

**Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, May 21, 2020 5:00 pm
Via Zoom Conference**

Present: Chair – Bill Vrooman, Sherry Countryman, Bernie Crossland, Bob Gaffey,
Maura McGroarty, Mike Taus, Greg Thornton, Walter Vail, Richard Weiss,
Absent: None
Town: Town Administrator’s Office – Bob Whritenour,
Town Accountant – Deb Potter,
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 5:04pm.
(Recorder’s Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Last Minutes Adjustment Recommendations

(See documents on file.)

Given the Board of Health heavy and year round workload during the Covid-19/Corona virus pandemic, and the likelihood that it would continue, Town Administrator Bob Whritenour recommended their urgent request to change the seasonal employee to a full time “assistant” Health Agent. Discussion showed further details.

- The position was vetted and classified by the Personnel Board at \$27.50/hr. 40 hrs./wk.
- This would bring the Department in line with other down-Island Town health staff.
- It was a technical and specialized position, and the Department felt that training/orienting one additional person was enough for the year.
- The Health Agent position was being part of the classification/compensation assessment.

Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Revenue Discussion

(See documents on file.)

- FY21 interest income projections were increased in consideration of penalties and interest on tax payment delays, and on a tax title case the Treasurer/Collector was working on.
- Trash collections were likely to be stable.
- Fees and Rentals – varied widely from year to year. Rentals for FY20 were very low due to cancelations but FY21 was expected to come back up. This could be adjusted if necessary.
- Miscellaneous Recurring (Harbor revenues) were significantly reduced, but reservations for July and August were still solid.
- Other Excise referred to short term rentals, meals and lodging, and some boat excise. The Massachusetts Dept. of Revenue (DOR) did not separate short term rental from lodging receipts but would respond if requested. Short term rentals were included in revenues but not in budgeting.
- The FinCom questioned the projected increase in building permit revenues.

Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Budget Adjustments Discussion and Vote

(See documents on file & 5/14/20 Minutes p.1-2.)

- Chair Bill Vrooman proposed level funding the Center For Living (CFL) and Vineyard Health Care Access Program (VHCAP) budget lines. The FinCom debated:
 - Social Services as less than 0.5% of the Town Budget and given the growing need should not be reduced for a savings of ~ \$25,000.

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- The organizations could be requested to share in the Town reductions.
- Every small bit of savings would help the Town, which would be in dire straits.
- Some were dissatisfied with the lack of detailed budget review, advocating for the FinCom authority over the budget, and urging significant level funding.
- Many members noted other Town budget reductions such as the elimination of the Cost Of Living Adjustment (COLA) pool, and the hard hit to other services and schools.
- There was a challenge to delaying the Town Clerk assistant position in a Presidential election year.

• **BOB GAFFEY MOVED TO REDUCE THE FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET LINES 5623 DUKES COUNTY HEALTH ACCESS AND 5352 MV CENTER FOR LIVING TO BE LEVEL FUNDED WITH FISCAL YEAR 2020; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 8 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: GREG THORNTON—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, WALTER VAIL—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE.**

• **Warrant Article Adjustments Discussion and Vote**

(See 5/14/20 Minutes p.2-4.)

Special Town Meeting Articles

- Articles #1, #2 – were unchanged and there was no further comment.
- Articles #3 – was to address FY20 health insurance and legal fee shortfalls. The amount had been amended to \$200,000. (*Mike Taus temporarily and briefly left the meeting.)
- **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE ON \$200,000 FOR HEALTH CARE EXPENSES AND LEGAL FEES DEFICITS; BERNIE CROSSLAND SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: GREG THORNTON—AYE, WALTER VAIL—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE.**

Annual Town Meeting Articles

- Articles #1 – FY21 Operating Budget (see above)
- **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE ON THE AMENDED TOWN OPERATING BUDGET AT \$32,407,605.18; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 8 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: GREG THORNTON—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, WALTER VAIL—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—AYE.**
- Articles #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #19, #20 - were unchanged and there was no further comment.

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• Articles #8 – Town Hall Project – The final numbers were expected next week. After some discussion and review **IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE OAK BLUFFS FINCOM TO RETAIN THE SAME COMMENT AS PREVIOUSLY TO SUPPORT THE TOWN HALL PROJECT AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION WHEN COSTS WERE KNOWN.**

• Articles #16 – Dukes County Human Services. Bill Vrooman proposed reducing social services to FY20 level funding or to their requested FY21 amount, whichever was lower, reducing the total from \$87,499 to \$77,995 as follows:

- Dukes Count Human Services - \$11,099	- First Stop - unchanged \$6,770,
- Substance Abuse – unchanged \$6,489,	- CORE - unchanged \$17,304,
- HAMV - reduced to \$15,193	- MV Youth Task Force - reduced to \$21,140.

• **BOB GAFFEY MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE ON REGIONAL HUMAN SERVICES BE AMENDED TO LEVEL FUND OR REMAIN AS REQUESTED WHICH EVER WAS LOWEST FOR A TOTAL OF \$77,995; MIKE TAUS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 8 AYES, 1 NAY, 0 ABSTENTIONS: GREG THORNTON—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, WALTER VAIL—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE.**

• Articles #17 – Adult Community Education Martha's Vineyard (ACE MV) - There was a discussion on FinCom authority over warrant articles. Articles were submitted to the Board of Selectmen who set the Warrant. The FinCom then made recommendations to voters on each article. In this case the FinCom was voting recommendations before the Selectmen had voted the Warrant so their recommendations would be conveyed to the Selectmen. It was unclear if ACE MV classes were continuing or what would happen in FY21. The FinCom had previously recommended it be level funded (see 3/5/20 Minutes p.7 #27). **IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE OAK BLUFFS FINCOM TO CONFIRM THEIR RECOMMENDATION TO LEVEL FUND ACE MV AT \$14,796.**

• Articles #18 – Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Dust Collection – Maura McGroarty strongly advocated for the urgent needs of the School which had worked hard to cut its budget at Oak Bluffs' request and was looking to cut another \$1,000,000 due to the current crisis. The majority of the FinCom were adamant that as a capital spending article Oak Bluffs could not retreat from its insistence on a fairer assessment formula (see 3/5/20 Minutes p.8 #8).

