



## Topsfield Finance Committee Minutes to the Meetings

Meeting was held  
via Videoconference  
March 1, 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 Finance Committee 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). For this meeting, members of the public who wish to watch or listen to the meeting may do so in the following manner: Video conference information is posted on the website. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so despite best efforts, we will post on the Topsfield website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.*

### **I. Call to Order**

Chair Che Elwell called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and initiated roll call. Present were Chair Elwell-Y, Karen Dow-Y, Karen Duval-Y, Jon Guido-Y, Mike Hartmann-Y, Eric Menzer-Y and David Larson-Y. Also present were Kevin Harutunian, Town Administrator; Catherine Gabriel, Town Accountant; Dick Gandt and Boyd Jackson, Select Board; Jackie Cuomo, Treasurer; Mr. Whelan, Moderator; Chief Collins-Brown, Fire Dept.; and Beth Willis, Clerk. Chairman Elwell noted the meeting is being recorded but not broadcast live. As the meeting took place via videoconference, all votes will be taken by roll call.

### **II. Review Capital – Kevin Harutunian**

Mr. Harutunian reviewed the modifications to the capital budget version 3.3 (February 17) including the following highlights:

- Generator (\$40K) moved to BAN premium from prior bonding.
- Police cruiser moved to Free Cash, including cost of fit-up (\$9,900) total of \$67K.
- Roof replacement of the fire station was moved to BAN premium - \$20K with another \$15K from transfers at STM.
- BAN premium use for generator and roof allows need purchases beyond Free Cash guideline number.
- Proposed capital is \$11.5K beyond guideline.
- Savings in operating budget (cruiser fit-up) results in increased Free Cash to cover capital plan.
- \$2,535 proposed from the water enterprise fund for HVAC equipment in water office.

- Remove \$15K for tank inspection from warrant.
- \$225,00 under water treatment upgrades will be delayed and may not be needed if successful request for DEP grant to cover costs.

Mr. Harutunian reported he had a good meeting with DEP. The video of PFAS public meeting is available on the Town website. The report found less than 20 parts per trillion PFAS in most Topsfield tests, which is lower than most communities.

Discussion ensued on the line item for facilities and maintenance repair. Mr. Harutunian noted that the \$25K allocated in the operating budget is for the personnel cost, while the \$27K in capital budget is for the hard costs for repair etc.

Discussion ensued on the cost and size of the generator. A 20kw air-cooled generator is a good size for a house, and this generator quoted for the Town is a 32kw liquid-cooled generator at two and one-half times the cost. Mr. Harutunian reported that a working group had been formed with representatives from the library, police, fire, town hall, technology and DPW to “value engineer” the right sized generator to support essential functions, i.e. the elevator, phone systems, computer servers, and telephones. While town hall personnel may be sent home in extreme conditions, support of the technology-related functions must be maintained both within town hall and communication with the greater community especially in emergency situations. The larger generator assures continued operations under any conditions. A 20-minute UPS backup system assures technology integrity. The evolution of technology demands a more sophisticated emergency support system. Mr. Harutunian will share the Committee’s concerns with the working group and report back to the Committee.

Also discussed was the option of switching from heating Town Hall via electricity to natural gas: is electric the “greener” option in the long run? Chair Elwell noted the cheaper cost of electricity in Quebec. Mr. Harutunian will also discuss this option with the working group and report back to the Committee. Mr. Harutunian also reported that the master clock item for the elementary schools will be moved to next year unless grant funding is secured. Most of the raise-and-appropriate items were moved to Free Cash.

Discussion also ensued on the purchase of the \$172K sidewalk plow that also can be used as a large mower in the summer. Mr. Harutunian pointed out that multifunctional cross-use and versatility of equipment results in a cost savings. He noted that \$78K will come out of Chapter 90 fund to offset the equipment cost.

### **III. Review Warrant Articles – Kevin Harutunian**

Mr. Harutunian reviewed version 2.0 of the warrant articles including the following highlights:

- Water tank inspection (\$15K) moved out of warrant.
- Revolving fund for flu/COVID vaccination clinics due to state change in COVID vaccination from local to mass sites, moved out of warrant.
- Marijuana bylaw remove from this year with intention of public forum next year.

