



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
January 22, 2018

I. Call to Order: Chairman Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM with Che Elwell, Jon Guido (arrived at 7:06), Michael Hartmann, Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; Park & Cemeteries Commissioners Steve Mscisz, Robert Benjamin, and Gretchen Rehak; Steve Shephard, Superintendent Parks & Cemeteries; Boyd Jackson and Dick Gandt, Selectmen. Members of the public present: David Larson, CL Niehaus, Libby Wilson, Cathy Granata, and Steve Lais.

II. Minutes: Dana Warren made a motion to accept the minutes from January 8, 2018. Che Elwell seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1. Mike Hartmann abstained as he was not present for the meeting; Jon Guido wasn't at the 1/8/18 meeting and wasn't present for tonight's vote.

III. FinCom FY19 Budget: Karen discussed the FinCom FY19 budget, noting \$1,437 for the recording secretary, \$395 (level) for membership fees & advertising, and \$100,000 for the FinCom Reserve Fund. Lou Ross made a motion to approve the Finance Committee budget and submit to Catherine Gabriel. Eric Menzer seconded the motion, voted in favor 6-0-0.

IV. Department Budgets: Liaison Reports: A brief discussion was held on some of the budgets noting and discussing any deviations from guidelines.

1. Eric Menzer reported that the Fire Department will attend the January 29th meeting.
2. Mike Hartmann reported that he met with Beth Willis, Town Clerk. She is requesting software as well as more personnel hours to manage public records. Mike will follow-up with Beth to see if she will come to a future meeting to discuss the requests.
3. Jon Guido reported that the elementary schools are currently working through their budget process. He noted that the school committee will have a budget working session on February 3rd. Jon noted that the Extraordinary SPED budget looks like it could be up about \$56k; he will stay in touch with the elementary schools. He anticipates that they will be at a future meeting in late February.

4. Che Elwell reported that the Police will attend the February 5th meeting. He has met with Town Hall personnel on insurance; waiting on numbers from MIIA.

5. Karen Dow reported that the solid waste contract has a contractual increase in Year 6 of 10. The parking clerk budget is small and level. The Town Hall budget requests an increase of 20% in gas and electric due to the increase of square footage in the new building. In the Selectmen Special budget, an increase in legal costs is requested of \$10K (up from \$50K) due to open meeting law and public records requests. The Web/Cable budget is up due to a contractual increase with Boxford Cable, and one-time costs to set up in the new Town Hall; these costs all come from offset funds from the cable companies.

Liaisons should continue to go through the budgets and any departments that have requests over guidelines should set up a time to come meet with the Finance Committee. Karen noted that Kellie Hebert will likely attend the February 12th meeting to go over Capital items.

V. Department Head Budget Presentations

a. Parks and Cemetery (7:15 pm) Lou Ross, department liaison, presented Commissioners Robert Benjamin, Steve Mscisz, and Gretchen Rehak, as well as Steve Shepard, Superintendent Parks & Cemeteries. A discussion of the proposed budget followed. The department is requesting an additional full-time staff position, to be funded by reducing seasonal help and part-time wages would come out of the revolving account. This position would increase the town's health insurance budget by approximately \$0 to \$7,200 to \$19,160, depending on the plan selected by a potential new employee. A discussion followed.

VI. FinCom Model Status: Mike Hartmann handed out the Recap Sheet for v2.0 of the Model. He noted that free cash has come in at \$2.26M, higher than previously assumed, as mentioned at the 1/8 meeting; possible uses will be discussed in many future meetings. A short discussion followed. Jen Davis will post the updated version to the town website, under the FinCom documents section.

VII. Preparation for Public Forum on Budget 1/24/18: Karen noted that FinCom members should continue to prep for questions. She will continue to forward along any questions she gets from Steve Whelan. A brief discussion followed.

VIII. Correspondence: Members have continued to receive copies of questions for the public forum from Steve Whelan.

IX. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting: None.

X. Upcoming Meeting Schedule: In addition to the 1/24 budget forum at 7:30 in the Proctor Cafeteria, the next meetings of the Committee will be held on January

29th, February 5th, February 12th, and February 26th, respectively, at 7:00 PM in the Proctor School Teacher's Lounge.

XI. Adjourn: A motion was made by Dana Warren to adjourn at 8:28 PM, seconded by Eric Menzer and voted in favor 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments: FinCom Model v2.0.