

Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 14, 2019, 5:00 pm
Oak Bluffs Library Second Floor Conference Room

Present: Chair – Bill Vrooman, Bernie Crossland, Herbert Kiehn, Maura McGroarty,
Walter Vail,

Absent: Bob Gaffey, Ray Moreis, Mike Taus, Richard Weiss,

Town: Town Administrator – Bob Whritenour, Parks – Amy Billings,
Town Accountant – Deb Potter, Highways – Richie Combra,

Others: MVYTF - Mike Joyce, Theresa Manning,
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.
(Recorder's Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• **2020 Highway Department Budget Review** (See documents on file.)

- Then Department was fairly level funded with the standard salary adjustments.
- Equipment Repairs showed a minimal increase in line with yearly overspending. New trucks did not significantly reduce the line since it covered all town vehicles including police cruisers—consolidated from all Town Departments some years ago to save funds.
- The front-end loader lease would end this year, and Department Head Richie Combra hoped to expend the line on a new rubbish truck lease.
- Equipment was misleadingly titled and comprised bundled payments on three trucks.
- Farm Pond Dredging also covered the Little Bridge Channel dredge.
- The FinCom asked Richie Combra to clarify/confirm a change from a 20 hr./wk. Administrative Assistant to 30 hr./wk.
- The electric vehicles greatly benefited Town staff, but had not reduced Fuel costs.
- Richie Combra received a \$1,500 stipend as Tree Warden for coordinating with Eversource/Nstar and answering resident calls. It had been in a different budget location and not consistently paid whereas it was now in Highways and paid.
- The Department was drafting a Request For Proposal (RFP) to outsource Building Maintenance for better quality custodial care—saving were likely to be minimal if any.
- The Town was in intense and ongoing negotiations with CRAPO landfill (New Bedford) about the volume of Oak Bluffs solid waste—currently at an excellent rate. However, the industry was changing rapidly so Tipping Fees were likely to rise sharply in the near future. Composting, recycling, and other waste reduction measures should be promoted.
- Mr. Combra considered that Town trash pickup about paid for itself. The Department looked at outsourcing two or three years ago but found private firms more expensive, mostly because of the large number of municipal bins (Circuit Avenue, Harbor, etc.) the Town would still be picking up.

• **2020 Parks Department Budget Review** (See documents on file.)

- The popular pickle ball courts costs were only a portion of the tennis court line painting.
- The Maintenance Ocean Park contract was rebid at a higher rate to include more services that had been separately billed (irrigation maintenance, extra parks, etc.). No other company came close to the Crosslands price.
- Town Beach Expense covered raking. The tractor was also used as a mower. There was a discussion on sand/rock complaints.
- Other Expenses included: Niantic Park walkways maintenance, Hagerty Tree services, etc.

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- The Sunset Park project was on the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) list.
- The Department was hoping to hire enough lifeguards for the summer but seasonal help was hard to find.

• Martha's Vineyard Youth Task Force (MVYTF) Warrant Request Review

(See documents on file.)

The MVYTF was established in 2004 by the Dukes County Health Council (DCHC) to address at risk behaviors for school aged youth. It had a strong network built up by long-time, consistent responsiveness: police, schools, parents, YMCA, Martha's Vineyard Community Services (MVCS), Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH), Island Wide Youth Collaborative (IWYC), etc. Their focus was on steady, statistically measurable and evidence-based long-term initiatives such as:

- regular youth risk surveys—through the schools;
 - long negotiations resulting in School Resource Officers (SROs);
 - liquor store compliance checks (including paying for extra police shifts);
 - recovery coaching;
 - vetted speakers and films on substance addiction and brain/physiological impacts;
 - police and parent response to basement or un-chaperoned parties;
 - medicine drop-boxes,
 - working to address the e-cigarette trend and the legalization of marijuana.
- MVYTF advised other organizations on effectiveness of initiatives. For example, research showed a child's reaction to an ex-addict speaker was that addiction was okay because now they were being paid to speak at schools.
 - Since about 2008, MVYTF had been operating under a \$125,000 five year State grant renewed for a second five yrs., and a three year renewable \$100,000 Federal grant. When the State grant ended, the MVYTF decided to become a 501c3 (all papers filed, waiting delayed final approval) to allow it to fundraise and facilitate further grant funding.
 - The \$225,000 budget was reduced to \$200,000 and the two staff moved to half time in order to sustain their work during the transition. As more comfortable with the Schools than Dukes County, the All Island School Committee (AISC) was asked to be fiscal agent through a Request For Proposal (RFP) mechanism similar to Adult Community Education Martha's Vineyard (ACE MV).
 - The MVYTF proposed \$100,000 (Island total) in one-year-only Town articles to bridge the bureaucratic gap. MVYTF assured the FinCom that as experienced/connected fundraisers and grant writers with a good track record, and measurable results, they considered \$100,000 a reasonable annual goal once the non-profit was established. They were proud of bring \$2,500,000 to the Island without requesting any Town funding.
 - Chair Bill Vrooman related negative comments from the Dukes County Manager. MVYTF Program Coordinator Theresa Manning acknowledged difficult relations:
 - offer of Center For Living Second Floor at \$10,000/yr. in expenses; and
 - a lower salary scale. (Town Accountant Deb Potter pointed out that salaries might be lower but the added County benefits were probably comparable or more expensive.)

