



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Town Hall: COA Activities Room
(2nd Floor)
March 18, 2019

I. Call to Order: Chair Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM with Jon Guido, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Che Elwell was not present. Also present: Mark Lyons, Selectman; Katrina Frere, Elementary School Committee Chair; Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator; Chief Jen Collins-Brown, Fire Department; and Jessica Steffens, Elementary School Committee. Members of the public present: David Larson, Kim Sherwood, and approximately 2 others. Karen Dow announced at 7:01 PM that Jeanine Cunniff was going to make a video recording and that Kim Sherwood was going to make an audio recording.

II. Minutes: Lou Ross made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from March 11, 2019. Eric Menzer seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1. Jon Guido abstained as he was not present for the meeting.

III. FinCom Model Status: Mike Hartmann handed out V2.5 of the model. He noted any updates made and a short discussion followed.

IV. Department Budget Review and Approval, including Elementary Schools:

Lou Ross made a motion that the Committee reserves the right to supersede or modify the following Department budget approvals by future vote. Mike Hartmann seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1 (Jon abstained, as he wasn't in the room at the time of the vote.)

Kellie Hebert discussed an over guideline request for a facilities manager to maintain the facility and new systems. She explained that this would allow for the management, technical operations, and maintenance of the newly renovated town hall and other town buildings. She went on to mention that there are various options available to the town to secure these services and that the goal would be to attract a temporary contractor and/or firm through a contractual arrangement.

Kellie discussed the need for IT services at town hall. Current support is provided

by a volunteer retiree who in the future will really be retiring. Kellie went on to explain that some support is provided by a consultant, but the hours are limited. She will discuss options with the consultant to see if she can get some direction as to how many hours might be needed and the cost to get additional IT support.

Jon discussed the elementary school override. The concern is that an override for over a million dollars may not be approved. He explained that if it wasn't approved, they wouldn't get any additional funding at all, and would actually have less funds to operate due to anticipated loss of a Title I grant and use of one-time revolving funds this year. A lengthy discussion followed on what budget amount the finance committee members could recommend for positive action and what services would be funded at that amount. Selectman Lyons said he wanted to get a sense of what the finance committee members thought, to help the selectmen in their deliberation process to decide on the amount of the override question on the ballot. The Board of Selectmen will be having a working session on Thursday, March 21st to discuss the override.

Eric discussed the Fire Department over guideline request. Chief Collins-Brown briefly discussed the need for additional staff on Friday and Saturday between the hours of 12AM and 6AM. She explained that 1/3 of the calls happen during the overnight when the station is not manned.

Jon Guido made a motion to approve Elementary School budget as detailed in the Article III vote tracker, dated March 13, 2019, in the amount of \$8,320,162 seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Mike Hartmann made a motion to approve Debt Service budget as detailed in Article III vote tracker, dated March 13, 2019, in the amount of \$1,435,597, seconded by Jon Guido, voted in favor 6-0.

Eric Menzer made a motion to approve Other Expenditures Pensions budget as detailed in Article III vote tracker, dated March 13, 2019, in the amount of \$1,224,339, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 5-0-1.

Eric Menzer made a motion to approve Other Expenditures Insurance budget as detailed in Article III vote tracker, dated March 13, 2019, in the amount of \$2,771,431, seconded by Lou Ross, voted in favor 5-0-1.

Dana Warren made a motion to approve Other Expenditures Salary Reserve budget as detailed in Article III vote tracker, dated March 13, 2019, in the amount of \$25,000, seconded by Mike Hartmann, voted in favor 5-0-1.

The Finance Committee reviewed the List of Requests over Finance Committee Guidelines, dated March 12, 2019.

Jon Guido recommended positive action on Town Hall- Maintenance & Repairs, in

the amount of \$13,000, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 6-0.

Lou Ross recommended positive action on Town Hall- Computer Maintenance, in the amount of \$11,000, seconded by Mike Hartmann, voted in favor 6-0.

Eric Menzer recommended positive action on Fire- F/T FF Overtime, Fire- Call Station Coverage, in the amount of \$44,000, seconded by Dana Warren, voted in favor 5-1-0.

V. Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

- a. **Assignments-** Responsibility for review of specific Town Meeting Articles and presentation of them at Town Meeting were assigned.
- b. **Recommendations-** The committee reserves the right to supersede or modify the following actions by future vote.

In a series of motions, the Finance Committee voted actions on the following Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles as numbered in the attached draft warrant, dated March 12, 2019:

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Masconomet Regional School District- Stabilization Fund, Article Sixth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Lease of Emerson Field, Article Tenth, Tri-Town Council on Youth and Family Services, Article Eleventh, and Senior Care, Article Twelfth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Mike Hartmann, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Town Facilities Repair and Maintenance Fund, Article Thirteenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Water Meter Reading System Upgrades, Article Sixteenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Mike Hartmann, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on North Street Exploratory Drilling, Article Seventeenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Eric Menzer, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Town Hall Work Stations, Article Nineteenth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Eric Menzer, seconded by Mike Hartmann, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Fire Rescue Vehicle Replacement, Article Twentieth, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Dana Warren, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends no action on Library Maintenance & Roofing Repairs, Article Twenty-Second, voted in favor 6-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Article Twenty-Third, General Stabilization Fund, in the amount of \$25,000; Article Twenty-Fourth, Capital Stabilization Fund, in the amount of \$100,000; and Article Twenty-Fifth, Other Post-Employment Benefits ("OPEB Trust Fund"), in the amount of \$300,000; voted in favor 6-0.

VI. Finance Committee Letter: Karen discussed the Finance Committee draft letter. She will make changes/edits and have a draft for the March 25th meeting.

VII. Correspondence: Karen discussed emails that were sent to the Finance Committee email address: a letter from Dan Pallotta and subsequent emails from Finance Committee members on school survey results, spending and performance, comparisons of student preparation from the three towns, and spending and performance and property values; and an email from Che Elwell on police budget and capital requests.

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 19th, 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 10:40 PM, seconded by Lou Ross and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes 3/11
3. Memo from Kelli Hebert: Request for Facilities Management Services
4. FY20: Possible uses for free cash and FY19 turn-backs, dated 3/17
5. Draft warrant articles, V2.1, dated 3/12
6. Article III vote tracker, dated 3/12
7. Model V2.5