



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Working Session
Town Hall Offices
461 Boston Street, Topsfield
Minutes of Wednesday, November 29, 2017
4:00 PM**

Board members present included Chairman Boyd Jackson, Clerk Mark Lyons, and Selectmen John K. Spencer and Richard Gandt. Chairman Laura Powers was not in attendance. From the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Kellie Hebert and Administrative Assistant and Recording Secretary Susan Winslow, were in attendance. Other Town Hall Staff present included Town Accountant Catherine Gabriel, Principal Assessor Toulia Guarino, Treasurer/Collector Barbara Michalowski and Community Development Director and Purchasing Agent Donna Rich.

Also in attendance were residents Gerry Buckley, Katherine Carlson, Eldon Goodhue, David Larson, Kim Sherwood.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Boyd Jackson called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Jackson made the following announcements:

- Please be informed that the meeting is being recorded by the Board's Recording Clerk with a device for her record-keeping. Is there anyone else present who wishes to record the meeting?

Selectman Gandt responded that he would be making an audio and video recording of the meeting with his personal camera.

- Chairman Jackson announced that the Executive Session scheduled for this meeting would be postponed to a later date.

NEW BUSINESS

Topsfield Police Benevolent Association Contract Memorandum of Agreement – Postponed

Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Process and Town Meeting Warrant

Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018.

The Town Warrant will open on January 9, 2018 and close on January 30, 2018.

Town Administrator Kellie Hebert distributed the FY2019 Budget Process Packet and acknowledged the assistance of the Financial Team including Town Accountant Catherine Gabriel, Principal Assessor Toulia Guarino, Treasurer/Collector Barbara Michalowski and community Development Director and Purchasing Agent Donna Rich.

Ms. Hebert explained that 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 to begin the Budget Planning Process with a level funded budget with no new “other” expenses. Any expenses that fall outside the guidelines must be presented on the “Essential Unfunded” sheet. Some Department Heads will appear before the Selectmen to review their budget requests for FY2019.

Town Administrator Hebert will oversee the warrant preparation with the assistance of Donna Rich. The Town Administrator will also oversee the Budget Process, with the assistance of Town Accountant, Catherine Gabriel, the Finance Team, Selectmen and Finance Committee.

Town Accountant Catherine Gabriel distributed the FY19 Budget Schedule (see attached). The Board discussed the addition of Working Sessions during the budget season as well as a Public Forum, tentatively scheduled for January 24, 2018. Town Administrator Hebert will confirm this date with the Finance Committee. Town Administrator Hebert will work with Finance Committee Chairman Karen Down to set up joint meetings with the Selectmen and Finance Committee during the Budget Process.

Town Administrator Hebert will ensure that the Draft Warrant will be distributed to Selectmen for their review 2 weeks prior to March 27, 2018, as the document must be delivered to the printer on March 27, 2018.

Resident Eldon Goodhue asked the Chairman how the public may become involved in the day-to-day budget process at Town Hall. Selectman Spencer offered to act as a conduit for any questions from residents. He explained that the Town has hired and elected people who are experts in their field, and in doing so, the public has put their trust in these professionals to do their job. For that reason, the public is not involved in the day-to-day management of the Budget process. Mr. Goodhue was also informed that the public has access to the Selectmen through the email selectmen@toppsfield-ma.gov and through telephone numbers listed in the phone book.

Selectman Spencer made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Clerk Lyons, so voted 4-0. The Meeting adjourned at 5:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Susan Winslow

Recording Secretary

Documents

1. Agenda
2. Document, "FY2019 Budget Process Packet"
3. Document, "FY19 Budget Schedule"

These Minutes were accepted as written at the Board of Selectmen Meeting.

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law,' G.L. 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.