

Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, January 10, 2019, 5:00 pm
Oak Bluffs Library Second Floor Conference Room

Present: Chair – Bill Vrooman, Bernie Crossland, Bob Gaffey, Herbert Kiehn,
Maura McGroarty, Ray Moreis, Mike Taus, Walter Vail, Richard Weiss,
Absent: None
Town: Town Administrator Of. – Bob Whritenour, Wendy Brough,
Town Accountant – Deb Potter, BOH – Meegan Lancaster
Others: Recorder - Marni Lipke * Late arrivals or early departures,
noted solely to mark vote counts.

• The Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) came to order at 5:04PM.
(Recorder's Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• **Approve Minutes (12/20/18)**

• **HERB KIEHN MOVED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 20, 2018 MINUTES AS AMENDED; WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—BOB GAFFEY** due to absence.

• **2020 Budget Review** (See 12/20/18 Minutes & documents on file.)

The Budget had been carefully reviewed for inconsistencies and all salaries adjusted for the negotiated Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA).

• Town Administrator Bob Whritenour reported several justified requests for administrative support positions.

Board of Selectmen (BOS)

Mr. Whritenour marginally increased the Professional/Technical line item based on history and current experience anticipating reduced Town Counsel costs. Negotiations and previous suits were completed and a current action was covered by insurance.

FinCom

Due to accounting procedures the Reserve Fund balance did not reflect spending.

Accountant

A discussion on re-titling the Assistant Accountant line (now at \$20,000 for consultant fees) was countered by Town Accountant Deb Potter, whose goal was to restore it to a salaried position (~ \$45,000).

Assessors (See below: Actions.)

- After several years of requests Board members would receive a \$1,000 stipend.
- This was a transitional year with the Assistant Assessor taking over as Assessor and a new Assistant being hired—the retired Assessor was available for training and consultation. There would likely be a future request for an Administrative Assistant.
- A Professional/Technical increase was proposed to migrate the massive database from a warrant article into the operating budget.

Treasurer Collector Fixed

• The Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) contribution was substantially reduced because the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MRVHRS) budget included expensive residential placements and an OPEB contribution beyond the Proposition 2 1/2 limit. Mr. Whritenour requested a discussion on strategies to address the OPEB liability, such as a dedicated OPEB override. Actuarial studies set the Town liability at

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\$31,000,000—Oak Bluffs was currently pay-as-you-go which would eventually become overly expensive. New Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) regulations were anticipated to insure OPEB did not force municipalities into bankruptcy.

Treasurer/Collector

- There was growing concern for more Town Hall staff (see above: Assessor) including in the Financial Dept. (see 12/20/18 Minutes p.2).
- The Town telephone system was bundled with the cable/phone/internet bill and less expensive than the old landlines with attendant hardware costs.

Town Clerk

- Although less than requested, the increase covered such things as high-grade paper mandated for official documents (birth, marriage, death certificates, etc.).

Registrar

A new vote counter (- \$6,000) was proposed and the repair line increased as a backup in case the warrant article failed. The presidential election year raised expenses.

Planning Board

- The Master Plan Draft Report was available for review.
- The Board had requested a full time clerical support position (as was common practice with other Towns) to keep records and maintain legal documentation.
- **The FinCom asked the Board enforce such decisions as parking remediation.**

Board of Selectmen Unclassified (See below: Actions.)

- The two Street Lighting line items tracked the light poles and the utility expense, with total spending down 11% from the 2007 baseline.
- Engineering/Architectural was needed from time to time.
- There was concern over high regional agency/organization budget increases:
 - 8% Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) (see below: Actions),
 - Dukes County Regional Housing Authority (DCRHA) (due to a classification/compensation study);
 - other non-profits such as the Vineyard Health Care Access Program (VHCAP);
 - MVRHS re: regional agreement formula.
- The MVC was conducting a mapping study of the 200+ Martha's Vineyard agencies, government entities and non-profits with the goal of promoting better efficiency and eliminating duplication of services. There was general acknowledgement and support for the services but objections to the multiple overhead costs. Alternative actions included:
 - MVCS gradual incorporation of other social service non-profits,
 - cooperation/coordination initiatives among non-profits;
 - **consolidating social services spending into a limited budget item or department**—which could be countered by a non-profit submitted warrant article;
 - putting all non-profit requests in an override to raise Town awareness.

Police

- A Detective was replaced with a patrolman (starting salary - \$71,000) saving \$10-12,000.
- Contractual increases showed a 1.5% COLA, steps and longevity. Delta Dental insurance was subject to fluctuations depending on who signed up.
- The Selectmen asked the Department to step up summer policing to reduce disorder and enforce regulations and bylaws.

Fire/Ambulance

- A concerted increase for personnel included:
 - stipend raises for all members to keep pace with other Island departments;
 - upgraded training (salaried training hours rather than tuition);
 - on-call increase for nights and weekends with a rotating on call supervisor.
- To relieve pressure on the Ambulance Reserve Fund, the Department requested shifting a paramedic from the Reserve into the Budget, but Mr. Whritenour denied the request. **The**

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FinCom asked for an Ambulance Reserve Fund accounting.

