



## Topsfield Finance Committee Minutes to the Meetings

Meeting was held  
via Videoconference  
March 15, 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](http://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 7:02 PM and initiated roll call. Present were Chair Elwell-Y, Karen Dow-Y, Karen Duval-Y, Mike Hartmann-Y, Eric Menzer-Y and David Larson-Y. Absent was Jon Guido. 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 10 members of the public, including Gretchen Rehak, Joyce Knarr, Joyce Sullivan, Brandon Smith, Becky Daitch, 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. Approval of Minutes of March 1, 2021**

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Menzer and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to approve the above minutes as amended. Chair Elwell-Y, Karen Dow-Y, Karen Duval-Y, Mike Hartmann-Y, Eric Menzer-Y and David Larson-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

### **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 (see attached model version 1.95). Ms. Duval noted an additional \$20K allocated in the MASCO operating budget for \$3,394,366. Ms. Dow updated the Committee on her attendance at the elementary school committee meeting and a summary of their deliberations leading to their final vote on the adjustments to the budget, including applied one-time revenue and grants, to achieve guideline, to be presented at a public hearing on April 1. Discussion ensued.

#### **Vote on Elementary School Budget**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Mr. Menzer and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to approve the elementary school budget at guideline of 2.75% increase. Chair Elwell-Y, Karen Dow-Y, Karen Duval-Y, Mike Hartmann-Y, Eric Menzer-Y and David Larson-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

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

#### **ARTICLE FOURTH: WATER DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET**

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Larson and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$2,285,337, inclusive of indirect cost of \$178,046. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

#### **ARTICLE FIFTH: MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT**

It was agreed to put this article on hold until certification is received.

#### **ARTICLE SIXTH: ESSEX NORTH SHORE AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT.**

It was agreed to put this article on hold until certification is received.

#### **ARTICLE SEVENTH: GRANT AUTHORIZATION FOR TOWN PROJECTS**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Larson, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

#### **ARTICLE EIGHTH: MASSACHUSETTS DEPART OF TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS**

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Larson and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y, Mr. Guido and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

#### **ARTICLE NINTH: TRI-TOWN COUNCIL ON YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$20,500 from Free Cash. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE TENTH: SENIOR CARE**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Mr. Larson, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$1,500 from Free Cash. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE ELEVENTH: COMPENSATED ABSENCES FUND**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Ms. Duval, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$100,000 from Free Cash. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE THIRTEENTH: TOWN FACILITIES REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Larson, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$27,000 from Free Cash. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE FOURTEENTH: TOWN HALL GENERATOR**

It was decided to hold on the vote.

**ARTICLE FIFTEENTH: POLICE CRUISER**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$67,500 from Free Cash. Mr. Hartmann-N, Mr. Larson-N, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y, Mr. Guido and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 4-2.

**ARTICLE SIXTEENTH: POLICE CRUISER RADIOS**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$160,000 from Free Cash. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y, Mr. Guido and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE SEVENTEENTH: FIRE STATION ROOF REPLACEMENT**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the total amount of \$35,000. Mr. Hartmann-N, Mr. Larson-N, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE EIGHTEENTH: PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING HVAC SYSTEM REPLACEMENT**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Mr. Larson and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the total amount of \$44,500. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE NINETEENTH: PUBLIC WORKS MULTI PURPOSE TRACTOR**

Following discussion, it was decided to hold on this vote.

**ARTICLE TWENTIETH: FIRE SPRINKLER IMPROVEMENTS  
FOR PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the total amount of \$148,000. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

Mr. Gandt, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Harutunian joined the meeting at 8:18PM.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-FIRST: PUBLIC WORKS PICKUP TRUCK**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Mr. Larson and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the total amount of \$80,000. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-SECOND: LIBRARY FIRE ALARM PANEL**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$14,000. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-THIRD: LIBRARY SECURITY CAMERA SYSTEM**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$15,000. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-FOURTH: BOSTON STREET WATER STORAGE TANK  
REPLACEMENT EVALUATION AND DESIGN**

Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Larson, it was unanimously voted to recommend positive action on the above article in the amount of \$275,000. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-Y. Motion passed 6-0.

**ARTICLE TWENTY-FIFTH: COPPERMINE ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

Mr. Elwell summarized the details of the situation. Mr. Harutunian followed with a history of the issue with regard to the present request for improvements to Coppermine Road. Messrs. Gandt and Jackson also gave their perspective. Chair Elwell then welcomed Ms. Knarr, resident of the neighborhood, who presented her perspective on behalf of the neighborhood residents. Discussion ensued including the prospect of petitioning the state to earmark Chapter 90 funds for paving of the road.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Menzer and seconded by Mr. Larson, it was voted to recommend positive action on the above article. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-N, Ms. Dow-N and Mr. Elwell-N. Motion did not pass 3-3.

On the advice of Mr. Harutunian that he will continue his discussions with Representative Hill with regard to earmarking this request for funds without prejudice for other future requests, it was decided to allow time for Mr. Harutunian to pursue the state's assistance. It is suggested to put this item on the agenda for next meeting when Mr. Guido will also be present.

#### **ARTICLE TWENTY-SIXTH: CREATION OF AN AMBULANCE AND FIRE APPARATUS STABILIZATION FUND**

Following discussion and upon motion for positive action duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Menzer, the motion failed due to concerns over locking in the amount of the yearly contribution and the purpose for which the funds can be spent. Mr. Hartmann-N, Mr. Larson-N, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-N, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-N. Motion failed 4-2.

Chair Elwell recommended and the Committee agreed that this item be revisited at next week's meeting when Mr. Guido will be present for further discussion.

#### **V. Base Budget and Over Guidelines Review**

Mr. Elwell began the discussion on the review and vote on the Omnibus budget over-guidelines amounts (see attached document.)

##### **Board of Health Vaccination Expense**

Following discussion and input from Ms. Hansbury, Board of Health, and upon motion duly made by Mr. Larson and seconded by Ms. Dow, it was voted to recommend approval of the above request in the amount of \$5,040. Mr. Hartmann-Y, Mr. Larson-Y, Mr. Menzer-Y, Ms. Duval-Y, Ms. Dow-Y and Mr. Elwell-N. Motion passed 6-0.

##### **Board of Health Administrative Assistant**

Following discussion and input from Ms. Hansbury and Mr. Rizza, Board of Health and Kevin Harutunian, it was decided to hold this vote until next week when Mr. Guido will be present.

##### **Police Base Budget and Additional Requests**

Chair Elwell began the discussion on the police budget. Discussion ensued with input from Police Chief Hovey and Kevin Harutunian.

#### **VI. Next Meeting**

Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 7:00pm

Agenda items:

Review warrant and budget model; Coppermine paving; ambulance stabilization; base budget and review over guidelines

**VII. 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 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 11:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford  
Recording Secretary

*Attachments:*  
*Fincom Budget Model*  
*Omnibus Level3*

*Minutes APPROVED April 12, 2021*