

**Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, March 20, 2024
by Zoom Cloud Conference**

1

Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Abbe Burt, Louise Clough, Ruth Konigsberg, Alex Meleney, Rachel Orr, Allan Rogers,
TSB: Chair Roy Cutrer, John Cahill, Christina Colarusso,
Others: Lynne Fraker, Donald Rose, Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Town: Town Administrator Jay Grande, Treasurer Jonathan Snyder, Pam Bennet, Elena DeFoe, Town Clerk – Hillary Conklin, Town Moderator Donald Rose, Library – Amy Upton, Arch Smith, Police Chief Chris Habekost, Lt. Bill Brigham, DPW – Kirk Metell, Harbormaster – Kim Elias

* TFC members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:06PM.

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

Joint Meeting with Tisbury Select Board (TSB)

- Chair Roy Cutrer called the joint session of the Tisbury Select Board (TSB) and Tisbury FinCom (TFC) to order at 6:06PM.

Reopening of the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Warrant – Select Board

- Ms. Christina Colarusso moved and Mr. John Cahill seconded a motion to reopen the 2024 Annual Meeting Town Warrant, motion passing unanimously: Ms. Colarusso—aye, Mr. Cahill—aye, Mr. Cutrer—aye.

Discussion and Potential Votes

Late Filed Articles

(See documents on file & below: Override.)

The ATM Warrant having been reopened the late filed articles would be officially submitted for the FinCom to vote at their next meeting. In order to eliminate or reduce a possible override several items that were common practice in other communities, were moved from budgeting (Raise and Appropriate—R&A) into Free Cash (see below: Override/Capital p.2).

Budget Adjustments

In the face of a \$124,450 deficit, Town Administrator Jay Grande spoke to the Police, Fire and Building Departments about cutting their budgets, bringing the Town FY25 budget to just barely under the tax levy limit, but without a sufficient differential to be comfortable.

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
March 20, 2024

2

Override – Finance Director

Capital Requests and Available Free Cash – Town Administrator and Finance Director

- It was unclear whether new positions had been included in some Department budgets (Building, Conservation...) so final numbers were not yet settled.
- There were a number of small reductions in the Fire Dept. budget.
- Police Overtime (OT) was cut \$100,000 plus a number of other smaller changes (see 2/28/24 Minutes p.4-5, & below: Borrowing p.3).
- The (Police Vehicle Department) cruiser was moved into Free Cash in anticipation of the Embarkation fee increase legislation (see 10/13/22 Minutes), when the annual cruiser could be funded through Embarkation.
- Shifting Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Dukes County OPEB Trust contribution to Free Cash would allow amounts to be increased depending on available Free Cash.
- The new Planning Board Assistant Administrative position was postponed for another year.
- The TSB budgets were amended down.
- The Assistant Town Clerk position (see 3/13/24 Minutes p.3) was under discussion to be eliminated.
- Other expenses (Dukes County assessments—see 1/10/24 Minutes p.1-3, MV Regional Communications—see 2/21/24 Minutes p.3, upgraded Library position, etc.), and funding sources (Chapter 70, Charter School, local revenues, etc.), plus \$700,000 Free Cash to reduce the tax rate; resulted in an R&A total of \$37,065,000—which was \$207-324,000 under the levy limit.
- Finance Director Jon Snyder did not consider this a sufficient differential in a year when the budget was less precise than usual due to the retirement of the long-time Town Accountant. Consequently he proposed a \$250,000 override for an R&A total of \$37,638,000.

The FinCom raised a number of issues:

- The additional \$185,000 increase to the Fire, Ambulance and Department of Public Works (DPW) Stabilization funds (see 3/6/24 Minutes p.4) was also R&A (real estate and personal property) and required a ballot vote.
- FY23 was still not closed, but Free Cash was estimated at \$7,000,000+. Because of Free Cash volatility, the auditors advised against increasing the \$700,000 tax rate commitment and for retaining \$3,500,000 in reserve.
- There was some concern about shifting recurring operating expenses (e.g. the annual police cruiser) out of the budget.
- A number of details were clarified: Lifeguards in the Fire Dept. budget, Local Drop Off article funded through fees (not R&A), Library staffing, etc.

