



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Town Hall: COA Activities Room
(2nd Floor)
March 25, 2019

- I. Call to Order:** Chair Karen Dow called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM with Che Elwell, Jon Guido, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer, Lou Ross, and Dana Warren present. Also present: Dick Gandt, Selectman; Katrina Frere, School Committee Chair; Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Kellie Hebert, Town Administrator; David Strachan, Chair of the Trust Fund Commissioners; Richard Walsh, Trust Fund Commissioner; and Kathy Hartmann, Library Trustee. Members of the public present signed the sign in sheet (attached). Karen Dow announced at 7:02 PM that Jeanine Cunniff was going to make a video recording.
- II. Minutes of March 18 and 19, 2019.** Jen is still working on the minutes. They will be ready to approve at the next meeting.
- III. FinCom Model Status:** Mike Hartmann handed out V2.7 of the model. A short discussion followed of any changes. Mike will continue to update the model to reflect all votes.
- 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. Che Elwell seconded the motion, voted in favor 7-0-0

Dana discussed the elementary school budget; discussion focused on the long-term impact of operational overrides vs. capital overrides. He explained that operating overrides compound forever while capital overrides expire over time. He went on to suggest the schools seek alternate funding mechanisms.

Catherine Gabriel reported that Article Twentieth, Elementary School Security and Surveillance Systems, could partially be funded by FY19 turn-backs (\$85,000). The system for one school will therefore be dealt with at Special Town Meeting, while the other system remains on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

V. Citizens' Petitions:

- a. **Exotic Animals:** Martha Sanders discussed a citizen's petition that would prohibit exhibition of wild or exotic animals in town. She explained that they pose a risk to the public and that there aren't enough laws to protect the wild animals from inhumane treatment. Currently, wild animals can be seen at the Topsfield Fair. Martha reached out to them but hasn't received any response. Eric will reach out to the Topsfield Fair to see if they would like an opportunity to discuss the petition.
- b. **Community Care Facilities:** Holger Luther discussed a citizen's petition to amend a zoning by-law entitled "Permitted Uses". A positive vote will re-instate the 1993 ATM vote to limit the establishment of such facilities in Topsfield to the IRA, ORA, BH and BP zoning districts that are less densely populated.

VI. Trust Fund Commissioners and Library Trustees: David Strachan, Chair of the Trust Fund Commissioners; Richard Walsh, Trust Fund Commissioner; and Kathy Hartmann, Library Trustee, discussed a request for funds for replacement of library carpet, painting and roofing repairs. The Commissioners believe the funding needed for the roofing repairs would not be appropriate for the Gould Fund to cover, and would like the library trustees to make a formal request to the TFC for these items. They went on to discuss what Gould Fund Parts A & B do cover. Mrs. Hartmann will discuss the request further with the Library Trustees and meet with the Trust Fund Commissioners.

VII. Town Meeting Warrant Articles

a. Assignments-

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

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

Special Town Meeting	Finance Committee Members
Article	Initials
1	
2	
3	

4	KD
5	CE
6	JG
7	LR
8	LR
9	LR
10	KD

- b. **Recommendations-** 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 25, 2019:

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on General Operating Budget, Article Third, including an additional \$593,068 for the Elementary Schools subject to a Prop 2 ½ override, voted in favor 5-1-1.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Mike Hartmann, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Water System Improvements, Article Fifteenth, voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Che Elwell, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Elementary Schools Technology, in the amount of \$210,000, Article Twenty-First, voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Steward Elementary School Security & Surveillance System, Article Twenty-Second, voted in favor 6-1-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Articles Second through Twenty-Second, Twenty-Fourth through Twenty-Seventh, Thirtieth through Thirty-Second, and Thirty-Sixth(based on warrant dated March 25th), voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Free Cash to Offset the Tax Rate, in the amount of \$500,000, Article Thirty-Seventh, voted in favor 7-0.

In a series of motions, the Finance Committee voted actions on the following Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles as numbered in the attached draft warrant, dated March 25, 2019.

By motion of Eric Menzer, seconded by Che Elwell, the Finance Committee recommends no action on Employee Compensation Study, Article Fourth,

voted in favor 6-1. Discussion: The finance committee would like to see a forecast of salaries in the future, to get a sense of when the existing staff reaches the top of the grid.

By motion of Eric Menzer, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Police Chief Search Process & Assessment Center, Article Fifth, voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Jon Guido, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Proctor Elementary School Security & Surveillance System, Article Sixth, voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Revoke Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, Article Seventh, voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Dana Warren, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Rescind Prior Year Bond Authorization, Article Eighth, voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Lou Ross, seconded by Eric Menzer, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on Road Repairs to Prospect Street and River Road, Article Ninth, voted in favor 7-0.

By motion of Che Elwell, seconded by Lou Ross, the Finance Committee recommends positive action on PEG Access and Cable Related Fund- Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Transfer, Article Tenth, voted in favor 7-0.

VIII. Correspondence: Karen emailed members the Finance Committee Draft Letter. Karen will make changes based on tonight's votes and discussion of the draft letter. Jon Guido made a motion to approve the Finance Committee Letter with these corrections, and for Karen to submit the letter to Kellie Hebert, seconded by Eric Menzer, voted in favor 7-0.

IX. 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 April 8th, and April 22nd, 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 10:12 PM, seconded by Mike Hartmann and voted in favor 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Sign in Sheet
3. Attachment A
4. FY20: Possible uses for free cash and FY19 turn-backs, dated 3/20
5. Draft warrant articles, V2.1, dated 3/25
6. Article III vote tracker, dated 3/13
6. STM articles, dated 3/25
7. Model V2.7
8. Elementary School Budget Discussion points