



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Proctor School
60 Main Street, Topsfield**

**Minutes of Monday, November 27, 2017
7:30 PM**

Board Members present were Chairman Boyd Jackson, Clerk Mark Lyons and Selectmen Richard Gandt and John K. Spencer. Selectman Laura Powers was not in attendance. Of the Selectmen's Staff, Town Administrator Kellie Hebert and Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary Susan Winslow were in attendance.

Principle Assessor Toulia Guarino was in attendance. From the Finance Committee, Chairman Karen Dow and Member Che Elwell were in attendance. Residents David Larson and Kim Sherwood were in attendance as were Ben and Maddie Demers from Boxford Cable Television and Doreen Burliss from the Tri-Town Transcript.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Boyd Jackson called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

The Board stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and then observed a moment of silence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Jackson made the following announcements:

- Please be informed that the meeting is being recorded live by Boxford Cable Television and that the Board's Recording Clerk has a recording device for her record-keeping. Is there anyone else present who wishes to record the meeting? There was no response to this question.

Executive Session:

- The Board will meet in Executive Session under Exemption #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, specifically for the Full Time Career Firefighters and AFSCME units for Water, Highway, Parks and Cemeteries, since an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the Chair so declares.
- The Board will NOT return to Open Session.

Selectman Gandt announced:

"The Holiday On the Green Event will take place on Saturday, December 2, 2017 from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm. There will be food trucks, hayrides, Nutcracker story time, Memory Tree Lighting, Artisan Workshop, visit from Santa, a Holiday Walk at

local businesses and much more. For more information, see the Town website or visit the Holiday On The Green website at www.holidayonthegreen.com

Selectman Spencer announced:

“There are new regulations for Private Skating Rinks. Last Spring, the Topsfield Conservation Commission adopted a new policy on private outdoor skating rinks located in a Buffer Zone or Riverfront Area.

The policy is intended to prevent damage to or alteration of jurisdictional areas from the installation of temporary ice skating rinks for private use.

Anyone who is considering installing a private skating rink, either temporary or permanent, in or near a Buffer Zone or Riverfront area, should review the guidelines on the Town Website at www.topsfield-ma.gov and contact Conservation Agent Heidi Gaffney.”

CITIZEN COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Listening Sessions Resident Kim Sherwood asked the Selectmen if they were planning to conduct Citizen Listening Sessions. Chairman Jackson directed that this topic will be placed on the December 11, 2017 Agenda for discussion.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

(Administrative Note: the Town Administrator's Report is intended to provide Board Members and Citizens with a brief update and reports of progress regarding the many various tasks and major projects that have been assigned to the Town Administrator or Town Department Heads. The TA Report is not intended to engage the Board with any lengthy discussion or questions requiring detailed background information. While limited questions and comments may be easily addressed at the end of the Report – it is recommended that certain questions or requests be referred to the Town Administrator for further research. Also, Board Members may also request that a specific matter be added to the next meeting agenda for a formal discussion and official deliberation.)

(Legal Note: Per Open Meeting Law, Board Members' personal opinions or member deliberations should NOT be offered during the Town Administrator's Report on matters that have not been publicly posted on the agenda; alternatively, for matters or items regarding issues of public decision making and further research and deliberation, the Board may consent, or take a vote, to add any specific topic to the next regular meeting agenda in order to allow the entire Board to engage in a full discussion, deliberation and formal vote following a duly posted meeting and agenda notice to all citizens with 48 hours advance notice.)

Town Administrator Kellie Hebert informed the Board that the Finance Committee has voted on Budget Guidelines and they have been posted on the Town Website. The Budget Process Packet (see attached) was distributed electronically to all Department Heads during the week of November 20, 2017. Based on Guidelines from the Finance Committee, Department Heads were

instructed that the FY2019 Budget will be level funded with no new “other” expenses. Some Department Heads will be invited to appear before the Selectmen to explain their budget requests for FY2019. The Town Administrator also met with officials from the Elementary Schools on November 27, 2017 to discuss their budget.

7:45 PM Public Classification Hearing:

Clerk Mark Lyons read the following Public Notice, “The Topsfield Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, November 27, 2017 at 7:45 PM at the Proctor School Library, 60 Main Street, Topsfield, to determine the percentage of the tax levy to be borne by each class of property for Fiscal 2018 in accordance with MGL Chapter 40, Section 56, as amended.

