

**Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee,
6:30PM, Wednesday, November 3, 2021
by Zoom Cloud Conference due to Covid-19 Restrictions**

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Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Jynell Kristal,
Mary Ellen Larsen*, Rachel Orr, Allan Rogers, Lesley Segal,
Dan Seidman, Sarah York,
Town: Treasurer – Jonathan Snyder, Ambulance – Tracey Jones,
Others: Recorder – Marni Lipke,

* 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.*)

Discussion with Tracey Jones, Director of Ambulance Department

(See Minutes: 2/17/21 p.1-2, & 3/3/21 p.5 & documents on file.)

* During this discussion Mary Ellen Larsen entered the meeting.

The FinCom and Ambulance Director Tracey Jones acknowledged recent increases in the Ambulance Dept. and were glad for this status survey.

- The Department was currently severely understaffed as one member was out on maternity leave (at least 12 weeks) and Ms. Jones, herself, was unexpectedly out on Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Ambulance overtime was consequently fairly high.

- There were now three staff on each run (as was standard practice throughout the State). However, no candidate was found for the new paramedic position (see Minutes: 2/12/20 p.4, & 2/17/21 p.1) and consequently a new Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) was hired with the understanding that they would get trained and certified as a paramedic.

- Tracey Jones was having to work during her FMLA leave, exposing a serious labor gap.

- 1 employee was being paid \$1 extra (\$168/wk.) to manage runs.

- In order to cover clerical work and billing Ms. Jones was considering either adding duties to an existing staff member (requiring union negotiations re: a shift to managerial) or hiring a part-time administrative assistant (requiring creation and funding of a new position at Town Meeting). In either case the person would cover during Ms. Jones vacation, sick leave, etc.

- The FinCom noted the importance of succession and backup staffing, which was lacking in almost all Town Departments.)

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- The healthcare industry across the country lost at least 30% of its personnel and the Island was no exception. Part-time/seasonal/per diem staff were not available and regular staff were burning out fast. Call volume was very high with all Vineyard ambulance services collaborating on mutual aid runs. As a de-facto event, this could possibly result in an Islandwide ambulance service—budget impact unknown.

- For example, Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH) contracted a private ambulance service and was no longer using the Oak Bluffs for off-Island and Island transport. Tisbury now had an agreement with Oak Bluffs to pickup Tisbury MVH patients going home (instead of waiting 3 hours for an ambulance to come over on the ferry).

- Priority #1 - immediate need for life sustaining action, i.e. cardiac or respiratory arrest;

- Priority #2 - life sustaining actions will be needed if something is not done;

- Priority #3 - ambulance needed for broken leg/arm, etc.

- Priority #4 - standby for Fire Dept., Police or, dispatched and canceled.

- Billing was outsourced to ComStar which charged Medicare/Medicaid and insurance companies. Every few years Ms. Jones and the Town Treasurer worked on outstanding bills of uninsured patients:

- as taxpayers were already paying for service some were forgiven;

- resident's could file for hardship.

- With the possible exception of part-time clerical staff, Tracey Jones was not expecting any dramatic increases or capital outlay.

- The Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) which originally funded the ambulance life packs opened another grant round for replacements.

- The new ambulance was being repaired so the backup ambulance was being used. Both were in reasonable shape and Capital Plans for a new ambulance in 2026 (depending on use) would be funded through Ambulance Stabilization.

- Tracey Jones was hoping for a grant to fund power stretchers that would lift into the ambulance (currently the most common cause of personnel back injuries as both patients and stretchers were heavier than formally).

- Thanks were exchanged and Tracey Jones left the meeting.

Review of Draft of Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Capital Planning Worksheet –
Jon Snyder, Finance Director (See documents on file.)

This 'wish list' from each Department encouraged Town planning.

- The one new item was a vehicle for the Assessor data gatherer who was in the field 3-4 days a week.

- The plan was to purchase a small hybrid SUV (sports utility vehicle)—State bid list price \$32,000.

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- An SUV was needed to navigate dirt roads.
- There were not sufficient or convenient charging stations at this time to accommodate an Electric Vehicle (EV) but hybrids were extremely fuel efficient (see below: Actions).
- Sharing vehicles had not worked out, and it was no longer appropriate for staff to use their own vehicle.
- The end of the list included larger projects.
- Most of the \$80,000 for Owen Park renovation had been voted/appropriated.
- Roadwork was considered an ongoing operating expense.
- In the future the plan should include climate change mitigation projects.
- The Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) renovation project was still mired in Town disagreements over the capital assessment formula but Tisbury share was projected here to be ~ \$45-50,000,000.
- The Beach Road seawall would be another major outlay.
- The status of current capital projects could be determined in FY23 budget Departmental interviews.

A little later in the meeting, Treasurer Jon Snyder reported that the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) had not yet set the levy limit, but that new growth was \$270,000—a little less than FY21, but on target.