• **WALTER VAIL MOVED THAT THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE ON \$28,316 FOR A MVRHS DUST COLLECTION SYSTEM; RICHARD WEISS SECONDED; MOTION FAILED: 2 AYES, 6 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: GREG THORNTON—NAY, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, WALTER VAIL—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—NAY, BERNIE CROSSLAND—NAY, BOB GAFFEY—NAY, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—NAY, BILL VROOMAN—NAY.**

• In view of the pandemic, the FinCom discussed the eliminated Article that included Kennebec bathroom renovation, suggesting that modern, sanitized bathrooms should be a priority. The Town had a task force on managing outdoor facilities (which included

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bathrooms) that was following State guidelines on social distancing, masks and increased cleanings/sanitation (twice per day). The Town recognized restrooms as high risk especially as there would be increased pressure due to the lack of restaurant restrooms, but deemed it wise to open the Kennebec Avenue restrooms with the above measures. Signs would be installed throughout the business district: maintain social distancing, wear your mask, wash your hands, if you're feeling sick stay home...

• Approval of Minutes (3/12)

• BOB GAFFEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 7, 2020 MINUTES; BERNIE CROSSLAND SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION AND OTHERS AS ABSENT: GREG THORNTON, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, WALTER VAIL—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—ABSTAIN, BILL VROOMAN—AYE.

• WALTER VAIL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 14, 2020 MINUTES; BOB GAFFEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSTENTIONS: GREG THORNTON—AYE, MIKE TAUS—ABSTAIN, WALTER VAIL—NAY, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—ABSTAIN, BILL VROOMAN—AYE.

• Accountant's Comments

Bob Whritenour commended Town Accountant Deborah Potter for her tremendous work under great pressure from the current financial uncertainty, dealing with deficit spending, changing budgets, etc.

• Member Comments

• The FinCom asked about Town Meeting plans (see below: Meeting/Events). They were currently set for the Tabernacle but could be postponed by a Governor's Executive Order. A task force was working on the logistics of social distancing during parking, queuing, checking in, seating, etc.

- If the Town Meetings were postponed beyond the end of FY20, (i.e. July 1st) monthly town budgeting would be authorized at 1/12th of the FY20 budget.

• Bernie Crossland thanked Mr. Whritenour for his commendable budget cuts.

• Public Comments – None

• Adjourn

• WALTER VAIL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 6:36PM; RICHARD WEISS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: GREG THORNTON—AYE, MIKE TAUS—AYE, WALTER VAIL—AYE, SHERRY COUNTRYMAN—AYE, BERNIE CROSSLAND—AYE, BOB GAFFEY—AYE, RICHARD WEISS—AYE, MAURA MCGROARTY—AYE, BILL VROOMAN—AYE.

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Meetings/Events:

BOS /Vote on Warrant – Monday, May 25, 2020

BOH – 10:00AM, Tuesday, May 26, 2020

STM/ATM Task Force – 11:30AM, Tuesday, May 26, 2020

BOS Meeting – 4:00PM, Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Deadline for Warrant Publication – Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Deadline for ATM Warrant – Tuesday, June 2, 2020

Special & Annual Town Meeting – Tuesday, June 16, 2020

Town Election – Thursday, June 18, 2020

OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, June 25, 2020 - Zoom

Action List

- Bob W. – give Selectmen FinCom Warrant & Budget recommendations.

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings

• Future Agenda Items:

Trash/Waste Analysis

Reserve Fund Increase

Town Cleaning Services Analysis

Embarkation Fund Policy

Documents on file:

- Agenda 5/21/20
- Whritenour cover email re: Revised Local Estimated Receipts 5/20/20
- Tax Recap Actual LER (2 p.)
- Fiscal Year 2019-2021 Local Estimated Receipts
- Analysis of LER Averages and Trends
- Preliminary Fiscal Year 2019 Local Estimated Receipts by Monthly Collections (2 p.)
- Preliminary Fiscal Year 2018-17 Local Estimated Receipts by Monthly Collections
- Preliminary Fiscal Year 2017-16 Local Estimated Receipts by Monthly Collections
- Preliminary Fiscal Year 2017-16-15-14-13 Local Estimated Receipts by Monthly Collections (3 p.)
- Preliminary Fiscal Year 2010-2019-2008 Local Estimated Receipts by Monthly Collections (3 p.)
- Potter cover email re: Updated Reports 5/21/20
- FY21 Draft Budget (10 p.) 5/21/20
- Certification of Appropriations, Special Town Meeting, Oak Bluffs, MA June 16, 2020
- Certification of Appropriations, Annual Town Meeting, Oak Bluffs, MA June 16, 2020
- Vrooman/McGroarty/Potter emails re: Budget Updates (2 p.) 5/14/20

• **Minutes approved by the OB FinCom 6/18/20**