• Approve Minutes (1/24/19, 1/31/19, 2/7/19)

• HERB KEIHN MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 24, 2019 MINUTES AS AMENDED; BERNIE CROSSLAND SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT.

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- **HERB KEIHN MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 31, 2019 MINUTES AS AMENDED; BERNIE CROSSLAND SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT.**
- **HERB KEIHN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 7, 2019 MINUTES AS AMENDED; WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT.**

• **Other Budget Topics**

- An embarkation tax of 50¢ per passenger on ferries over a certain size (Steamship Authority (SSA), Hyline, Island Queen, etc.) netted Oak Bluffs about \$190,000 per year. Revenue spending was restricted to matters related to the impact of the ferry passenger influx—currently incorporated into the Police Budget for summer officers.
 - Ferry (or embarkation) funds could be designated for other uses (dredging, harbor, signage, etc.) but the Police budget would have to compensate for the \$200,000 loss through the real estate tax base, which would challenge the Proposition 2 ½ limit.
 - Ferry revenue remained fairly stable. Town Administrator Bob Whritenour froze the Police commitment at \$200,000 and rolled over any residuals from year to year. [The FinCom suggested some of the fund be used to offset harbor projects such as \\$80,000 for jetty repair.](#) Mr. Whritenour did not want to spend down to \$0.
 - Current public perception was that the \$200,000 ferry fees were in addition to the published Police Budget when in fact they were already included. [The FinCom recommended language to explain that ferry revenue was used to offset the Town Budget.](#)
- The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee met and approved \$438,000 worth of projects for \$653,000 in Free Cash, allowing funds for the social services articles.
 - Bob Whritenour highlighted changes to the proposed Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Budget, which he was happy to report showed some flexibility.
 - Increases were from the first draft were: Dukes County Retirement System (DCRS) (\$80,000) and the Arts Council (\$500).
 - Reductions included: health insurance, Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC), and the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS).
 - He advised raise and appropriate language for annual social service articles, to incorporate them into the tax levy rather than the more risky Free Cash category.
 - Dukes County social service articles (not including MVYTF) totaled \$57,657, with the \$14,100 additional County Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) contribution article (see 1/31/19 Minutes p.2). There was a brief conversation on mandated County equalized valuation (EQV) formula versus the Edgartown backed 50% population-50% real estate value formula.
 - The Sheriff was requesting \$56,518 (see below: Actions).
 - Total of the above articles \$128,275, leaving a slight surplus that would be used to increase the Town OPEB contribution.
 - Mr. Whritenour reported:
 - no Selectmen support for the proposed Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank;
 - so far no Adult Community Education Martha's Vineyard (ACE MV) article.

• **Accountant's Comments**

- Deb Potter was talking to Massachusetts Dept. of Revenue (DOR) regarding placing social services in a discrete budget department.

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- The FY19 Budget showed no substantive problems. A couple Departments needed transfers and surprisingly the Police would break even if they continued on their current course. The MVRHS SRO was now segregated into a detail line.
- A reserve was budgeted for unexpected employee expenses (retirements, resignations, etc.); for example separation costs for Shellfish Constable Dave Grunden who was retiring on June 30th—long term replacement plans were not yet known.

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

- The FinCom would examine/recommend the Budget in detail at the February 21st meeting and vote the Warrant on the February 28th meeting.
- Chief John Rose's contract allowed for overtime and his use varied from year to year: very low in 2017, higher in 2018 due to filling shifts during a high staff vacancy period.
- Police Chief Erik Blake was confirmed as not stepping away from Emergency Management so there would be no extra compensation for Chief Rose.

• **Public Comments** – None

• **Adjourn**

Having lost quorum, Chair Bill Vrooman adjourned the meeting at 7:11PM.

Meetings/Events:

OB FinCom Public Forum- 5:00PM, Thursday, February 21, 28, 2019

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

- Bob W. - email FinCom Sheriff information.
- All - go through budget in detail in preparation for 2/21/19 meeting.

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings (cont.)

• Future Agenda Items:

Police Department Finances	Trash/Waste Analysis
Parking Mitigation Follow-Up	Reserve Fund Increase
Town Cleaning Services Analysis	Assessor's Office re: PILOTs
Auditor Management Letter Update (January, March, June, September)	
Embarkation Fund Policy	

Documents on file:

- Agenda 2/14/19
- Sign In Sheet 2/14/19
- Martha's Vineyard Youth Task Force (4 p.)
- YTF stickers
- MVC FY2020 Final Budget (2 p.) 1/17/19
- Martha's Vineyard Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2018 Highlights (2 p.)
- FY19 YTD (19-13), FY20 Draft Budget (9 p.) 2/14/19

• **Minutes approved as amended for spelling by the OB FinCom 2/21/19.**