

Minutes
West Tisbury Finance Committee Meeting
March 3, 2009
Public Safety Building

Present: Al DeVito - chair, Sharon Estrella, Ann Nelson, Brian Athearn and Greg Orcutt.

Guests: Bruce Stone, Town Accountant; T. J. Hegarty, Dukes County Rodent Control; Sarah Kuh, County Health Care; Norman Perry, Maria MacFarland & Ernie Mendenhall, Personnel Committee; Dianne Powers, Skipper Manter and Richard Knabel, BoS; Jen Rand, Executive Secretary.

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

Al opened the meeting by commending Bruce for the excellent work he has done for the town as Town Accountant.

Dukes County Rodent Control:

Mr. Hegarty was present to explain the DCRC warrant article for Integrated Pest Management. He indicated there would be no COLA for county employees. Total FY10 budget request is \$51,915.81. The county pays 40% - \$20,766.32. The towns pay 60% - \$31,149.49. West Tisbury's share is \$4,234.23.

Brian made a motion, seconded by Greg to recommend the warrant article in the amount of \$4,423.23 for West Tisbury's 60% share of the Integrated Pest Management program. The motion passed 5-0.

County Health Care:

The total FY10 budget request for the Vineyard Health Care Access Program is \$88,863.94. County 40% - \$35,545.58, towns 60% - \$53,318.36. WT share is \$7,571.21. Ms. Kuh is requesting an additional \$51,972, of which West Tisbury would pay \$8,195.98. This will still leave a \$64,000 deficit. Ms. Kuh explained that to have level funding she has had to cut staff hours, not operating costs. To meet the deficit, she hopes to receive grants, but may have to implement layoffs as grant money is drying up. She reviewed the figures of those served by the VHCAP, a program that provides a safety net for those in need. This year the program has assisted app. 2,500 clients - 15% of the year round community. Ms. Kuh reported the program receives 10 hrs. a week in volunteer time and that the Rotary Club has funded an emergency fund of \$10,000 - \$12,000 since 2002.

Greg, seconded by Ann, made a motion to approve the warrant article (#43?) in the amount of \$7,571.21 for West Tisbury's 60% share of the Vineyard Health Care Access Program. The motion passed 5-0.

Ann, seconded by Brian, made a motion to approve the warrant article (#44?) in the amount of \$8,195.98 for West Tisbury's share of an additional 100% request for the Vineyard Health Care Access Program. The motion passed 5-0.

Forum:

The forum will be held on April 4, 10 - 12 at the Howes House. Set-up at 9:30.

Bruce will have last year's updated charts as well as new charts showing state and town revenue. Richard, Dianne and Al will meet with Bruce the week of March 21 to review the charts. Kathy Logue will make a presentation for the Capital Improvement Committee.

At 5:22 there was a recess for the selectmen to hold a brief meeting. The FinCom meeting reconvened at 5:30.

Personnel board budget #152:

Mr. Perry reported that board members plan to attend off-island sessions to get a good sampling of other towns.

Greg, seconded by Sharon, made a motion to preliminarily approve the Personnel Board budget. The motion passed 5-0.

COLA:

Mr. Perry began by reading the Personnel Board by-law: "the Personnel Board has the responsibility to formulate fair and equitable compensation for town employees. The Board is appointed by the Board of Selectmen and serves at the pleasure of the BoS." Mr. Perry then explained the process the board uses to arrive at a figure. This includes averaging the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for 12 months, averaging the COLA of all other island towns and averaging the COLA of some off-island towns. These averages are added together to reach a final average for West Tisbury. He said that this is the method that has been used for some time and has been consistent. Mr. Perry acknowledged that the state of the economy presents a complex problem. 3.6% is presently being suggested for the FY10 COLA, but might be lowered to 3.4%. At present, the effect on the budget is app.\$20,000.

Al stated that he would like to see a COLA of 1.5%. Brian and Ann thought 1.5 2%. Ernie Mendenhall thought 1.5% was acceptable and hoped there would be no opposition from the FinCom at the town meeting. FinCom agreed that 1.5% would negate the need for discussion at town meeting.

Sharon opposed cutting the COLA, citing that insurance costs have gone up and employees who are not in a union would likely end up with less take-home pay with no COLA.

Selectman Richard Knabel asked if the reclassification for step increase had been taken into account when deciding the COLA suggesting that voters would see this as an additional raise that might total as much as 8.5%. In response, Jen Rand asked that they be considered as very separate entities. The reclassification was voted on last year to amend pay inequities and should not be part of a COLA discussion.

Brian, seconded by Ann, made a motion to not recommend the budget with a 3.6% COLA. The motion passed 4-1.

Brian, seconded by Ann, then moved to recommend the budget with a 2% COLA. The motion passed 4-1.

Schedule re warrant article hearings:

Meetings will be held on March 10, 17 & 24 to review warrant articles.

The next meeting is Tuesday, March 10, 2009, 4:30pm at the Public Safety Building.

There being no other business, a motion for adjournment was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nancy Rogers, Administrative Clerk