- There was a suggestion that the Chief's salary be paid 50% from Ambulance Reserve and 50% Fire Dept. This year the salary included a step, after several years of no steps. The FinCom reviewed the salary history and the recent negotiating crisis legal costs and:
 - RICHARD WEISS MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE FIRE/AMBULANCE CHIEF SALARY RAISE AT 1.5%; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION TABLED pending the Department interview.
- Maura McGroarty reported that rental car tax revenue was dedicated to police training.
- Professional//Technical was created because increased regulations resulted in more off-Island trainings and/or bringing professional instructors to the Island.

Building Inspector

In an attempt to address the challenges of finding and keeping certified staff (see 12/6/18 Minutes p.2-3) the Selectmen were working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Tisbury on a shared high certification level Building Commissioner (\$160,000 total or ~ \$80,000 each Town), with each Town hiring its own local inspector and administrative assistant. However recent developments in the Tisbury Building Inspector Dept. had complicated implementation.

Shellfish

- A FY19 change in personnel showed Oak Bluffs to be substantially underfunded. New hires required higher salaries to compete with other regional departments.

Emergency Management

This Department was managed by the Police and Fire/Ambulance Chiefs so no salaries were listed. The boat was used for water emergencies.

Marina

The FY19 salary cuts created budgeting problems. The \$6,000 seasonal position covered 12 hrs./wk. [Maura McGroarty questioned salaries.](#)

Highway

- Other Wages was level funded.
- Mr. Whritenour attested to the Department frugality, however the [FinCom questioned rising Truck Repair given the constant warrant articles for new equipment](#)

Board of Health (BOH) (See below: Actions.)

- The FinCom proposed that Board stipends be restored to be consistent with the Assessor stipends (see above). (The Town Moderator stipend was less supported in view of once or twice a year duties.)
- The Seasonal Employment line was raised to cover increased hours for existing staff—although there was an error in the increase. Variations in the line item history reflected staff transitions.
- The Clerical position was re-evaluated and the hours raised from 35 to 40 hrs./wk to cover increased inspection initiatives—fees should cover the expense.

Council On Aging (COA)

The Center For Living (CFL) budget was late and \$10,000 more than expected.

• **Accountant's Comments** - None

• **Member Comments** (See below: Meetings/Events & Actions.)

• **Public Comments** - None

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• Adjourn

- **WALTER VAIL MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:02PM; BERNIE
CROSSLAND SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meetings/Events:

- OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursdays, January 17, 31, 2019 - OB Library**
- OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursdays, January 24, 2019 - Fire/EMS Bldg.**
- OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursdays, February 7, 14, 21, 28, 2019 - OB Library**
- OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 14, 2019 - OB Library**
- AIFC 5:00PM, Thursday, March 28, 2019**
- Special & Annual Town Meetings - Tuesday, April 9, 2019 - MVRHS PAC**

Action List

- Wendy B. - send Town/Assessors/Finance, etc. organizational chart(s).
- Deb P. - email street light breakdown to FinCom.
- Bill V. - schedule MVC and County budget interviews
- Bob W. - add \$3,000 to the BOH budget for Board stipends.
- Bill V. - set up phone remote for Bob Gaffey at 1/17/19 meeting.

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings

- Future Agenda Items:
 - Police Department Finances
 - Trash/Waste Analysis
 - Parking Mitigation Follow-Up
 - Reserve Fund Increase
 - Town Cleaning Services Analysis
 - Auditor Management Letter Update (January, March, June, September)

Documents on file:

- Agenda 1/10/19
- Sign In Sheet 1/10/19
- FY19 YTD (19-13) FY20 Draft Budget (9 p.) 1/9/19
- Whritenour/Thornton cover emails re: Warrant Articles 1/2/19
- FY2020 County Requests for Funding (2 p.)
- Whritenour/Thornton cover emails re: Warrant Articles 1/2/19
- Oak Bluffs Core (2 p.)
- Dukes County Social Services (2 p.)
- Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard (2 p.)
- Martha's Vineyard Center for Living
- Whritenour/Thornton cover emails re: Warrant Articles - Additional Supporting Documents (2 p.) 1/9/19
- VHCAP FY2020 Budget (2 p.)
- County of Dukes County, Vineyard Health Care Access Program Annual Report, FY2018: July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018 (2 p.)
- Debt Service Schedule by Town 3/15/16 (3 p.)
- Martha's Vineyard Community Services Town Funding Request 2020 (8 p.)
- Vrooman/Whritenour/Friedman cover emails re: 2020 Budget
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District Budget for Fiscal Year '2020, Certified 1/02/19 (9 p.)
- Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Workshop Session January 08, 2019 (10 p.)
- Whritenour memo re: Budget Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2020 (25 p.) 1/4/19
- Town Administrator Report January 8, 2019 (84 p.)

- **Minutes approved as amended for typos by the OB FinCom 1/24/19.**