



Town of Topsfield Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Hybrid In Person / Zoom Meeting
February 27th, 2023 6:00 PM

Topic: Finance Committee

Time: February 27th, 2023 6:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

COA Conference Room at Town Hall

- I. Call to Order 6:00 PM
- II. **Attendance:** Che Elwell, David Larson, Tim O'Malley, Jon Guido, Catherine Hodges, Karen Duval (remote), Mike Hartman, Catherine Gabriel-Town Finance, Kevin Harutunian-Town Administrator (partial), Fire Chief Collins-Brown, Police Chief Hovey
- III. **Free Cash Generation**
 - a. A detailed presentation by Kevin Harutunian about the generation of "Free Cash". A discussion ensued with all participating.
 - b. Ongoing discussion occurred about where there are gaps between what is appropriated and what is actually spent, and when the appropriated amount is not spent, it is rolled into the "Free Cash" accounts.
 - c. There was a discussion about the philosophical differences in how to plan capital expenses and request. Longer term planning over time and as a result how free cash may be allocated and spent.

IV. Council on Aging

- a. The Council on Aging shared some of the initiatives which they are focused on and planning.
 - i. Trips to other destinations, such as NYC
- b. There is the thought that there will be a need to acquire a vehicle to transport for various purposes, such as events as well as some personal needs such as doctor office visits by members.
- c. Currently the CoA delivers Meals on Wheels daily to 50 residents.
- d. There was a discussion about the age distribution and the demographics of the population of Topsfield. It was estimated that over 30% of the population is 60 years old, or greater.

V. Highway and Cemetery Departments- Gary Wildes

- a. Gary reviewed the usefulness of the tractor which was purchased last year and how well it has worked out.
- b. Gary discussed capital items and what he believes are required based on wear and tear and expected remaining useful life. Photos are attached.
- c. A discussion occurred regarding the zero turn mowers and when to acquire new mowers based on wear and tear of the existing machines. It was discussed that a consideration may be to approve the money to replace these machines when it is absolutely required, and the money be approved and set aside until such time occurs.

VI. Fire Department-Chief Jen Collins-Brown

- a. Chief Collins-Brown reviewed the operations of the Fire Department.
 - i. It was reviewed the impact around the two new firefighters which were hired, trained and brought on over the past several months.
 - ii. Chief Collins-Brown discussed and reviewed revenue trends over the past several years, revenue is up considerably.

- iii. Chief Collins-Brown discussed that there is a need for Ambulance Billing SW at a cost of \$3,000, as well as an additional \$3500 for SW which allows for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to be automated.
- iv. Chief Collins-Brown discussed the reasons that she feels a new Ambulance is needed. She reviewed how the pricing of new Ambulances have increased considerably over the past few years and that there is a 2 year wait time.

VII. Mike Hartmann reviewed the Financial Model as of now, new request for Capital Items is approximately \$1.8M.

VIII. A discussion around when the FinCom would vote on the various articles and request. Tentatively voting will occur on March 13, 20 and 27th.

IX. Potential agenda items for March 6th, review warrant articles. Potentially have Zoning Committee attend the meeting to discuss potential warrant articles around Zoning recommendations.

Motion to Adjourn: Catherine Hodges

Jon Guido- Second

All voted yeah

The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Discussion on agenda topics is at the discretion of the Chair. Discussion during meetings should always be courteous and respectful. You must be recognized by the Chair before any comments, questions or discussion may be offered or considered.