

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, April 3, 2024
by Zoom Cloud Conference

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Present: Chair – Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Alex Meleney,
Ruth Konigsberg, Rachel Orr, Allan Rogers,
Others: Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Town: Town Clerk – Hillary Conklin,

* TFC members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:30PM.

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

Vote on Late Filed Articles – None

Levy Limit (See documents on file, & 3/20/24 Minutes p.2-3.)

- Because this was the first budget without an experienced Town Accountant, errors and omissions resulted in unclear reporting (e.g. a \$25,000 error entering the Human Resources budget).
- With salary increases for both Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) (Management and Professional—M&P raises) and FY25 (Cost of Living Adjustments—COLAs), as well as continued levy limit uncertainty Finance Director Jon Snyder recommended a \$400,000 override. Final calculations were likely to be late in the budget process so some FinCom recommendations might have to be announced on Annual Town Meeting (ATM) floor.
- The FinCom letter (see 3/20/24 Minutes p.3-4) garnered ~ \$116,000 in savings from 4 departments:
 - \$75,000 from the Tisbury School,
 - an additional \$35,000 (total \$135,000) from the Police,
 - \$3,898 new hire savings from the Library, and
 - \$2,000 from Information Technology (IT).
- As a ballot question, the FinCom did not officially vote on overrides but members repeated their objections to further burdening taxpayers when local receipts were 39% under-estimated and Departments continued to over-budget by 10%.
 - The Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) Division of Local Services (DLS) recommended Free Cash at 5% (~ \$2,000,000) vs. Tisbury's \$7,600,000.
 - However, DSL did not recommend depending on Free Cash to reduce the tax rate because it was unstable revenue that would result in steep tax increases in years it was not available.

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- Proposition 2 ½ was an unreasonable limit given today's salary increases and inflation. Casualty insurances were also rising steeply.
- Close examination of the 4-year spreadsheet showed major consistent turn-backs in 4 places:
 - Tisbury School by about \$785,000,
 - Maturing Debt by about \$439,000,
 - Health Insurance by about \$300,000, and
 - Street Lighting by about \$261,300. There was considerable confusion about this line (see below: Actions).
- As the best sources for override savings the FinCom asked to re-interview these Departments (see below: Actions/Future Agendas).

Discussion and Votes on Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Budgets

(See documents on file, & below: Actions/Future Agendas.)

FinCom recommendations were due in about 2 weeks.

• Acknowledging current errors and fluidity the FinCom stated these votes were for accurate budgets/final figures.

- These Departments had increases or decreases less than 5% or \$5,000.
- *RACHEL ORR MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR 2025 DEPARTMENT BUDGETS AS PRESENTED:*

- **ASSESSORS #141,**
- **BOARD OF HEALTH #510,**
- **BUILDING MAINTENANCE #192,**
- **COUNCIL ON AGING #541,**
- **CONSTABLE #299,**
- **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT #291,**
- **FINANCE COMMITTEE #131,**
- **HISTORIC COMMISSION #691,**
- **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) EQUIPMENT #156,**
- **LIBRARY #610,**
- **MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL #693,**
- **MODERATOR #114,**
- **MUNICIPAL HOUSING TRUST #189,**
- **PARK & RIDE #481,**
- **PERSONNEL #152,**
- **POLICE TRAINING & INSTRUCTION #211,**
- **REGISTRAR/ELECTIONS #163,**
- **SELECT BOARD #122,**
- **TREASURER COLLECTOR #145,**
- **VETERANS BENEFITS #543;**

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LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

- These Departments had increases of less than 10% over FY24.
- The FinCom discussed the SelectBoard Other budget which included general Town operating expenses: Audit, Legal, Water, Solar Panels, Workman's Compensation, Unemployment, Casualty Insurance, etc.
- The IT total is quoted here to clarify the \$2,000 reduction (see above p.1).
- The Planning Board (see 3/27/24 Minutes p.1-2) retained the Administrative Assistant for clerical work, zoning bylaw recodification as well as minutes.
- ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR 2025 DEPARTMENT BUDGETS **AS PRESENTED:**

- **ACCOUNTANT #135,**
- **BUILDING INSPECTOR OTHER #240,**
- **DUKES COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY #185,**
- **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY #155 AT \$332,544,**
- **MARTHA' VINEYARD COMMISSION #841,**
- **PLANNING BOARD #175,**
- **SELECT BOARD OTHER #123,**
- **SHELLFISH #172,**
- **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS #176;**

LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

- The final group of Departments had increases greater than 10%.
- The Animal Control Officer (ACO) increase was carried over from the Reserve Fund request regarding salary and on-call stipend (11/29/23 Minutes p.1).
- Human Resources was the FY24 M&P salary increases.
- Conservation was discussing how to fund/structure its agent's retirement and replacement (see 3/13/24 Minutes p.1), whether by article or budget, and possibly combining it with other Annex Departments' personnel needs.
- LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR 2025 DEPARTMENT BUDGETS **AS PRESENTED:**

- **ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER #292,**
- **CONSERVATION #171,**
- **HUMAN RESOURCES #153,**

