



Topsfield Finance Committee  
Minutes to the Meetings  
Town Hall: COA Activities Room  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
January 27, 2020

**I. Call to Order:** Chair Jon Guido called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM with Karen Dow, Karen Duval, Che Elwell, Eric Menzer, and Lou Ross present. Mike Hartmann was not present. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Boyd Jackson, Selectman; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; Chief Haglund, Captain Hayward, Chief Brown; and Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator. Members of the public present: David Larson.

**II. Minutes:** Karen Dow made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from January 13, 2020. Che Elwell seconded the motion, voted in favor 4-0-2. Lou Ross and Eric Menzer abstained, as they were not present for the meeting.

**III. Department Budget Presentations, including:**

- a. **Police (7:15PM)** Karen Duval, liaison, introduced Chief Haglund and Captain Hayward. A discussion of the budget followed. Captain Hayward discussed that hiring the two new officers to reduce overtime costs has been successful to date. As of 1/26/20, 104 shifts did not have to be filled, an OT savings of \$43,172. Captain Hayward went on to discuss a request for an additional \$8,450 for training. The instructor costs have increased since the current trainer, who is paid at a reserve officer rate, is retiring and new instructors will be paid at the police OT rate. The mandated training requirements have also increased by 4 hours per officer due to accreditation. He went on to discuss an increase in hours for the administrative personnel (4 additional hours for the executive assistant, and 3 additional hours for the administrative assistant). He explained that since the RECC center has moved over to E911 (a savings of \$100,000 to the town) some of the services that the RECC originally covered, is now getting pushed back to the station. There has also been an increase in Records Requests. This can be a time-consuming process because in some cases, not all the files are in the database, personnel need to search through files on the third floor. The Captain went on to discuss that there are administrative fees that do offset the cost of the administrative personnel. To date this year, \$37,700 in fees have gone back to the general fund. The Captain went on to discuss that negotiations will begin soon for the full-time officer contract.

- a. **Fire (8:15PM)** Karen Dow, liaison, introduced Chief Brown. A discussion of the budget followed. Discussion focused on the request of \$65,000 for increased coverage. Chief Brown would like to increase coverage of the Fire Station by 2 call firefighters from midnight to 6:00AM, Sunday through Thursday (5 days). The extra station coverage granted last year, has made a difference, however in a 6-month period there have been 60 calls between midnight and 6:00AM, of those calls, 18 have had no coverage available to respond. She went on to explain that the increase in calls is partially due to an aging population, more people are staying in their homes longer. Chief Brown went on to discuss that Northeast ambulance is extremely busy. A decision was made back in July, to have the town transport patients if they could and not wait for Northeast to respond. To date, \$162,000 in revenue has gone back to the general fund. A general discussion followed on ways to be able to use that revenue to fund the fire department budget, instead of going to the general fund. Chief Brown went on to discuss that the fire department (along with Essex & Middleton FD) have been awarded a federal grant for portable dual band radios. Chief Brown briefly discussed the potential for regionalizing the fire department. She thinks it could be a possibility sometime in the future but is something that is hard to initiate with other communities.

**IV. FinCom Model Status:** Mike was not present to discuss the model.

**V. Correspondence** None.

**VI. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting:** Che will continue to attend Masco School Committee meetings and give updates to Fincom. Karen and Eric just recently attended the Elementary School Committee's four-hour budget meeting. They are still early in the process.

**VII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule:** The next meetings of the Committee will occur on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, and February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall Council on Aging Activities room.

**X. Adjourn:** A motion was made by Karen Dow to adjourn at 9:40 PM, seconded by Lou Ross and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

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Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of 1/13/20
3. Police: FY21 Comparison of no new hire vs. 2 new hire budgets
4. Police: FY20 Budget YTD Figures/Accomplishments