



Topsfield Finance Committee  
Minutes to the Meetings  
Town Hall: COA Activities Room  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
February 4, 2019

- I. Call to Order:** Chair Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with Che Elwell, Mike Hartmann, Lou Ross, Eric Menzer, and Dana Warren present. Jon Guido was not present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Laura Zalewski, Library Director; Gail Bryson, Library Trustee Chair; Kathryn Hartmann, Library Trustee; Paula Burke, Council on Aging Director; Penny Rogers, COA chairperson; Chris Roman, Treasurer of Friends; Scott Morrison, Superintendent of Elementary Schools; Katrina Frere, School Committee Chair; Dr. Kevin Lyons, Superintendent of Masco; Bill Hodges, Masco School Committee; Zillie Bhujju, Masco School Committee; and Sue Givens, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Members of the public present: David Larson, Libby Wilson, Jeanine Cunniff and Curtis Niehaus. Karen Dow announced at 7:00 PM that Jeanine Cunniff was going to make a video recording.
- II. Minutes:** Dana Warren made a motion to accept the minutes, as amended from January 28, 2019. Lou Ross seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1. Che Elwell abstained as he was not present for the meeting.
- III. Department Budget Presentations, including:**
- a. Library 7:00PM-** Dana Warren, liaison, introduced Laura Zalewski, Gail Bryson, and Kathryn Hartmann. Laura passed out an informational sheet and a discussion of the budget followed. Attendance at the library is stable, but circulation use is trending down. In the budget, adjustments were made within the "Other" line items as possible to cover changes in costs. Still there are request over guideline: \$72-telephone monthly rate increase, \$392-network administration yearly contract increase, \$1300- software increases as well as increased speed through Comcast for the public computers, \$1000-repairs & maintenance/unanticipated, and \$2298-contractual maintenance increases.
  - b. Council on Aging 7:30PM-** Dana Warren, liaison, introduced Paula Burke, Penny Rogers, and Chris Roman. Paula passed out an informational sheet on Transportation and a discussion followed. Paula went on to discuss some of the

programs and activities that the Council on Aging offers. There are about 1,600 seniors in town and participation in the activities and programs has doubled since last year. Paula believes that having a dedicated space at Town Hall has greatly contributed to this increase. A discussion of the budget followed. The requests over guidelines are: \$1000- vehicle maintenance, \$4240- increase of van driver hours, and \$100- annual fire inspection of vehicle.

- c. **Elementary Schools 8:00PM-** Scott Morrison and Katrina Frere gave an update on the budget process. The school administration has just presented the budget to the school committee. The first-draft administration budget including all school committee potential programs shows an increase of 15.34% from FY19. The increases are: \$125,000-Loss of Title I funding, \$300,000- 5-day kindergarten cost with no offset fees and no carry-forward in revolving accounts, \$160,000- program enhancements for 21<sup>st</sup> century education, \$509,000- special education and contractual obligations, \$37,000- Professional development, and \$100,000- technology investment to make a start on properly funding technology needs. Budget deliberations are in progress, continuing February 7<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and March 7<sup>th</sup>. Scott also noted that teacher contract negotiations are in progress for a contract that starts 7/1/19. The TESC will be back to meet with FinCom at the end of February to give an update on the budget process.
- d. **Masconomet 8:45PM-** Dana Warren, liaison, introduced Dr. Kevin Lyons, Sue Givens, Bill Hodges, and Zillie Bhujju. Dr Lyons handed out a “thumbnail” budget increase analysis sheet; a discussion followed. The first-draft total operations and maintenance budgetary increase is 4.6%. Enrollment shows a slight downward trend. Some of the increases were discussed, focusing on hiring a full time HVAC employee. Dr. Lyons noted that the school committee will begin budget deliberation on February 6<sup>th</sup>, February 27<sup>th</sup>, and March 4<sup>th</sup>. A budget hearing will take place on March 6<sup>th</sup> and March 11<sup>th</sup>. Adoption of the budget will take place on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

**IV. Liaison-led Updates and Discussions: Operating Budgets, Revenues, Other Expenditures:** A brief discussion was held on some of the budgets, noting and discussing any deviations from guidelines.

- 1. Karen discussed a future local-option meals tax. Two-thirds of the towns in the state have this, and essentially all neighboring communities with any restaurants charge the local meals tax. Lynne Bermudez is researching the possibility of this tax and how it would affect local businesses.

**V. FinCom Model Status:** Mike presented model V2.0. Mike has added the estimated tax rate calculation; schools are still assumed at a 3% increase. The model is over the levy limit by \$759,450 at this early stage. A short discussion followed.

**VI. Correspondence:** None.

**VII. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting:** none

**VIII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule:** The next meetings of the Committee will occur on February 11<sup>th</sup>, and February 25<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Council on Aging Activities room.

**X. Adjourn:** A motion was made by Dana Warren to adjourn at 9:40 PM, seconded by Eric Menzer and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

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Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of 1/28/19
3. Model V2.0
4. Library Infograph
5. Senior Scoop
6. COA transportation data
7. Masco FY20 operations budget increases