RUTH KONIGSBERG SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

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- The Ambulance budget actual increase was only 3%. The distortion was due to personnel costs being shifted between Fire and Ambulance budgets (see 3/6/24 Minutes p.3).
- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 **AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT BUDGET #231** AS PRESENTED: RACHEL ORR SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*
- In keeping with a statewide shortage, the Building Inspector Department had an unfilled Local Inspector position in FY24. The FY25 budget included training, textbooks, etc. in case of a new hire. Current staffing was: a part-time Building Commissioner and a full-time Building Commissioner (with a substantial FY24 M&P raise). The Department generated \$212,000 in permit/inspection revenues, pretty much covering its salary costs.
- *RACHEL ORR MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 **BUILDING INSPECTOR'S DEPARTMENT BUDGET #241** AS PRESENTED: ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*
- The reduced Fire Department budget was up 8.2%. The Department historically over-spent its budget, using every penny.
- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 **FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET #220** AS PRESENTED: LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*
- Police shifts were likely to stay at 8 hrs/5 days (see 2/28/24 Minutes p.5). The FinCom appreciated the Department willingness to cut \$135,000 and noted heavy FY24 overtime costs.
- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 **POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET #210** AS PRESENTED: LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE.*

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- The Town Clerk budget raised the following issues (see also Minutes: 3/15/23 p.4, & 3/13/24 p.3, & 3/27/24 p.3).
 - The Town was trending away from union to more M&P positions, which greatly increased salary levels.
 - There was concern about how the Town created positions. The FinCom recommended analysis and a strategic staffing plan for more efficient, prioritized hiring and smoother operations. For example a single dedicated purchasing agent, a backup or assistant IT person, succession planning, etc.
 - The Town Clerk was one of several critical Town positions: Police Chief, Fire Chief, Finance Director, Town Administrator, etc. The Clerk was answerable to the State and Federal governments for Town reporting and elections.
 - The Tisbury Town Clerk was elected so the FinCom asked if it was appropriate to hire/appoint an Assistant Town Clerk.
 - It was a big cost jump, but in the end the FinCom asked what would happen if the Town Clerk came down with Covid a week before an election.
- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 **TOWN CLERK DEPARTMENT BUDGET #161 AS PRESENTED: ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Discussion and Votes on 2024 Warrant Articles

(See documents on file, & below: Actions/Future Agendas.)

- The FinCom repeated its reservations about the Fire Chief's Ford Explorer as a perk or necessity. Previously, personal Town-owned cars were mostly used police cruisers.
 - Tisbury would now have 2 fully equipped Fire command vehicles.
 - The Explorer was similar to the Police Chief's personal/Town vehicle.
 - The Fire Chief's contract specified a vehicle but not the type, cost, etc. An Electric Vehicle (EV) did not qualify for the necessary equipment and hybrid vehicles had been problematic. The FinCom requested that vehicle parameters be specified in future contracts.
 - The matter was approved by the Town Administrator and Tisbury Select Board (TSB).
- The Police rotated replacing cruisers every year (see 3/20/24 Minutes p.2).
- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FISCAL YEAR 2025 WARRANT ARTICLES AS PRESENTED:*
 - **ADULT CONTINUING AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD (\$10,000),**

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- **ASSESSOR QUINQUENNIAL CERTIFICATION (\$20,000),**
- **PRIOR YEAR BILLS (\$43,408),**
- **AMBULANCE 50% STABILIZATION 50% FREE CASH (\$475,000),**
- **POLICE CRUISER (\$70,000),**
- **6 SETS OF FIREFIGHTING GEAR (\$51,000),**
- **SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS UNITS (\$23,159),**
- **FIRE CHIEF FORD EXPLORER (\$70,000),**

ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

- Ruth Kronigsberg recused herself due to conflict of interest.
- ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FISCAL YEAR 2025 ARTICLE TO UPGRADE A TISBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY POSITION AT \$4,123** AS PRESENTED: LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

- The following articles had been withdrawn:
 - TSB off-Island vehicle,
 - Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) Transportation EV charging (see 2/28/24 Minutes p.3, & 3/13/24 p.6),
 - Library capital articles (delayed for fall Special Town Meeting)—likely to come from Capital Building or General Stabilization.

- The Town was voting technology funds without seeing any results, e.g. a new Town website (see Minutes: 3/3/21 p.2, & 2/9/22 p.2, & 3/9/22 p.7), so the FinCom was hesitant to further burden the Town's only IT person with a technology assessment. TSB member John Cahill proposed the project with a possible vendor in mind (see below: Actions).

- The Shade Tree Farm was former TSB member Tristan Israel's proposal, for native trees to be located near the Town leaching field, and harvested to replace Town trees and fill Main St. planter boxes. Mr. Israel working with Polly Hill Arboretum would start the project, but further care was expected to be a voluntary citizen project similar to Oak Bluff's.

- ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FISCAL YEAR 2025 WARRANT ARTICLES** AS PRESENTED:

- **SHADE TREE FARM (\$5,000),**
- **DISPOSE OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT;**

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RACHEL ORR SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Approve Minutes 3/27/24

- The FinCom commended Vice Chair Louise Clough for Chairing the meeting.
- ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MARCH 27, 2024 MINUTES AS AMENDED; RACHEL ORR SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—ABSTAIN, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—ABSTAIN.

