



Topsfield Finance Committee

Minutes to the Meetings March 27, 2017

**I. Call to Order:** Chair Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM with Che Elwell, Jon Guido, Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Mike Hartmann was not present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Interim Fire Chief Richard Harris; Police Chief Haglund; Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator; and Steve Whelan, Town Moderator. Also present were members of the public: Tony Silva, Daniel Cushing, Colleen Wells, David Larson, Betsy Dempsey, Peter Dempsey, Chris LaPointe, R.A. J. Hunter, Martha Sanders, David Finn, Dan Ludmour, and Dick Gandt.

**II. Minutes:** Dana Warren made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from March 20, 2017. Jon Guido seconded the motion, voted in favor 6-0-0.

Dana Warren made a motion to accept the Joint Board of Selectmen/FinCom meeting minutes as amended, with the inclusion of the public list, from March 20, 2017. Che Elwell seconded the motion, voted in favor 6-0-0.

**III. Department Budget Review and Approval:** The Committee reserves the right to supersede or modify the following Department budget approvals by future vote.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Article III Vote Tracker, dated March 19, 2017, including department budgets that were submitted over the finance committee guidelines or that requested items on their attachment.

Lou Ross made a motion to recommend positive action on Finance Committee Reserve of \$100,000 and Salary Reserve- Other Expenditures of \$75,000 seconded by Jon Guido, voted in favor 6-0. Discussion: Both of these items are now part of Article Three on the Warrant Articles.

Che Elwell moved to rescind the previous vote on Cable- Other \$32,674.74, Town Clerk Salary \$68,744, and ConsCom Administrator Salary \$73,406, amended to Cable Other \$35,000, Town Clerk Salary \$61,672, and ConsCom Administrator Salary \$61,672, seconded by Lou Ross, voted in favor 6-0.

The Finance Committee reviewed the Unfunded Essential Budget Requests, date March 27, 2017:

The COA Rental Space, Item #12, cost for FY18 will be paid using FY17 turn-backs.

Jon Guido recommended positive action on COA "other", Item #10, for the amount of \$390, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 6-0. This is to cover the maintenance cost of a new COA tracking software. The purchase cost of the software will be covered using FY17 turnbacks.

Jon Guido recommended positive action on Library Wages, Item # 16, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 5-1. This would combine two 15-hour part time positions into one 30-hour position; this has no impact on the Library Salary/Wage Budget, but does impact the Insurance budget.

Eric Menzer recommended positive action on Fire Wage Budget, Item #7, for the amount of \$10,165, seconded by Che Elwell, voted in favor 5-1. This would promote two Firefighters into two existing but currently vacant Fire LT positions.

**IV. Town Meeting Warrant Article Assignments:** Responsibility for review of specific Town Meeting Articles and presentation of them at Town Meeting were assigned as listed below.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant	Finance Committee Member
Article	Initials
1	KD
3	MH
4	LR
5	DW
6	DW
7	DW
8	KD
9	LR
10	LR
11	LR
12	DW
13	DW
14	CE
15	KD
16	CE
17	LR

18	JG
19	LR
19A	
19B	
19C	
20A	LR
20B	CE
20C	CE
20D	CE
20E	CE
20F	EM
20G	EM
20H	LR
20I	LR
20J	LR
21	LR
22	JG
23	LR
24	LR
25	LR
26	LR
27	EM
28	
29	LR
30	LR
31	LR
32	LR
33	KD
34	KD
35	KD
36	KD
37	JG
Special Town Meeting	Finance Committee Members
Article	Initials
1	
2	KD
3A	KD
3B	
3C	
3D	
4	KD

5	
6	

**Town Meeting Warrant Article Recommendations:** The committee reserved the right to supersede or modify the following actions by future vote.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles pending recommendations from the Committee are as follows; Articles first, third, seventeenth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, and thirty-third, as numbered in the attached draft warrant, dated March 27, 2017.

