

**West Tisbury Finance Committee Warrant Hearing
West Tisbury Finance Committee Meeting
Howes House
May 9, 2017**

Attendance

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

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings

Doug moved to approve minutes as submitted from the meetings on March 7, 2017 and March 14, 2017 and as revised from the meeting on March 9, 2017. Greg seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Greg noted that the minutes reflected ACE MV would provide an update to the Fin Com and that the Selectmen would provide the Fin Com with the building maintenance report when it was completed. It was determined Margo would follow up with Jen Rand.

New Business

Request for Appropriation Transfer – Animal Control

Bruce explained both Animal Control Officers (ACOs) resigned and retired in the last year and the newly hired ACOs must satisfy mandatory training. Bruce further explained that although the cost of training is \$7,800 excluding travel, there are excess funds in the wage line due to a difference in wages between the prior ACOs and the newly hired ACOs.

Doug moved to approve the appropriation transfer request of \$5,230 from 292-5700 Animal Control Expenses to 292-5120 Animal Control Personal Services. Gary seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Request for Transfer from Reserve Fund – Town Electric Expense

Bruce explained the transfer was necessary because of the arrangement with the developer of the town solar array and landfill which calls for the developer to pay real estate tax for the site but to be reimbursed for the tax by the town. Bruce further explained the reimbursement paid was \$10,611 which is projected to leave this year's budget about \$9,000 short. Bruce said this is a one-time event as the reimbursement has been factored into next year's budget.

Greg moved to approve the transfer request of \$9,000 to 194-5700 Town Electric Expense. Doug seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Municipal Modernization Act Invoice Approval

Bruce explained that since the Fin Com does not always meet monthly, it may want to consider a provision in the Municipal Modernization Act which allows committees to designate a person who can approve invoices for payment with the condition that person reports that payment at the next meeting.

Financial Management and Governance Approval of Bills/Warrants (Sections 57-58)

Allows any multi-member boards, committees, and commissions heading departments, including select boards, to designate one of its members to review and approve bills or payment warrants, with a report provided at the next meeting. Currently, a board or committee heading a department may delegate authority to approve payrolls to a member, and a regional school committee may designate a subcommittee to approve bills and payrolls with a report to the next meeting of the full committee. Absent a charter or special act, boards and committees currently have to approve bills or payment warrants by majority vote at a meeting subject to the Open Meeting Law.

Source: City & Town August 18, 2016

A Publication of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services

Gary moved to allow the Finance Committee Chair or Vice Chair to approve invoices up to \$500 when the Finance Committee does not meet on its normal monthly basis. Greg seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Letter to Selectmen

The Chair referred the committee to a draft letter from the Fin Com to the Selectman regarding financial topics for the upcoming year. There was a discussion regarding stipends for elected town boards and committees and its inclusion in the letter. The Chair said she would rephrase the language to say that stipends should be paid with some kind of consistency.

There was a discussion regarding the tax levy increase. Bruce said the state average tax levy increase has been 4.0% for the last ten years and West Tisbury's levy increase has consistently been 3.5%. Gary asked about the typical surplus and free cash at the end of the year. Bruce said the town usually underspends about 4% and has 1% excess revenue. The Chair asked if setting a budget increase of 2.5% is reasonable. Bruce responded that sometimes in the past, the direction given was to create a budget with no increased hours and level funded expenses. Bruce added that most budget expenses are level funded for the town departments and committees.

State Road Maintenance

The Committee discussed the letter written by the Selectmen to District Highway Director at Mass DOT, Mary-Jo Perry, regarding the transfer of routine maintenance responsibilities for state roads to the Island municipalities. Skip Manter said he thought the idea would not move forward because there was so much backlash from municipalities. The Chair said the Fin Com heartily supports the Selectmen letter to Mass DOT and appreciates their efforts.

Transition Planning

Katherine notified the Committee that she has been serving as Chair since 2012 and is stepping down from the position. Katherine explained that Vice Chair, Gary Montrowl, will step into the Chair position. Doug suggested codifying a rotational process for the Chair position. Katherine suggested nominating Greg as Vice Chair because he is the next most senior Committee member. The Committee concurred and Greg agreed to assume the position of Vice Chair.

Greg thanked Katherine for her work, highlighting her organization and the improvements she initiated to the budget and warrant recommendation process. Once again, the Committee concurred.

Correspondence/Scheduling

The next Finance Committee meeting will be Tuesday, June 13 at 4:30pm and will be held at the Howes House.

The Chair reviewed an invoice submitted by Lynn Christoffers in the amount of \$250 for the video taping of warrant hearings.

Greg moved to approve payment of the invoice from Lynn Christoffers. Doug seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

The Chair reviewed an invoice submitted by Margo Urbany-Joyce for 42.75 hours worked from January 3, 2017 through April 30, 2017.

Greg moved to approve payment of the invoice from Margo Urbany-Joyce. Doug seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

The Chair reminded the Committee that West Tisbury is the host of the All Island Fin Com Meeting on Tuesday, May 16 and the agenda is to discuss what the AIFC has accomplished and goals and procedures for going forward. The Chair said there will not be any substantive presenters.

A discussion regarding ACEMV, the fact that it is a private nonprofit that seeks funding from the town and not all towns contribute based on the 50/50 formula took place. Bruce noted that town appropriation for ACEMV is to the school committee and asked what the agreement between the school committee and ACE MV looks like.

The Chair shared the most recent two copies of the Beacon with the Committee.

Adjournment

Greg moved to adjourn. Gary seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:25pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Margo Urbany-Joyce
West Tisbury Finance Committee Admin Assistant

Approved 4-0-1

June 13, 2017