

Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 6, 2020 5:00 pm
Oak Bluffs Library Conference Room

Present: Acting Chair – Bob Gaffey, Sherry Countryman, Bernie Crossland,
Maura McGroarty, Greg Thornton, Mike Taus, Walter Vail, Richard Weiss,
Absent: Bill Vrooman,
Town: Town Administrator – Bob Whritenour, Town Accountant – Deb Potter,
Highways – Richie Combra, Parks – Amy Billings,
Affordable Housing Committee – Mark Leonard,
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 5:03pm.
(Recorder's Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• **Approval of Minutes (1/23)**

• **MIKE TAUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 30, 2020 MINUTES AS CORRECTED; GREG THORNTON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—BOB GAFFEY** due to absence.

• **Parks Department Budget Review** (See documents on file.)

- Although the Ocean Park contract had increased Crossland was still the most cost effective contractor by far, also working on the: Harbor, Police Station, irrigation, mowings, fertilizing etc.
- It was difficult to find sufficient summer labor for park maintenance and oversight, and the Department was looking for a more stable, reliable workforce. Another full-time seasonal Park position was considered too expensive. Lifeguard salaries were justifiably raised to avoid attrition.
- Capital projects were progressing adequately: tennis court resurfacing (in near future), Lagoon stair repair (completed); North Bluff re-nourishment took priority over State Beach. Pay Beach/South Bluff seawall replacement was a large, future project—permitting process was long and onerous.
- The Conservation Commission (ConCom) permitted 3 beach-rakings per year as rocks helped prevent erosion. Pay Beach was now considered an engineered beach. [The FinCom suggested renting the beach-rake out to other municipalities.](#) An active Beach Committee advocated for beneficial as well as less practical projects; for example, they were instrumental in improving handicapped entrance access, but also requested removal of current sand and replacement with sifted material.
- Nothing further was planned for Waban Park improvements. Future goals might be completed irrigation and wall repair.
- Thanks were exchanged.

• **Highway Department Budget Review** (See documents on file.)

The. Town Administrator Bob Whritenour stated that he had cut the Department to fairly minimal increases, so that any residual funds could be dedicated to Highways as the “best bang for the buck”.

Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
February 6, 2020

2

- Public Building Maintenance and Recycling Disposal were raised to match actuals.
- Resurfacing Roads covered: dirt road maintenance, catch basin cleaning, pothole filling, concrete resurfacing and blind striping. The Department surveyed the roads and prioritized work every 5 years. Chapter 90 funds could be used on any highway projects. More major resurfacing was proceeding according to Streetscape planning.
- There was a discussion on garbage collection. The Department made several studies and continued to monitor the issue, comparing costs (salaries, fuel and capital).
- Sticker revenues were sufficient to cover costs, although recycling deficits continued.
- Municipal pickups (Main St., Harbor, etc.) would have to be covered by the Town, even with an outside contract.
- Equipment Lease was a misleading title. The 1994 rubbish truck would get surplus and replaced in FY21, keeping Equipment Leasing fairly stable as the street sweeper payments were completed.
- The Department had 10 staff: Department Head, Administrative Assistant, foremen, heavy equipment operators, laborers, custodians.
- The new Tree Maintenance line was a good beginning (see 1/9/20 Minutes p.2) to address issues highlighted in a 3-4 yr. Survey.
- Workmen's Comp was average or low for such departments.
- The FinCom commended the condition of the OB roads and thanked Mr. Combra for his time and work.

• Accountant's Comments (See documents on file.)

- Other Gov't Support in the current FY21 budget draft, broke out County programs embedded in the Town Budget: Vineyard Health Care Access Program (VHCAP), Center For Living (CFL) Operating Budget, and CFL Principal & Interest (debt not directly related to Town).
- Free Cash was certified at \$828,966 in the top 5 highest level in 12-14 yrs., some due to huge back taxes. (Wastewater Retained Earnings did not hit the 20% mark, and there would likely be some difficulties as sludge disposal rates were doubled without notice.)
- The Audit was completed and preliminary conversations showed no additional management letter comments and progress on the remaining two issues. They were pleased with Town record keeping. Mr. Whritenour hoped Oak Bluffs could achieve the Comprehensive Financial Award.
- Level funded health insurance rates (see 1/23/20 Minutes p.2) and revised statutory formula assessment figures resulted in \$182,922 savings from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) budget, plus Town savings of \$144,635 (including Oak Bluffs School-OBS). Mr. Whritenour noted the following goals/commitments:
 - \$100,000 increase to reach the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) goal;
 - \$75,000 OBS residential placement tuition requirement;
 - \$82,056 in two Dukes County requests: budget deficit coverage and a Stabilization Fund;
 - \$65,371 Oak Bluffs share of the Emergency Communications System (Sheriff).
- Other items of note included:
 - \$21,000 MV Youth Task Force article request;
 - \$142,000 FY20 bond interest payment due in April/May 2020;
 - Stabilization Fund for unforeseen personnel expenses (e.g. separation costs) versus Reserve Fund investment, as the Reserve Fund could be voted for any un-budgeted expenses.
- Residual funds from the Fire Station construction article could be transferred to another municipal construction project.

**Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
February 6, 2020**

3

• Member Comments

• Public Comments – None

• Adjourn

• MIKE TAUS MOVED TO ADJOURN THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 6:39PM; SHERRY COUNTRYMAN AND BERNIE CROSSLAND SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meetings/Events:

OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, February 20, 2020 - OB Library

Nomination Form Deadline - Thursday, February 27, 2020

OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, February 27, 2020, OB Library

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. – resend email on MVRHS & health insurance savings.
- Parks/Highway – consider renting beach rake to other organizations/municipalities.

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 2/6/20
 - Sign In Sheet 2/6/20
 - Potter email re: Notification of Free Cash Approval (4 p.) 2/3/20
 - Attachment A: Town of Oak Bluffs Information for Bidders, Proposal Contract, Specifications and Bonds For Landscape Maintenance....(2 p.)
 - FY21 Draft Budget (9 p.) 2/6/20
 - Vrooman/Thornton emails re: Oak Bluffs Finance Meeting
 - County of Dukes County Budget Summary 2/4/20 (2 p.)
 - Explanation of Warrant Article for Fund County Stabilization Fund (2 p.)
 - FY20/21 Substance Use Disorder & Homelessness Prevention Budget Request \$30,000 (2 p.)
 - Whritenour/Tierney cover emails re: MVRHS Certified FY21 Budget and Assessments (2 p.) 2/10/20
 - Revised Warrant Article for 2020 Annual Town Meetings, Submitted by: Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District (2 p.)
 - Martha's Vineyard Regional High School District Re-certification of FY21 Budget February 3, 2020 (10 p.)
- Minutes approved by the OB FinCom 2/20/20.**