

Recommendations of the Finance Committee

For Consideration by the Annual Town Meeting

April 8, 2008

At this Town Meeting the citizens of West Tisbury will consider fifty-two warrant articles, the vast majority of which are money items. Some funds will be spent in this fiscal year, some in next fiscal year (FY2009) and some over a longer period as permission to issue bonds or establish a stabilization fund is being sought.

The total amount of money which we will consider is almost \$21,000,000, of which \$13,000,000 is the Town budget for FY2009. The next largest item (\$5,120,000) is the renovation of the Town Hall, the cost of which for the most part will be funded by issuing long term bonds. \$1,000,000 in CPA funds are being requested for a variety of projects. Almost \$800,000 will be reserved for future needs; these include CPA reserves, a new stabilization fund (OPEB) and revolving funds for the health department and conservation commission. \$310,000 is being requested to repave North Road. \$250,000 will be taken from Free Cash to reduce our taxes.

Despite the large sum of money involved in this warrant, should all articles pass the tax rate will increase by 1.1%.

Recommendations

The Finance Committee is charged with making recommendations as to passage of warrant articles that come before the Town citizens assembled in a Regular or Special Town Meeting.

Here are our recommendations for the Annual Town Meeting to be held on April 8, 2008.

Article 1 – Town Election

The Finance Committee took no action.

Article 2– Town Reports

The Finance Committee took no action.

Article 3 – Amend the Personnel By-law by Changing the Wage Scale

The Finance Committee did **NOT RECOMMEND** this article. The new wage scale introduces a new step to all pay grades. While the impact of this new grade is relatively minor (\$38,000) in FY2009, the annual cost will increase so that five years out the cost will be \$180,000 per year not counting annual Cost-of-Living raises.

Article 4 – Cost of Living Raise for Town Employees

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The amount proposed is in line with generally accepted indices.

Article 5 – Town Budget

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The budget increase of 1% is less than it has been in prior years, and continues a downward trend in the average annual growth of Town budgets.

Article 6 – Compensating Balances

The Finance Committee took no action.

Article 7 – Triennial Revaluation

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The Town is mandated by the Commonwealth to conduct a reevaluation of all personal and real property every three years. These funds enable the Town to comply with this mandate.

Article 8 – Additional Hours for Library Staff

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. The additional hours have been recommended by the state Board of Library Commissioners and will enhance the safety and security of the library.

Article 9 – Maintain Current Hours of Library Operation

The Finance Committee was divided on this article; the vote was 2 – 2. The article seeks to correct a budgeting error made in FY2007, which increased the hours of library operation without providing funds to do so.

Article 10 – Allocate Dog License Fees to the Library

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This is a 'housekeeping' article to comply with state law.

Article 11 – Conservation Commission Revolving Fund

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 0 with one abstention to **recommend** this article for passage. This appropriation will improve the administrative operations of the commission.

Article 12 – Dukes County Regional Housing Authority

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 0 with one abstention to **recommend** this article for passage. This appropriation pays for a portion of the operating costs of the Housing Authority.

Article 13 – Chipper for the Highway Department

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This will improve the efficiency of the Highway Department.

Article 14 – Repair and resurface North Road

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. North Road is in need of repair, the total cost of which is over \$300,000. The Town will pay \$200,000 of this cost via this article, the balance will be paid from state funds as specified in Article 15.

Articles 15 – Repair and resurface North Road

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. These funds come from the state and will allow the completion of the North Road repair and resurfacing.

Article 16 – Complete the path along the Edgartown/West Tisbury Road

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The funds are needed to complete the path that has been constructed along the Edgartown/West Tisbury Road.

Articles 17 – Planning money for the Paths by the Roads Committee

The Finance Committee by a vote of 3 - 1 did **NOT RECOMMEND** this article for passage. Input from the voters is needed with regard to the interest in future paths.

Article 18 – Transfer funds within the Fire Department budget

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The roof on Station 1 needs to be repaired.

Article 19 – Maintain fire hydrants in Town

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The Fire Hydrant Fund, which is used to maintain our fire hydrants, needs to be replenished. It is quite likely that these funds will be used over a number of years.

Articles 20 and 21 – Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for the Fire Department

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The SCBA Stabilization Fund was established last year. With passage of these articles sufficient funds will be available to buy the breathing apparatuses.

Article 22 – Health Insurance for Retirees

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. Approval of this article will lower the Town's insurance costs with no loss of benefits to retirees.

