



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Working Session
Town Hall Offices
461 Boston Street, Topsfield
Minutes of Wednesday, December 20, 2017
4:00 PM**

Board members present included Chairman Boyd Jackson, Clerk Mark Lyons, and Selectmen Richard Gandt and John K. Spencer. Selectman 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.

Town Accountant Catherine Gabriel, Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown, Health Agent John Coulon, Conservation Agent Heidi Gaffney, Police Chief Evan Haglund, Detective Sergeant Gary Hayward and Purchasing Agent and Community Development Director Donna Rich were in attendance. Also in attendance were residents David Larson and Libby Wilson.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Boyd Jackson called the meeting to order at 4:03 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.

- "The Board will meet in Executive Session under Exemption #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for the Full Time Firefighter and Call Firefighter Units 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."

NEW BUSINESS – BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

Police Department

Police Chief Evan Haglund and Detective Sergeant Gary Hayward presented the Police Department level-funded Budget for FY19. Chief Haglund explained that the budget numbers distributed to Selectmen would change slightly due to the recent announcement by Sergeant Weir that he is going to retire. The cost relates to the expense of sending a new officer to the Police Academy. Because the Topsfield Police Benevolent Association is currently negotiating their contract, there are no final numbers for this item at present.

Other requests include \$11,344 for Captain's Salary and \$12,185 representing the contractual increase in the Chief's salary.

Chief Haglund and Detective Sergeant Hayward reviewed additional items including:

- The Police Station is in need of age-related repairs. There is also an increase in cost of water due to water leaks, concern over potential costs if cast iron pipes split.
- Continuation of the plan to replace one cruiser per year in Capital Budget Request.

Selectman Gandt asked Chief Haglund and Detective Sergeant Hayward what they can do to save money.

The Chief replied that the budget is very tight and he will be working with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, but if the budget were to be cut, it would have a detrimental effect on Town safety.

Selectman Spencer referred the Board to a question he had received from a resident about reducing the number of cruisers on the road at night from two to one, and relying on the State Police as back-up in order to save money.

Chief Haglund responded that this would result in a serious safety issue for both the officer on duty and the residents of Topsfield. Criminals could take advantage of one-man police coverage at night in Topsfield. Further, the State Troopers are thinly staffed, with a patrol area ranging from the 495 corridor in Lawrence/Haverhill to Route 95 to Peabody which would result in a considerable response time in the event of an emergency in Town.

Board of Health

Health Agent John Coulon presented a level funded budget. Mr. Coulon presented a function of reallocation of funds from the Minutes Secretary position to fund the Senior Administrative Assistant position which would then encompass the responsibility for taking Meeting Minutes and full-time office coverage for the Health Department and full time coverage for the Conservation Department. Mr. Coulon informed the Board that through the Board of Health, the Town is a

member of four active Public Health Coalitions that encompass Public Health Emergency Preparedness, Tobacco Control and Modernization of the Food Code. The Health Agent has also procured grant funds for the Town through involvement in these coalitions.

Conservation Commission

Conservation Agent Heidi Gaffney presented a level funded budget with the reclassification of the Administrative Assistant to Senior Administrative Assistant. Chairman Jackson commended Mr. Coulon and Ms. Gaffney for the work of the Board of Health and Conservation Commission.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Jenifer Collins-Brown distributed a Mission Statement. Chief Collins-Brown informed the Board that due to the fact that the Full Time Firefighter and Call Firefighter Units are currently in contract negotiations, the numbers for those two budget items are subject to change. Chief Collins-Brown also reviewed:

- Upcoming retirements from the Department.
- Deferred maintenance of the Fire Station.
- Vehicles are now on a maintenance plan.
- Asbestos was abated, holes in walls and broken gutters were repaired.
- Requested a SAFE grant for \$5300, and received \$6100.
- 3 new Call Firefighters from Topsfield, Ipswich (on Topsfield line) and Danvers (on Topsfield line).
- Discussion about replacement of medical supplies.
- Salary Reserve Fund will be used to cover projected changes to salary and wages upon completion of contract negotiations.
- Revenue from the ambulance to date this year is \$38,000.
- Revenue from fire alarm inspections to date this year is \$12,000.

