

Approved 1/30/19
TOWN OF WEST TISBURY
SELECTMENS MEETING
Wednesday, January 16, 2019 4:30 p.m. – 6:22 pm

Present: Selectmen Cindy Mitchell, Skipper Manter, Kent Healy, Jen Rand

Also Present: Bruce Stone, Kathy Logue, Larry Shubert, Ginny Jones, Kate Warner, Catherine Walthers, Ted Jochsberger, Rhonda Conley, Makenzie Brooks, Doug Ruskin, Quinlan Slavin, Emma Bena, Finn Robinson, Odin Robinson, Emily Boyd, Ayla Strom, Tasman Strom, Nola Savard, Izzie Anthony, Josie Powers, Jasper Ralph, Annemarie Ralph, Holly Pretsky

Minutes: *S. Manter motioned to approve the minutes of 12/19/18. K. Healy seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.*

Plastic Bottle Ban: Plastic Free MV, a group of young students, presented a request to the Board of Selectmen to place an article on the town meeting warrant banning plastic drink bottles. They said they had asked the Board of Health, and they are willing to enforce the bylaw. The bylaw will ban the sale and distribution of plastic water bottles under 34 ounces. It will not be illegal to have one in your possession. The group said they were asking for it to be a Selectmen's article so that wording could be altered if needed. They plan to hold a public forum at the West Tisbury Library to answer questions for the public. When asked what the alternatives would be they said there are glass bottles and water comes in cardboard boxes. They added soda bottles to the ban because in Concord MA when the water bottle ban went into effect the sale of soda rose. They said the owner of Cronigs market said he would be in favor of it if the entire island had the ban. Kent asked what the cost of enforcement would be. Jen noted that the Board of Health already inspects businesses for cigarettes, so it may be rolled into that. Skipper said the final wording might need to be changed to have a clearer word than "distribution".

S. Manter motioned to add the Bottle ban Bylaw to the Town Meeting Warrant. K. Healy seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Short Term Rental (STR) Tax: Jen said that the Board would need to make some decisions on what, if anything they wanted to place on the warrant regarding the new STR tax. The town, which currently does not have a rooms tax could ask the voters to approve a tax of 2, 4 or 6% which would apply to short term rentals as defined in the new law, and hotels, and the Youth Hostel. Christine Flynn of the MV Commission provided the Board with a breakdown of estimated receipts at each of the percentages allowed. She explained her methodology for arriving at those figures explaining the assumptions she made. It was noted that the newly registered properties are then able to be inspected by the town, should the town decide to do so, and inspection fees can be charged. Ted said the town should do inspections. Kent said there would be issues with properties not being properly registered. Jen pointed out that the town was not responsible for that, the State was in charge of the registration and enforcement. Cindy said she thought the Financial Management Team should meet and develop a formal recommendation for the board, noting there should be parity between the towns. West Tisbury is the only Island town that does not have a rooms tax for hotels. Skipper said he is not in favor of raising taxes. Bruce noted that the town has consistently increasing expenses and the revenue sources are flat. This is a new opportunity to take some of the burden off the tax payer. Cathy Walthers, homeowner, said she did not know what to charge her incoming tenants. Kathy Logue said she

was hopeful the new tax would provide extra revenue for the town, as well as possibly turn some rentals back into year-round options for people. Kent said he was concerned about how complicated this would be for the town to keep track of. Dawn said this was an opportunity to increase town receipts as all the other towns on the Island are doing. Kate Warner said the town should start at 4% to reflect what other similar town's on the island are doing. The Board will continue to work on this for the town meeting warrant.

Affordable Housing Committee – Old Courthouse Rd Project: Rhonda said the Committee was looking for input in the draft Request for Proposals to bring a housing project forward. They also asked the Board to approve the contract with Leedara Zola to work with the committee on this project.

S. Manter motioned to enter into a contract with Leedara Zola for assistance with the Old Courthouse Rd project. K. Healy seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Fire Chief Position: Jen said that she had inquired of other towns and the Fire Chiefs are all on contract. Skipper said he thought all town employees should be treated the same and there should be no contract employees.

S. Manter motioned to make the Fire Chief position a contract position. K. Healy seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was KH & CM in favor SM opposed.

Shellfish Position: Jen explained that the Shellfish Committee would prefer the job was a 20 week position at 40 hours/week versus the previously discussed 10 hours/week year-round. This would still not trigger any benefits. She added that the Committee has a list of equipment they need, the cost of which can be completely covered by the license plate money held by the town to be spent only on economic development or tourism. Kathy noted that her unemployment budget will go up as a result of the new positions.

S. Manter motioned to structure the job as requested and authorize the use of the license plate money for this purpose. K. Healy seconded the motion. The vote on the motion was unanimous in favor.

Housing Bank: Doug Ruskin said the Short Term Rental tax was planned as a source of revenue for the proposed Housing Bank. They said after last year's vote at town meeting to support the concept of the Housing bank they worked to bring this petition forward as soon as the tax law passed. The language for the Housing Bank is modeled after the Land Bank. The warrant article is asking for 3% of the tax collected to be dedicated in perpetuity to the Housing Bank to be used for the creation of affordable year round housing. Bruce said he has raised a question with the Department of Revenue regarding the legality of dedicating tax money in this way. His belief is that it must first go to the general fund, with a vote at town meeting for appropriation. Skipper said he was okay with the concept of the Housing Bank, but felt the members should be appointed not elected. He said he was not in favor of dedicating the tax money in perpetuity, he felt the voters should have the opportunity to decide where the funds go. He thought perhaps some of the Land Bank funds could be dedicated to this. Makenzie said this was a once in a lifetime chance to address the housing issue, which is driven in part by the rental market. Larry said the Affordable Housing Committee was in favor of the Housing Bank. He added he thought the town should have a 6% tax so that 3% would still be available for General Fund needs. Kent said he was in favor of changing zoning to allow more houses.