



**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
WORKING SESSION  
Town Hall Offices  
461 Boston Street, Topsfield  
Minutes of Wednesday, March 7, 2018**

Board members present were Chairman Boyd Jackson, Clerk Mark Lyons, Selectmen Richard Gandt and John K. Spencer. Selectman Laura Powers was not in attendance. From the Selectmen's staff, Town Administrator Kellie Hebert and Executive Assistant and Recording Secretary Debi Morong were in attendance.

From the Fire Department, Fire Chief Jen Collins-Brown

**Call to order**

At 5:04pm, Chairman Jackson called the working session to order noting that the meeting was being audio taped by Debi Morong and asked if anyone in the audience was taping the meeting, they should let the Board of Selectmen know.

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

**Announcements**

The Board will meet in Executive Session under Exemption #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining for the Topsfield Benevolent Association, IAFF Firefighters, Call Firefighters AFSCME Parks and Cemeteries 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.

**FY2019 BOS Departmental Budgets**

The Topsfield Police Department budget has not been approved by the Finance Committee due to retirements that will impact the salary line. The updated budget numbers should be available by next week.

The Topsfield Fire Department budget has not been approved by the Finance Committee due to requests for justification on a few capital items.

As of this meeting, the Finance Committee has not approved the increases for the following:

Legal Services Requests	\$10,000	Due in part by Public Records/OML
PT Town Clerk Office Requests	\$17,192	Need help with Public Records/OML
Fire Department increased	\$2,500	Medical Supplies – EMS Responses have increased
Fire Department	\$2,000	Travel Exp. – Attend Trainings/Meetings

The Selectmen's Legal Services line is based on previous year's actual expenses and a shortfall in FY2018 due to the increase in Public Record/OML Requests. In the last six months, the town has expended \$5,000 on legal fees specifically for Public Records/OML Requests.

The Part-time Personnel in the Clerk's Office proposal is to add someone approximately 18hrs/week to address the public records requests that come into that office daily/weekly. These requests have severely impacted the daily operations of the Clerk's Office and this would help alleviate some of the strain.

The Fire Department has requested additional funds for medical supplies, such as disposable gloves, bandages and oxygen masks are needed to be able to assist people in need. Over the past 4 years, the number of EMS Responses has increased approximately 18%. This expense can be offset by Ambulance billing receipts deposited into the Town's General Fund.

The Fire Department has requested additional funds for Travel Expenses. This is a mandatory contractual requirement, which allows reimbursement of travel expenses to attend trainings, professional development and state-wide meetings.

#### **FY19 Departmental Budget Requests: List of Requests over 0% FinCom Guidelines**

Clerk Lyons makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee for an additional \$10,000 for Legal Services to be added to the base budget totaling \$60,000. Selectman Gandt seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Clerk Lyons makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee for an additional \$4,100 for the Annual Audit Professional Services

to be added to the base budget. Selectman Spencer seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee an additional \$2,472 for Electric Utilities and \$1,442 for Gas Utilities to be added to the base budgets. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Spencer makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget \$300 for building rental fees to accommodate the elections and an additional \$2,750 for election expenses to be added to the base budgets. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Spencer makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget \$4,500 for Public Records Tracking Software for the Clerk's Office. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

This is a request for increase in the Clerk's Office salary line to hire part-time help (approximately 18hrs/wk.) to assist with public records/OML requests and during busy office times, such as Town Meeting and Elections. As a revised request, it was recommended to reduce the amount originally requested and split it into two categories; \$5,000 for salary – Clerk's Compensation for taking on the role of RAO and \$7,000 for wages –Part-time staff to assist office.

Selectman Spencer makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget a revised request of \$5,000 for a wage reclassification in the Town Clerk's Office and \$7,000 to the Clerk's salary budget to hire a part-time office assistant at hers and the Town Administrator's discretion. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 3-1 with Selectman Gandt voting not to recommend approval.

Clerk Lyons makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget an additional \$2,500 for Medical Supplies for the Topsfield Fire Department. Selectman Spencer seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 3-1 with Selectman Gandt voting not to recommend approval.

Selectman Spencer makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget an additional \$2,000 for reimbursement of travel expenses to attend trainings, professional development and state-wide meetings. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget and additional \$929 for expenses related to Animal Boarding costs. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget an additional \$2,175 to adequately budget for the Street Lights (Electricity) due to an increase in rates. Selectman Spencer seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget \$20,112 due to a contractual funding requirement for the town's Solid Waste Collection. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget \$400 for postage to continue the outreach and mailing of the COA Senior Scoop. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget \$400 for software maintenance fees related to COA Programming Tracking Software purchased in FY18. Selectman Spencer seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee for \$3,600 to cover the rental space needed for COA activities for a six month period. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Spencer makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee to add to the base budget \$2,000 for a total of \$37,000 due to the increase in annual operating expenses to provide cable services by Boxford Cable Television, Inc. and these funds come out of the PEG/Cable Fund which is a self-supporting special reserve fund. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

Selectman Gandt makes a motion to recommend approval to the Finance Committee for \$3,000 for a one-time expense to fund additional time and services for the move and set-up of the cable equipment into the New Town Hall building and these funds come out of the PEG/Cable Fund which is a self-supporting special reserve fund. Clerk Lyons seconded the motion and it was approved with a vote of 4-0.

### **Preparations for 2018 Town Meeting on May 1, 2018**

Selectman Spencer will recuse himself from any votes regarding Article-Sixth: Masconomet Regional School District – Capital Budget Assessment, as he is a sitting Topsfield Representative on the Masconomet School Committee.

At 6:50PM, Selectman Spencer excused himself from the Board of Selectmen's meeting to attend a Masconomet School Committee Meeting.

The warrant articles are written by the Board of Selectmen, the recommendations are from the Finance Committee and the explanations are subject to change from either the Town Administrator or the Board of selectmen as it is strictly for helping understand the articles.

At 7:00PM, Chairman Jackson makes a motion to adjourn the Selectmen's Working Session and enter into executive session for reason #3, not to return to open session. With a roll call vote, it was approved 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Debi Morong, Executive Assistant

### **Documents Used:**

- FY19 Departmental Budget Requests: List of Requests over 0% Finance Committee Guidelines, dated 2.24.18
- Preliminary Draft Warrant Document as of 2.24.2018