- Add elementary school cafeteria management contract from three to five years.
- Refining changes to the Masconomet contract to separate votes and itemization of changes.
- Sign bylaw modifications.

Discussion ensued on the funding of the MASCO contribution( see attached chart.) Mr. Elwell reported he had met with DESE and confirmed the accuracy of the number. 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%. As of October 1, 2020 the Topsfield elementary headcount decreased by 85 students, driving a shift of NSS dollars to Masconomet. Discussion ensued on the effect of changing enrollments due to COVID as well as a continuing trend into the future as MASCO's enrollment continues to trend down including the following highlights:

- State not making allowance due to drop in enrollment because of COVID.
- MASCO enrollment did not change drastically due to COVID, but is trending smaller.
- Elementary school will bounce back next year.
- MASCO needs to look at enrollment trending down.
- MASCO's enrollment in 2012 is 2,087 and this year was 1,700 projected to be as low as 1,476 in October, 2024; then stays flat for three years and increases.
- Administration plan was to reduce the number of middle school classrooms.
- Mr. Elwell to talk with MASCO School Board. Because of enrollment swing and NSS, budgets are affected, Boxford share decreases.
- Ms. Duval to meet with School Committee on Wednesday and will express our concern and perspective on funding.
- Effect of purchase of PPE on operating budget.
- This year's Topsfield kindergarten is 67 and first grade is 75; expected to increase post-COVID.
- If MASCO student population is down 3% why should budget go up 2%; if student population is down 3% budget should be decreased by 3%.

Ms. Duval will continue discussions with the administration and MASCO's school board for further clarification around the calculation of Topsfield's share of the budget along with the overall district agreement. Mr. Harutunian is also continuing ongoing discussions with administration.

#### **IV. Review Base Budget, Contractual and Outside Guidelines – Kevin Harutunian**

Mr. Harutunian updated the base budget items (February 8) as follows:

- Reduction in police cruiser fit-up costs of \$9,900 (moved to Free Cash.)
- Reduction in hours in Inspectional Services Dept.
  - Reduction in hours of Admin Assistant from 32 to 24 – decrease of \$10,706.

- Reinstatement of Inspection Officer's hours from 18 to 30 – increase of \$23,587.
- Add to compensated absences fund using \$60,000 in Free Cash in lieu of \$60,000 in omnibus.
- Reduction in MIIA benefit trust of \$50K based on actual enrollment and reduction in contingencies. Level funded at \$2.1M based on actual enrollment down to \$2,050,000.
- Mr. Hartmann will update the omnibus by another \$50K decrease for the Committee vote and Ms. Gabriel will update the Committee changes made.

Discussion ensued on the requested additional six hours from the accounting department. Mr. Harutunian reviewed the recent transitional changes made in departmental adjustments in personnel. The Committee expressed its approval of this long-standing request. Also discussed was improving operational efficiency through utilization of strategic rollout and leverage of existing Munis software.

#### **V. Liaison Updates**

- Ms. Duvall will ask Mr. Harvey to join next Monday's Finance Committee to discuss the budget and impact of the increase in MASCO contribution. Discussion ensued on the strategic direction of the conversation.
- Mr. Larson noted that the roster of DPW equipment received recently was quite informative, comprehensive and thorough.

#### **VI. FinCom Model**

Mr. Hartmann updated the Committee on the recent version of the FinCom model incorporating current MASCO numbers. (See attached model.) Discussion ensued. Mr. Hartmann will resend the most up-to-date detailed model to members via email according to discussion and input. Mr. Harutunian noted he had asked his departmental heads to take another look at their budgets for savings. Discussion also ensued on the possible impact of budget cuts to services in terms of essentials and nice-to-haves. Also discussed was the positive impact of new growth due to COVID and building/addition permits.

Mr. Harutunian noted that the base departmental budgets are looked at very closely prior to the budget being set. Every effort is currently being made to take hard looks at every line item for alternative solutions in a tough economic climate.

