

MEETING MINUTES
Town of Heath
SELECT BOARD
Jacobs Road Municipal Center
April 9, 2024

Called to Order at 6: 00 P. M. with Susan Lively, Elissa Viarengo, and Hilma Sumner, Town Coordinator, in attendance.

Other Attendees: See attendance sheet.

The meeting was recorded.

Review Agenda: Review of minutes of April 2, 2024, was tabled.

6:05 p.m. FY 2025 Budget Planning with Finance Committee.

Operating Budget (Article 3): Accounts were reviewed. It was concurred to leave Legal Fees at \$15,000. The Police Department Expense account was increased due to an increased fee for computer maintenance. The Board of Health Expense account was decreased to \$1,500 since the Town still has credit with the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District and Special Projects account was dropped to \$5,000 with the thought of some existing account monies being transferred to a new Community Hall/Sawyer Hall Building Needs account at the Annual Town Meeting.

Capital Expenses: The list of capital expenses was reviewed as well as options for available funds that could be transferred to pay for the capital purchases. A list of transfers was compiled. It was agreed to transfer some of the Free Cash into a Salt Shed Construction account to use for initial expenses. It was also discussed to ask the Moderator to allow further votes about Salt Shed construction be presented at a Special Town Meeting.

Employee Wages: Following a general discussion about wages, the Board reviewed proposed wage increases for each individual employee. The decision was made that the goal was to work to have salaries comparable to those in other local towns. Robyn recused herself from the meeting while Sue and Elissa deliberated about the Highway Department employees' salaries. After Robyn returned the Board proposed increasing the Emergency Management Director's stipend to \$1,250.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles: The first draft of the warrant articles was reviewed. There will be new articles added to request some money transfers. It is hoped that, after next week's meeting, the warrant will be ready to send to town counsel.

MTRSD Agreement Articles: In discussing a possible meeting with MTRSD officials and the School Committee Representative, the Board agreed that 4:30 p.m. would be the earliest time for a meeting. Possible dates that will be shared with the Representative are April 24, 25, 29 and

May 2. The Board stated that, if there were not spreadsheets that showed a clear comparison and explanation in assessment rates at least one week in advance of a meeting, there would be little purpose in convening a meeting.

Mail:

- K. Nartowicz re loan information
- SML re: highway salary comparison
- M Thurber re: MTRSD phone capital articles
- G. Ponce re: ambulance agreement
- B. Litchfield re: MTRSD agreement articles position
- Rep. Blais re: legislation introduced
- SML re: community sustainability meeting-- On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Select Board unanimously voted to approve the proposed letter.
- HAS re: HYPAs costume room use
- C. Rabbitt re: March Town Nurse Report
- J. McDonough re: March police report
- SML re: Beacon Hill in the Berkshires report
- FCSWMD re: March recycling expense
- Spring “Clean Sweep” Bulky Waste Recycling Day
- Northwestern D.A. re: gun buy-back day
- Sen. P. Mark re: April district hours

Next Meeting: April 16, 2024

10:00 p.m. Adjournment: On a motion by Susan Lively and seconded by Elissa Viarengo, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilma A. Sumner
Town Coordinator