



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Meeting was held remotely via a posted Zoom link
February 28, 2022

Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. This means that members of the public body as well as members of the public may access this meeting via virtual means. 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 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 7:02 PM with Karen Dow, Jon Guido, Karen Duval, Tim O'Malley, Mike Hartmann (7:05) and David Larson (7:12) present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Beth Willis, Town Clerk; Charise Nulsen and Meredith Sokoloski, Topsfield Elementary School Committee; Superintendent Scott Morrison, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations Steve Greenberg, and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Matt LaCava, Tri-Town School Union; Carroll Willa, Principal of Steward School. Members of the public present: one. All votes at the meeting were taken by roll call due to the remote nature of the meeting.

II. Review any meeting minutes: 2/14/22 minutes: motion to approve by J. Guido, seconded by K. Duval. Voted in favor by roll call 5-0.

III. Elementary School Budget Update:

- C. Nulsen reported the TESC is still deliberating on the FY23 budget.
- S. Greenberg reported the administration's draft budget shows an increase of about 7% for level services, including ~\$86k in extraordinary special education costs. There were no XSPED costs in the FY22 budget. These anticipated FY23 XSPED costs would lead to a FinCom guideline increase of 3.9% over the FY22 approved budget.
- Plan is to use ESSER III funds split over FY23 and FY24. The focus for these funds is on mitigating the impact of COVID, for example by covering the cost of an adjustment counselor.
- FY23 budget assumes a smaller amount for 5-day kindergarten tuition, making progress towards the TESC goal of 5-day free kindergarten.
- TESC understands the issue created by using one-time funding sources to pay for on-going costs.

- Will Topsfield fund a SPED reserve or stabilization fund? J. Guido suggests TESC discuss with the Select Board.
- J. Guido inquires about strategic planning. Dr. Morrison reports:
 - Exploring elementary regionalization
 - Working on school safety with town departments and the RECC
 - Working on social, emotional and intellectual engagement
- C. Elwell points out the average home's real estate tax takes 28 years to cover just the cost of K-12 education for 2 children.
- TESC has a budget meeting the week of 2/28, understands the Town's budget schedule.
- M. Hartmann points out even with the Elementary Schools at guideline, the current model is significantly over the levy limit.

IV. Review Warrants and assign articles: C. Elwell presented a draft list of article assignments, aligned with liaison assignments. T. O'Malley volunteered to take on the Master Plan article. T. O'Malley will also check with K. Harutunian as to whether the requested additional fire personnel will be part of Article Third or a separate article.

V. Possible follow up on Select Board/Town Administrator items: To be discussed at the 3/7 meeting.

VI. Review and vote base budgets: To be done at the 3/7 meeting. M. Hartmann will generate the budget vote tracker.

VII. Model Update: \$584k over the levy limit with proper treatment of Masco debt final payment and SBAB reimbursement.

VIII. Next Meetings:

- 3/7: Vote base budgets, begin voting over-guidelines requests; meet with Town Administrator and Select Board on budget items related to them.
- 3/14: Masconomet budget; continue voting over-guideline requests; begin voting warrant articles.
- 3/21: continue voting warrant articles.
- 3/28: finalize all votes.

IX. A motion was made by Karen Dow to adjourn at 8:43 PM, seconded by Karen Duval and voted in favor 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Dow

Attachments: Draft warrant article assignments

| Article Number | Article Name |
|----------------|--|
| 2nd | Balance Transfers |
| 3rd | General Operating Budget |
| 4th | Water Department Operating Budget |
| 5th | Masconomet Regional School District Assessment |
| 6th | Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School District |
| 7th | Grant Authorization for Town Projects |
| 8th | Massachusetts Department of Transportation Contracts |
| 9th | Tri-Town Council on Youth and Family Services |
| 10th | Senior Care |
| 11th | Compensated Absences Fund |
| 12th | UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION Fund |
| 13th | Town Facilities Repair and Maintenance Fund |
| 14th | Police Cruiser |
| 15th | Police Cruiser Radios |
| 16th | Steward and Proctor School Floors – phase 1 |
| 17th | Public Works Pickup Truck |
| 18th | Public Works One-ton dump Truck |
| 19th | Public Works vehicle lifts |
| 20th | public works zero turn mower |
| 21st | PINE GROVE CEMETERY roadway and water line replacement |
| 22nd | Pine grove cemetery lot expansion |
| 23rd | |
| 24th | Water tank Storage - land purchase |
| 25th | water department Billing Software |
| 26th | |
| 27th | Landfill Repairs |
| 28th | tree removal |
| 29th | park and ball field improvements |
| 30th | Consulting for ms4 GENERAL permit |
| 31st | Recodification of Zoning Bylaws |
| 32nd | CONSULTIANT FOR TOWN WIDE MASTER PLAN |
| 33rd | Amend Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, amendment 13 |
| 34th | Amend Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, amendment 14 |
| 35th | |
| 36th | Retiring of school building debt |
| 37th | Other Post-Employment Benefits (“OPEB” Trust Fund) |
| 38th | Capital Stabilization Fund |
| 39th | GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND |
| 40th | Free Cash to Offset the Tax Rate |
| 41st | |
| 42nd | |
| 43rd | Tree Plantings |
| | Amend Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, amendment 15 |
| | Amend Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, amendment 16 |
| | Amend Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, amendment 17 |
| | Amend Masconomet Regional School District Agreement, amendment 18 |

FinCom Member

Mike Hartman

David Larson

Karen Duval

Karen Duval

Che Elwell

Che Elwell

Karen Dow

Karen Dow

Che Elwell

Che Elwell

Che Elwell

David Larson

David Larson

Jon Guido

David Larson

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