



Topsfield Finance Committee  
Minutes to the Meetings  
Town Hall: COA Activities Room  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
February 10, 2020

**I. Call to Order:** Chair Jon Guido called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM with Karen Dow, Karen Duval, Che Elwell, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer, and Lou Ross. Also present: Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Boyd Jackson, Selectman; Laura Zalewski, Library Director; Gail Bryson, Library Trustee; Kathryn Hartmann, Library Trustee; Greg Krom, Water Department Superintendent; Richard Stone, Water Commissioner; Mark Gallagher, Water Commissioner; Phil Knowles; Highway Commissioner; Gary Wildes, Highway Superintendent; Wendy Hansbury, Board of Health; Sheryl Knutsen, BOH Board Member; Zillie Bhuj, Masco School Committee; 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 February 3, 2020. Karen Duval seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-2. Eric Menzer, and Lou Ross abstained, as they were not present for the meeting.

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

- a. **Library (7:00PM)** Karen Duval, liaison, introduced Laura Zalewski, Gail Bryson, and Kathryn Hartmann. A discussion of budget increases followed. Some of the increases mentioned; \$225 for water usage, \$2,357 for contracted cleaning services, \$9,606 for unanticipated maintenance & repairs, and \$4,039 for computer expenses. Laura went on to discuss some of the repairs and maintenance that needs to be done at the library. She explained that an air make-up unit has been broken for the last two years and there is also an ongoing mold issue throughout the building. Laura went on to discuss a capital request of \$15,000 for security cameras. She said this is needed as there has been some instances of DVD theft at the library. In a 3-month period, 90 DVDs were missing. She went on to say that the cameras would also monitor the outside of the premises, in areas around the building that currently, aren't easily viewed. A discussion followed on whether the Gould Trust Fund would fund the capital item. Kathy Hartmann explained they would not. She went on to say that they recently funded the cost of repainting two rooms and replacing carpet. She said that an overview of what the Gould Trust Fund covers is located on the Town website.

- b. **Board of Health (7:30PM)** Che Elwell, liaison, introduced Wendy Hansbury, Health Agent, and Sheryl Knutsen, Board of Health Member. A discussion of budget increases followed. Some of the increases mentioned; \$2,678 for dead animal pickup. They currently have a contract with a company that will pick up and dispose of dead animals. An increase of \$3,700 for vaccine expense. This would be to track flu shots more clearly, as there has been an increase of participants. In the past, any cost overrun was absorbed in the dead animal line item, but it no longer contains excess appropriation. Last year the Board of Health spent \$1,500 on the flu clinic, but \$1,400 went back to the general fund as some of the cost can be recouped from insurance. An increase of \$4,007 for administrative assistant additional hours. This position was previously funded for 19 hours per week but decreased to 17 with position shifts. Wendy would like to see the position back at 19 hours per week to meet the needs of the department. An increase of \$2,289 for board secretary/minute taker. The Board of Health Board Secretary was funded through FY18. Current administrative assistant has continued to work additional hours as minute secretary in exchange for comp time. Use of comp time negatively impacts service delivery with limited availability of office hours.
- c. **Highway (8:00PM)** Gary Wildes, Highway Superintendent, discussed the budget, noting that it is within guidelines. He went on to discuss a capital request for a fire safety sprinkler system at the Highway/Water Facility. He went on to explain that there is now enough water pressure to install the system. A booster station needed to be built before the sprinkler system could be installed. A short discussion followed.
- d. **Water Enterprise (8:30PM)** Greg Krom discussed the water enterprise fund budget, noting any increases. He went on to discuss an increase in the unanticipated emergency line item due to possible increased manning of the water treatment plant. (\$130,000 increase) He explained that they will be applying for a waiver from the DEP. If the waiver is granted, they will not need the additional labor. Greg went on to discuss debt service. There is no short-term debt, it has been converted to long term bonds. The long-term average rate is 2%. Greg informed the fincom that MassDEP is in the process of implementing new regulations to implement PFAS from municipal water supply and may require additional water treatment structure.

#### **IV. Liaison-led Updates and Discussions: Operating Budgets, Revenues, Other Expenditures-**

- 1. Zillie Bhuju discussed that the Masco school committee plans to attend the March 2<sup>nd</sup> FinCom meeting. A short discussion followed.
- 2. Kevin discussed that the Board of Selectmen had a working session to have a final discussion and make any changes to the budget. He went on to explain that two changes have been made. The police overtime has

decreased to \$140,000, a savings of \$28,000. The BOS voted to decrease the 2% COLA to 1.60%. This matches up with the IRS COLA. Kevin went on to discuss that he plans to do a comprehensive HR study. Once he gathers all the data, he can come up with a plan that works best for the town. He will send the FinCom version 2 of the budget in the next couple of days.

**V. FinCom Model Status-** Mike discussed the updated Model. A short discussion followed. Mike will continue to make updates.

**VI. Correspondence-** The Beacon

**VI. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting:** None

**VII.Upcoming Meeting Schedule:** The next meetings of the Committee will occur on February 24<sup>th</sup>, and March 2<sup>nd</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 9:45 PM, seconded by Eric Menzer and voted in favor 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

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Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of 2/3/2020
3. Water Department Budget
4. Model dated 2/3/2020
5. Town of Topsfield Revised FY2021 Pay Grid
6. Town of Topsfield FY2021 Pay Grid Positions
7. The Beacon

