



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Town Hall: COA Activities Room
(2nd Floor)
February 11, 2019

- I. Call to Order:** Chair Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM with Che Elwell, Jon Guido, Mike Hartmann, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Eric Menzer was not present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator; Donna Rich, Town Hall procurement; Steve Shepard, Parks & Cemetery Superintendent; Gretchen Rehak, Parks & Cemetery Board Member; Steve Mscisz, Parks & Cemetery Board Chair; Evan Haglund, Chief of Police; Captain Gary Hayward, Police Department; and Katherine Jackson, Executive Assistant to the Chief. Members of the public present: David Larson, Dick Gandt (Selectman), and Curtis Niehaus.
- II. Minutes:** Che Elwell made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from February 4, 2019. Dana Warren seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1. Jon Guido abstained as he was not present for the meeting.
- III. Department Budget Presentations, including:**
 - a. Town Administrator/Town Hall 7:00PM-** Kellie Hebert discussed the Town Hall budget. She explained that there is an increase of \$65,000 in property & casualty insurance, due to proper assessment of building values, including consideration of improvements due to the Town Hall project, Steward and Proctor school projects, and the water treatment plant. She also discussed a request over guidelines of \$2,125 for an addition of a part-time, non-benefited, recording clerk. Kellie explained that there has been an increase in work sessions, and this position would reduce overtime costs (unbudgeted). Donna Rich discussed increases in costs, some of which are associated with the new Town Hall: electricity-\$5,640, maintenance & repairs- \$13,000, computer maintenance \$11,000, and telephone/communications-\$3,500. Kellie also briefly discussed two possible requests for funding: explore the options regarding building/facilities maintenance/management, and explore support of the Town Hall information technology infrastructure. Desktop support is needed. Currently a volunteer assists the Town Hall daily, but he would like to “retire” from this volunteer help. Kellie handed out a six-year capital

improvement plan document, which will be discussed at a future date.

- b. **Parks & Cemetery 7:30PM-** Lou Ross, liaison, introduced Steve Shepard, Steve Mscisz, and Gretchen Rehak. A discussion of the budget followed. They are requesting a new full-time labor position. This position would replace 3 part-time seasonal positions. Wages and benefits for this position would be funded by the Parks & Cemetery Trust Fund. They explained that part-time seasonal help is difficult to find; having a full-time position would benefit the department with funerals, fall/spring cleanup and maintenance of the fields. Gretchen also discussed a request for \$5,000 for the Holiday on the Green event that takes place in town every December. She explained that it is a successful night but there is an issue of funding the event. In the past they have received private donations, but it has been difficult to get enough funding through donations alone. The money requested would cover the event.
- c. **Police 8:00PM-** Che Elwell, liaison, introduced Chief Haglund, Captain Hayward, and Katherine Jackson. A discussion of the budget followed. With the continually increasing cost of overtime, the police department is proposing a plan to hire additional personnel to cut costs. Capt. Hayward presented 3 budgets for comparison: base budget, 1 new hire (day shift), and 2 new hires (day and evening shifts). Cpt. Hayward also reported that there is one officer leaving the department and there is currently one person in the academy (self-funded). Currently 70% of the full-time officers are filling the overtime shifts, reserves are not. A discussion on some of the other potential savings followed.

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.

V. FinCom Model Status: Mike reported there are no changes; he will be meeting with Catherine Gabriel and expects to have an update for the next FinCom meeting.

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 25th, March 4th, March 11th, March 18th, and March 25th 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 9:06 PM, seconded by Lou Ross and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of 2/4/19
3. Six Year Capital Improvement Plan
4. Police Weekly Expenditure Analysis
5. Potential Savings: new hire 2 officers
6. Explanations: one officer vs. two officer savings
7. Monday through Friday day and eve shift fills
8. Budget increases by line item
9. FY20 police wages break down
10. FY20 wages break down- two new hire full time officers
11. FY20 wages break down- one new hire full time officer
12. FY20 police budget graph