

**West Tisbury
Finance Committee Meeting
Howes House
July 12, 2016**

Attendance

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

Guests: Skip Manter – Selectman, Bruce Stone – Town Accountant, Samantha Look – Vineyarders for Grass Fields, Dave Miller - Vineyarders for Grass Fields, Moira Silva - Vineyarders for Grass Fields, Rebekah Thomson - Vineyarders for Grass Fields.

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

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Gary moved to approve the May 10, 2016 minutes as corrected by Doug. Chuck seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Gary moved to approve the Schools Subcommittee minutes from May 24, 2016 as corrected by Chuck. Chuck seconded the motion which passed 2-0.

Doug moved to approve the June 24, 2016 minutes with his revisions. Chuck seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Old Business

All Island Fin Com Reception

The Chair led a discussion about the All Island Finance Committee reception held on June 18, 2016. Doug said it was a good start and the Committee concurred.

Chuck said he would find an All Island Fin Com most useful if action comes out of it to help West Tisbury. Gary stated that he liked the fact that there is contact with other committees.

Doug explained he thought the point was to develop Island wide consensus on Island wide issues like the schools and he hopes that is the route the AIFC is going down. The Chair stated that if the format is to elect a permanent group and a chair for the AIFC, she believes it will run out of steam.

Gary explained that he liked the idea that there is a forum and a coalition which identified the issues it can deal with now, but next year will be different issues.

Report from Meeting with School Superintendent

The Chair reported that she and Gary met with Superintendent D’Andrea in a productive meeting which used the letter the FC sent to the Superintendent as an agenda for the meeting. The topics included: OPEB obligations and strategic plan for E & D fund use; financially viable school choice policies; cost

effective ways to deliver special education services; island-wide procurement of common goods and services; impact of Fair Labor Standards Act; long-term business and financial plan for school system; and MV @Play proposal plans.

Chuck asked if any next steps resulted from the meeting with the Superintendent. The Chair responded that the Superintendent offered to attend a Fin Com meeting and they discussed the Superintendent submitting preliminary budget information in November and December so the FC could impact the budget earlier.

The Chair discussed the follow up UIRSD committee meeting which she and Chuck attended. Chuck explained Amy Tierney structured the finances such that a surplus in West Tisbury would pay for a deficit in the West Tisbury school budget and a surplus in Chilmark would pay for a deficit in the Chilmark school budget. Approximately \$160,000 was taken from E&D to pay for the Chilmark school's HVAC. The E&D balance of nearly \$65,000 was put into OPEB and the E&D balance is now zero.

The Chair stated that a difficult issue will be coming up with a policy of paying down OPEB or how to use E&D funds.

Chuck noted that Robert Lionette suggested creating a contingency plan to fix the track in case MV@Play falls through. Skip said that the contingency plan is to use the CPA money to repair the track, but Chuck did not think the CPA funds were sufficient to complete the repairs.

The Chair said that in addition to a dialogue with the Superintendent, the FC needs to connect with the school committee.

The Chair asked Skip and Bruce for a copy of the town meeting article to amend the regional agreement that was approved by all three towns from which Skip read at the UIRSD meeting when he listed the arrangement at 80-20-20. The Chair explained that part of the issue discussed was how to reimburse each town for expenses so that the books could be closed for the fiscal year.

Personnel Subcommittee Report

Doug presented two motions:

1. That the West Tisbury Finance Committee present the proposed wage scale adjustment titled "Personnel Wage Proposal July 2016" dated July 12, 2016 to the West Tisbury Personnel Board and request that it be placed on their agenda for discussion in person with them at their next meeting.
Chuck moved to accept the motion. Gary seconded the motion which passed 4-0.
2. That the West Tisbury Finance Committee recommend to the West Tisbury Personnel Board that the annual wage adjustment policy currently in use by the town of Chilmark be adopted for West Tisbury and that such recommendation be placed on their agenda for discussion in person with them at their next meeting.

Gary asked about push back. Doug said that it is a specific set of steps to get to a number and a policy that accompanies the formula such that the increase will never be less than 1% nor greater than 3%. The Chair asked why the policy should include a lower limit of 1%. Chuck explained that in Chilmark (and most likely West Tisbury), 50% of the staff is at the highest step

level and with the annual increase in medical benefit costs, take home pay would be less than in the prior year if the COLA was zero as produced from the formula.