Article 23 – Other Post Employment Benefit Stabilization Fund

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. The Town faces substantial future obligations for health insurance and other benefits for retirees. Passage of this article is a first step towards minimizing the cost of these future obligations.

Article 24 – Appropriate CPA Reserves

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. These funds will be available for suitable projects to be approved by the Town in the future.

Article 25 – Restore Town Hall

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. The Town has voted to renovate the current building, but rejected a previous design as too costly. In the interim, costs have increased. It is time to vote the funds as any further delay will only increase the costs further.

Article 26 – Plan to Restore Mill Pond

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 with one abstention **NOT TO RECOMMEND** this article for passage because of concerns about an incomplete planning process and uncertain future costs.

Articles 27 and 28 – Use CPA Funds for A New Path

The Finance Committee voted **NOT TO RECOMMEND** these two articles for passage because of conflicting assertions concerning the design, local opposition, a lack of permits from the Planning Board and safety concerns.

Article 29 – Housing at Bailey Park Road

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This is a necessary step in providing more affordable housing lots in the Town.

Article 30 – Housing at 200 State Road

The Finance Committee was divided on this article; the vote was 2 – 2. The article seeks CPA funding to assist in the creation of affordable housing.

Article 31 – Second Mortgage Loans

The Finance Committee voted **NOT TO RECOMMEND** this article for passage because it was felt that the funds could be used Island-wide and might not be available for housing in West Tisbury

Article 32 – Sepiessa Point Apartments

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. This article will add three additional rental units to the Sepiessa Point apartments.

Article 33 – Rental Conversion Program

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. These funds will be used to fund part of the successful Rental Conversion Program and will enable West Tisbury residents to obtain affordable rental housing.

Article 34 – Provide for Written Ballot at Town Meeting

The Finance Committee voted 4 - 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This will give all voters the opportunity to register their opinion in complete confidence.

Article 35 – Police Cruiser

The Finance Committee voted 4 - 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The current vehicle is at the end of its useful life as a primary patrol vehicle and should be replaced.

Article 36 – Establish a Revolving Fund for the Health Department

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This will simplify the Town's vaccination program and enable the Health Department to react swiftly to emergency situations.

Article 37 – Continue a Revolving Fund for the Drop-off Facility

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This fund was established last year to enable a more economical, orderly and current management of funds.

Article 38 - Appropriate Funds for Ambulance Replacement Stabilization Fund

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 0 with one abstention to **recommend** this article for passage. This article is designed to provide for systematic ambulance replacement and minimize spikes in appropriations.

Article 39 – Multi-Purpose Building for Parks and Recreation

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. Space is needed to house the equipment of the Parks and Recreation department and to serve as a central point of contact with the public.

Article 40 – Fund Part of the Vineyard Health Care Access Program

The Finance Committee voted 4 - 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The County is unable to fully fund this program any longer, yet the need for the program continues.

Article 41 – Fund Part of the Integrated Pest Management Control Program

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. The County is unable to fully fund this program any longer, yet the need for the program continues.

Article 42– Engineering Services

The Finance Committee voted 3 - 1 to **recommend** this article for passage. The Town needs engineering services throughout the year.

Article 43 – Pay a Past-Due Bill

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. Through an oversight this bill was not paid in FY2007.

Article 44 – Change Day of Town Meeting

The Finance Committee took no action on this article.

Article 45 – Hire a Consultant to Prepare a Classification and Compensation Plan

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. The Personnel bylaw requires the plan to be updated on a regular basis.

Article 46 – Amend Personnel Bylaw

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 with one abstention to **recommend** this article for passage. This article formalizes a new position to perform tasks already being performed. The increased costs are minimal.

Article 47 – Reduce the Tax Levy

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This will reduce our taxes for FY2009.

Article 48 – Install Wind Turbine at West Tisbury School

The Finance Committee took no action on this article. This is an advisory article that is present on all three annual town warrants in the Up-Island Regional School District. It will provide guidance to the Up-Island Regional School Committee and the District Energy Committee.

Article 49 – Fund the High School Music Department

The Finance Committee voted 2 – 1 to take no action on this article.

Article 50 – Martha’s Vineyard Cultural Council

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **recommend** this article for passage. This is a small amount to contribute to the Vineyard’s cultural activities.

Article 51 – Support the Performing Arts

The Finance Committee took no action on this article.

Article 52 – Withdraw from the Up-Island Regional School District

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to take no action on this article.

Respectfully submitted,

West Tisbury Finance Committee

Al DeVito, Chair

Richard Knabel, Vice Chair

Brian Athearn

Sharon Estrella

Ann Nelson