

West Tisbury Finance Committee Meeting
Howes House
July 10, 2018

Attendance

Committee: Gary Montrowl – Chair, Chuck Hodgkinson, Greg Orcutt (phone), Doug Ruskin

Guests: Bruce Stone – Town Accountant, Skip Manter - Selectman

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:32pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings

Doug moved to approve the minutes from June 12, 2018 as amended. Chuck seconded the motion which passed 3-0-1 (Greg abstained).

Old Business

Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC)/Review of All Island Finance Committee

The Chair deemed the AIFC discussion a good start and said that although the issue will eventually end up with the Selectmen, the Finance Committees, which are the first group at an official level to pay attention to the issue, can force the discussion. There was a discussion about whether the RECC is a county problem or a town problem and whether capital costs would be state funded. The Committee discussed the pros (putting money away to show the towns are willing to take some responsibility) and cons (no specific plan for the use of funds) of a stabilization fund. All Committee members agreed that more information regarding cost and options was needed.

Doug agreed to invite Sherriff Ogden to the next AIFC meeting and follow up with Tisbury Finance Committee Chair, Jeff Krystal.

Fin Com Participation on West Tisbury Finance Team

The Chair reported that he met with Town Administrator, Jennifer Rand and Town Accountant, Bruce Stone. The Chair explained the Finance Team does not have fixed meetings and many of the topics covered are of no interest to the Fin Com. The Chair suggested the Fin Com be included in the budget briefing at the beginning of the budget cycle. The Chair said there was a recommendation the letter sent to department heads and committee chairs at the beginning of the budget cycle be jointly sent from the Selectmen and Finance Committee. The Chair added that he trusted Bruce to bring issues to the Fin Com's attention and did not think regular reports were necessary.

Greg said the Finance Committee needed a place at the table. Chuck reminded the Committee the strategic decision of one lump sum override for the Annual Town Meeting was made without the Finance Committee. Doug suggested the relationship be formalized with the requirement the Fin Com be informed of issues that will impact voters or the budget. The Chair suggested including a finance team report on the Fin Com agenda each month which will formalize the process, but not require a written report.

New Finance Committee Member to Fill Vacant Position

The Chair informed the Committee he had followed up with Jane Dreeban regarding the Finance Committee position. Skip explained a joint meeting of the Selectmen and Finance Committee is needed to appoint a new member.

Any Topic Not Anticipated by the Chair

Chuck informed the Committee he planned to go to the MVRHS budget meeting where the regional school agreement and the concept of equalized population and town value will be discussed.

Doug said the UIRSD allocation formula has been under discussion and the conclusion of the West Tisbury committee studying the formula was the district only needs one building and therefore the cost of the second building should be born by Chilmark. Doug said that recommendation was made in January, 2017. Doug recommended that as a representative of the voters looking at the budget, it is time for the Finance Committee to seriously start working on a recommendation the Town divorce itself from the UIRSD.

Chuck said he would like to see a plan on the how the separation would happen before the Fin Com can recommend withdrawing. Greg reminded the Committee he spoke to a person who headed a subcommittee of the Massachusetts department of education who said it is difficult to leave a regional school entity.

The Chair asked Greg and Doug to gather information on the topic because the Committee cannot make a recommendation without more information regarding the process, as well as how OPEB, pension liabilities and capital debt from construction would be split.

Correspondence/Scheduling

A decision will be made at the end of July regarding whether there will be a Finance Committee meeting on August 14 at 5pm.

There will be an AIFC meeting on July 26, 2018.

Adjournment

Doug moved to adjourn. Greg seconded the motion which passed 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Margo Urbany-Joyce

Approved 8/14/18, 4-0