Committee Reports

A Planning Board public hearing on commercial activity in residential neighborhoods was long and controversial. The subtle balance between allowing businesses to work from home versus protecting neighbors from noise, traffic, etc. was likely to be a major issue at the 2024 ATM.

Future Meetings

The next meeting's goal was to complete all budget and warrant article recommendations include votes on Water and Wastewater enterprise funds.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

The FinCom thanked Alex Meleney for attending while on vacation in Marrakesh.

- ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:13PM; LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- **TFC TBD – 6:30PM, Wednesdays, April 10 & 17, 2024 – Zoom**
- **Special/Annual Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday, May 28, 2024 – PAC**
- **Town Election – Tuesday, June 11, 2024**

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Appendix B: Actions:

Nancy – contact Town Hall re: Street Lighting clarification;
- and FY23 Free Cash.

Nancy – schedule Personnel/TSB/Human Resources/TFC meeting on strategic planning new personnel positions.

Jon S. – reconsider local receipt projections.

Future Agendas

- Minutes: 4/3/24
- Previously Reviewed Departments/Articles - Interviews/Discussion/Votes
 - ° Debt & Interest #700 – Maturing Debt
 - ° Select Board Other #123 – Street Lighting
 - ° Tisbury School #300
 - ° Treasurer/Collector Other #146 – Health Insurance
 - ° New Town Hall Task Force – Professional Services Article,
 - ° IT Assessment Article – John Cahill,
 - ° M&P and Part-Time/Seasonal Pay Scales,
- 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
- Personnel/TSB/Human Resources/TFC Meeting on Strategic Planning
- Letter re: specifying parameters of personal vehicles in management contracts
- Late Filed Article(s)
- Reserve Fund Requests
- 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
- 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: \$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

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Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda 4/3/24
- Gilfoy email re: Meeting 4/3/24 3/30/24
- Budgets to be Voted as of 3/31/24
- 2024 ATM Articles (2 p.)
- Gilfoy/Snyder emails re: Updated Levy Limit and article list 3/31/24
 - Fiscal Year 2025, Recap – Local Receipts 3/29/24 9:27AM
 - Town of Tisbury FY2025 Budget & Levy Limit, March 29, 2024 9:27AM (3 p.)
 - 2024 Town Meeting Articles as of 3/29/24 9:30AM (3 p.)
- Gilfoy/Snyder cover emails re: Budget vs actual spending comparison last 4 years (2 p.) 3/12/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 114 Moderator (2 p.) 3/4/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 141 Assessors (5 p.) 2/15/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 152 Personnel Board (3 p.) 1/18/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 153 Human Resources (5 p.) 2/15/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 155 Technology (6 p.) 1/11/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 156 Technology Equipment (2 p.) 3/4/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 171 Conservation (4 p.) 1/18/24
- Gilfoy cover email re: Latest Conservation Commission FY25 Budget (2 p.) 4/2/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 176 Zoning Board of Appeals (3 p.) 2/16/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 185 Regional Housing Authority 2/27/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 240 Other Inspectors (3 p.) 1/18/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 241 Building Inspector (6 p.) 1/18/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 241 Building Inspector
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 292 Animal Control (4 p.) 2/14/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 299 Constables

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Appendix C: Documents on File (cont.)

- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 510 Board of Health (6 p.) 2/29/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 541 Council on Aging (3 p.) 2/27/24
- FY 2024 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 543 Veterans Benefits
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 610 Library (4 p.) 2/27/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 691 Historical Commission (2 p.) 2/25/24
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 693 Cultural Council/Arts (4 p.)
- FY 2025 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 841 Martha's Vineyard Commission (2 p.) 2/16/24
- Leland email re: Financials for fire and ambulance (3 p.) 3/17/24
- Gilfoy/Leland/Schaeffer emails re: Alarm Bylaw (3 p.) 3/17/24
- Habekost email re: Stats and Comparison Data (9 p.) 3/10/24
- Gilfoy email re: Answers to Police budget questions 3/20/24
- Annual Town Meeting Articles, Article Quinquennial Certification of All Real Estate and Personal Property 1/12/24
- Article Submission Form, Revised – Annual Town Meeting, Article, Quinquennial Certification of All Real Estate and Personal Property 1/18/24
- To: Town of Tisbury Re: Warrant Article to Support Continuing & Community Education on Martha's Vineyard (3 p.) 1/10/24
- Town of Tisbury Article – Environmental Assessment and Flood Hazard Mitigation 1/12/24
- Town of Tisbury, 2024 Annual Town Meeting, Warrant Article – Implementation of watershed management 1/12/24
- Article Submission Form, – Annual Town Meeting, To Establish the New Position of Assistant Director/Adult Services Librarian at the Vineyard Haven Public Library 1/11/24
- Grande/Rogers emails re: Fire Chief Vehicle (4 p.) 3/28/24

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 4/10/24