#### **VII. Upcoming Meeting Schedule: The next meeting of the Committee Monday, March 8, 2001 at 7:00 PM via zoom teleconference.**

**VIII. Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Dow and seconded by Mr. Menzer, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Chair Elwell-Y, Karen Dow-Y, Karen Duval-Y, Jon Guido-Y, Mike Hartmann-Y, Eric Menzer-Y and David Larson-Y. Motion passed 7-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:22PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford

Finance Committee Clerk

*Attachments:*

*MASCO Contribution Chart*

*FinCom Model*

*Minutes APPROVED March 15, 2021*

298 Topsfield

Topsfield    Masconnet Essex North Shore    Combined Total for All Districts

Prior Year Data (for comparison purposes)

1	FY21 foundation enrollment	627	483	22	1,132
2	FY21 foundation budget	6,270,046	5,363,688	376,127	12,009,861
3	Each district's share of municipality's combined FY21 foundation	52.21%	44.66%	3.13%	100.00%
4	FY21 required contribution	5,031,835	4,304,465	301,849	9,638,149
5	FY22 apportionment of contribution among community's districts				
6	FY22 total unapportioned required contribution ('municipal contribution' tab row 19 or 25)	542	490	25	9,617,413
7	FY22 foundation enrollment	5,574,732	5,629,900	452,839	11,657,471
8	Each district's share of municipality's total FY22 foundation	47.82%	48.29%	3.88%	100.00%
9	FY22 Required Contribution	4,599,154	4,644,667	373,592	9,617,413

2 Attachments

See you tonight.

Thank you!

Great!

ReplyReply allForward

March 1, 2021  
RECAP SUMMARY

TOWN OF TOPSFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE  
BUDGET WORKSHEETS

VERSION 1.91  
FY 2022

DISCLAIMER: THIS DOCUMENT IS A "WORK-IN-PROGRESS". IT IS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS A RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE.								
	FIN COM EST. TAX RECAP 2018	FIN COM EST. TAX RECAP 2019	FIN COM EST. TAX RECAP 2020	FIN COM EST. TAX RECAP 2021	FIN COM EST. TAX RECAP 2022	DIFFERENCE PRJ. 2022 +/- 2021 \$ %		Comments Notes
<b>II. AMOUNT TO BE RAISED:</b>								
<b>A. APPROPRIATIONS:</b>								
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	1,426,424	1,485,270	1,648,459	1,664,254	1,679,247	14,993	0.90%	
PUBLIC SAFETY	2,473,539	2,613,676	2,696,952	2,871,188	2,860,526	(10,662)	-0.37%	
EDUCATION: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	7,827,171	8,108,071	8,913,230	9,117,902	9,368,645	250,743	2.75%	0
PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES	935,637	1,680,330	1,726,163	1,724,420	1,652,754	(71,666)	-4.16%	
HUMAN SERVICES	666,739	263,776	280,180	278,498	281,063	2,565	0.92%	
CULTURE AND RECREATION	893,979	609,774	638,658	665,336	652,447	(12,889)	-1.94%	
DEBT SERVICE	672,875	1,139,566	1,349,146	1,370,828	1,312,063	(58,765)	-4.29%	
OTHER EXPENDITURES (PENSIONS/INSURANCE)	3,962,622	3,934,577	4,156,770	4,249,683	4,278,832	29,149	0.69%	
TOTAL ARTICLE 3RD	18,858,986	19,835,040	21,409,558	21,942,109	22,085,577	143,468	0.65%	
MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL	7,207,467	7,579,413	7,693,568	7,825,842	8,471,155	645,313	8.25%	
OTHER ATM WARRANT ARTICLES	2,826,529	2,632,492	3,646,596	3,333,633	4,067,810	734,177	22.02%	
STM WARRANT ARTICLES	-	250,962	395,400	19,410	-	(19,410)		
TOTAL: APPROPRIATIONS	28,892,982	30,297,907	33,145,122	33,120,994	34,624,542	1,503,548	4.54%	
<b>B. OTHER AMOUNTS TO BE RAISED:</b>						-		
1. AMOUNTS CERTIFIED FOR TAX TITLE PURPOSES						-		
2. DEBT & INTEREST CHARGES NOT IN SCH. B						-		
3. FINAL COURT JUDGMENTS						-		
4. TOTAL OVERLAY DEFICITS OF PRIOR YEARS						-		
5. TOTAL CHERRY SHEET OFFSETS (CS1-ER)	11,144	10,770	10,985	11,043	11,043	-	-	
6. REVENUE DEFICITS						-		
7. OFFSET RECEIPTS DEFICITS (CH.44, S53E)						-		
8. AUTHORIZED DEFERRAL OF TEACHERS' PAY						-		
9. SNOW AND ICE DEFICIT (CH.44, S31D)					100,000	100,000		
10. OTHER		-				-		
TOTAL: LINES 1 - 10	11,144	10,770	10,985	11,043	111,043	100,000	9	
<b>C. STATE AND COUNTY ASSESSMENTS</b>	294,285	300,530	209,214	201,552	201,552	-	-	
<b>D. ALLOWANCE FOR ABATEM'TS &amp; EXEMP'S (OVERLAY)</b>	175,000	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000	-	-	
<b>E. TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE RAISED:</b>	29,373,411	30,749,207	33,505,321	33,473,589	35,077,137	1,603,548	4.79%	
						-		
<b>III. ESTIMATED RECEIPTS &amp; OTHER REVENUE SOURCES:</b>						-		
A. ESTIMATED STATE RECEIPTS	1,887,064	1,927,465	1,971,166	2,019,051	2,069,473	50,422	0	
A1. OVERLAY SURPLUS for ALLOWANCE FOR ABATEMENT				100,000	70,000	(30,000)		
B1. ESTIMATED LOCAL RECEIPTS (SCHEDULE A)	1,505,500	1,600,000	1,600,000	1,650,000	1,650,000	-	-	
B3. ENTERPRISE FUNDS (SCHEDULE A-2)	1,504,522	1,801,901	2,091,364	2,372,426	2,566,021	193,595	0	
B4. REVOLVING FUNDS (SCHEDULE A-3)		-				-		
C1. FREE CASH FOR PARTICULAR PURPOSE	733,194	663,250	1,167,500	758,000	1,028,500	270,500	0	

