

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, March 6, 2024
by Zoom Cloud Conference

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Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Ruth Konigsberg, Rachel Orr, Alex Meleney*, Louis Pashman, Allan Rogers, Dan Seidman,

Others: Abbe Burt, Lynne Fraker, Recorder – Marni Lipke,

Town: Town Administrator Jay Grande, Treasurer Jon Snyder, Harbormaster – John Crocker, Kim Elias, Morgan Reitzas, Fire/Ambulance/EM – Chief Greg Leland, Patrick Rolston,

* TFC members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:31PM.

(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Review of Emergency Management (EM) Budget

Patrick Rolston, Emergency Management Director

(See documents on file.)

- EM was a crisis planning and preparedness organization that sent out initial event calls. During a crisis EM staff coordinated radio lines, department response, etc. But they also were on duty in their regular Town roles. The Island EM Manager was Kevin Brennan at the Martha's Vineyard (MVY) Airport. Tisbury staffing was before the Personnel Board: currently it was Emergency Management Director Asst. Fire Chief Patrick Rolston and the Police Dept. Executive Assistant Samantha Dore (see 2/28/24 Minutes p.4).
- EM costs included contracting with MV Communications for storms, code reds, etc. In Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) a separate line was set for Professional Services (#5300)—used for technicians to set up phone service, wifi, etc. at emergency accommodations. Usually most of this line was returned to the Town at the end of the fiscal year.
- The current equipment was sufficient to the new Tisbury School project, and was shared around the Island according to regional shelter needs.
- In FY24 the Department acquired 2 dual role phones, an iPad, wifi costs, etc.

Review of Fire Department and Ambulance Budgets and Warrant Articles

Greg Leland – Fire Chief/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Coordinator

(See documents on file.)

- Fire Department Budget salary lines were clarified as follows.

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- Fire Chief Greg Leland's new contract shifted all his salary (both EMS Coordinator and Fire Chief) into the Fire Department (see below: Ambulance budget) and was in fact less than the combined salaries plus the standard Management and Professional (M&P) Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)—\$152,000 in FY24 to ~ \$163,000 in FY25.
 - ° The line also included education incentives. The Chief was already credentialed (at 3%) and working slowly at degrees but currently too busy to earn any next year.
- The Salary Line now encompassed: Asst. Chief Patrick Rolston, lifeguards, duty chief, secretary, shift coverage, volunteer pay, etc.
 - ° Despite a minor volunteer firefighter stipend increase, Tisbury was still behind other Towns.
 - ° Lifeguards were poached by Edgartown for South Beach.
- The Fire Chief's vehicle (see below: Articles) as per his contract would be a Town car so maintenance, gas/oil, repairs, etc. were added to the Fire and Department of Public Works (DPW) budgets.
- Currently the Chief was using his own car and was reimbursed at the Federal rate (65¢/mile) with a 10,000 m. cap—current annual mileage 15,000 plus \$5,000 in repairs. This line was reduced in anticipation of the Chief's vehicle.
- The Command Vehicle was shared among whoever was duty chief, for example during the day Asst. Chief Rolston for inspections and events.
- As a smaller department, a repurposed ambulance could be decommissioned and expenses reduced accordingly.
- Total expenses were up 6.7%, plus the staffing percentage—which was distorted by the Chief's salary shift from the Ambulance Dept.
- The Department received \$17,800 in grants and usually contributed about \$18,300 in revenues to the General Fund (see below: Actions).
- The FinCom discussed the ongoing shift towards a professional department (e.g. the permanent Asst. Chief—see Minutes: 1/9/19 p.2-3, & 3/6/19 p.2) and the need to plan and balance other Town budgets accordingly.
- In 2020 when Mr. Leland was Asst. Chief there were 350 calls and 250 inspections per year. Now there were ~ 700 calls and well over 1,000 inspections, leaving the Chief and Asst. Chief tapped out every week. The Department had to find a way to meet State standards or become ineligible for funding/grants, etc. Edgartown hired 2 full time inspection positions—apart from their Chief and Asst. Chief.
- The State only allowed a \$50 permit fee, but there were other modes of compensation such as inspection or review fees and fines. A house inspection took 1 hr. plus preparation time.
 - ° Short-term rental inspection fees increases received voter pushback.

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- Most inspections were about code, such as solar installations and batteries—which were highly technical and time-consuming.
- Fines could be levied for false alarms from poorly maintained commercial alarm systems.
- Many calls were burnt food from badly designed kitchen ventilators.
- Chief Leland asked for FinCom support to increase fee/fine revenues.

Warrant Articles

- \$70,000 for a Fire Chief's car (see above) and accompanying equipment.
- \$51,000 for 6 sets of firefighting gear on a rotating replacement at the end of their 10 yr. lifespan. 12 sets of gear would have to be replaced in FY26—hopefully with some Embarkation funding.
 - Current gear included the carcinogen polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and as the first non-PFAS gear the replacements would likely be more expensive so funds might not cover all 6 sets.
- \$23,519 for the Department half of the final year of the Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) cycle.

