

**Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, March 11, 2021, 5:00 pm
Via Zoom Conference**

Present: Chair –Bob Gaffey, Bernie Crossland, Sherry Countryman, Maura McGroarty,
Mike Taus*, Walter Vail, Bill Vrooman, Richard Weiss,
Absent: None,
Others: Recorder - Marni Lipke
Town: Town Administrator – Bob Whritenour, Town Accountant – Deb Potter,
* Late arrivals or early departures of OB FinCom members, noted solely to mark vote counts.

- The Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) came to order at 5:01pm.
(Recorder's Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Approval of Minutes

• **MIKE TAUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 4, 2021 MINUTES AS AMENDED FOR TYPOS; BILL VROOMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• **Follow Up to Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen (BOS)** (See 3/9/21 Minutes.)

The FinCom agreed the meeting ran too long and was not productive regarding:

- little new information on the Park & Ride, other than an emphasis on business owners;
- no direction on Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) capital requests.
- It was noted that the FinCom bylaws included advisory capacity over non-monetary Town matters and that recommendations could be given on Town Meeting floor if an issue needed discussion after the publication deadline.

• **Vote on Remaining Warrant Articles** (See Documents on file & 3/4/21 Minutes p.2-7.)

Annual Town Meeting (ATM)

• ATM Article #5 – \$55,000 Municipal Building Maintenance – Free Cash

A Library window had been repaired but this article would fund other Library building problems.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$55,000 FOR MUNICIPAL BUILDING MAINTENANCE; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• ATM Article #22 – Bikeway Easements– Chapter 90

- The bikeway through the Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH) parking lot was unsafe for vehicles and bikes as well as unpopular with cyclists and the curved road was particularly dangerous at that spot. The parking lot path was a temporary measure while the bikeway was being planned and constructed—in keeping with an MVH agreement requiring bikeway support.
- There were concerns on the new configuration of the County Road intersection. The Town was aware of the difficulty and had been in contact with the State.
- A property owner's objections publicized in the press referred to State-owned easements.

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• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR BIKEWAY EASEMENTS; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• ATM Article #25 – \$510,000 Park & Ride – Appropriate
FinCom issues included:

- differing dollar amounts on the article and the information material;
- taxpayer burden on a measure that benefited mostly business owners;
- lack of funding and/or planning for regular bus service to and from the lot;
- downtown traffic congestion limited to 3-4 months per year;
- non-paying lot versus kiosk/sticker revenue and lack of enforcement planning;
- need for lighting for late night restaurant workers;
- commercial vehicle use.

It was noted that removing business employee vehicles from the congested downtown would increase parking and accessibility for all OB residents year round. In addition the Town would greatly benefit by shifting commercial parking stickers now assigned to Town Hall, waterfront and North Bluff to the Park & Ride. Spending on Town infrastructure stimulated economic development and investment.

- The Park & Ride satellite lot was a primary Selectmen goal for many years, as parking was the #1 complaint. The conceptual design was Town funded and the next phase could include further planning and adaptation. It was the Selectmen and Administration responsibility to resolve operational issues.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$510,000 FOR PARK AND RIDE; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 1 AYE, 6 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—NAY, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, MIKE TAUS—NAY, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, BOB GAFFEY—ABSTAIN.**

• ATM Article #27 -4) – \$104,800 Harbor Homes – CPC

Member concerns were about insufficient funds for the property purchase— which was in Oak Bluffs.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$104,800 FOR HARBOR HOMES; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• ATM Article #28 – \$52,163 Dukes County Communications – Raise & Appropriate

The assessment formula by call volume was revisited (see 3/5/20 Minutes p.6 #23). Originally Oak Bluffs requested a number of Islandwide agencies' calls located in Oak Bluffs (MVH, MVRHS, Woodside, etc.) be exempted from the OB assessment. However Town Administrator Bob Whritenour negotiated (and advocated for) a 50% flat fee/ 50% call volume formula that worked out to be more advantageous than the exemption. A 100% 6-Town flat fee would overburden the more rural Aquinnah and Chilmark taxpayers.

- In addition measures were instituted to increase local control: a technical board of all Towns' public safety chiefs supervised/monitored operations, and a financial board of Town Administrators oversaw finances. A robust public safety communications system was vital.

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• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$52,163 FOR DUKES COUNTY REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 6 AYES, 1 NAY, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—ABSTAIN, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• ATM Article #29) – \$68,197 Human Services – Raise & Appropriate

Member comments suggested the situation was hopeless.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$68,197 FOR HUMAN SERVICES; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 2 AYES, 4 NAYS, 2 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—NAY, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, BOB GAFFEY—ABSTAIN.**

• ATM Article #30 – \$7,763 Dukes County Stabilization – Raise & Appropriate

Given covid reduction of services the FinCom questioned if this amount was needed.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$7,763 FOR DUKES COUNTY STABILIZATION; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 0 AYES, 7 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—NAY, BERNIE CROSSLAND—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—ABSTAIN, BILL VROOMAN—NAY, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, MIKE TAUS—NAY, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, BOB GAFFEY—NAY.**