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
March 20, 2024

3

- The FinCom was not in favor of another override which had become a regular problem every couple years. Not only did it increase taxpayer burden but it could be interpreted as an opportunity for Departments to expand services or personnel.
- It was noted that the 2 ½% levy limit was unrealistic in relation to annual salary Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) and steps.
- The FinCom also revisited the issue of the high amount of Free Cash, which indicated sloppy or over budgeting.

Ballot Questions – Select Board

Adjustment to Schedule – Finance and Advisory Committee and Select Board

- The FinCom only received department budgets 2 weeks ago and there was still no ATM Warrant draft. They requested the schedule be revised to allow them sufficient time to discuss and vote their recommendations.
- The Ballot deadline was April 23rd with a tight printing/mailing turn around. The Warrant would be signed May 1st and printed May 15th- 16th.

Adjournment (TSB)

- *Ms. Christina Colarusso moved and Mr. John Cahill seconded a motion to adjourn at 6:58PM, motion passing unanimously: Ms. Colarusso—aye, Mr. Cahill—aye, Mr. Roy Cutrer—aye.* Thanks were exchanged.

Borrowing Article(s) – Finance Director

The Library borrowing article was withdrawn. FY24 article funds were paying for an Owners Project Manager (OPM) (see 3/8/23 Minutes p.1-2) but roof and Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning (HVAC) repairs would exceed previous estimates. The Library hoped to have accurate bids in time for a fall Special Town Meeting (STM) with a debt vote on the Presidential election ballot. Capital Building Stabilization was discussed as a possible source.

- In considering how to avoid an override the FinCom proposed sending a letter to all Town Departments, requesting reductions for a total of \$350-370,000 or 1% of the FY25 Budget, to have a levy limit cushion of at least \$560,000.
- The larger Departments had already been reduced.
- There was a suggestion to request a 0.5% cut in COLAs.
- The Police Dept. 8 hr. vs. 10 hr. shift OT differential was \$200,000 so OT could be cut more than the currently proposed \$100,000.
- Members were reminded that FY24 Management and Professional (M&P) pay raises were in a separate article and not included in department budgets, which distorted the FY25 salary hikes.
- The Capital Planning Committee should draft a policy on which projects should come from Free Cash and which from Stabilization Funds.

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
March 20, 2024

4

- It was agreed the letter should be sent to all departments as a Town team effort, have a tight deadline/timeframe (sent 3/25/24 with 3/29/24 deadline), and ask for any available cuts – at least (but not specified) 1% of their budgets.

Vote on Reserve Fund Transfer Requests (See documents on file.)

The TSB approved both transfers at today's meeting.

Harbormaster

• *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE HARBORMASTER'S REQUEST TO TRANSFER UP TO \$8,000 FROM THE RESERVE FUND TO COVER DOCK REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE; LOUISE CLOUGH AND ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ABBE BURT—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Finance and Advisory Committee

• *RACHEL ORR MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S REQUEST TO TRANSFER UP TO \$5,000 FROM THE RESERVE FUND TO COVER UNFORESEEN MINUTE SERVICES INCREASE; ALEX MELENEY AND ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ABBE BURT—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Finance and Advisory Committee Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budget

(See documents on file & 1/10/24 Minutes p.4.)

Given the above FinCom Reserve Fund request and the high number of Finance Committee meetings, an increase in Minute's funding was advisable.

• *ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO INCREASE THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE BUDGET PURCHASED SERVICES LINE ITEM TO \$10,000; ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ABBE BURT—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

• The \$100,000 increase to the FinCom Reserve Fund was withdrawn.

Approve Minutes from 1/24/24, 2/7/24, 2/21/24, 2/28/24, 3/6/24, 3/13/24 (See below: Actions.)

• *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:*

- *JANUARY 24, 2024,*
- *FEBRUARY 7, 2024,*
- *FEBRUARY 21, 2024,*
- *FEBRUARY 28, 2024,*

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
March 20, 2024

5

- MARCH 6, 2024,
- MARCH 13, 2024,
LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION as not a member at the time, *OTHER ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: ABBE BURT—ABSTAIN, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

- The FinCom requested Minutes be voted regularly, as available.
- Recorder Marni Lipke asked for and received permission to shift around documents on file in accordance with meeting relevance.