Chuck suggested changing the language such that it does not reference the town of Chilmark policy. Doug explained that a policy would not be written that references another town.

Gary asked Bruce how the step increase became 5% instead of lower step increases at other towns. Bruce responded that's the way it has always been and predates him.

Chuck moved to accept the motion. Gary seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

Doug explained he would also like for the Fin Com to propose a policy for salary review of elected officials. Chuck responded that he thought it was decided at a prior meeting to put this on the back burner. The Chair suggested the Committee defer this discussion until the next meeting when Greg Orcutt could be involved in the discussion. The Chair asked Doug to conduct research on this topic.

New Business

Rebekah Thomson from Vineyarders for Grass Fields (VFGF)

Before Vineyarders for Grass Fields began the presentation, Doug asked why VFGF requested to be on the agenda for the Financial Committee meeting. Rebekah Thomson responded that their concerns include financial issues.

Moirá Silva made a presentation to the committee highlighting the following points:

- MVRHS recently voted to approve phase one of MV@Play's proposal, including a new track, artificial turf playing field, bleacher seating for 500 people and stadium lighting on the high school campus.
- At the time of the vote, there was no user agreement between the school and MV@Play, no estimate regarding the increase in liability insurances and unclear future expenses regarding the ongoing costs for artificial field maintenance and carpet replacement.
- MV@Play will pay for the initial installation costs, but effective day two, MVRHS will assume financial responsibility for all costs associated with the project.
- This is only phase one of a three phase project intended to be a 41 acre athletic complex designed by Gale Associates.
- The complex will serve high school athletics, youth and adult soccer, football and lacrosse, summer camps, tournaments and other events. Therefore the MVRHS committee voted to assume permanent financial responsibility for the upkeep of new facilities designed to host athletic events - even those not related to the high school.

- Gale Associates stated that annual maintenance per field is \$1,000 and that the plastic carpet will last 15 years and will need to be replaced at a cost of \$350,000. The replacement cost estimate has been increased to \$450,000.
- Robert Lionette spoke with Barnstable in June. They informed Robert they have been spending \$20,000 per year on maintenance and will need to replace their plastic carpet after ten years at a cost well over \$1,000,000. These costs are associated with one field and the MV@Play proposal is for five fields. The Barnstable field is infilled with crumb rubber which is a less expensive option than the plant based infill being proposed for the MVRHS.
- According to Superintendent D'Andrea the user agreement is now finalized. However, the agreement appears to be non-standard and potentially creates exposure for MVRHS. The agreement states that MV@Play is a 501c3 and will remain such for the term of the agreement. However, Vineyarders for Grass Fields have not been able to confirm that is the case.

Moira Silva listed the following financial questions from Vineyarders for Grass Fields:

- Will the school's current insurance policy cover this project and what are the incremental costs?
- How long is the warranty for a new plastic carpet? Eight years.
- What are the reasons the plastic carpet must be replaced?
- What types of problems are covered by the warranty?
- What types of problems are not covered by the warranty?
- What conditions or maintenance practices void the plastic carpet's warranty?
- Does a single warranty cover all aspects of the artificial field's soil-base preparation, base materials, artificial turf materials, top-dressing, irrigation system, etc. or will there be separate warranties and warranty voiding conditions for each of the elements?
- What is the estimated cost of the new carpet and infill?
- What are the added costs of shipping tens of tons of new and used material on and off Island?
- How much time, equipment, and manpower must be budgeted to ensure a reasonable sanitary playing surface?
- Given the financial demands on MVRHS, how does the school plan to pay for annual maintenance, carpet replacement for each field every eight years, and infill replenishment as it migrates into the environment?
- What maintenance practices and documentation are necessary to keep the carpet safe?
- Do the sanitizing cleansers or the scrubbing process damage the artificial fibers and lessen the projected life expectancy of the product? Will the use of these sanitizing cleaners invalidate the surface's product warranty?
- Will MVRHS be responsible for cleaning up after the adult and recreational teams that use the fields?
- Will the school try to remain carbon-neutral on this product? If so, what are the projected costs for the new trees, installation and maintenance?

