



Topsfield Finance Committee

Minutes to the Meetings

Meeting was held in the COA Activities Room, Topsfield Town Hall

Remote participation was also possible via a posted Zoom link

October 18, 2021

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted in person. We will also attempt to include via remote means, in accordance with applicable law. This means that members of the public body as well as members of the public may access this meeting in person, or via virtual means. In person attendance will be at the meeting location listed above, and it is possible that any or all members of the public body may attend remotely, with in-person attendance consisting of members of the public. The meeting may also be accessed remotely via contact provided below. When required by law or allowed by the Chair, persons wishing to provide public comment or otherwise participate in the meeting, may do so by in person attendance, or by accessing the meeting remotely, as noted above. Additionally, the meeting may be broadcast at a later date via the town YouTube channel and Boxford Cable Television.

I. Call to Order: Chair Che Elwell called the meeting to order at 6:43 PM with Karen Dow, Karen Duval, Jon Guido (via Zoom), Mike Hartmann, and David Larson present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; via Zoom: Beth Willis, Town Clerk; Dick Gandt, Select Board member; and Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator. Members of the public present: Tim O'Malley. All votes at the meeting were taken by roll call, for the benefit of any remote participants.

II. Open position update: Steve Whelan announced that Eric Menzer has resigned from the FinCom due to time conflicts. Steve introduced Tim O'Malley, who will be appointed in his place.

III. Review meeting minutes: 9/27/21 minutes to be approved at next meeting.

IV. FY2023 Liaison Assignments: Liaison assignments were updated according to individual interests and experience. The assignments with larger time commitments (Model, Masco, Elementary, Police and Fire) were distributed across the FinCom, with alternates assigned for the two school committees.

V. Continue discussion on areas of focus for FY2023 and beyond:

- No updates from schools.
- Dick reported Select Board goals for the year include financial planning, with a 5-year projection. This will involve input from Kevin and the FinCom. Kevin reported Catherine is working on the forecast.

Catherine is looking at FY23-27, projecting expenditures and receipts from recent experience, known contracts. Debt is now known. Questions on schools, insurance, new trash contract. Trash contract could increase significantly, as the current 10-year contract ends this year. Size of school budget increases have a large impact on future budget balancing. FY23 is the end of the current Masco debt payments; when will new debt begin for Masco capital improvements?

- Good news, FY21 actual new growth was about \$221,000 rather than the conservative \$75,000 used to build the balanced budget.
- Ambulance revenue for FY22 Quarter 1 is \$118k; new billing company so report details are being worked out. The allocation of 25% of billings to the Fire Equipment stabilization fund will happen at year-end, or possibly mid-FY and year-end.

VI. Discuss guidance letter:

- Rather than stating “no new services”, ask committees and department heads to make choices to provide essential services without significantly increasing costs.
- More discussion to be held at the 11/1 meeting, with a final letter by 11/8.
- Kevin has begun budget meetings with department heads: capital requests due 10/22; FY23 operating budget package to be distributed 11/22 with a due date of 12/22.

VII. Fall meeting schedule: Next meetings are 11/1 and 11/8 at 6:30 pm, with a meeting 12/6 if necessary.

VIII. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting: Catherine reported the personnel bylaw review is on-going. A review of the non-represented salary grid will not happen this year.

IX. Adjourn: A motion was made by Karen Dow to adjourn at 8:27 PM, seconded by Karen Duval and voted in favor 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Dow

Attachments: FY23 liaison assignments