

## **Finance Committee Meeting Minutes**

### **February 27, 2007**

Those Present: Al DeVito - chair, Richard Knabel, Skip Manter and Brian Athearn.

Guests: John Powers, Health Agent; Don Hatch, MV Refuse District; Jo-Ann Resendes, Cynthia Mitchell and Michael Colaneri, Board of Assessors; Rick Reinhardtsen and Peggy Stone, Parks and Recreation.

This meeting was taped for airing on MVTV

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

During tonight's meeting the proposed FY '08 budgets of the MV Refuse District, the Board of Assessors and the Parks and Recreation Department were reviewed with the FinCom. Department/Committee heads were informed that votes taken were preliminary due to the considerable increase in the total budget. Some line items may need further review for possible cuts.

#### **MV Refuse District Budget:**

Line item #439, MV Refuse District. Mr. Hatch explained the assessment procedure from the district to the town. He pointed out that West Tisbury has the highest volume of recycling and that recycling has costs but no revenue. He also discussed the reduction in administrative expenses, a savings that is offset by the increase in wages/benefits. He further explained that the \$3,000 increase reflected the decrease in the assessment set against the increase in the LDO expense. Finally, Mr. Hatch noted that the number of trips off-island has been reduced to approximately 45 a year resulting in a savings of \$23K. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily approve line item #439. The motion passed 4-0.

Line item #433, Local Drop Off. John Powers explained that he has looked into the effect that closing the LDO would have. He figured that it would save about \$17k, an amount he did not feel justified closing the LDO. Richard asked why his actual 2006 expenditure had been \$16,962, yet he had budgeted \$54,634 for FY07 and now \$62,600 for FY08. John explained that the large request was to cover a worst-case scenario, but that he was very unlikely to spend that amount. He feels fine going for a significant decrease in his request, as long as the FinCom will guarantee that he will be given more money should the need arise. He noted that starting in FY08 there will be monthly tracking of the town's assessment and that any credits will be returned to the town's general fund on a monthly basis. There was some concern on the part of some FinCom members that the money might not be available in the reserve fund, but finally a motion was made and seconded to reduce the LDO budget, line item #433, from \$62,600 to \$45,000. The motion passed 4-0.

#### **Town Assessor Budget:**

Line item #141, Town Assessor. Jo-Ann Resendes began the discussion by outlining the three major expense segments: Wages - 75%, legal - 17% and other - 9%. The increase in wages includes not only Cola, but also an increase in hours due to the rise in regulatory requirements.

The administrative assistant and the data collector positions have each been increased by five hours. Also, converting to digital mapping will require additional work to move over to the new platform. The legal budget is level funded. Other expenses include the purchase of a new digital camera, software support, appraisal work for the interim adjustment required annually. The Professional and Technical Services line includes \$4k for Vision, \$1k for mapping and \$175 for binding. Richard asked why the workload and salaries were increasing at a rate that was not commensurate with the town's growth. Jo-Ann responded that the data collector was a new position and as a new hire the person in that position was eligible for step increases. Other factors include, but are not limited to, new regulations requiring more time to fulfill deed transfers every time a new lot is created (about 24-40 yr.); the newly-formed Community Preservation Commission; and motor vehicle excise assessments. Mike explained that the assessor does all the preparatory work for tax bills, that the tax collector only becomes involved after the assessor has done all the work to the point of billing.

Richard asked where abatements were budgeted. Jo-Ann explained that abatements are handled in an overlay account and are not a part of the assessor's budget. For FY08 there is \$130k set aside in the overlay account, which typically has \$100k-150k. For West Tisbury this amount is approximately 1%-2% of the overall budget whereas other towns have 3%-5%. Skip asked if a taxpayer receives a check if an abatement is due. Jo-Ann responded that a check is issued if all taxes are paid in full, if not, then the abatement is credited towards the person's taxes. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily approve line item #141. The motion passed 4-0.

#### **Parks and Recreation Budget:**

Line items #620, 630, 632, 635, 640 and 650. Line item #620, Parks and Recreation Committee is level funded. Line item #630, Tennis Courts has only step and COLA increases. Rick is looking into other ways to run the tennis court that might result in lowering the expenses. Line item #632, Beaches. The figures in this budget were confusing so it will be discussed after conferring with Town Accountant Bruce Stone. Line item #635, Swimming Instruction is level funded. Rick commented that this free program has about 30 kids participating, all from West Tisbury. Line item #640, Winter Recreation is also level funded. The line #5270, Rentals and Leases, in the amount of \$2,000 is for swimming in the pool at the Mansion House. Rick is trying to get this amount reduced. He explained the \$1,000 for Halloween was to cover food, decorations, awards, etc. Line item #650, Town Grounds is also level funded and is for basic maintenance. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily approve line items #620, 630, 635, 640 and 650, holding off on line item #632. The motion passed 4-0.

#### **Minutes:**

The minutes of January 30 and February 13 were approved with minor corrections. The minute of February 6 will be discussed at the next meeting.

Al informed the members of the March 6 meeting of the Aquinnah Finance Committee. Al believes that committee might not approve the school budget and wondered if the West Tisbury FinCom members should attend the meeting to lend support to the Aquinnah FinCom. It was decided that if those scheduled to meet with the WT FinCom on March 6 could be rescheduled for March 13 then WT members would attend the Aquinnah meeting. Nancy will call Mark London, Joyce Bowker and Eric Whitman to reschedule their times.

Al mentioned that after meeting with School Superintendent Dr. James Weiss he had received a letter from Dr. Weiss outlining a reduction of \$109,000 in the UIRSD budget.

There will be a public meeting on Saturday, March 31 at the Howes House at 10am to review the budget before the town meeting.

There being no other business, a motion for adjournment was made and seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Nancy Rogers, Administrative Clerk