

Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 27, 2020 5:00 pm
Oak Bluffs Library Conference Room

Present: Acting Chair – Bob Gaffey, Sherry Countryman, Maura McGroarty,
Greg Thornton, Walter Vail,
Absent: Bernie Crossland, Mike Taus, Bill Vrooman, Richard Weiss,
Town: Selectman – Mike Santoro, Town Administrator – Bob Whritenour,
Town Accountant – Deb Potter,
Fire/EMS - Matthew Bradley, Patty Culkins, Manuel Rose,
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 5:07pm.
(Recorder's Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• **Fire Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Budget Review** (See documents on file.)

- The FinCom focused on Town operating budgets but discussed all the components of the Department:

- Town Operating Budget EMS/911 (- \$368,000):
 - half EMS Chief and half EMS Lieutenant salaries,
- Ambulance Reserve Fund/Transport (- \$1,430,000) shown as line item/detail in appendix:
 - half EMS Chief and half EMS Lieutenant salaries,
 - all paramedic and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) salaries,
- Town Operating Budget Fire,
- Town Operating Budget Emergency Management (EM).
- [The FinCom requested a breakdown of Expenses/Other Charges](#) (gas, maintenance, supplies, etc.) in all the Department components, e.g. ambulance repair was a major EMS/911 expense.
- A normal dayshift was one 911 crew and two Transport crews with administrative support.
- Rough statistics showed about 800 Transport trips, 500 911 trips and about 3-400 cancelation/refusals.
- The Department proposed shifting a paramedic from Transport to Town funding,
- A financial/statistical transport study was still being prepared for negotiations with the Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH) (see Minutes: 6/6/19 p.3, & 10/3/19 p.4, & 11/21/19 p.3 & 1/9/20 p.2). The Hospital advertised for private ambulance transport service but received no responses, and so might be more flexible about compensating for the impact of recent Medicare/Medicaid regulations. The matter remained a Town priority.
- Town Administrator Bob Whritenour refused Department proposals to shift a paramedic from Transport to Town funding several years running, however, if negotiations failed, the Town would have to consider Department infrastructure changes to absorb expenses now billed to the Ambulance Reserve—likely involving an override of - \$600,000.
- There was some confusion over boats, Fire Department and EM, large and small. Crafts were used for boat fires, dive calls, rescues, etc. Other Towns also had boats. [The FinCom requested a detail on the number of trips.](#)
- Staff pay was mostly unchanged. Stipends were not subject to Cost Of Living Adjustments (COLAs), but had recently been increased. Volunteers were hard to recruit given an aging population and changes in mandated training hours. To compensate, the Towns had strong mutual aid agreements.

Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
February 27, 2020

2

- The Fire Dept. proposed adding a Fire Prevention Officer (see 1/9/20 Minutes p.2) to relieve the Chief of inspection burdens and increase commercial compliance:
 - quarterly commercial inspections,
 - residential inspections at sale, renovation, construction, etc.
 - [The FinCom suggested inspection fees be reviewed and adjusted for a sliding scale.](#)
- Other changes included:
 - extending the night/weekend coverage to weekend days, and
 - training for special high intensity incidents.
 - A request to expand the waterfront boat crew training staffing pool was rejected.
- Although new houses were safer, Departments now struggled with automatic fire alarm (AFA) calls. Many Circuit Avenue buildings without alarms or sprinklers (pre-existing/non-conforming) and the 151 Campground buildings were areas of concern.
- Emergency Management supplies (cots, water, etc.) for ferry service suspension, hurricanes and other disasters had to be monitored and kept current.

• **Approval of Minutes**

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 20, 2020 MINUTES AS CORRECTED FOR TYPOS; GREG THORNTON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—SHERRY COUNTRYMAN** due to absence.

• **Warrant Articles** (See documents on file.)

Mr. Whritenour distributed a Warrant draft, warning the FinCom that it was Free Cash “heavy” and likely to be changed/trimmed back. It was organized by funding categories:

- Town Budget, capital articles, bonding articles, Community Preservation (CPC), then outside funding requests, then bylaw changes and petitioned articles.
- Town Accountant Deb Potter noted the Social Services separation requested by the FinCom would be reported differently in the Warrant to avoid confusion.
- Petition articles (requiring 10 signatures) had to be included on the warrant but were often legally problematic.
- Residential tuitions were mandated but separated in an article as an extraordinary expense.
- The Bylaw amendment was crafted to conform to State “Green Town” requirements.

• **Public Comments** - None

• **Accountant’s Comments** - None

• **Member Comments** - None

• **Adjourn**

• **GREG THORNTON MOVED TO ADJOURN THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 6:28PM; WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

continued

**Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
February 27, 2020**

3

Meetings/Events:

- 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

- Matt Bradley - report Other Charges/Expenses breakdown for Fire, 911, EM & Reserve.
- Matt Bradley - report number of Fire/Rescue/EM boat trips.
- Bob Whritenour - consider fire inspection fee sliding scale.

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings

- Bob G. - keep Greg informed of all meeting issues.
- Future Agenda Items:

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

Documents on file:

- Agenda 2/27/20
- Sign In Sheet 2/27/20
- Town of Oak Bluffs Fire-EMS Department, Department Services, Goals and Performance Measures FY21 (13 p.)
- Draft Warrant for Special Town Meeting, Commonwealth of Massachusetts (3 p.)
- Draft Warrant for Annual Town Meeting, Commonwealth of Massachusetts (31 p.)

- **Minutes approved by the OB FinCom 3/5/20**