



Topsfield Finance Committee
Minutes to the Meetings
Meeting was held
via Videoconference
February 9, 2021

Approved 2/22/2021

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, Karen Duval, Jon Guido, Mike Hartmann, Eric Menzer and David Larson. Also present Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Jackie Cuomo, Treasurer; Wendy Hansbury, Town Health Agent, Sheryl Knutsen, Board of Health; Gary Wilde, Highway, Parks and Cemetery; Arrived at 8:30 were Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator; Dick Gandt, Selectboard; Zillie Bhujju, Masco School Committee. Chairman Elwell noted the meeting would be recorded but was not broadcast live. As the meeting took place via videoconference, all votes were taken by roll call.

II. Meeting Minutes from January 11, 2021 and February 1, 2021 were reviewed and approved

- **Voted:** January 11, 2021 minutes; motion Karen Dow, seconded by David Larson; 7-0. February 1, 2021 minutes; motion David Larson, seconded by Jon Guido, Eric Menzer abstained; 6-0-1.

III. Presentation of the Treasurer Department by Jackie Cuomo

- Wages are up 2%
- Expenditures are level funded overall. Slightly higher postage expenses but expected to be absorbed by other line items.
- Refinanced 2011 water bond that has 5 years remaining. 3 bids received which ultimately will lead to \$26,000 in savings over 5 years on \$330,000 of principal.

IV. Presentation of the Board of Health Department by Wendy Hansbury and Sheryl Knutsen

- Ms. Hansbury provided an overview of the budget for the department.
- Given the mandatory requirement for all students to receive flu vaccines expenses have increased.
- The department is working on a process for reconciling the cost outlays for the

flu vaccine from the BoH budget vs. the insurance reimbursements to the Town General Fund.

- With the Board of Health now responsible for dead animal pickup the work has been contracted to an external vendor, but the line item fluctuates and is difficult to predict.
- Board of Health is looking for additional funding for a recording secretary for the minutes of the recurring board meetings.

V. Presentation of the Highway, Parks and Cemetery by Gary Wilde

- Mr. Wilde presented an overview of the Highway, Parks and Cemetery budgets.
- Streetlights are being budgeted higher by \$3,800 to reflect actual costs. Several methods for conversion to LED lights are being considered.
- There is an increase in clerical hours needed for Parks and Cemetery, associated with reduced department supervisor hours.
- Mr. Wilde noted that there are 16 vehicles in the Parks and Cemetery department that need a plan for ongoing maintenance.
- A discussion ensued around the flare maintenance at Pye Brook (cost appears in the Landfill budget); it is expected there will be a reduction in maintenance needed, leading to future savings.

VI. Liaison Updates

- Karen Duval provided an update to the committee on the development of the Masco school budget.
- Topsfield's share of the budget has increased substantially this year based on the enrollment calculation for the town and the Commonwealth's determination of the Net School Spending number for the town.
- Masco's estimate this year for Topsfield's share is an increase of 8.7%. Mrs. Duval will continue discussions with the administration and the school committee for further clarification around the calculation of Topsfield's share of the budget along with the overall district agreement.
- Mrs. Duvall updated the committee on the police department budget, noting it is still under review with the Police Chief as well as Town Administrator Kevin Harutunian.

VII. FinCom Model

- Mr. Hartmann updated the committee on the recent version of the FinCom model.
- The current estimate of the model based on department guideline budgets has the budget over the tax levy limit by \$506,330.

VIII. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting: Free Cash has been certified at \$2,618,095. K. Harutunian reports discussions are in progress on possible disposition of the old Highway Garage in the center of town.

IX. Upcoming Meeting Schedule: The next meetings of the Committee will occur on February 22, 2021 at 7:00 PM via zoom teleconference.

X. Adjourn: A motion was made by Karen Dow to adjourn at 8:57 PM, seconded by Karen Duval and voted in favor by roll call vote of 7-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Menzer,

Finance Committee Clerk
