

**Town of Oak Bluffs**  
**Finance and Advisory Committee**  
**Thursday, May 16, 2019, 5:00 pm**  
**Oak Bluffs Library Second Floor Conference Room**

Present: Chair – Bill Vrooman, Bernie Crossland, Bob Gaffey, Maura McGroarty,  
Greg Thornton, Walter Vail, Richard Weiss,

Absent: Mike Taus,

Others: Town Accountant – Deb Potter,  
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.)

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

• **Accountant's Comments**

• End of year overages included:

- Selectmen—partially due to some significant legal costs (Professional/Technical);

- a smaller than usual Police deficit;

- Shellfish because of separation costs for an employee;

• Other accounting or software anomalies included:

- Treasurer/Collector/Assessor staff shifts due to merging departments;

- Tax Title;

- Police Officer-In-Charge (OIC) and Overtime separation;

- Building Department inspections (plumbing, wiring, etc.).

• The FinCom clarified various line items, such as computer maintenance/software licenses, New Town Hall/trailers telephone expenses, Marina salaries before the busy season, Municipal Building maintenance (see 2/15/18 Minutes p.1), Oak Bluffs School capital spending, leasing (copiers), FY19 as the last year of the Marina Fuel Facility debt pay-off, and Snow & Ice spending—possibly for equipment.

• Barring any surprises, Town Accountant Deb Potter was expecting fairly reasonable end of year transfers. The FinCom commended both Deb Potter and Town Administrator Bob Whritenour. There was a brief discussion on the FinCom role in financial oversight.

• **Minutes Approval (5/2/19)**

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 2, 2019 MINUTES AS AMENDED; BOB GAFFEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSTENTIONS—BOB GAFFEY, RICHARD WEISS** due to absence.

• Chair Bill Vrooman reported there had been no Selectmen response to the Finance Committee letter (see 5/2/19 Minutes p.3 & documents on file). There was also no response on his request to be the Town Appointee to the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Regional Agreement Subcommittee.

• Given the lack of response the FinCom discussed a joint meeting or, attending a Selectmen's meeting to raise the issue during Public Comment.

• **Ray's Replacement** (See below: Actions.)

Sherry Countryman was interested in serving on the FinCom.

**Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee**  
**May 16, 2019**

**2**

• **Allocation Formulas** (See documents on file.)

The County weighted votes and allocation formula was Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Part 1, Title VI, Ch. 35 §28B. The FinCom reiterated objections to the shift to the 50% population/50% assessed value formula as counter to the mandate, and especially given the weighted votes that favored Edgartown and Chilmark. Greg Thornton reported that out of the 351 Massachusetts towns/cities, Martha's Vineyard Towns were among the lowest tax rates in the State: Chilmark 1st, Edgartown 3<sup>rd</sup>, Aquinnah 6<sup>th</sup>, West Tisbury 7th, Oak Bluffs 20<sup>th</sup>, Tisbury 28th.

• **Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) Real Estate Candidates**

(See documents on file & below: Actions.)

Oak Bluffs real estate value was assessed at \$3,030,000,000. Martha's Vineyard Landbank held \$25,900,000 worth of tax-exempt land in Oak Bluffs. OB Resident Homesite held another \$4,300,000 and the MVRHS campus represented \$71,300,000. Only Island Elderly Housing paid a minimal PILOT. In addition there were State owned properties: e.g. State Beach in Oak Bluffs, the State Forest in Edgartown and West Tisbury. There were 220 non-profit organizations on the Island however many of them (such as Island Food Pantry) did not hold land.

• **Salary Adjustments** (See below: Actions.)

As Personnel Board representative, Bill Vrooman advised the FinCom of Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) FY21 salary adjustments based on a comparative study showing some positions at a pay disadvantage. The FY20 budget included a pool for the increases. The FinCom discussed various ramifications:

- Town ability to attract and retain competent staff—e.g. Library (see 1/17/19 p.1), Assessor (see 2/13/14 Minutes p.3);
- Island housing shortage and prices which affected every profession—citing Mr. Whritenour's commute from Falmouth, and construction worker housing/commuting costs;
- instituting/practicing a performance management (staff evaluation) system.

• **Member Comments.**

• Bill Vrooman and Bob Gaffey hoped to meet monthly with Bob Whritenour. At the first meeting the discussion covered:

- Mr. Whritenour's strategic plan to address the Dukes County Retirement System and Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) liabilities;
- a Town/Martha's Vineyard Hospital session to negotiate the Ambulance Reserve contract;
- Year-round and/or senior year-round resident real estate tax abatement on homes assessed under \$1,500,000. The disadvantage was the applications were due three months after the tax rate was set making the initial year difficult to estimate.
- 45% of Oak Bluffs houses were not winter-occupied, while in Chilmark it was 70%.

• **Public Comments** – None

• **Adjourn**

• **RICHARD WEISS MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:03PM; BOB GAFFEY AND GREG THORNTON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**continued >**

**Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee  
May 16, 2019**

3

**Meetings/Events:**

MVRHS Regional Agreement Subcommittee – 12:00N, Wednesday, May 22, 2019 - PAC

**OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursdays, June 6 & 20, 2019 - OB Library**

Audit Exit Interview - 4:30PM, Tuesday, June 11, 2019 - OB Library

**Action List**

- **Bill** – contact Sherry Countryman & Steve Auerbach re: membership and resumes
- **Bill** – re-contact Selectmen re: joint meeting & MVRHSC Regional Subc. appointee.
- **Bill** – does County assessed value include the non-taxable properties?
- **Bill** – scan & send assessor reports on tax-exempt properties.
- **Bill** – send list of positions receiving salary adjustments.

**Ongoing Action List from previous meetings**

• Future Agenda Items:

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

**Documents on file:**

- Agenda 5/16/19
- Sign In Sheet 5/16/19
- Vrooman cover email re: FinCom 5/17/19
- Part I Administration of Government, Title VI Counties and County Officers, Chapter 35 County Treasurers, State Supervision of Count Accounts and County Finances, Section 28B Advisory Board for County Expenditures; Action on Proposed Budget; Public Hearing; Capital Improvement Fund (8 p.)
- Public Tax Exempt Properties Fiscal Year 2019 (5 p.)
- Private Tax Exempt Properties Fiscal Year 2019 (3 p.)
- Vrooman/Potter cover email re: 5/16 Agenda
- Town of oak Bluffs YTD Report (18 p.) 5/13/19
- Vrooman letter re: Allocation Formulas 5/5/19

- **Minutes approved as amended by the OB FinCom 6/6/19.**