



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Town Hall: COA Activities Room
(2nd Floor)
March 11, 2019

I. Call to Order: Chair Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM with Che Elwell, Jon Guido, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Also present: Mark Lyons, Selectman; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; Katrina Frere, School Committee Chair; Scott Morrison, Tri-Town Superintendent; Steve Greenberg, Assistant Superintendent of Operations; and Dan Pallotta, School Committee. Members of the public present signed the sign in sheet (attached). Karen Dow announced at 7:04 PM that Jeanine Cunniff was going to make a video recording.

II. Minutes: Che Elwell made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from February 25, 2019. Lou Ross seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-2. Karen Dow and Dana Warren abstained as they were not present for the meeting.

Dana Warren made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from March 4, 2019. Lou Ross seconded the motion, voted in favor 6-0-1. Jon Guido abstained as he was not present for the meeting

III. FinCom Model Status: Mike Hartmann handed out V2.41. He noted any updates made; the amount over the levy limit is \$358,863. A short discussion followed.

IV. Department Budget Presentations

- a. **Elementary School Committee 7:15PM-** Katrina passed out and read from her letter to the Finance Committee. She reported that the budget process has been lengthy and difficult. After much deliberation, the new proposed operating budget of \$9,374,005 was voted by the School Committee. This is an increase of \$1,053,843 over the Finance Committee guideline. They are asking for an operational override in this amount. There are also two capital requests: \$170,000 for security cameras and safety systems at Steward and Proctor, and \$13,500 for a floor scrubber at Steward. Also, they are requesting a warrant article for technology in the

amount of \$390,000. The School Committee is also recommending that the town establish a Special Education Reserve Fund, but to not fund it this year. The fund is a mechanism that helps to offset any extraordinary special education needs not anticipated in a prior school year. A discussion followed, focusing on the impact an override would have on the tax rate and residents. Jon Guido left the Finance Committee meeting temporarily to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting with the School Committee.

- V. Department Budget Review and Approval:** Lou Ross made a motion that the Committee reserves the right to supersede or modify the following Department budget approvals by future vote. Che Elwell seconded the motion, voted in favor 6-0.

Lou Ross made a motion to approve Department base request budgets as detailed in the Article III vote tracker, dated March 11, 2019, excluding Elementary, Masco, Water, Insurance, Debt Service, Pensions, and Other Expenditures, which is incorporated herein by reference, seconded by Che Elwell, voted in favor 6-0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the List of Requests over Finance Committee Guidelines, dated February 25, 2019.

Dana Warren recommended positive action on Selectmen – Minutes Secretary, in the amount of \$2,125, seconded by Lou Ross, voted in favor 5-1. Discussion: This would alleviate the need to pay overtime to the Board of Selectmen Executive Assistant.

Mike Hartmann recommended positive action on ASR Professional Services- Cyclical Re-inspections, in the amount of \$10,000, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Che Elwell recommended positive action on Town Hall- Electricity, in the amount of \$5,640, seconded by Lou Ross, voted in favor 6-0.

Dana Warren recommended positive action on Town Hall- Telephone, in the amount of \$3,500, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Che Elwell recommended positive action on PEG Legal Services- \$1,000/PEG Prof Services- Boxford Cable Access- \$4,000/PEG Website Enhancements-\$ 5,000, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 6-0. Discussion: These costs are a pass-through funded by the PEG fund.

Che Elwell recommended positive action on Police- Phone Communications, in the amount of \$5,250, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Che Elwell recommended positive action on Police wages- Training, in the amount

of \$11,563, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Eric Menzer recommended positive action on Fire- Cleaning Contract, in the amount of \$5,650, seconded by Che Elwell, voted in favor 6-0.

Eric Menzer recommended positive action on Fire- Medical, in the amount of \$8,050, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 6-0.

Eric Menzer recommended positive action on Inspector Professional Services- Permit Link Agreement, in the amount of \$10,000, seconded by Mike Hartmann, voted in favor 6-0. This is offset by a \$10 per permit fee that shows up in Local Receipts.

Lou Ross recommended positive action on Street Lights- Electricity, in the amount of \$1,244, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 6-0.

Dana Warren recommended positive action on COA Wage Van Drivers, in the amount of \$4,240, seconded by Lou Ross, voted in favor 6-0.

Dana Warren recommended positive action on COA Fire Alarm Maintenance, in the amount of \$100, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Dana Warren recommended positive action on COA Vehicle, in the amount of \$1,000, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Dana Warren recommended positive action on Library- Repair & Maintenance/Anticipated, in the amount of \$2,298, seconded by Mike Hartmann, voted in favor 6-0.

Dana Warren recommended positive action on Library- Repair & Maintenance/ Unanticipated, in the amount of \$1,000, seconded by Che Elwell, voted in favor 6-0.

Che discussed the Police request for additional officers; focusing on the one or two officer options, and the potential savings. Che will reach out to the Police department to clarify how benefits for the additional officers would be funded. Jon returned to the Finance Committee meeting during this discussion.

VI. Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

- a. **Assignments-** Responsibility for review of specific Town Meeting Articles and presentation of them at Town Meeting were assigned as listed below. Numbering from 3/1/19 version of the ATM Warrant.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant	Finance Committee Member
Article	Initials
1	
2	JG
3	MH
4	LR
5	DW
6	DW
7	DW
8	KD
9	LR
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	LR
16	CE
17	EM
18	CE
19	JG
20	CE
21	DW
22	LR
23	LR
24	LR
25	MH
26	MH
27	CE
28	KD
29	LR
30	LR
31	KD
32	CE
33	JG
34	EM
35	LR
36	JG
37	KD
38	KD

b. Recommendations- Karen asked all liaisons to research and review their

assignments. Voting will take place at the next Finance Committee meeting.

VII. Correspondence: None.

VIII. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting: none

VIII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule: The next meetings of the Committee will occur March 18th, March 19th, and March 25th at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Council on Aging Activities room.

X. Adjourn: A motion was made by Dana Warren to adjourn at 10:43 PM, seconded by Eric Menzer and voted in favor 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes 2/25, 3/4
3. TSC Budget Adjustment sheet
4. TSC Proposed Operating Budget
5. TSC letter
6. Article III vote tracker, dated 3/11
7. Model V2.4