Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
January 29, 2018

I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with Che Elwell, Jon Guido, Michael Hartmann, Eric Menzer, and Dana Warren present. Lou Ross was not present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; Jen Collins-Brown, Fire Chief; and Dick Gandt, Town Selectman. Members of the public present: David Larson, Kim Sherwood, and approximately 4 others. Karen Dow announced at 7:01 that Kim Sherwood was going to make an audio recording; late arrivals were notified of this recording.

II. **Minutes:** Dana Warren made a motion to accept the minutes from January 22, 2018. Che Elwell seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1. Jon Guido abstained as he was not present for the entire meeting.

III. **Department Head Budget Presentations:**

Fire Department: 7:00PM- 7:52PM, Eric Menzer, department liaison, introduced Jen Collins-Brown, Fire Chief. A discussion of the proposed budget followed. The department is requesting an increase beyond guidelines of $2,500 in "other" for medical supplies as the number of medical calls is up, and a contractual increase of $2,000 for travel expenses. Also, $40,000 is being requested in the capital plan for turn-out gear to set a replacement rotation so all firefighters have at least one set that is not beyond its "use-by" date. Sixteen sets of turn-out gear have been purchased this year (at cost of $51,000). Chief Collins-Brown also discussed some building updates that have been made to the fire station at minimal cost, but noted that there are still more updates that need to be done in the near future. She also said that the department is in the process of trying to recruit call fire fighters for night coverage, something that has been a challenge, not just for Topsfield but on a national level as well. A discussion followed. Eric Menzer will continue to be in touch with the chief.

IV. **Liaison-led Updates and Discussions: Operating Budgets, Revenues, Other Expenditures:** Continued discussion of budgets, noting any deviations from guidelines. The following departments will be scheduled for February 5th, 2018:
   a. **Library**
   b. **Police**
   c. **Others may be added**

1. Dana Warren reported that the Council on Aging is requesting $790 for tracking software, and a $450 increase for postage & mailing. Dana will see if they will attend a future meeting to discuss their budget further. Dana will also reach out to Essex Tech to discuss their projected FY19 operating budget and possible expansion plans.

2. Che Elwell will be meeting to discuss OPEB next week and will give an update at the next FinCom meeting.

3. Mike Hartmann discussed Model V2.0 and the process of balancing. A brief discussion on revenue assumptions, and free cash sources and possible uses followed.

4. Jon Guido mentioned the whale chart created two years ago and updated last year was made for the purpose of looking at debt projections for projects being considered those years; not an annual document.

    V. Correspondence: Jon Guido handed out his opening remarks from the public budget process forum. Jon discussed having the committee review the document and making it a public document. Karen will add the topic to next week's agenda. Further discussion will continue at the next meeting. Mike Hartmann discussed an email request he received for a whale chart, which he does not have, but does have a summary of actual debt using Barbara Michalowski's spreadsheet she has on borrowing.

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

    VII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule: The next meetings of the Committee will be held on February 5th, February 12th, and February 26th, respectively, at 7:00 PM in the Proctor School Teacher's Lounge.

    VIII. Adjourn: A motion was made by Dana Warren to adjourn at 8:48 PM, seconded by Eric Menzer and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments: Jon Guido's Opening Remarks- public budget process forum.