



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Town Hall: COA Activities Room
(2nd Floor)
March 4, 2019

- I. Call to Order:** Chair Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM with Che Elwell, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Jon Guido was not present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; and Dick Gandt, Selectman. Members of the public present: David Larson and Jeanine Cunniff. Karen Dow announced at 7:04 PM that Jeanine Cunniff was going to make a video recording.
- II. Minutes:** Minutes of February 25, 2019 will be voted on at the next meeting.
- III. Department Budget Review and Approval:** Discussions of budgets continued, noting and discussing any deviations from guidelines.
1. Catherine presented the Parks Maintenance revolving account breakdown. A review and short discussion followed.
 2. Mike Hartmann presented the Article 3rd Vote Tracking sheet, dated 3/2/19. Voting will take place at the next meeting. FinCom voting needs to be completed by 3/25/19, as the warrant will be going to print on 4/4/19.
 3. Che Elwell is attending a Masco subcommittee meeting; a representative from each of the towns will be present. Topic of discussion will be on various ways to fund repairs and how to present the need for funding to each of the towns.
 4. Mike Hartmann discussed non-union wages; the average increase is 5.67%. A discussion followed, including varying # of pay periods per year, movement on the grid, tradeoff where employee turnover creates a possible salary savings versus loss of experience, and relative salary budgets of non-represented, school and non-school union personnel. Kellie Hebert suggested a compensation study to analyze the current system and how it compares to surrounding towns. FinCom members would like to have a 5-year forecast of salaries, including when various people hit the top of the grid and therefore get no step increase, to provide a better understanding of the increases in the years to come.

IV. Capital Items Review: Kellie was present to discuss FY20 Capital Items.

Items within the \$300,000 guidelines: **1. Front-end loader- \$165,000-**\$15K of this would come from the water department budget. **2. Town wide repair & maintenance fund- \$37,000-**this fund would be to manage unanticipated repairs that arise throughout the year. **3. Town Hall servers (2 out of 3)- \$24,000-**the current servers are more than 10 years old and are no longer serviced and supported. **4. Fire Ambulance/Rescue Vehicle replacement- \$40,000-**this would be to purchase a backup vehicle and outfit with a stretcher; currently the Fire department is temporarily borrowing one. **5. Police Station Emergency External Generator- \$49,000-** the current generator is old and needs to be replaced. Kellie also discussed other capital items, if funds permit: **1. Elementary school security systems- \$170,000. 2. Police SUV Patrol Cruiser- \$60,000. 3. Library Maintenance & Building Improvements- \$TBD.**

Four items that could potentially be funded through STM warrants using FY19 turn-backs (primarily insurance savings/credits): **Police radios- \$10,000; Fire equipment gear (3rd of 5)- \$20,000; Fire portable radios- \$26,000; Steward school scrubber- \$13,500.**

Kellie also noted that in the future the Essex County Regional Emergency Communication amount of \$106,000 will no longer appear on the cherry sheet, as the state 911 fund will cover all costs. The timing of when this will happen is still unknown. Kellie will have more information in the next two weeks.

V. Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

- a. **Assignments-** Responsibility for review of specific Town Meeting Articles and presentation of them at Town Meeting were assigned as listed below. Numbering from 3/1/19 version of the ATM Warrant.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant	Finance Committee Member
Article	Initials
1	
2	JG
3	MH
4	LR
5	DW
6	DW
7	DW
8	KD
9	LR
10	
11	
12	
13	

14	
15	LR
16	CE
17	EM
18	CE
19	JG
20	CE
21	DW
22	LR
23	LR
24	LR
25	MH
26	MH
27	CE
28	KD
29	LR
30	LR
31	KD
32	CE
33	JG
34	EM
35	LR
36	JG
37	KD
38	KD

- b. Recommendations- Karen asked all liaisons to research and review their assignments. Voting will take place at the next Finance Committee meeting.

VI. FinCom Model Status: Mike handed out V2.3. A discussion of options to reduce the amount over the levy limit followed. Mike will continue to update the model further and present an updated version at the next meeting.

VII. Correspondence: None.

VIII. 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 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 10:19 PM, seconded by Che Elwell and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Draft warrant, dated 3/1
3. Parks Maintenance revolving account
4. Model V2.3
5. Article 3 vote tracker, dated 3/2
6. 2019 Warrant development process & timeline