



Topsfield Finance Committee Minutes to the Meetings

Meeting was held
via Videoconference
March 29, 2021

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Topsfield Finance Committee was conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Topsfield website, at www.topsfieldma.gov. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference information is posted on the website. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

I. Call to Order

Chair Che Elwell called the meeting to order at 7:01PM and initiated roll call. Present were Chair Elwell-Y, Karen Dow-Y, Karen Duval-Y, Jon Guido-Y, Mike Hartmann-Y, Eric Menzer-Y and David Larson-Y. Also present were Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator; Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Dick Gandt, Marshall Hook and Boyd Jackson, Select Board; Chief Collins-Brown, Fire Dept.; Beth Willis, Town Clerk; Wendy Hansbury, Health Agent; Chief Neal Hovey, Police Dept.; Sheryl Knutsen and Mark Rizza, Board of Health; and approximately fifteen members of the public, including Gretchen Rehak, Joyce Knarr, Joyce Sullivan, Brandon Smith, Becky Daitch, Brandon Smith, Tony Roselli, Rhonda Dean, Janet Karoubicalis, Effie Ypsilantis Tappa and Linda Magalnick. Chairman Elwell noted the meeting is being recorded but not broadcast live. As the meeting took place via videoconference, all votes will be taken by roll call. Chair Elwell noted that members of the Select Board will be joining the meeting at the conclusion of their own meeting.

II. ARTICLE TWENTY-FIFTH: COPPERMINE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Elwell reported that Kevin Harutunian had spoken with Representative Hill as well as our legal team, and based on that the language of the warrant was changed as follows:

Recommended that should the state not allot the Town a grant or otherwise make funds available to the Town for the stated purposes by June 30, 2022, the Town vote to transfer and appropriate from Free Cash the sum of \$45,000 to be expended by the Select Board to fund road repairs, improvements and maintenance on the portion of Coppermine Road in which

the Town of Topsfield holds an access easement between the Coppermine subdivision and Locust Street in Middleton, all to ensure safe access to properties in Topsfield, including all incidental and related expenses.

This article would fund road resurfacing of the portion of Coppermine Road in Middleton, in which Topsfield has an access easement and which is the sole access to the Coppermine Road subdivision in Topsfield. The Town will be requesting a grant through the state's FY2022 operating budget to fund the road resurfacing. In the event the state does not provide the Town with funding, the Town would then be able to use local funds to perform the work.

Discussion ensued including input from residents Joyce Knarr, Tony Roselli and Janet Karoubicalis.

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was voted to recommend positive action on the above article. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 7-0.

III. FinCom Model Review

Mr. Hartmann updated the model in accordance with the most recent warrant articles and in accordance with all votes of the FinCom. Ms. Gabriel reported updated numbers according to the last Omnibus and Mr. Hartmann adjusted the model accordingly. Discussion ensued.

IV. WARRANT ARTICLE VOTES (numbering from final version of warrant)

ARTICLE THIRD: GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was voted to recommend positive action on the above article that the Town vote to appropriate the sum of \$22,231,508 for elementary schools, highways, and other Town expenses, and fix the annual salary and compensation of all elected officers from July 1, 2021, and determine the manner of expending the same as stated in Attachment A to the warrant; and to meet said appropriation, in addition to the amount transferred for such purposes under Article Second, to transfer the sum of \$75,000 from Overlay Surplus and raise and assess the sum of \$22,091,335.33. Mr. Hartmann-N, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-1.

ARTICLE SECOND: BALANCE TRANSFERS

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Larson, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article that the Town vote to transfer the sum of \$65,172.67 from various funds listed under this Article Second in the warrant and appropriate the same to fund the General Operating Budget in Fiscal Year 2022 to be voted under Article Third. Mr. Hartmann-N, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 7-0.

ARTICLE THIRTY-THIRD: RECODIFICATION OF GENERAL BYLAWS

Following discussion with input from Clerk Beth Willis, recommendation is pending.

**ARTICLE THIRTY-FOURTH: AMEND ZONING BYLAW, ARTICLE XI,
GROUNDWATER PROTECTION DISTRICT**

Following discussion with input from Clerk Beth Willis, recommendation is pending.

ARTICLE THIRTY-EIGHTH: CAPITAL STABILIZATION FUND

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Larson, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article to transfer from Free Cash \$100,000 to the Capital Stabilization fund. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 7-0.

ARTICLE THIRTY-NINTH: GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Guido, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article to transfer from Free Cash \$25,000 to the General Stabilization Fund. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 7-0.

ARTICLE FORTIETH: FREE CASH TO OFFSET THE TAX RATE

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Hartmann and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article to transfer from Free Cash \$400,000 to offset the tax rate. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 7-0.

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE FOURTH: PEG ACCESS AND CABLE RELATED
FUND – FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET TRANSFER**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Ms. Duval, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article to transfer \$1,100 from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund to the PEG and Cable Professional Services Account to fund cable access services. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 7-0.

V. FinCom Letter

Mr. Elwell presented a draft version of the annual FinCom letter to be included in the mailing of the warrant for Annual and Special Town Meetings. Various edits were discussed and made. Upon motion duly made by Mr. Guido and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was voted to approve the revised version of the letter, and delegate authority to Mr. Elwell to make final grammatical edits and include final numbers based on Mr. Hartmann's revised model reflecting tonight's votes. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-abstain. Motion passed 6-0-1.

VI. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of March 8, 2021: Mr. Guido made a motion to approve the 3/25/21 version of these minutes, seconded by Ms. Dow; Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 7-0.

Minutes of March 15, 2021: Ms. Dow made a motion to approve version 2A of these minutes, seconded by Mr. Larson; Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Mr. Guido-abstain (absent for the meeting), Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0-1.

VII. Any Other Business

Mr. Harutunian expressed his thanks for the Finance Committee's work on a balanced budget.

VIII. Next Meeting

Monday, April 12 @ 7:00pm

Agenda items: Review warrant assignments; voted Articles 33rd – 36th.

Thursday, May 6 at a time TBD; joint meeting with Select Board to finalize any pending business before Town Meeting.

Saturday, May 8 at 10:00AM on the Town Common; Annual and Special Town Meetings.

IX. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Menzer and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:12PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary

Minutes APPROVED April 12, 2021