In a series of motions, the Finance Committee voted actions on the following Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles as numbered in the attached draft warrant, dated March 27, 2017;

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Che Elwell, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Authorization to Transfer Balances, Article Second, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Water Department Operating Budget, Article Fourth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Masconomet Regional School District- Budget Appropriation, Article Fifth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Masconomet Regional School District- Safety and Security, Article Sixth, voted in favor 6-0. Discussion: The Finance Committee noted that this item appeared in an earlier version of the model as a Capital Exclusion, but will now be funded by free cash.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Che Elwell, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School District, Article Seventh, voted in favor 6-0. Discussion: The number of students has increase from eleven to fourteen.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Grant Authorization for Town Projects, Article Eighth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Massachusetts Department of Transportation Contracts, Article Ninth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Jon Guido, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Engineering & Landfill Monitoring, Article Tenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Che Elwell, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Lease of Emerson Field, Article Eleventh, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Jon Guido, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Tri-Town Council on Youth and Family Services, Article Twelfth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Che Elwell, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Senior Care, Article Thirteenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Authorize and Adopt a General Bylaw to establish Revolving Funds, Article Fourteenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Compensated Absences Fund, Article Fifteenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Establish Application of Bond Premiums, Article Nineteenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Pyebrook Park Landfill Infrastructure & Maintenance, Article Twentieth-A, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Che Elwell, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Police SUV Patrol Cruiser, Article Twentieth-B, voted in favor 5-1.

By motion of Che Elwell, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Police Security System Upgrade, Article Twentieth-C, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Che Elwell, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Police Station Building Exterior Repairs, Article Twentieth-D, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Che Elwell, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Police Portable Radio Replacement Program, Article Twentieth-E, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Eric Menzer, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Fire Personal Protective Equipment, Article Twentieth- F, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Eric Menzer, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Fire Water Rescue Boat & Equipment, Article Twentieth- G, voted in favor 6-0. Discussion: The current boat is 57 years old. It is used approximately nine times a year. Interim Fire Chief Richard Harris is looking into all avenues to cut the cost of a new boat.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Highway Small Dump Truck with Plow, Article Twentieth-H, voted in favor 5-1. Discussion: This would replace a 2006 truck.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Improvement Program and Fiscal Year 2018 Capital Budget- Town Facilities Maintenance & Repair Fund, Article Twentieth- I, voted in favor 5-1.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Water Main Replacement Project, Article Twenty-First, voted in favor 6-0.

Lou Ross moved to rescind and amend the previous vote on the Water Main Replacement Project, Article Twenty-First, to reflect that this would be funded through the water enterprise, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Proctor and Steward Elementary Schools Building Envelope Project, Article Twenty-Second, voted in favor 4-2. Discussion: Discussion focused on the impact of this project on overall debt. Finance Committee members also discussed how this project would impact the tax payer. On an average \$550,000 house, it would cost approximately \$139 a year.

By motion of Eric Menzer, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Citizen Petition – Donibristle Farm, to be funded by a one-time Capital exclusion, Article Twenty-eighth, voted in favor 5-0-1 (Dana Warren was not present for the discussion or vote, due to a potential conflict of interest). Discussion: Discussion focused on whether this should be funded by a one-time capital exclusion or a debt exclusion. A one-time capital exclusion would not add to the town's debt. Taxes would increase for one year, approximately \$200 for an average household in FY2018, if a state LAND grant application is not successful. A discussion followed on how taxes would be calculated.

Lou moved to rescind the previous vote of the Citizen Petition- Donibristle Farm,

Article Twenty-eight, and to amend the article to include a condition for public access, seconded by Che Elwell, voted in favor 5-0-1.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Averill Street Driveway and Public Access Easement, Article Twenty-Ninth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on General Stabilization Fund, Article Thirtieth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Capital Stabilization Fund, Article Thirty-First, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Other Post-Employment Benefits ("OPEB Trust Fund"), Article Thirty-Second, voted in favor 6-0.

**V. Finance Committee Letter:** Karen handed out a draft letter. A discussion followed. She asked that the committee review the letter and that they will vote on a final draft at the next meeting on March 29, 2017.

**VI. New Business:** None

**VII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule:** The next meetings of the Committee will be held on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7:00PM in the Proctor School Teacher's Lounge.

**VIII. Adjourn:** A motion was made by Dana Warren to adjourn at 11:43PM, seconded by Lou Ross and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

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Attachments: Draft Warrant, dated March 27, 2017