

**West Tisbury
Finance Committee Meeting
West Tisbury Library
April 19, 2016**

Attendance

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

Guests: Jen Rand – Town Administrator, Bruce Stone – Town Accountant, Skip Manter – Selectman

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

Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings:

Greg moved to approve the minutes from March 22, 2016 as submitted. Gary seconded the motion which passed 4-0-1 with Chuck abstaining.

Old Business

No Old Business.

New Business

Reserve Funds Transfer Request – Town Report

Jen presented the Reserve Funds Transfer Request of \$298.40 for Town Reports. Jen explained that the report was over budget because it was longer than in the past. Although \$6,100 was budgeted for FY16, the same amount is budgeted for FY17 because Jen plans to print fewer reports next year because people are not coming to get them.

Doug moved to approve the \$298.40 Reserve Funds Transfer to Town Reports. Gary seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Reserve Funds Transfer Request – Streetlights

Jen presented the Reserve Funds Transfer Request of \$4,530 for streetlights. Jen explained that when the town converted streetlights to LED lights two years ago, the Selectmen requested two lights be added in North Tisbury near Cronig's. Although the lights were installed by a contractor, they were never connected to power by Eversource because Eversource lost the request. The amount requested is for the power connection by Eversource.

Doug moved to approve the Reserve Funds Transfer of \$4,530 for streetlights. Chuck seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Doug asked Bruce about the reserve fund balance which Bruce said was approximately \$14,000 after the two transfers approved at today's meeting.

The Chair asked newly elected Finance Committee member, Chuck Hodgkinson to introduce himself to the Committee. Chuck explained that his Island experience included working for the Town of Chilmark

in various positions and on numerous projects. This experience combined with an interest in being more involved with the Town of West Tisbury led Chuck to seek election to the Finance Committee.

The Chair led a discussion about the recent Town Meeting and the role and performance of the Finance Committee. Greg responded that people had read the Fin Com letter to the editor, responded and took it to heart. Greg added that people in other town governments took notice and the West Tisbury Fin Com earned respect.

Gary agreed and stressed that it is a long term effort that is not going to be won in a single meeting and that it is an educational process with the electorate. Gary added that the letter to the editor was helpful as was the handout for Town Meeting prepared by Doug, particularly where it explained the split votes. Gary thought it was a good process to be on stage and suggested in the future, the FC provide a report to set the tone of Town Meeting.

Katherine agreed that the FC should begin with a statement noting, as described by Town Moderator, Dan Waters, this year was testing the waters.

Doug gave it a six on a scale of one to ten. Doug explained that being on stage offered a new perspective and that the Fin Com is achieving more of a leadership position. Doug pointed out that the Town Moderator takes the budget page by page and then there is a vote. The school budget was an area that was up for discussion and when the vote came, it was one of many lines on the page. Doug suggested it may be sensible to vote those lines separately.

Bruce responded that as each item is discussed, it could be called out as an amendment to be voted on separately.

Chuck noted that as a citizen, he remembers the last significant warrant article that was defeated was the second renovation of Town Hall which was about ten years ago. Chuck explained that he works with the selectmen and finance committee year round in Chilmark. Chuck stressed the need to build a relationship with the schools and volunteered to attend all of the school meetings. Chuck summarized that once it's on the warrant, it passes.

The Chair said that in the future, she believes the better strategy is to come up with a reduced number for a line item. Gary responded that he liked the way the Fin Com is developing more on the advisory stage. Two small victories were the school agreed to look at OPEB at the end of the year and on Town floor the library amended the warrant article for the new position so it is not a full time benefitted position.

The Chair initiated a discussion about timing, noting that the Committee reviewed the budgets efficiently. Doug responded that if the Committee would like to have a picture of the total budget including warrant articles, then it will have to wait for the warrant to be presented before reviewing the budgets, which pushes back the budget reviews to early March.

Katherine said the schedule worked well until the last night of the warrant article hearings which was complicated because the West Tisbury School playground was added to the agenda.

Gary suggested one or two public meetings in between the televised sessions to internally discuss budgets and warrants articles. Katherine responded that would preclude a vote after each budget is presented.

Chuck said it is a 12 month process and the Committee has to follow the money, concentrating on the Personnel Board, Community Preservation Committee and the schools. Gary agreed and added the Committee can constructively engage with the Superintendent's office on issues including procurement, whether special needs costs are being handled equitably and responsibly and changes to school choice.

The Chair agreed that constant attention is necessary and that if the Committee pursues issues with the school board and personnel board, it will require a greater time commitment with subcommittees researching, presenting reports and following up.

Doug agreed, but suggest the Committee create priorities.

The Chair requested a priorities list from each of the Committee members. The Committee responded as listed below:

- Doug – schools and personnel board
- Gary – schools
- Greg – schools and OPEB
- Chuck – schools, personnel board, capital plan for the schools

The Chair instructed the Committee that a vote on Fin Com priorities would be taken at the next meeting.

Bruce explained that he thought this year's town meeting went well because of ten years of trust with people in the Town and the Finance Committee is part of that trust. We have not had a proposition 2.5 pass in over 12 years and have stayed below 2.5% with new growth.

Scheduling and Correspondence

The next Fin Com meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, May 10 at 4:30pm to be held at the Howes House.

The Chair circulated Margo Urbany-Joyce's hours submitted of 41 hours through March 22, 2016.

Gary moved to approve the hours submitted. Greg seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Greg moved to adjourn. Doug seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Margo Urbany-Joyce, Administrative Assistant

Approved: 5-0

Date: 4/10/16