The Board thanked Chief Collins Brown for the report.

Chairman Jackson left the meeting at 5:41 PM

Selectmen

Town Administrator Kellie Hebert, assisted by Donna Rich, presented the Selectmen's Budget including the following:

- Cable PEG is estimated to increase \$5,000, funded from the General Fund from receipts from the Cable Franchise Fee.
- If additional Cable equipment is needed, it will be considered a Capital Expense.
- Selectman Lyons requested that the Town Administrator inquire if the Selectmen Meetings can be set up as a "program/series" on Cable Television so they may be recorded by a DVR.
- The Purchasing Agent and Community Development Coordinator will be moved from an hourly wage to a salary in the personnel budget line.
- The expense for an Executive Assistant is subject to change due to a change in personnel.

Selectmen's Special

- Request for an increase in the Legal Budget which is projected to have a \$10,000 deficit. Clerk Lyons pointed out that the Open Meeting Law and Public Records Request Law Revisions enacted in January, 2017 have associated legal costs and an obligation of the Town Administrator to protect the Town.
- Solid Waste Collection costs will be increasing due to a contractual obligation five years into the ten-year contract.
- Animal Control Officer Carol Laroque is requesting an additional \$929 to cover the cost of taking animals to Muddy Creek Veterinary Clinic which acts as the Town's kennel.
- Stormwater Management Coordinator receives a \$5,306 stipend and Stormwater consulting is a \$10,000 expense item necessary for EPA mandated reporting. This is an interim situation until the Town has a more comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan.
- Selectman Spencer asked about the use of the Soldiers and Sailors Graves line. It was explained that this is for grave markers and is handled by the Veterans' Service Officer Richard Cullinan.
- The Animal Inspector budget is within Finance Committee guidelines.
- Town Administrator Hebert informed the Board that no increases have been added to the Stipends this year.
- The Historical Commission budget is within guidelines.
- The Recycling budget is within guidelines. Donna Rich informed the Board that there are plenty of recycling stickers and trash decals, so there will be no need to order new ones in FY19.

Clerk Lyons entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session. Selectman Gandt made a motion to enter into Executive Session and adjourn at the close of Executive Session. Seconded by Selectman Spencer.
The Chairman called for a Roll Call Vote:

Clerk Lyons – yes
Selectman Gandt – yes
Selectman Spencer – yes

So voted 3-0. The Board entered into Executive Session at 6:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Susan Winslow
Recording Secretary

Documents

1. Agenda
2. Document, "Salary and Wage Line Items Police Department

3. Document, "FY19 Budget – Department Request Public Safety – Police Department"
4. Document, "Salary and Wage Line Items Board of Health"
5. Document, "Board of Health Budget Discussion"
6. Document, "FY19 Budget – Department Request Board of Health"
7. Document, "FY19 Budget – Department Request Conservation"
8. Document, "FY19 Budget – Department Request Public Safety – Fire Department"
9. Document, "Other Expense Line Items – Fire Department"
10. Document, "Mission Statement"
11. Document, "Salary & Wage Line Items Board of Selectmen"
12. Document, "FY19 Budget – Department Request - Selectmen Department"
13. Document, "Other Expense Line Items (Operating Expenses) Board of Selectmen"
14. Document, "FY19 Budget – Department Request Selectmen's Special"
15. Document, "Other Expense Line Items (Operating Expenses PEG Cable Advisory)"
16. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request PEG/Cable Advisory Salary and Wages"
17. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Zoning Board"
18. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Sealer of Weights & Measures"
19. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Other Expense Line Items (Operating Expenses Animal Control Officer)"
20. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Animal Control Officer"
21. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Animal Inspector"
22. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Stormwater Management"
23. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Refuse Expense"
24. Document, "Other Line Items (Operating Expenses Board of Selectmen Refuse"
25. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Recycling Expense"
26. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Veterans Services"
27. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Soldier & Graves"
28. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Historical Commission"
29. Document, "FY19 Budget Department Request Memorial & Veterans Day"

These Minutes were accepted as written at the February 5, 2018 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.