



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Meeting was held
via Videoconference
January 04, 2021

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.

I. Call to Order: Chair Che Elwell, called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM with Karen Dow, Jon Guido, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer and David Larson. Also present Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; **Regrets:** Karen Duval. Chairman Elwell took a moment to recognize the recent passing of John Spencer and the years of service and dedication that he gave to the town of Topsfield.

II. Meeting Minutes from November 9, 2020 were reviewed and approved

- **Voted:** November 9, 2020 minutes; motion Karen Dow; seconded by Jon Guido. All voted in favor as amended to include further clarity around the elementary school 2.75% increase to indicate that health and pension expenses are born by the overall town budget.

III. Review of 5 Year Budget and Capital Plan

- Mr. Elwell noted that the 5 year plan was being developed and will be ready for discussion from the broader committee at the end of January

IV. Town and School Updates

- Mr. Menzer provided an update on elementary schools highlighting that the budget review session between the school committee and the administration will be taking place Saturday January 9th. This is a couple weeks earlier than has been conducted historically. The finance committee will look to have the school committee in to provide an updated at the January 25th scheduled fincom meeting.
- Mrs. Dow indicated she is in the process of reviewing the fire department budget.
- Mr. Larson has reviewed the water department budget indicating it is flat to slightly lower. Water department has received approval from the state to run the water treatment plant unmanned overnight. The Hwy department budget has been reviewed and its meeting guidelines. Parks department has an increase in clerical expenses which will be discussed

given the combination of Parks and Hwy oversight.

V. MASCO Regional School Update:

- Mr. Elwell informed the committee that the MASCO school committee has asked us to review the regional agreement. There will be some minor cleanup of the agreements since it has been a while it has been reviewed. Some key areas of review will be the logistics of how payments are made from the town to MASCO in terms of the frequency. Currently payments are quarterly and there is a request to move to monthly payments. The impacts will have to be carefully considered. Another area of focus for the agreement will be looking at changing how the apportionment is structured in terms of calculating enrollment and Topsfield year to year obligation.

VI. Fincom Model Review

- The committee reviewed the latest version of the fincom model.
- Pension are estimated to up 4.9% and insurance up 5%.
- Using some baseline assumptions around the town, elementary and MASCO budgets we are currently \$477k over the levy limit
- Free cash is to be certified at the end of January
- Model will continue to be revised as more information becomes available.

VII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule: The next meetings of the Committee will occur on January 11, 2021 at 7:00 PM via zoom teleconference.

VIII. Adjourn: A motion was made by Karen Dow to adjourn at 8:16 PM, seconded by David Larson and voted in favor by roll call vote of 6-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Menzer,

Finance Committee Clerk