Committee Reports – Nothing to report.

Future Meetings (See below: Meetings/Events.)

- Next week's agenda would include: TSB budgets and articles, Town Clerk advocacy for an Assistant, and the Planning Board budget.
- Members requested in-person meetings but quorum issues might require hybrid technology (see below: Actions).

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

• *ABBE BURT MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:50PM; ALLAN ROGERS AND ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- TSB – 4:30PM, Wednesday, March 27, 2024, KCT/Zoom
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, March 27, 2024 – Zoom**
- **TFC TBD – 6:30PM, Wednesday, April 3 & 10, 17, 2024 – ESF/Zoom**
- Ballot Deadline – Tuesday, April 23, 2024
- Warrant Signed – Wednesday, May 1, 2024
- Special/Annual Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday, May 28, 2024 – PAC
- Town Election – Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Appendix B: Actions

Nancy – Reserve ESF conference for in-person meetings

- Find someone to set up hybrid meetings technology.

Nancy/Rachel – draft letter to all Departments.

Jon S. – include Fire/Ambulance/DPW Stabilization article on ballot.

Jon S./Jay G. – send warrant article list including funding sources.

continued >

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
March 20, 2024

6

Appendix B: Actions (cont.)

Future Agendas

- Approval of Minutes if Available
- Late Filed Article(s)
- Town Clerk Assistant
- Previously Reviewed Department/Article Votes
 - Accountant
 - Ambulance Budget & Article
 - Emergency Management Budget
 - FinCom
 - Fire Budget & Articles
 - MVRHS Budget
 - Police Budget, Training/Instruction, Vehicles
 - Shellfish Budget
 - Tisbury School Budget
 - Treasurer Collector Budgets & Articles: Other, OPEB, Debt & Interest,
 - Wastewater Budget & Articles
- MV Public Safety Communications as Town Budget line item
- FinCom Support for Fire Inspection Fee/Fine Update
- Wastewater/Water Works re-configuration and possible crew sharing
- End-of-Year Transfer Vote

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
- 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: \$16,650.25

- 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 – Police Dept. generator rent
- 3/20/24 – Harbormaster - \$8,000 – dock repair & maintenance
- 3/20/24 – Finance Committee - \$5,000 – Minutes for additional meetings

continued

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
March 20, 2024

7

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Gilfoy cover email & Agenda (2 p.) 3/20/24
- Gilfoy email re: Latest Article and levy limit list as of 4:30pm 3/20/24,
 - Town of Tisbury – FY2025 Budget & Levy Limit, 3/20/24 3:48PM (3 p.)
 - 2024 Town Meeting Articles as of 3/20/24 as of 3:48PM (3 p.)
- Gilfoy email re: Updated levy limit and article list spreadsheets 3/20/24,
 - Town of Tisbury – FY2025 Budget & Levy Limit, as of 3/20/24 9:49AM (3 p.)
 - Town of Tisbury – FY2025 Budget & Levy Limit, 3/19/24 9:49AM (3 p.)
- Article Submission Form ATM, Late-Filed, Article – To Purchase One Police Cruiser
- Article Submission Form ATM, Late-Filed, Article – To Increase and Fund the Finance and Advisory Committee's Reserve Fund 3/14/24
- Article Submission Form ATM, Late-Filed, Article – To Fund OPEB Trust 3/14/24
- FY2024 Question, Shall the Town be allowed to assess an additional...
- Town of Tisbury – FY2025 Budget & Levy Limit, March 18, 2024 (3 p.)
- 2024 Town Meeting Articles as of 3/18/24 (3 p.)
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 131 Finance Committee (3 p.) 2/2/24
- Gilfoy email re: Reserve fund expenditures to 3/20/24
 - Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund, Finance and Advisory Committee 3/18/24
 - Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund, Dock & Pier Maintenance 3/11/24
- Gilfoy/Doyle emails re: Planning Board meeting Master Plan presentation & acceptance vote 3/17/24
- Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee memo re: Reducing Budget (URGENT) 3/25/24

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved as amended 3/27/24