Ambulance Department Budget

- The Ambulance Coordinator salary line was reduced by the amount shifted to the Fire Chief's salary line, minus a Paramedic Supervisor salary—day-to-day duties Chief Leland could not fill as he was not a paramedic.
- An accounting error showing \$0.00 instead of \$93,083.04 in FY24 Department Head Line mistakenly inflated the FY25 Budget, which was actually only 2.9-3.1% over FY24.
- Staffing was explained as follows.
 - 1 full time EMT, 4 full time paramedics and a paramedic supervisor (one paramedic just gave notice);
 - 10 hr. day shifts and 14 hr. night shifts with 1 paramedic and 2 EMT's minimum each;
 - shifts could be staff paid with salary/stipend or per-diem paid by the hour.
 - Staff worked a 24 hr. shift and a night shift each week with the remaining 8 hrs. per month for training.
- The Department paid for staff's continuing education including off-island events and practices. It also paid lodging, travel, food, etc. for those going for certification education, as well as half tuition after the first year of service to Tisbury and the other half after the second year of service.

Ambulance Warrant articles

- \$475,000 (combination Ambulance Stabilization and Raise & Appropriate—R&A) for a new ambulance, a locked-in price from a previous estimate—current price \$520,000 with 18-24 month order/build timeline. It would replace Tango 91 purchased 20 years ago and re-chassised 8 years ago which would be unusable in another 2 years (10 yr. mandated lifespan).

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- Another article would double the annual contribution to the Ambulance and Fire Stabilization funds in order to account for the sharp rise in fire truck and ambulance prices.
- The new ambulance would fit easily into the Emergency Services Facility (ESF) ambulance bay.
- The FinCom thanked Greg Leland and Patrick Rolston for all their hard work.

Review of Harbormaster Budget and Warrant Articles

John Crocker, Harbormaster (See documents on file.)

- Harbormaster John Crocker retirement at the end of FY24 was built into the Budget in terms of overlap and new salary (at Step 2 to give negotiating room) —the position should start advertising next week.
- Data Processing line – The Harbor used Mooring Info software to run most operations: mooring information, leases, parking permits, revenues, etc. It also had a reservation system but it was not widely used by customers.
- To fill vacant transient moorings such as the new Tashmoo moorings – 4 day-use & 4 overnight, the Harbor proposed adding Dockwa, the reservation system used by most harbors and boaters—the \$5,400 cost was only 5% of transient mooring revenues.
- Other increases included a \$1,600 stipend for Kim Elias to oversee the Tashmoo dredging. Ms. Elias had the necessary expertise and history since she had partnered with John Crocker on previous Tashmoo dredges.
- The Department was working on a Commonwealth grant application to pay the usual half of the project expenses.
- The FinCom suggested the Office Supply line be raised from \$300 to \$500 in accordance with spending trends.
- The Harbor vehicle was 10 yrs. old but only had 18,000 miles on it.

Warrant articles:

- The late file article was approved – see below.
- All articles were funded through Waterways (mooring fees and 50% of vessel excise tax) and would actually be expended in FY24.
- Tashmoo Dredging would come half from a State grant and half from Dredge Stabilization. (Embarkation could only fund Harbor dredging.)
- There was a \$25,000 Embarkation article for Owen Park Dock design and permitting (see 1/17/24 Minutes p.4 #G). The Pier replacement was almost ready: the order of conditions was complete; Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permits were imminent, and a Seaport Economic Council (SEC) grant application was submitted. Mr. Crocker recommended his replacement hire an expert to do the pylon work.
- Thanks were exchanged and the FinCom wished Mr. Crocker a happy retirement.

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Vote to Accept Late Filed Article

- The amount was revised down from \$5,000.
- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE HARBORMASTER LATE FILED ARTICLE FOR \$3,000 FOR A PERMIT TO EXPAND THE TASHMOO LANDING DINGHY FLOAT EXPANSION OR TAKE ANY ACTION RELATIVE THERETO; LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: RACHEL ORR—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE.*

Discussion and Votes on Previously Reviewed Budgets and Warrant Articles

The FinCom was unwilling to vote department budgets without more financial foundation information and other budget requests.

- Issues of global Town spending were noted: the high cost and investment in Island education—among the top 10 in the State, the shift to a professional Fire Dept.; Police ratio similar to Manhattan, the unique challenges of Island \ life and a seasonal resort economy.

Schools – Tisbury School, Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), Superintendent's Shared Services – Tabled

- The Town was still unclear about Chapter 70 reimbursement.
- Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) insurance was \$82,000 more than expected, this and other changes would be absorbed with Excess and Deficiency (E & D)—the school district's equivalent of Free Cash, so that Town assessments would remain the unchanged.

Embarkation Article (See Minutes: 2/21/24 p.1, & 2/28/24 p.5.)

