

Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, January 16, 2020 5:00 pm
Oak Bluffs Library Conference Room

Present: Chair – Bill Vrooman, Sherry Countryman, Bernie Crossland*,
Maura McGroarty, Greg Thornton, Mike Taus, Walter Vail, Richard Weiss,
Absent: Bob Gaffey,
Town: Town Accountant – Deb Potter,
Others: MVC – Alan Turner, Alex Elvin; HAMV – Paddy Moore
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 5:06pm.
(Recorder's Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• Approval of Minutes (1/9)

• MIKE TAUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 9, 2020 MINUTES; GREG THORNTON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSTENTIONS—MIKE TAUS as not read, **RICHARD WEISS** due to absence.

The FinCom again discussed the length of the minutes in terms of simplicity to read and approve versus the need for a specific record. There was a discussion on alternatives such as action minutes or both summarized and comprehensive sets.

- It was agreed that anything included in an accompanying document would be so referred and not written into the minutes.

• Alex Elvin – Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) Mapping

The MVC received funding for a statistical profile and infrastructure study, i.e. how much the Island was spending on: police, fire, libraries, water, sewer, etc. over a period of time— i.e. as a narrative rather than a snapshot. Elder Services was the first such study, as the fastest growing population on the Island. The study was started in 2018 in collaboration with Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard (HAMV) and other organization, setting goals and developing the kind of data that would be a resource to organizations. The MVC collected the information but made no conclusions and recommendations. Information was divided into a database and a narrative (see documents on file). FinCom issues included:

- Council On Aging participation and data collection;
- separation of administrative costs;
- differing proportions of elderly populations among Towns as driven by transportation and accessibility issues;
- commendations, thanks and support for the long-overdue study.

• Review Selectmen's Budget Request (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

- The FinCom discussed and set a joint meeting time with the Board of Selectmen (see below: Meetings/Events) on the FY21 Budget as well as Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) assessment issues. The FinCom clarified the following items.
- The \$200,000 salary pool included funds for contract negotiation results, Pay Equity (classification/compensation) recommendations and Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs); for example, Library salaries showed pay equity adjustments.

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- The local receipts increase was projected at \$222,000 of which \$179,100 was conservatively estimated short-term rental revenue.
- The MVC increase might be due to assessment changes and/or legal expenses.
- The Fire/Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Chief salary was split between the Ambulance Reserve Fund and the EMS Department (see below: Actions). The FinCom and Town Accountant Deb Potter reviewed the Ambulance Reserve Fund:
 - eligible expenses labor costs, salaries and benefits (including the Workmen's Compensation self insurance, which was a heavy burden on the Fund (see 10/4/18 Minutes p.3)—and purchase of public safety vehicles and equipment.
 - changes in Medicare/Medicaid payment and selection of Oak Bluffs as part of a statistical reporting study,
 - continuing issues with the Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH) (see 1/9/20 Minutes p.2).
- FY19 books were held up by a glitch in Schedule A submission; however establishment of Free Cash did not affect the tax rate, which had already been set.
- Public Building Maintenance presented a shift to contract cleaners and a job title change (see 1/9/20 Minutes p.2).

• **Accountant's Comments** - None

• **Member Comments**

The FinCom revisited the issue of the vote to strike the conversation on Chief John Rose (see 1/9/20 Minutes p.2). Richard Weiss (having heard about the vote from Sherry Countryman) told the press about it during an interview about another subject. The press then called Chair Bill Vrooman who stated the vote was taken to allow the Selectmen to release the information as the appropriate source. The reporter then contacted Recorder Marni Lipke to listen to the audiotape of the meeting. Richard Weiss strongly and repeatedly protested the vote and his right to talk about the problem especially in light of Selectmen executive sessions and Chief Rose's lies. However he also protested press actions, since they published his quote against his wishes. The debate covered a number of issues:

- open meeting law and the public's right to all information from a public meeting;
 - the balance between closed door sessions and public right to know;
 - complex nature of personnel confidentiality laws as another reason for the vote to strike;
 - press rights to notes, audio or video tapes, and draft minutes of public meetings;
 - objections to Mr. Weiss' action when he was not present at the meeting in question;
 - Town Administrator Bob Whritenour's report on the issue;
 - Chair request that FinCom members inform him when or after talking to the press and/or members referring the press to the Chair for comment;
 - differentiating between speaking as a private citizen vs. as an elected Town representative;
 - public misperception of complex Town process and actions;
 - press goals and objectives on truth and selling papers.
- Chair Bill Vrooman announced he would be stepping down as Chair in April but would continue as a FinCom member (see below: Actions).

• **Public Comments** - None

• **Adjourn**

• **MIKE TAUS MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:00PM; RICHARD WEISS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

continued

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Meetings/Events:

OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, January 23, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, January 30, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, February 6, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, February 13, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, February 20, 2020 - OB Library
Nomination Form Deadline - Thursday, February 27, 2020
OB FinCom Budget Hearing - 5:00PM, Thursday, February 27, 2020, TBD
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 5, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 12, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 19, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom Budget recommendation deadline March 20, 2020
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, April 2, 2020 - OB Library
Special & Annual Town Meeting - 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 14, 2020
Town Election - Thursday, April 16, 2020
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, April 23, 2020 - OB Library

Action List

- Bill V. – reserve first floor Library Conference Room for 1/30/20 meeting.
- Bill V. – request a list of pay equity changes from Bob Whritenour.
- Deb/John Rose – send Ambulance Reserve Budget breakdown.
- Deb – resend actuals.
- All – consider who to elect as Chair in April/May 2020.

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings

- Bob G. – keep Greg informed of all meeting issues.
- Sherry/Bob/Maura/Richard – pick up nomination forms for 2/27/20 submission deadline.
- Future Agenda Items:

Trash/Waste Analysis	Reserve Fund Increase
Town Cleaning Services Analysis	Embarkation Fund Policy

Documents on file:

- Agenda 1/16/20
- Sign In Sheet 1/16/20
- Vrooman/Brough email re: Dept. Organization Charts (6 p.) 1/10/20
- Vrooman/Whritenour cover email re: Treasurer Collector Budget 1/14/20
- Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, Department Budget Submissions for FY21 (12 p.)
- Town of Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, Department Budget Submissions for FY21
- Vrooman/Potter cover email re: FinCom and Budget Corrections (2 p.) 1/16/20
- FY21 Draft Budget (11 p.) 1/16/20
- FY21 Draft Budget (10 p.) 1/16/20
- Vrooman/Elvin cover email re: Elder Services Database and Presentation for FinCom 1/16/20
- Martha's Vineyard Senior Services Mapping 2019 (24 p.)
- database (10 p.)

- **Minutes approved as amended by the OB FinCom 1/23/20.**