



Topsfield Finance Committee  
Minutes to the Meetings  
Meeting was held  
via Teleconference  
March 23, 2020

*Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Topsfield Board of Selectman was conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation by members of the public and/or parties with a right and/or requirement to attend this meeting can be found on the Topsfield website, at [www.topsfieldma.gov](http://www.topsfieldma.gov).*

**I. Call to Order:** Chair Jon Guido called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM with Karen Dow, Karen Duval, Che Elwell, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer and Lou Ross. Also present Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Steve Whelan, Town Moderator; Dick Gandt, Selectman; Boyd Jackson, Selectman; and Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator. Members of the School Committee present; Charise Nulsen, Andrew Prazar, Meredith Sokolowski, and Gus Serino. Also present Scott Morrison, Superintendent of Schools; and Steve Greenberg, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations. Members of the public: a list of the call-in names are attached. This was a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen. Brad Sweet live streamed the conference call. A copy of the live recording can be found on the Town website; [www.topsfieldma.gov](http://www.topsfieldma.gov).

**Minutes:** Karen Dow made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from March 2, 2020. Eric Menzer seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1. Karen Duval abstained as she was not present for the meeting.

Karen Dow made a motion to accept the minutes as amended from March 9, 2020. Karen Duval seconded the motion, voted in favor 5-0-1. Che Elwell abstained as he was not present for the meeting.

**II. FinCom Model Status-** Mike Hartmann discussed updated Model 2.4. He discussed that with a few updates/modifications the amount over the levy limit is \$358,586.

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

- a. **Elementary (7:10PM)** Charise Nulsen discussed that the school committee was able to make further reductions to the budget. The budget is now at 4.05% over guidelines an increase of \$360,884. She went on to say that the remaining asks are essential. She explained some of the adjustments that were made. The 5-day kindergarten tuition will be phased out. The first years tuition would be reduced to \$1,700 per student. She also went on to say that technology would be included in the operating budget (originally \$110,000, reduced to \$50,000). A grant writer is also essential and would be shared with the town of Middleton. The Math in focus request will be a warrant article.

#### **IV. Department Budget Review and Approval**

1. Steve Whelan discussed that town meeting has been postponed to June 23, 2020. Town election will be on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Steve went on to say that the extra 5-6 weeks would give more time to make better decisions about the budget. Kevin will confirm the exact date the warrant will go to print (middle of May).
2. Jon discussed Fincom meeting would go back to once a week on Mondays. The March 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> Fincom meetings, will be canceled.
3. Kevin discussed some of the warrant articles that have been removed in version four; police suv cruiser, ballot counter, ADA compliance study for Proctor & Steward, public works fire sprinkler system, security cameras at town hall, and septic management replacement program. An article was created for the Fire department night shift coverage (\$65,000). Also, an article was created for compensated absences.
4. Kevin discussed revenue data that Jackie, Town Treasurer, and Catherine, Town Accountant pulled together to get an idea of what the impact may be on real estate taxes in preparation for a possible recession, given the covid-19 epidemic. He went on to say that during the period of FY2008-2011, the four-year average of receiving tax payments was 99.3%. 60% of taxes are received by banks (escrow accounts) and 40% is direct payments. He also noted that local receipts stayed within projections as well. Mike Hartmann questioned the trend of Article third. Kevin can pull data for that.
5. Karen Duval discussed a line item in the police budget for vehicle repair/maintenance, since a police cruiser will not be purchased in FY21. Current vehicles will be out of warranty soon.

#### **V. Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

##### **a. Assignments**

ATM Warrant Article	Fincom Member
	Initials
1	JG
2	JG
3	MH

4	LR
5	CE
6	CE
7	JG
8	LR
9	KDUVAL
10	KDUVAL
11	JG
12	KDUVAL
13	JG
14	MH
15	KDOW
16	KDOW
17	KDOW
18	KDOW
19	EM
20	EM
21	LR
22	KDUVAL
23	LR
24	LR
25	EM
26	EM
27	JG
28	JG
29	JG
30	EM
31	LR
32	KDOW
33	LR
34	JG
35	KDOW
36	CE
37	CE
38	CE
39	KDOW
40	LR
41	JG

- b. **Recommendations-** The Finance Committee will delay voting to a future meeting.

**VI. Correspondence-** None

**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 March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 7:00 PM via zoom teleconference.

**X. Adjourn:** A motion was made by Karen Dow to adjourn at 8:57 PM, seconded by Che Elwell and voted in favor 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Davis

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Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes
3. Model
4. Conference call-in names (who attended)
5. ATM Warrant