



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
October 23, 2017

- I. Call to Order:** Chairman Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM, with Che Elwell, Jon Guido (arrived at 7:20), Michael Hartmann (arrived at 7:30), Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; Dick Gandt, Town Selectman; Bill Hodges, Masco School Committee; John Spencer, Masco School Committee; Sue Givens, Masco Chief Financial Officer; Linda Ross, Topsfield Elementary School Committee; Katrina Frere, Topsfield Elementary School Committee. Members of the Public Present: David Larson, Curtis Wilson, Libby Wilson, Kim Sherwood, Eldon Goodhue and Toni Pizzinato-Hatfield. Kim Sherwood announced at 7:17 that she was making an audio recording of the meeting and had been since the meeting started. Late arrivals were notified of the recording; Linda Ross and Katrina Frere were notified after the meeting, as they had already left.
- II. Minutes of October 2, 2017:** Dana Warren made a motion to approve the October 2, 2017 minutes as drafted, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 4-0-1. Che Elwell abstained as he was not present for the meeting.
- III. Elementary School Committee Update 7:04PM-7:16PM:** Linda Ross and Katrina Frere briefly discussed the elementary school budget timeline; they are working to have an approved budget to us earlier than in the past. The central office budget has a tentative approval in October and the operating budget in February 2018. They said there are no new expected capital expenditures for FY19. They are looking to maintain level service. They will send enrollment numbers to Jon when available, also the teachers' contractual increases. Currently Steward Elementary is a Level I school and Proctor Elementary is a Level II in the state's MCAS scoring system. Katrina and Linda also gave a brief update on the school roof project, stating the project is in the bidding process and construction will begin the day after school is out for summer vacation. Scott Morrison and Steve Greenberg will attend a future meeting in January.
- IV. Masconomet School Committee Update 7:30PM-8:10PM:** Bill Hodges reported that the Committee is in the beginning stages of the budget process. Budget requests are due mid/late November. The budget sub-committee will meet with advisory members by December. Budget time-line and priorities hand-outs were provided and briefly discussed. Bill also mentioned that a focus group has been developed, 'Long Term Facility Task Force'; their role is to determine what items need to be done and when, according to the long term capital plan that was commissioned. MSBA help with the costs is anticipated. Dana Warren will be in touch with the Committee and they will be at a future meeting to give an update.

V. FY2019 Budget Process:

a. Model: Mike Hartmann presented model V1.1. He said that the first run of the model has many assumptions at this very early point in the process and that it's a work in progress. A general discussion followed. Mike will continue to update the model and present version 2 in January.

b. Guidelines: There was a general discussion amongst Committee Members on Budget Guidelines. Catherine Gabriel noted that budgets are due to Town Hall on December 11th (associated with Board of Selectmen) and December 21st (all other departments).

VI. Correspondence: Letter from Tax Wise Topsfield expressing concern over tax increases, interest in transparent government and controlling spending.

VII. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of meeting:

Steve Whelan, Town Moderator, thanked the Finance Committee for their hard work on the Town's financial management, contributing to the Town of Topsfield's bond rating to move from Moody's Aa2 to S&P AA+.

VIII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule: The next meetings of the Committee will occur on October 30, 2017 and November 13, 2017 at 7:00 PM in the Proctor School Teachers' Lounge.

VIII. Adjourn: A motion was made by Dana Warren to adjourn at 8:40 PM, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Davis

Documents Used:
Model V1.1
Masco Budget Calendar FY2019
Masco 2018-2019 Budget Priorities
Topsfield Elementary School Slides
Tax Wise Topsfield Letter