



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
February 12, 2018

- I. Call to Order:** Chairman Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM with Jon Guido, Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Che Elwell and Mike Hartmann were not present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Dick Gandt, Town Selectman; Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator, Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; Beth Willis, Town Clerk; and Paula Burke, Director of Council on Aging. Members of the public present: David Larson, Katherine Carlson, Kim Sherwood, Sean Cuniff, Gerry Buckley and approximately 4 others. Karen Dow announced at 7:03 that Mr. Cuniff was going to make a video recording; late arrivals were notified of this recording.
- II. Minutes:** Dana Warren made a motion to accept the minutes from February 5, 2018. Jon Guido seconded the motion, voted in favor 4-0-1. Eric Menzer abstained as he was not present for the meeting.

III. Department Head Budget Presentations:

Town Clerk: 7:00PM- Lou Ross introduced Beth Willis, Town Clerk. A discussion of the proposed budget followed. Beth pointed out the budget fluctuates year to year, due to a varying number of elections. The department is requesting increases beyond guidelines in "Other" for: building rental and election workers due to 1 local election and 2 state elections. A discussion of unfunded essential items followed. The Town Clerk is requesting \$4,500 (\$2500 purchase price & \$2,000 annual fee) to purchase records management software. Due to the increasing number of public records requests, the software would help in managing and executing the requests, as well as storing the documents in a cloud-based system. A request for a \$17,192, 19 hour/week clerk position was discussed. This position would work opposite the existing part-time assistant clerk and help with the increased work due to unfunded mandates, increase in public record requests, and early voting.

Council on Aging: 7:15PM- Dana Warren, department liaison, introduced Paula Burke, Director of Council on Aging. Paula discussed some of the activities and programs that the COA offers, noting that most programs are low cost or no cost at all. Last year, Meals on Wheels delivered 6,000 meals to seniors. She also noted that the check-in system, approved last year at Town Meeting, is working well and will reach full potential in the new building. A discussion on the increase of postage in the budget followed.

Town Administrator: 7:30PM- Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator, handed out reference documents: “FY19- Departmental Budget Requests Over Guidelines”, “Capital Budget Requests- FY19”, and a very preliminary draft list of warrant articles. She has met and discussed the Operating budget with the Board of Selectmen. She noted that the Board of Selectmen are supportive of most of the requests over guidelines but need further discussion and deliberation on a few of the requests. A discussion on Capital items followed. Kellie noted that she will be presenting Capital in more detail to the Board of Selectmen on March 5th.

IV. Liaison-led Updates and Discussions: Operating Budgets, Revenues, Other Expenditures: Continued discussion of budgets, noting any deviations from guidelines. Lou Ross noted Snow & Ice is trending over budget but depends on the rest of the season. The following departments will be scheduled for February 26th, 2018:

- a. Water
- b. Elementary Schools
- c. Others may be scheduled

V. Correspondence:

a. **Letter to Editor based on Jon Guido’s remarks at 1/24 Forum:** Jon Guido discussed the letter to the editor document. He emailed the document to all Finance Committee members and asked that any changes be forwarded along to him. Members will vote the letter at the next meeting.

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

VIII. Adjourn: A motion was made by Dana Warren to adjourn at 9:25 PM, seconded by Lou Ross and voted in favor 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments: FY19 Departmental Budget Requests Over Guidelines, Capital Budget Requests- FY19, Preliminary list of Warrant Articles.