- When additional costs arise involving repair, maintenance, replacement, will those costs be passed on to the parents of rec players in the form of higher sign up fees? Taxpayers?
- Would an extra part time position need to be created to handle scheduling for the new athletic fields, as suggested in the second public forum?
- If phase one is completed as planned this fall, where will maintenance fees come from, given that the FY17 budget is already allocated?
- If there were a class action suit, would it be covered by regular liability insurance or would the towns be responsible for damages?

Doug said the FC can recommend against spending the money for the MV@Play, but the school committee operates independently from the towns. Samantha Look said they understand the MVRHS committee is there to make a decision, but they were put under a lot of pressure and this is a big financial issue.

Chuck said there is no pro forma p&l and we don't know the sources and uses of capital for this project. Chuck continued that members of the FC recently met with the Superintendent and one of the questions for the Superintendent was whether MVRHS has the competency and finances to run this athletic complex.

Gary referenced the point Moira made that maintenance for the Barnstable field was \$20,000 per year. Rebekah Thomson said it is difficult to find a comparable field because of use.

Gary asked if the life span is eight to ten years. Rebekah responded that the limited warranty is eight years and the Barnstable field lasted ten years.

Gary asked if the replacement cost is \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. Rebekah responded that Gale Associates quoted the replacement carpet as \$350,000, but last week in Chilmark they quoted \$450,000. Rebekah said that Barnstable is looking at \$1,000,000 for a replacement carpet.

Chuck suggested that VFGF contact Gale Associates and ask what name they used to file the 501c3 because it may be a different name than VFGF searched. Rebekah responded that the language regarding the 501c3 status has been changed to pending.

The Chair asked for the exact status of the MV@Play project. Moira Silva replied that the project has been referred to the Martha's Vineyard Commission, but it has not been decided if the MVC will review it.

The Chair asked about the rationale for the project. Rebekah Thomson replied that it is to create a community sports complex where children of different ages could recreate together. Moira Silva added the fact that the initial installation is free is also part of the rationale.

Gary asked Skip if he had any input. Skip responded that the field is in terrible shape and probably won't be usable soon. The first proposal was for rubber infill, but subsequently, MV@Play has come back with an organic surface. Skip suggested that since the original installation is free, if it doesn't work out, it could be replaced with a grass field in four or five years. Samantha Look said it is not easily reversible. Samantha added the soil would be stripped out and would leave a dead zone which would require an immense budget to put the land back to a state where it could sustain a grass field.

Doug asked if there was anything specific VFGF was asking the Fin Com to do now. Samantha asked if it would be helpful for the MVC to see a letter from the FC highlighting the financial issues. The Chair stated that has not been an action taken by the Fin Com in the past and she was not sure the Fin Com wanted to establish that precedent now. The Chair continued that the Fin Com would discuss the issue at a subsequent meeting, but sending a letter to the MVC after one presentation was not a good idea. The Chair assured VFGF that the Fin Com will be alert and proactive on the issue.

Chuck said there are meetings at the MVRHS scheduled next week which will cover several topics including the athletic field and that he planned to attend and would learn more about the issue.

Rebekah Thomson said the issue of using Community Preservation Act funds for the track part of the project has come up. Gary said that there is no guarantee the school will get the funding for the project because there is so much competition. However, the project will not receive funding if artificial turf is used because artificial turf is clearly against CPA regulations.

Chuck said that CPA funds can only be appropriated as listed on town warrants. Chuck added that if admission is charged, that may also void the ability to use public CPA funds.

Scheduling & Correspondence

The Chair presented Margo's 8.25 hours worked from June 13, 2016 through June 30, 2016.

Gary moved to approve the hours as submitted. Chuck seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

The Chair presented a bill from the Association of Town Committees for \$155.

Doug moved to approve payment of the bill submitted. Chuck seconded the motion which passed 4-0.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 13 at 4:30pm at the Howes House.

Adjournment

Gary moved to adjourn. Chuck seconded the motion which passed 3-0 (Doug left the meeting at 5:45pm).

The meeting was adjourned at 6:08pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Margo Urbany-Joyce, Administrative Assistant

Approved: 3-0

Date: 9/13/16