• ATM Article #31 – \$14,796 Adult Continuing Education-MV – Raise & Appropriate

The service would never be completely self-sufficient (see 1/14/21 Minutes p.3-4). There was an objection to funding personal expansion courses in addition to the trades education. The program might become more affiliated with the MVRHS—aside from the current matching grant partnership on vocational learning.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$14,796 FOR ACE MV; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 0 AYES, 7 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—NAY, BERNIE CROSSLAND—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—NAY, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, BOB GAFFEY—NAY.**

• ATM Article #32 – \$73,128.65 MV Regional High School (MVRHS) Electric Buses – Borrowing

The discussion included:

- possible future grant opportunities (instead of this tight year due to Covid-19);
- current prohibitive capital cost suggesting the MVRHS wait till it was reduced;
- more urgent MVRHS spending priorities;
- replacement of buses already scheduled for rotation;
- substantial savings over the 10 year vehicle lifetime (see Minutes 1/14/21 p.3 & 2/11/21 p.1).

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$73,128.65 FOR MVRHS ELECTRIC BUSES; BILL VROOMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 5 AYES, 2 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN.**

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• ATM Article #33 – \$84,579.65 MVRHS Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) –
The Article was taken off the ballot but remained on the Warrant. The substantial MVRHS OPEB budget line was noted in the Executive Summary. It was reported that an OBSC member advocated rejecting it.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$84,579.65 FOR MVRHS OPEB; BILL VROOMAN SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 0 AYES, 7 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—NAY, BERNIE CROSSLAND—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—NAY, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, BOB GAFFEY—NAY.**

• ATM Article #34 – \$183,572.57 MVRHS Technology Upgrade – Borrowing
MVRHS Facilities Director Mike Taus emphasized the desperate need for the work. Others considered constant updates and maintenance should be part of the MVRHS Budget. There was a discussion on MVRHS Committee dysfunction, the large MVRHS budget contingency, and the financial advantages and political impossibility of regionalizing into a one Island government.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$183,572.57 FOR MVRHS TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE; BILL VROOMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 3 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, BOB GAFFEY—NAY.**

• ATM Article #35 – \$8,368.02 Superintendent’s Shared Services Office Repairs – Borrowing
A new building was needed.

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$3,388.02 FOR SUPERINTENDENT’S SHARED SERVICES OFFICE REPAIRS; BILL VROOMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AY, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

Special Town Meeting (STM)

• STM Article #1 – \$100,000 Year End Shortfalls in Expenditures – Free Cash

• **BILL VROOMAN MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$100,000 FOR YEAR END SHORTFALLS IN EXPENDITURES; WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 6 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• STM Article #2 – \$50,000 Year End Shortfalls in Salaries and Wages – Free Cash

• **BILL VROOMAN MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$50,000 FOR YEAR END SHORTFALLS IN SALARIES AND WAGES; WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 6 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• STM Article #3 – \$17,061 Prior Year Information Technology Software Bill – Free Cash
The sources were accounted for.

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• **BILL VROOMAN MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR \$17,061 FOR PRIOR YEAR IT SOFTWARE BILL; WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS**

• STM Article #4 – Mass. General Law (MGL) 200a §9A Alternate Procedure for Abandoned Funds (See 3/5/20 Minutes p.8-9 #2.)

This was a housekeeping measure to institutionalize past practice. The article was eliminated from the 2020 Town Meeting for streamlining purposes.

• **BILL VROOMAN MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE FOR MGL 200A §9A ALTERNATE PROCEDURE FOR ABANDONED FUNDS; WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

• **Accountant's Comments**

The Selectmen invited the FinCom to a joint workshop (see below: Meetings/Events). The joint FinCom/Selectmen meeting was posted by the Selectmen's Office.

• **Public Comments** - None

• **Member Comments** - None

The FinCom would discuss and vote Department budgets at its next meeting.

• **Adjourn**

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 6:45PM; BILL VROOMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: WALTER VAIL—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE.**

Meetings/Events:

OB BOS/FinCom - 4:30PM, Friday, March 12, 2021 - Zoom

OB FinCom - TBD 5:00PM, Thursdays, March 18, 25, 2021 - Zoom

STM/ATM - April 13, 2021

Action List

- Bob W. - Edits:
 - Change introduction from MVRHS PAC to Tabernacle
 - STM #2 \$50,000 (fifty-thousand dollars)
 - ATM #23 typo 7 Ayes, 1 Nay,

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings:

- Bob G. – coordinate/schedule quarterly meetings with BOS.
- FinCom work with Town Admin. on updating Town fee structure, licensing, BOH, etc.

• **Future Agenda Items:**

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

continued >

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Documents on file:

- Agenda 3/11/21
- Warrant for Special Town Meeting, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, (4 p.)
- Warrant for Annual Town Meeting, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, (48 p.)
- Warrant for Annual Town Meeting, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, (revised p.1)
- Town of Oak Bluffs, April 13, 2021 Annual and Special Town Meetings, Draft Warrant Articles,
March 4, 2021

• Minutes approved as amended for a typo by the OB FinCom 3/18/21