Interested taxpayers are encouraged to present oral testimony at this hearing or may submit information on their view in writing to the Selectmen's Office no later than November 27, 2017.”

Selectman Gandt made a motion to open the Public Hearing. Seconded by Selectman Spencer, so voted 4-0.

Chairman Jackson invited public comment.

Resident Kim Sherwood voiced her concern that the public was being allowed to comment before Principle Assessor Toulia Guarino's presentation. Chairman Jackson informed Ms. Sherwood that the public would be allowed comment after the presentation.

Principle Assessor Toulia Guarino referred to the Town of Topsfield Fiscal Year 2018 Classification Packet that was distributed to Selectmen and available to the public at the meeting (see attached).

Following the presentation, resident Kim Sherwood informed the Board that she wanted to make a point of clarification, that the Town could choose to exempt the first \$50,000 value of a home and shift the burden to higher priced homes. Chairman Jackson asked if there was any further public comment. There was none.

Selectman Gandt made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Seconded by Selectman Jackson, so voted 4-0.

Selectman Spencer made a motion to adopt a residential factor of one for residential property. Seconded by Selectman Gandt, so voted 4-0.

Selectman Spencer made a motion to vote to NOT adopt a residential exemption. Seconded by Selectman Gandt, so voted 4-0.

Selectman Spencer made a motion to NOT adopt a small commercial exemption. Seconded by Selectman Gandt, so voted 4-0.

Selectman Spencer made a motion to NOT adopt an Open Space Discount. Seconded by Chairman Jackson. Selectman Gandt informed the Board that

Topsfield does not have an Open Space Discount. Clerk Lyons made a motion to amend the original motion to include the words, 'if applicable'. Seconded by Selectman Gandt, so voted 4-0.

The Chair called for a vote on the amended motion, so voted 4-0.

Clerk Mark Lyons presented an overview of the composition of the Town Budget and history of tax increases on a typical home over the last fifteen years.

Principle Assessor Toulia Guarino gave the Board a review of the current Statutory Exemptions including the 41-C Statutory Exemption and the Senior Tax Work-Off Program, Veterans Tax Work-Off Program and Senior Circuit Breaker Program.

Residents who are interested in these programs were encouraged to contact the Assessor's office or the Council On Aging, as the case may be.

NEW BUSINESS

Memorandum of Agreement Between the Town of Topsfield and the Topsfield Police Benevolent Association Town Administrator Hebert informed the Board that she has conducted six meetings with the Union Representatives and Clare Schroder from Mass C.O.P. and asked for a vote of the Board to approve the MOA. After discussion, it was agreed that the document would be further updated and placed on the Agenda of the 11/29/17 BOS Meeting for Open Session discussion and approval.

Selectman Gandt expressed his desire for an original copy of the Police contract with markups indicating proposed changes.

This item will be added to the Working Session scheduled for Wednesday, November 29, 2017.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

November 13, 2017

Selectman Gandt made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 13, 2017. Seconded by Selectman Spencer, so voted 4-0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:24 PM, Chairman Jackson made a motion to enter into closed Executive Session, with the meeting to adjourn at the conclusion of Executive Session without returning to Open Session. Seconded by Selectman Spencer.

Roll Call Vote to enter into Executive Session:

Jackson – Yes

Lyons – Yes

Gandt – Yes

Spencer - Yes

So voted 4-0. The Board entered Executive Session at 9:24 PM.

DOCUMENTS

1. Agenda
2. Detailed Agenda
3. Memorandum from Board of Assessors dated November 27, 2017
4. Copy of newspaper tearsheet for Legal Notice: Public Hearing on Monday, November 27
5. Language for Legal Notice for Public Hearing
6. Document, "Town of Topsfield Fiscal Year 2018 Classification Hearing Packet"
7. Document, "Division of Local Services Municipal Databank Report CIP Shift"
8. Document, "Open Meeting Violation Complaint" filed by Kim Sherwood
9. Document, "Request for Public Records – RAO Response form dated 11/13/17
10. Letter of thanks to Topsfield Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown from Boxford Fire Chief Brian Geiger
11. Draft Meeting Minutes of Monday, November 13, 2017
12. Memorandum of Agreement (Draft 11/27/2017) between the Town of Topsfield and the Topsfield Police Benevolent Association dated 11/27/2017.

Minutes were accepted as amended at the January 8, 2018 Board of Selectmen Meeting.

<p>Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18-25, the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting, the members present and absent, and the actions taken at the meeting. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion of any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.</p>
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