- The conversation on tasers was reviewed: usage, part of personal gear, lifespan, and internal computer data. The new tasers were easier to aim.
- There was a proposal to dedicate all Embarkation funds to the Police, as did Oak Bluffs. Tisbury's Embarkation process was more in keeping with the Law and included all seasonal police costs.
 - If the Legislation passed (see 10/13/22 Minutes) and funds were tripled, some portion would be dedicated to public safety departments including the Police. The Legislation was before the Joint Committee but had some wrinkles regarding other Massachusetts port town non-uniform requests.
- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FISCAL YEAR 2025 EMBARKATION WARRANT ARTICLE H) 17 POLICE TASERS (\$85,000)** AS PRESENTED: LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED;*

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MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Department of Public Works (DPW) Budget and Articles

(See 2/28/24 Minutes p.2-4.)

- ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET** AS PRESENTED: LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.
- DPW articles were tabled pending funding source information.

Police Budgets (See 2/28/24 Minutes p.4-5) Tabled

Capital Planning Committee Discussion (See 2/28/24 Minutes p.6.)

- RACHEL ORR NOMINATED ALEX MELENEY AS A FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE: ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION: DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—ABSTAIN, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Future Meetings (See below: Meetings/Events & Actions.)

Next week would include the Finance Department budgets and articles as well as possibly Wastewater and the Town Clerk, and a joint meeting with the Tisbury Select Board (TSB) to vote Abbe Burt's membership.

Committee Reports

- There would be a joint Climate Committee/Tisbury School Committee (TSC)/TFC/TSB conversation on the School solar installation.
- DPW Director Kirk Metell would accompany the new Wastewater Director to talk about a number of articles currently before the Sewer Advisory Committee.
 - The new Operator was a good worker who had a history with the Department.
 - FY24 Wastewater Enterprise revenues were over estimated by ~ \$279,000, due to assuming the heaviest customer loads instead of the load average.

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- Over the last 10-20 years the leaching flow had been increased and now Wastewater staff was working to increase the Plant effluent flow from 110,000 to 140,000 gallons.
- A property (in the Harbor watershed) exceeded their septic capacity and requested emergency hookup (as allowed by law). This would be a minor draw on the flow. The owner would pay connection costs and treatment fees.
- Despite the vote to bond, the new State Rd. sewer district pipes were neither engineered nor in construction.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

• LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:39PM; DAN SEIDMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, March 13, 2024 – Zoom** Finance, WW, Clerk,
- **TFC – TBD – 6:30PM, Wednesdays, March 20, 27, 2024 – Zoom**
- **Special/Annual Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday, May 28, 2024 – PAC**

Appendix B: Actions

Nancy – request updated levy limit information.

Dan – email Nancy re; Sewer Advisory Committee meeting outcome.

Greg L. – email Fire Dept. revenue & grants to Jon S. & Nancy for distribution.

John C. – revise budget to Office Supplies \$500.

Future Agendas

- Minutes: 1/24/24, 2/7/24, 2/21/24, 2/28/24, 3/6/24
- Votes – Ambulance Budget & Article
 - DPW Articles
 - Emergency Management Budget
 - FinCom Budget
 - Fire Budget & Articles
 - Harbormaster Budget & Articles
 - MVRHS Budget
 - Police Budget
 - Tisbury School Budget
- MV Public Safety Communications as Town Budget line item
- FinCom Support for Fire Inspection Fee/Fine Update
- Late Filed Article(s)

continued >

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Appendix B: Actions (cont.)

Budget Season Notes

- No new positions in FY25
- FY25 salaries/budgets will be higher due to classification raises.
- Request data on how much each Department turned back in FY23.
- Request projects for grant funding.
- Request capital projects

Budget Season Notes

- attach budget/narrative modules to agendas.
- request/demand foundational information, levy, free cash estimates, etc.
- include Dept. fee revenues (offsetting expenses) in budget interview;
- ask departments to project all needs 5 years out i.e. like a capital plan but on other factors—staffing, program changes, etc.

\$100,000 FY24 Reserve Fund spending tally – Balance: \$29,650.25

- 10/4/23 – Ambulance - \$43,000 – monitor/defibrillators
- 11/29/23 – Select Board - \$6,518 – salary step 2 & on-call stipend
- 11/29/23 – DPW - \$20,831.75 (\$10,000) – Police Dept. generator rent

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda/Revised Agenda (2 p.) 3/6/24
- Gilfoy email re: Preliminary Budget list (2 p.) 3/2/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 291 Emergency Management (5 p.) 2/4/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 220 Fire (7 p.) 2/27/24
- Tisbury Fire Department: FY 2025 Annual Town Meeting Raise and Appropriate Request: 6 Sets Firefighting Gear 11/28/23
- Tisbury Fire Department: FY 2025 Annual Town Meeting Transfer Request: Ford Explorer 12/6/23
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 231 Ambulance/EMT (5 p.) 2/27/24
- Tisbury Ambulance Service: FY 2025 Annual Town Meeting Transfer from Ambulance Stabilization and Raise & Appropriate Request: New Ambulance Ford Explorer 11/28/23
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 295 Harbormaster (10 p.) 2/16/24
- Snyder email re: Revenue Figures for Town Report (2 p.) 12/29/23
- Town of Tisbury, Harbor Department, FY2025 Warrant Articles (2 p.) 1/16/24

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 3/20/24