C2 OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR PART. PURPOSE	131,004	326,968	685,626	79,484	497,138	417,654	1	
D1 FREE CASH TO REDUCE TAX LEVY	\$176,419	\$478,683	\$500,000	\$260,000	\$0	-\$260,000		
E. TOTAL ESTIMATED RECEIPTS & OTHER REV. SOURCE	5,937,703	6,798,267	8,015,656	7,238,961	7,881,132	642,171	8.87%	
						-		
SUMMARY OF AMTS TO BE RAISED & ESTIMATED RECEIPTS						-		
						-		
TOTAL AMOUNT TO BE RAISED	29,373,411	30,749,207	33,505,321	33,473,589	35,077,137	1,603,548	4.79%	
TOTAL ESTIMATED RECEIPTS AND REVENUE:	5,937,703	6,798,267	8,015,656	7,238,961	7,881,132	642,171	8.87%	
TOTAL TAX LEVY:	23,435,708	23,950,940	25,489,665	26,234,629	27,196,005	961,377	-	3.66%
MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE LEVY:	23,524,851	24,035,528	25,785,184	26,385,644	27,045,597	659,953	-	2.50%
EXCESS LEVY CAPACITY: (UNDER) OR OVER MAX. ALL. LEVY	(89,144)	(84,587)	(295,518)	(151,016)	150,408	-		OVER/(UNDER)
TOTAL VALUATION:	1,362,278,394	1,408,568,756	##### 1,450,846,418	1,450,846,418	1,450,846,418	-		8
TAX RATE:	17.20	17.00	17.57	18.08	18.74	-		
Memorandum: Current certified Free Cash:	\$1,611,613	\$2,266,933	\$2,564,754	\$2,046,950	\$2,618,095			
Minimum Free Cash Position: Free Cash	\$702,000	\$1,125,000	\$897,254	\$1,028,950	\$1,589,595			
expended above Net available Free Cash :	\$909,613	\$1,141,933	\$1,667,500	\$1,018,000	\$1,028,500			
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0			

NOTES: Budget comparisons adjusted to compensate for excluded or new line items FY vs FY budget categories.

Masco