

**West Tisbury Finance Committee Meeting
Howes House
June 13, 2017**

Attendance

Committee: Gary Montrowl – Chair, Greg Orcutt – Vice Chair, Chuck Hodgkinson, Katherine Triantafillou, Doug Ruskin

Guests: Jen Rand – Town Administrator, Bruce Stone – Town Accountant, Joe Tierney – Building Inspector

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:33pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings

Greg moved to approve minutes as submitted for the meeting on May 9, 2017. Doug seconded the motion which passed 4-0-1 with Chuck abstaining because he was not in attendance on May 9, 2017.

New Business

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Selectmen

Jen Rand explained the request was for electrical work for the installation of the electric car chargers. Jen said that although the Town received a grant of \$10,500, it is not sufficient to cover the total cost of the purchase and installation.

Greg moved to approve the request for transfer of \$6,000 from the reserve fund to Board of Selectmen #122-5780. Doug seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Gary asked what happens if the Town runs out of reserve funds. Bruce explained that an invoice from the prior year requires 50% approval at a regular meeting and 90% approval at a special meeting. Bruce added that all FY2017 payments must be approved by July 15, 2017.

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Treasurer Personal Services

Chuck moved to approve the request for transfer of \$322.63 from the reserve fund to Treasurer – Personal Services #145-5120. Greg seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Building Department Personal Services

Joe Tierney explained that the number of electrical, plumbing and gas installation inspections continues to rise. Joe said that for a special inspection, \$65 is paid to the Town which pays the inspector \$60 so all of the funds are covered, but it is done through the general fund. Joe further explained that in FY2015, the Town paid for a total of 604 inspections, which rose to 727 in FY2016 and 743 inspections year to date through May.

Gary asked about increasing permit fees. Bruce responded that is being considered.

There was a discussion regarding electrical, plumbing and gas inspectors being on the payroll even though they act as independent contractors. It was decided to ask Kathy Logue to address the Fin Com on this topic.

Greg moved to approve the request for transfer of \$6,300 from the reserve fund to Building Department Personal Services - #241-5120. Chuck seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

ACE MV

There was a discussion about ACE MV regarding the continued request for funding by towns and a need for more information from ACE MV. It was decided the All Island Finance Committee (AIFC) would be the best platform to work with ACE MV.

Planning Issues for the Year Ahead

Doug reported that the AIFC planning subcommittee created a list of FY 2018 presenters to be nonprofits (ACEMV, First Stop and Center for Living all at one meeting), regional entities, Community Preservation Committee (CPC), Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) assessment under unified tax rate, state reimbursement for education, voter education, and OPEB.

Doug said the AIFC would invite all CPC chairs, review an analysis of the prior year's spending, look at a process to handle regional requests from CPCs and perhaps determine a formula for how regional projects should be funded.

There was a discussion about school funding and the unified tax rate which would involve shifting school funding from headcount to real estate valuation. Bruce said that a unified tax rate formula for education defies the concept of regional education in which each town believes it will achieve a lower cost of education. Bruce said that Tisbury and Oak Bluffs would benefit from a change to a unified tax rate. Bruce explained that West Tisbury is unique because the percentage of students is similar to the Town's percentage of EQV (equalized valuation).

Doug said the OPEB discussion would focus on how to roll out to other entities the plan created by West Tisbury for the Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD).

Planning for Issues in the Year Ahead

The Chair polled the committee regarding the principle issues for the Fin Com to address in fiscal year 2018 resulting in a list including the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) and UIRSD. A discussion regarding the future of the UIRSD and negotiations with Chilmark took place.

The Chair noted that Superintendent D'Andrea had not yet delivered neither the special education study nor the strategic plan to the Fin Com and said he would follow up with the Superintendent.

When asked about OPEB, Katherine said that although it was an issue for the Fin Com to continue to push, she did not think it warranted a Fin Com subcommittee.

Housing Production Plan

The Chair said that although this is not something that is immediately affecting the Town, it is something that will affect the Town at some time because there will be money attached to it and the FC should monitor this issue.

The Chair listed the following highlights from the study:

- The state enables local ZBAs to approve affordable housing developments under flexible rules if under 10% of the year round housing units in the town consist of income restricted units or subsidized housing for low or moderate households.
- WT is under 10%. As of June, 2016, there were only 23 units from West Tisbury on the list of subsidized housing inventory and the Town would need at least 103 sub units to surpass its 10% under the Chapter 40 affordable housing goal.
- Of the six towns, only Chilmark is more deficient than West Tisbury. While not likely, it is possible for the state to intervene and force the town to build units that might not be to the Town's satisfaction.

The Chair suggested that in order to build the West Tisbury affordable housing inventory, either West Tisbury needs to stop putting money into other towns' projects or needs to pursue the other alternative which is to get the state to look at the Island as a whole.

Chuck noted that every Island town has an affordable housing zoning bylaw under which recipients can earn 140% of area median income and Chilmark was able to get legislative approval to raise that threshold to 150% due to the high cost of real estate. Chuck asked why Island towns are being judged based upon a statewide limit and not the higher AMI limits approved by the attorney general due to the higher cost of living here.

The Chair said this is an issue to be addressed at the AIFC because it is an issue that affects all Island towns. Bruce asked if this was also a planning board issue.

Chuck said that he contacted Adam Turner at the MVC asking why the Housing Production Plan could be adopted with approval by the planning board and board of selectmen with no Fin Com approval needed. Chuck added this could be the single most expensive project any Island town is going to take on.

Doug said that part of what is going on is to look for sources of funding including a housing bank and a fee on seasonal rentals directed to housing which has passed in the state senate. Doug added there is a push to look for dedicated funding that does not come out of CPA funds or real estate.

The Chair said consultants were hired to look at where each town stands with affordable housing and how the towns could meet affordable housing goals. Doug added that the study was funded by the MVC and the towns.

The Chair asked Doug to keep the Fin Com up on this topic going forward.

Review of Committee Assignments

Chuck agreed to be the West Tisbury Finance Committee representative on the West Tisbury Community Preservation Committee.

Chair Position Rotation

Doug suggested a formal process for rotation of the chair position. After a discussion surrounding term limits and the timing of when the position would rotate, the Committee decided not to formalize a process, but will do so in the future.

Correspondence/Scheduling

The Chair shared the most recent issues of the Beacon and the Municipal Advocate.

The next All Island School Committee will be June 26, 2017 at 6pm at the MVRHS.

The next West Tisbury Finance Committee will be Tuesday, July 11 at 4:30pm at the Howes House. If there are no reserve fund transfers to be approved, the meeting may be cancelled.

All Island Finance Committee meetings are scheduled for the fourth Thursday of the month, but there will be no July meeting.

Adjournment

Doug moved to adjourn. Greg seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margo Urbany-Joyce
West Tisbury Finance Committee Admin Assistant

Approved 4-0

July 11, 2017