

**Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, January 30, 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: Selectmen: Chair – Brian Packish, Jason Balboni, Mike Santoro,
Town Administrator – Bob Whritenour, 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 5:05pm.
- MIKE SANTORO MOVED TO OPEN THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING AT 5:05PM; JASON BALBONI SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

(Recorder's Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• **Approval of Minutes (1/23)**

- **WALTER VAIL MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 23, 2020 MINUTES AS CORRECTED FOR TYPOS; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

• **Selectmen's Budget** (See 1/9/20 documents on file.)

Town Administrator Bob Whritenour had presented the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Draft Budget to both the Selectmen and the FinCom, however, the Board of Selectmen were unexpectedly occupied with some extended Executive Sessions and did not carry out their usual budget discussion and recommendation. Consequently the Budget Draft was sent to the FinCom for comment, reversing the usual practice. There was a discussion on how to proceed and then on a number of Budget aspects.

- There was no override this year.
- The FinCom had reviewed the following Social Services (see 12/19/19 Minutes p.1-4): Center For Living (CFL); First Stop; Counseling, Outreach and Referral for Elders (CORE); Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard (HAMV); Vineyard Health Care Access Program (VHCAP); and Dukes County: Social Services Department and Substance Disorder/Homelessness Department. These were all level funded, except HAMV, which was moving towards a new structure.
 - The proliferation of non-profits and duplication of services was briefly revisited.
- Due to a strong financial position, Cape Cod Municipal Health Group (CCMHG) was able to vote level funded health insurance rates, which would save about \$145,000. There was general feeling that \$100,000 should be committed to Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) to reach the Town goal of \$200,000 per year (see Minutes: 6/6/19 p.1 & 1/9/20 p.1).
- Due to the spike in Oak Bluffs Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) enrollment/assessment the Town was not able advance any Department initiatives.
 - Town Administrator Bob Whritenour advised as follows (see 1/9/20 Minutes p.1-2).
 - Local receipts should continue to be conservatively estimated in case of economic down-turn or unforeseen events.
 - He was satisfied with Fire Dept. extra trainings as currently recommended.

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- Highway Dept. increases could be slightly augmented.
- The Board of Health (BOH) requested a full-time assistant (32 hrs./wk.) that was reluctantly reduced to part-time, but could be expanded to increase efficiency.
- Here and at the end of the meeting the Public Health Department Budget was considered.
 - The BOH raised its fees for the first time in 10 years) to more accurately reflect costs; the increase would bring in a total of ~ \$4,945 which would revert to the General Fund. The fees varied depending on size, capacity and type (septic, revisions, restaurant, etc.). and were now in line with other State fee structures—other Island towns were likely to revise fees.
 - For the first time last year the Department was able to inspect every restaurant.
 - Proliferating, unfunded State requirements and mandates, as well as the plastic bottle ban and possible composting regulations, were increasing inspection workloads and scope.
- The Oak Bluffs School (OBS) Budget was at 2.98% having completed a 5 yr. initiative to match staffing to enrollment growth. The Residential Tuition was mandated. The School was commended for having the lowest per pupil cost on the Island, delivering excellent education within a tight budget and raising \$30,000 at the latest fundraiser.
- The Fire and Police Chiefs had worked out a schedule on ambulance rebuilds and cruiser replacements (see 1/23/20 Minutes p.1). Vehicles were vetted by the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and purchased from the State Bid list at substantial savings. There was a discussion on “value engineering” vehicles and basic requirements. The Town was moving to hybrid and electric vehicles. Charging station installation (one behind and one in front of the Police Station) were grant subsidized—fees were considered for public use.
 - [The FinCom requested a response from Fire/Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Chief John Rose on the FY21 Budget.](#)
- The Selectmen reported they had been working hard on sharing services with other towns, talking about fire and police chiefs, building inspectors, shellfish constables, and animal control officers. It was emphasized that combined funding would increase salary levels sufficiently to attract stable, quality candidates.

• Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Agreement

(See documents on file, & Minutes: 2/28/19 p.7, 5/2/19 p.2-3, 6/6/19 p.2, 6/20/19 p.2, 7/10/19, 7/18/19, 9/3/19, 9/4/19, 10/2/19 p.1.)

Oak Bluffs had unilaterally forced a debate on the MVRHS allocation formula by rejecting the Feasibility Study, and had proposed equalized valuation instead. However the ensuing debate by six Towns' Selectmen and FinComs had resulted in walkouts by one or two towns, and was at an impasse, including refusal of outside mediators.

- Enrollment/assessment spike made budget planning very difficult—which would be compounded if large bond debt payments were included in the fluctuations.
- The FinCom requested Selectmen input and commitment on strategies to move forward.
 - The School leaders should also be involved in the conversation.
- Towns had been more amenable to separating capital allocation from operational costs and possibly to compensating Oak Bluffs for lost real estate taxes.
- Mr. Whritenour drafted four formula options: current regional/enrollment/statutory (FY20 OB share 27.1%), County allocation (OB Share 14%), County 50/50 formula (OB Share 21%), one Town/one vote with Aquinnah as half, the other half split between the five remaining towns.
- The situation was likely to be forced by a facilities crisis (roof, failed heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC), inspections, etc.), at which point the Town would be in a difficult position.

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- It was important to emphasize to the entire Island that the assessment change impact on individual taxes would not be catastrophic.
- When the MVRHS Regional Agreement was originally drafted in the 1950s the six Town tax rates were fairly similar and there were two formulas: capital and operational.
- There was considerable debate on how to bring Edgartown to the table.
- Petitioned articles in other Annual Town Meetings (ATMs) and Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or booster club advocacy/voting blocks were another possible solution.
- Current MVRHS capital projects were the athletic fields and the dust collection system.
- The campus was used as a community resource after school hours, including the Performing Arts Center (PAC).
- The Selectmen suggested working with the Towns one at a time to build consensus, and directed Mr. Whritenour to reach out to Tisbury Town Administrator Jay Grande to schedule a joint selectmen meeting also including one FinCom and one School Committee representative from each town.

• **Accountant's Comments** - None

• **Member Comments** (See below: Actions.)

- Contract negotiations were beginning. Greg Thornton agreed to represent the FinCom.

• **Public Comments** - None

• **Adjourn**

• **MIKE TAUS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 6:57PM; MAURA MCGROARTY AND RICHARD WEISS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

• **MIKE SANTORO MOVED TO ADJOURN THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING AT 6:57PM; JASON BALBONI SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Meetings/Events:

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

- Bob W. - contact Mr. Grande re: joint Selectmen meeting on MVRHS assessment.
- inform OBSC members for a representative to attend.
- Bob G./Greg - choose FinCom representative to attend.

continued >

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Action List (cont.)

- Bob W./Bob G./Greg – schedule Fire/EMS/Ambulance Reserve interview.
- Greg – Negotiations Committee: 11:00AM, Tuesday, 2/4/11 at Town Hall Admin. Office.
- 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 1/30/20
- Sign In Sheet 1/30/20
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District January 6, 2020 Certified FY21 Budget Example of Regional Formula Calculations
- Summary of Human Service Cost for Martha's Vineyard by Funding Formula Fiscal Year 2019
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District Warrant Article for 2020 Annual Town Meetings, Article Capital Project – Dust Collection System (2 p.) 1/17/20

- Minutes approved as corrected by the OB FinCom 2/6/20.