

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2008

Present: Al DeVito - chair, Richard Knabel, Sharon Estrella, Brian Athearn and Ann Nelson.

Guests: Bruce Stone, Town Accountant; Manny Estrella, Fire Chief; Beth Toomey, Police Chief

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

Fire Department Budget:

Chief Manny Estrella noted the following changes in his budget:

- Line 5214 - \$1,000 increase for heating oil
- Line 5300 - \$300 increase for Professional & Technical services
- Line 5302 - \$2,000 new line for Professional & Technical training/seminars
- Line 5480 - \$500 increase for gas

When questioned about maintenance costs, Chief Estrella explained that he has taken money not used for other line item expenses and put it towards maintenance. Al requested that the maintenance line item for next year more accurately reflect actual maintenance costs so that the FinCom can have a clearer picture of maintenance costs for the whole town.

Brian moved for preliminary approval of the fire department budget. Seconded by Ann. The motion passed 4-0-1 with Sharon abstaining.

Fire Department Warrant Articles:

Article 1: to transfer \$15,000 from Personal Service (Line 220-5120) to Expenses (220-5700) for shingling part of roof of Station 1 and for plants for Station 2. Manny explained that he is shingling a portion of the roof of Station 1 each year. There was discussion about whether or not this should go before the Capital Improvements Committee. More information is needed before a vote can be taken.

Article 2: to vote to appropriate \$20,000 for the maintenance of 13 dry fire hydrants in town. These are hydrants that were initially paid for by developers of certain properties. The money has dried up so the hydrants must now be maintained by the fire dept. The members asked that the wording "to be used as needed" be inserted so the article will read: ...vote to appropriate \$20,000 to be used as needed for the maintenance...

Article 3: appropriate \$60,000 for SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus). When added to the \$50,000 from last year, this will allow Manny to finish purchasing 24 SCBA units.

Police Department Budget:

Payroll reflects the 2.4% COLA and step increases.

Chief Toomey went through what was actually spent for Special Officers, making significant changes to her budget with this information. Bruce Stone has worked with Chief Toomey to restructure the police dept. budget.

The chief explained the expenses at the airport will be undergoing a change in process, in that the airport will be billed for the actual hours worked at the officer's rate of pay, plus costs for uniforms, training, benefits, etc. the airport will then pay that amount to the department.

Expenses:

Chief Toomey was pleased that efforts to keep a careful eye on energy use resulted in a drop in electricity. Even so, the request for FY09 is up due to the increase in the cost of electricity.

Line 5300, Professional & Technical (services) has more than doubled due to combining it with 5380, computer services, making it a more appropriate accounting.

Line 5290, Custodial Services, has been decreased. These services had been occurring weekly, but will now be bi-weekly.

Line 5480, Vehicular Supplies, has been increased to reflect the rise in gasoline prices. Bruce stated that this line has been very true to actual expenditures.

Line 5600, Intergovernmental Assessments, is for West Tisbury's portion of the Command Vehicle used by the entire island. This vehicle is used for municipal emergencies and could be used for dispatch control if the communications center were to be out of commission. WT has been asked to contribute \$1600 now, but the chief expects that amount to go down in the future. She hopes to use the vehicle at the Ag Fair this summer.

Al asked Chief Toomey if there was any room for reducing her budget. She said she could not do anything about personnel, but that she would look at her expenses. The chief has looked hard at what has actually been spent so that she could present a zero-funded budget.

Richard moved with a second by Ann to preliminarily approve the Police Department budget. The motion passed 5-0 with the proviso that Chief Toomey come back with any new figures.

Annual Report:

Members were in favor of the report. Richard made a motion, seconded by Brian, to authorize the chair to revise the report to include the joint effort of the FinCom with the BoS to have a warrant article to provide for a paper ballot if requested by a yet to be determined number of people at town meeting.

FinCom Budget:

Should MVTV line be increased? Yes, from \$1000 to \$1200.

Other purchased services, add \$250.

Total increase, \$450.

Motion to approve by Richard, seconded by Brian. Approved 5-0.

Ann asked for clarification of the purview of the Capital Improvement Committee. Al responded that any project over \$10,000 with a 5-year life expectancy has to go before the CIC. The CIC rates each project as follows:

- 1 - must be done
- 2 - should be done
- 3 - would be nice to do, but not necessary

He further noted that the CIC only makes recommendations, as the FinCom. The primary concept is to provide the voters with a 5-year plan so they will know what to expect.

Strategy for Budget Season:

There was a discussion about the need to inform voters of financial issues coming up at the Annual Town Meeting. What is the best way to get information disseminated? The feasibility of an online questionnaire will be looked into.

Richard reported that the MVRHS budget had just been approved. The UIRSD budget is under dispute. A 2/3 vote is needed. At present, 2 of the 5 members are not in favor.

Bruce handed out operating statements for the budget period 12-1-07 through 12-31-07. This year's tax levy increase is 2.2% compared to last year's increase of 1.7%.

Minutes will be taken under advisement for the next meeting.

The next meeting is Tuesday, January 22 at 4:30pm.

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

Meeting was adjourned at 6:08.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Rogers, Administrative Clerk