

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
at the Tisbury Emergency Services Building
6:30PM, Wednesday, November 18, 2015**

Present: Co-Chairs – Paul Cefola & Jeff Kristal, Pamela Brock,
Nancy Gilfoy, Jynell Kristal, Mary Ellen Larsen;
Town: Selectmen – Larry Gomez, Treasurer – John Snyder,
Ambulance Director – Tracey Jones,
Fire Chief – John Shilling,
TSC – Colleen McAndrews, Asst. Supt. Richie Smith,
MVRHS Finance Manager Mark Friedman,
Minutes – Marni Lipke * Late arrivals or early departures

The Co-Chairs convened the Tisbury Finance Committee (FinCom) meeting at 6:34PM and checked that the agenda process was functioning effectively.

Ambulance Replacement/ Repair Discussion

Despite overhauls the 2007 ambulance has had numerous continuous issues, which it turns out is characteristic for this make and model—now discontinued with no recall or further warranty. It still would not shift out of second gear until warmed up. The 1997/98 ambulance was the primary vehicle but the 2007 ambulance (not normally “staffed”) became primary when the other was on call or being serviced—resulting in a tenuous situation last August that hastened this action. The Dept. proposed a rebuild involving pulling the “box” or ambulance equipment (which was in good shape) and placing it on a new chassis, engine, transmission, etc. This would:

- increase its life,
 - stagger the two ambulance replacements; and
 - avoid triggering new safety codes/standards compliance—costing five figures.
- The Dept. was moving away from diesel fuel, which was inappropriate for short, small town transports.
- The request triggered a January Special Town Meeting (see below: Meetings/Events) in order to complete the work before the summer season.
 - Current ballpark estimates were for \$105,000 (from a less costly New Jersey Co.) but the request was for up to \$110,000 to cover any unexpected expenses. (A new ambulance was ~\$240,000.)
 - A bid for the federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) was unsuccessful, but would be repeated next year for the 1997/98 vehicle.
 - The Ambulance Stabilization account balance would be \$105,000—including the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) \$35,000 annual contribution. Former Treasurer Tim McLean strongly advocated that Stabilization not be tapped for this emergency. Fire Stabilization was banking for a pumper truck.

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- The FinCom discussed Stabilization regulations, borrowing and annual contributions (see below: Action List).

Update and Discussion of Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Budget Subcommittee Process (See documents on file.)

Introductions were made all around. Co Chair Paul Cefola reported on the Budget Subcommittee hearings, particularly that although there was a lot of information, there were no definitions of line items, and less discussion than expected. MVRHS Accounts Manager Mark Friedman offered to review the budget line by line with definitions. Most school budgets were based on the previous year (rather than returning to 0). This year Supt. Matt D'Andrea had met with fairly good response to his request that all schools level service their budgets and keep increases under 2.5%.

- Superintendent's Shared Services Office structure was explained as follows:

- Mr. D'Andrea was Superintendent of five school districts: MVRHS (the Principal also had some Superintendent duties), Tisbury, Oak Bluffs, Edgartown, and Up Island Regional School District (UIRSC).

- The Office minimized costs by centralizing school physical, occupational and speech/language therapists as well as psychologists shared by all the Island schools. In addition there were three programs (Bridge, Headway, Social Skills) for severely challenged preschool, elementary and middle school students (the MVRHS had its own special needs programs). The three programs reduced "residential placement" tuitions (at least ~\$175,000 each) for severely challenged students. More moderate special needs were included in mainstream classes.

- Except for a fixed portion paid by the MVRHS the Supt. Shared Services budget was assessed by each district's school population. The formula benefited one or another District each year but balanced out fairly over the long run.

- In keeping with Supt. D'Andrea's request, the MVRHSC had reduced three staff positions by attrition and looked internally for staffing shifts to come in at 2.4% increase however, State revenues, (partly through Charter School tuitions) continued to drop putting a greater burden on the Towns.

- After a November 30th Public Hearing the MVRHSD budget would be certified in early December. It was assessed by the Massachusetts Statutory formula, which depended on State budget numbers only available the following February.

The FinCom discussed a number of issues.

- MVRHSC member Skipper Manter raised philosophical objections to Excess & Deficiency (the MVRHS equivalent to Free Cash).

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- In an attempt to keep costs down, the All Island School Committee repeatedly voted not to include a Facilities Manager in the Shared Services budgets. Currently the MVRHS Facilities Manager was paid a Shared Services stipend to consult with other Island schools.
- Mr. Friedman’s opinion focused on the need to maintain, repair and upgrade the 60 year old facility. Replacement of the malfunctioning Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) system alone was estimated at \$4,800,000. Other facilities studies included: building envelope, Career/Technical Education (CTE or vocational), the library, the track (with \$280,000 in CPA funds) and fields, as well as space needs. The entire upgrade might run as high as \$10-20,000,000 requiring the District to float a bond. The process would be transparent with a number of public hearings and meetings.
- Tisbury School Committee (TSC) Chair Colleen McAndrews emphasized the delicate timing that coincided with a large scale Tisbury School capital project.
- The MVRHS food service contracted with Chartwells and walked a difficult line between required low pricing and balanced meals satisfying extensive Federal regulations nutritional content (low salt, no sugar, no fried foods, etc.) and paperwork reporting. Jeff Kristal suggested that instead Island businesses supply school lunch to augment business slow season.
- Massachusetts was at the top of the fourth and eighth grade national scholastic achievement and Island schools were in the 85th percentile of State schools. Asst. Supt. Richie Smith stressed that Island schools:
 - were very aware of being 40-45% of a town budget so increases could diminish other Department finances;
 - were an investment in the Island’s children and not a business to be judged simply on financial costs;
 - needed to compete with other State students— staff/ student climate was the basis of a school’s quality.
- The Administration was going through a regional needs assessment study and hoped to make schools (the Island’s most well funded institutions) more efficient.
- The FinCom thanked the School representatives for their time and attendance.

