

Recommendations of the Finance Committee

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 11, 2006.

Article 2 – Town Reports

The Finance Committee took no action.

Article 3 – The Budget

The Finance Committee would be remiss if it failed to point out that the increase of \$175,564 in the Police Budget is due in large measure to a change in accounting for the police detail at the airport. All of the costs for the airport detail are reimbursed and appear in general fund revenues; thus, this change in accounting has no cost to the taxpayer.

Article 4 – Compensating Balance Agreements

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. This article will give the Treasurer the authority to conduct the Town's banking business.

Article 5 – Estuary Project

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. This multi-year project, which was approved at the 2004 Annual Town Meeting, seeks to protect the health of Tisbury Great Pond. The state assumes one-half of the cost, with the balance being split equally between West Tisbury and Chilmark. This is the Town's second of three payments for this project.

Article 6 – Triennial Reevaluation

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. The Town is mandated by the State to conduct a reevaluation of all personal and real property every three years. One-third of the total funds needed are being requested now so that the costs can be spread over three years. This policy of spreading costs of capital projects over a number of years was recommended by the Capital Improvements Planning Committee.

Article 7 – Medicare Health Benefits Supplement Plan

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. Retirees will have to enroll in the Medicare health benefits supplement plan offered by the Town, rather than another, more expensive plan. There is no increase in cost to the retirees as a result of this change.

Article 8 – InterMunicipal Mutual Aid Agreement for Health Agencies

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. In the event of an emergency, this agreement will allow the Town to share its health resources with other towns and to share in the health resources of other towns.

Article 9 – Amend Personnel Bylaw

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 with one abstention to recommend this article for passage. This article updates salaries with the current cost of living increase.

Article 10 – Road Maintenance

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to recommend this article for passage. Passage of these articles is necessary for the Town to be reimbursed by the State for road maintenance costs.

Article 11 – Dukes County Regional Housing Authority

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to recommend this article for passage. This appropriation supports the efforts to provide affordable housing on the Island.

Article 12 – Maintenance and Repair of the Police Station

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. These repairs were recommended by the Town Buildings Committee and by the Police Station study authorized at the 2004 Annual Town Meeting.

Article 13 – Painting Howes House

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. The Town Buildings Committee believes that failure to paint the Howes House now will result in higher maintenance costs in the very near future.

Article 14 – Affordable Housing Trust Fund

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. This article will enable funds collected by the Affordable Housing Committee (e.g., from the sale of lots) to be placed into a trust for the creation and preservation of affordable housing in the Town.

Article 15 – Town Hall Repairs

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. This article will allow the spending approved at the January 2004 Town Meeting to be expended in the most economical manner.

Article 16 – Drug Task Force Grant

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 with one abstention to recommend this article for passage. This appropriation represents the Town's share of an Island-wide program to combat the use of illegal drugs on the Island.

Article 17 – Police Cruiser

The Finance Committee voted 2 – 1 with one abstention 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 18 – Computer Hardware and Software for Police

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 with one abstention to recommend this article for passage. Two computers are at the end of their useful life and need to be replaced. Further, such upgraded computers will be necessary should an anticipated Record Management System grant materialize later this year.

Article 19 – Town-Wide Space Needs and Feasibility Study

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to **not** recommend this article for passage. There is insufficient information available as to the details of this study.

Articles 20 and 21 – Establish Community Preservation Funds

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend these articles for passage. Monies raised from the Town's acceptance of the Community Preservation Act must be placed in separate funds. The amounts listed in the article are the minimums specified in the Act for open space, historical preservation and affordable housing and the maximum for administration. Such an allocation gives the Town the greatest flexibility for spending these funds.

Article 22 – Upgrade Town Building on Old Courthouse Road

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to recommend this article for passage. The committee felt that the funds requested are minimal and may improve the Park and Recreation's services this coming season.

Article 23 – Town Audit

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. A periodic audit is necessary for good financial management.

Article 24 – Transfer from Personal Services to Expenses

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. Approval will permit the Fire Department to perform necessary painting of the two fire stations.

Article 25 – Jaws of Life

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. The current 'Jaws of Life' cannot cut through the metal of current automobiles.

Articles 26 and 27 – Taking and Resurfacing of Old Stage Road.

The Finance Committee was divided on recommending these articles for passage. The vote was 2 – 2. Those opposing these articles were concerned as to whether the owners agree to the taking.

Article 28 – Upgrade Local Transfer Station

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage. The current transfer station was designed and built in 1988 with an expected life of ten years. There is a concern that, without this upgrade, personal safety may be at risk.

Article 29 – Stabilization Fund

The Finance Committee was divided on recommending this article for passage. The vote was 2 – 2. Those opposing this article felt that these funds should be returned to the taxpayer.

Article 30 – Increase On-Call Duty Pay

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 with one abstention to recommend this article for passage. This increase will bring the Town in line with the amounts being paid for on-call duty by other Island towns.

Articles 31 and 32– Establish Ambulance Replacement Stabilization Fund

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend these articles for passage. This fund will allow the Town to spread the cost of the next ambulance over a period of years.

Article 33 – Tax Title Land

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to recommend this article for passage.

Article 34 – Zoning Bylaw

The Finance Committee took no action.

Article 35 – Tri-Town Ambulance Service as an Enterprise Fund

The Finance Committee was divided on recommending this article for passage. The vote was 2 – 2. Those opposed believe that ambulance services should continue to be provided to Town citizens at no cost.

Article 36 – 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 37 – Holding Multiple Offices

The Finance Committee took no action.

Article 38 – Rescind Town Hall Appropriation

The Finance Committee took no action. The Committee agrees with the spirit of this article. However, legal opinion is needed, as funds have been expended from this appropriation.

Article 39 – Sale and Leaseback Town Hall

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 1 to **not** recommend this article. The full financial implications of this article have not been explored. Further, if approved, this article gives sole authority to the Board of Selectmen without requiring further Town approval.

Article 40 – Poet Laureate

The Finance Committee took no action.

Article 41 – Zoning bylaw

The Finance Committee took no action.

Here are our recommendations for the Special Town Meeting to be held on April 11, 2006.

Article 1 – Town Hall Estimate

The Finance Committee voted 4 – 0 to **not** recommend this article. The committee feels that further expenditure of the appropriated funds would not be justified as it is evident that the renovations approved by Town meeting cannot be made within the \$3.7 million appropriation.

Article 2 – Legal Fees

The Finance Committee voted 2 – 1 to recommend this article. The Board of Assessors feels that these funds, which are in addition to \$30,000 included in their budget, will be needed to pay for legal fees to be incurred in FY2007.

Article 3 – Paths by the Roads

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 to recommend this article. Because of the delay in building the path previously approved (South Indian Hill to Humphrey’s) the estimated cost of this project has increased in line with the rise in petroleum-based products, such as asphalt.

Article 4 – Redirect Emergency Management Funds

The Finance Committee voted 3 – 0 to recommend this article. The article reserves for a period of five years funds previously appropriated for emergencies.

Article 5 – Charge for Ambulance Calls

The Finance Committee was divided on recommending this article for passage. The vote was 2 – 2. Those opposed believe that ambulance services should continue to be provided to Town citizens at no cost.

Respectfully submitted,

West Tisbury Finance Committee

Sharon Estrella, Chair

Al DeVito, Vice Chair

Peter Costas

Jeffrey “Skipper” Manter