

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2006

Present: Al DeVito-Chair, Brian Athearn, Sharon Estrella, Richard Knabel, Skip Manter.
Guests: Bruce Stone- Town Accountant, Chuck Hodgkinson – Chair of Town Space needs Committee, Bill Haynes – Chair of Town Paths Committee, Nancy Rogers – applicant for the Fincom’s administrative assistant’s position.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Ms. Eldridge being not present, Mr. Knabel was asked to take the minutes.

Mr. Hodgkinson explained the work of the Space Needs Committee. That committee was asked by the ATM to report to the town by November 15, 2006 on what the space requirements for various town functions will be in the future. The committee has determined that three projects are of immediate concern: the town hall; the police station; the library addition. Three options have been decided for the town hall, two for the police station, and one for the library. Mr. Hodgkinson explained that the committee foresees spreading the projects over at least 15-years, and that the town’s current debt will be retired by 2020. His committee is concerned about the impact of new debt on the tax rate, and is carefully studying how to minimize it. Warrant Article #2 for the Nov. 28 STM requests a sum of money, yet to be determined, for planning purposes. This money would be spent to get estimates of cost for the various options the committee has identified.

Action on this article was deferred until a specific sum is requested, which he said would be forthcoming within a week.

Mr Haynes explained the plans to build a paved 4,920-long walking/bike path on the north shoulder of Edgartown-West Tisbury Road between the vicinity of the youth hostel and the police station. Article #3 requests \$190,000 for this purpose. If the article passes construction would most likely begin after Labor Day 2007. Mr. Haynes said that delaying the project would increase the cost.

In the discussion the following concerns were raised: The amount, since it is a raise-and-appropriate item, would raise this year’s tax rate; that this article was not appropriate for a STM; that abutting property owners should be notified and heard before the plans are finalized and financed. Both Mr. Athearn and Mr. Haynes said that safety was a consideration, that other such paths had been welcomed and well used. Mr. Haynes also stated that the abutters would be notified after the article has passed.

On motion to recommend Article #3 by Mr. Athearn, seconded by Mr. Knabel the vote was 2-2-1, Ms. Estrella and Mr. Knabel opposing, and Mr. Manter abstaining.

No recommendation on Article 3.

Nancy Rogers, of Rock Pond Road, WT, was interviewed for the position Administrative Assistant to the fincom being vacated by Ms. Eldridge. The position pays \$13.77/hr to start, and is budgeted for 160 hours per year. Ms. Rogers is the only remaining applicant.

On motion to hire by Mr. Manter, seconded by Ms. Estrella, the vote was unanimous in favor. Ms. Rogers will begin at the committee's regular meeting on November 14.

The Oct. 17, minutes were approved unanimously.

The committee discussed which future fincom meetings should be televised. It was decided to televise the **Nov. 18, 10:00 a.m. meeting at Howe's House** to explain the committee's actions on warrant articles for the Nov. 28 STM. The committee's expense budget will be used to pay for the videographer. After the STM, if Article 13 passes, all meetings of the fincom will be televised.

The **next meeting** of the fincom will be on **Nov. 2, at 3:00 p.m.** Scheduled to appear before the committee are: Selectmen John Early & Glenn Hearn to discuss the cemetery (Article #10) at 3:00; Joanne Rescendes to discuss the assessor's request for additional funds to cover the triennial certification of real estate values (Article #5), and a request for funds to digitize the town's tax maps (Article #6) at 3:30. Chief Toomey is scheduled for 4:00 to discuss the Tri-Town Ambulance article, and Superintendent of Streets Richard Olsen has not yet responded to a request to explain Article #9 amending the Driveway Bylaw.

The committee briefly discussed the Island-wide public forum on the proposed new DOE regulations governing the financing of regional school districts, which was held in the RHS cafeteria on Oct. 18, and attended by Messrs. DeVito, Knabel and Manter. They expressed the view that the Island needed to be exempted from the "transition period", outlined by the Associate Commissioner of Education Jeffrey Wulfson, to the so-called "wealth based" financing formula. The transition period would cause temporary, but major, changes in the allocation of costs between the towns. The cooperation of Representative Turkington and Senator O'Leary would be sought.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Knabel