Sub Committee Reports

(See below: Action List)

- Mary Ellen Larsen reported that the Center For Living (CFL) building had still not been purchased. The County had expected the CFL to become a County Department but the CFL had retained a lawyer to protect their interests and the ensuing process would require special legislation.

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- The CFL would use some of the bequest to install the fire suppression system.
- There were actually four or five CFL (former Edgartown Anchors) employees that would be shifted to the County umbrella, bringing them within State regulations on pay scale, benefits and Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB). Mr. Gomez objected to the County Advisory Board (CAB) action on this increase without informing the Towns.

Community Preservation Act (CPA) Discussion for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17)

(See documents on file.)

Over 26 applications totaling over \$2,000,000 were received of which six were regional (three affordable housing projects and three recreational projects). The Town collected \$553,000 in CPA taxes matched by \$220,461 from the State—less than last year. Issues discussed included:

- the Owen Park and Owen Street Dock projects and funding;
- regional versus Town only projects;
- dissatisfaction with the affordable housing Water Street project;
- frivolous nature of some CPA spending;
- protecting affordable housing funding (possibly through the meals/lodgings tax revenue) while reducing CPA taxes from 3% to 1%.
- CPA Committee meeting schedule and FinCom feedback.
- The FinCom agreed to invite the Chair and Vice Chair of the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) for more information.

Discussion with Finance Director re: Letter to Department Heads

New Town Treasurer John Snyder spoke about the steep learning curve and his enjoyable first days.

- For the last two years Town Departments had been asked to hold the line with only contractual wage increases.
- The drop in fuel prices should give the Town a little maneuvering space.
- Over frugality on Town roads and infrastructure was costing more in the long run. The Department of Public Works (DPW) argued that growing duties and level staff numbers had reduced maintenance of Town buildings, “patched” repairs, and increased outside contracts. The FinCom considered borrowing a substantial amount to repair roads and sidewalks.
- The solar array saved the Town about \$105,000 in power costs as well as accumulating Solar Renewable Energy Certificates (SRECs) (see below: Action List).
- Most departments were dilatory in submitting Capital Improvement requests.
- The Fire Dept. needed maintenance funding as well as new equipment from its Stabilization Fund.
- Schools and Police had begun collective bargaining negotiations.

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- The Town was re-organizing in such areas as Animal Control/Police, and Natural Resources/Harbor.
- The FinCom requested a report on why the Harbor was not generating income.
- *MARY ELLEN LARSEN MOVED TO REQUEST ALL TOWN DEPARTMENTS TO PRESENT LEVEL SERVICE BUDGETS; JYNELL KRISTAL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- *PAUL CEFOLA MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:49PM; NANCY GILFOY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Meetings/Events:

- **Tisb. FinCom - 6:30PM, Wednesday, December 9, 2015 - EMS**
- MVRHSC (Budget Certification) - 7:00PM, Monday, December 7, 2015
- TSC - 8:30AM, Thursday, December 10, 2015 – Tisbury School
- Special Town Meeting - 7:00PM, Tuesday, January 12, 2016
- Warrant Article Deadline - 12:00N, Wednesday, November 25, 2016

Action List:

- All - consider new FinCom member.
- Tracy Jones - send FinCom total amount spent out of warranty.
- Jeff - send stabilization fund parameters to John Snyder.
- John Snyder - consider stabilization transfers from Stabilization or Embarkation.
- Mary Ellen - send FY17 CFL budget to Jeff.
- How does Suzanne Kennedy allocate the solar saving credits?
- Suzanne Kennedy can be invited to meetings on the FY17 budget.
- Agenda Reminders
- 11/18/15 Minutes
- Discussion on CPA and invitation to CPC Chair and Vice Chair
- New Member or Vote to Reduce FinCom to Eight Members
- Report on Wastewater Planning

Documents on file:

- Agenda 11/18/15
- Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee contact sheet 11/15/15
- Grande/Tisbury memo re: Special Town Meeting (Revised) (2 p.) 11/9/15
- Town of Tisbury Ferry Embarkation Fee Revenue
- MVRHSD Proposed Budget for FY'17 Version #3 (8 p.) 10/26/15
- MVRHSD Proposed Budget for FY'17 Version #4 (8 p.) 11/02/15

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- MVRHSD Proposed Budget for FY'17 Version #5 (8 p.) 11/10/15
- MVRHS General Fund Transfers FY15
- Town of Tisbury Community Preservation Committee Final Funding Interview Schedule 2015
 - CPA Funds Received 2009-2016
 - Community Preservation Revenues
- Strategies to Consider as OPEB Costs Escalate (8 p.) February 2011

Minutes approved 1/6/16.