- The management and professional (M&P) Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) was set at 2.3%—driven by the formula Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the Boston/Nashua area from Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Personnel Bd. noted the high inflation that was likely to continue. Tisbury M&P effected about 16-17 Town employees however it was often used as a basis for union negotiations which were starting shortly for the next 3-year contract. Mr. Snyder hoped to tie union COLAs to the same CPI.

Discussion of Proposed Amendment to Town's Budget Policy

(See documents on file.)

The policy was drafted in an attempt to avoid last year's lengthy and redundant budget process.

- The Library, School, Water, Planning Board and Health Departments were under separate authority. All other departments reported to the Tisbury Select Board (TSB). The FinCom considered and advised on all department budgets.
- The new policy had been built into the calendar but still depended on Town Accountant timeline.
- The FinCom was very firm about the need for FinCom independence. Members considered joint TFC/TSB meetings to interview departments, but

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separate FinCom discussions and recommendations. Bylaws stated that the FinCom presented the Budget while the TSB had authority over the warrant.

- There was disagreement on whether TSB recommendations or actions should pre-date FinCom deliberations.

- The FinCom thanked Mr. Snyder for his information and acceptance of feedback and Mr. Snyder left the meeting.

- The FinCom returned to the issue at the end of the meeting to formalize their concerns regarding their wish for cooperation as well as the importance of independent deliberations. Some felt moving the first budget approval to the TSB undermined the FinCom authority.

- The public was largely unaware that the FinCom presented the budget and there had been instances where the TSB changed FinCom requests when the FinCom should retain ultimate budget authority. The TSB could be compared to the executive branch, and was more familiar with the day-to-day working and finances of the various departments. The FinCom role as taxpayer representatives was to insure spending made sense to residents.

- Members were concerned about clarifying FinCom authority. Qualifying language such as “could” not “will” in the draft policy was noted.

- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE TISBURY TOWN BUDGET POLICY WITH THE FOLLOWING AMENDMENTS:*

- e) i) *THESE BUDGETS WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE SELECT BOARD BEFORE THEY ARE SUBMITTED TO THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR FINAL REVIEW,*

- e) ii) *ONCE THE SELECT BOARD HAS APPROVED THE BUDGETS, THEY WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR FINAL REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION;*

LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 9 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SARAH YORK—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, JYNELL KRISTAL—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, MARY ELLEN LARSEN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LESLIE SEGAL—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Committee Reports

- Sarah York was a member of the Tisbury School Building Committee – Design/Construction Phase (TSBC) and reported: that work had been going on behind the scenes.

- Exterior, Interior, Landscaping, etc. Working Groups had been formed. Ms.

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York volunteered for Communications (to keep everyone informed) and Invoice Review (see below: Actions).

- Mr. Harold Chapdelaine was elected Chair and Mr. Michael Watts, Vice Chair.
- Given the construction market inflation, demand and shortages, Chris Blessen of Tappé Architects was happy to say he had not “fallen out of his chair” at current cost estimates.
- The temporary school plans were progressing but due to procurement and logistics timelines was not likely to be ready before spring 2022. It would be located on the east playground of the current school site. The architect was consulting with modular companies in collaboration with Town leadership.
- The TSBC discussed concerns about smoother more timely Tisbury vendor payment, which was particularly critical for construction projects.
 - Community Preservation Committee (CPC) would begin interviews and make their recommendations by the end of next week.
- The Cranberry Barn project was deemed ineligible due to previous funds timing out, and the Town Clerk withdrew a records preservation request in consideration of timing and funding issues.
- Most applications were large regional projects.
 - Members were still being appointed to the Climate Change Committee. Cheryl Doble was elected Chair and Melinda Loberg Vice Chair. The Committee was hoping for a Town staffer to act as secretary. Bruce Stewart and former Energy Committee Chair Bill Straw attended meetings and were excellent resources. Dept. of Public Works (DPW) Director Kirk Metell was also a member since he would direct implementation of the required measures.
- The Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) requested a steering committee representative and then representation on each of 6 MVC climate change working groups. The MVC goal was for Towns to come together to apply for funding opportunities and not compete against each other.
 - Information delays had disrupted the Water Resources Committee schedule and it was hoped a public meeting would be held in December. This Committee also oversaw stormwater drainage and was working with the University of New Hampshire on plans to alleviate Five Corners flooding.
 - Since the Tisbury School was moving into the renovation/construction phase, the TSB decided to get State Legislature permission to move Special and Annual Town Meetings (STM/ATM) out of Tisbury—probably to the MVRHS Performing Arts Center (PAC). There was some concern over legislative delays, which might force a STM/ATM date change.
 - Mary Ellen Larsen would alternate with Sarah York as MVRHS Budget Subcommittee liaisons (see below: Actions).

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Approve Minutes from 5/5/21, 6/2/21, 7/7/21, 7/28/21, 8/24/21, 8/25/21, 9/29/21

- JYNELL KRISTAL MOVED TO APPROVE THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2021 AND JUNE 2, 2021; LESLEY SEGAL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT (2 were not members at the time): RACHEL ORR—ABSTAIN, LOUISE CLOUGH—ABSTAIN, MARY ELLEN LARSEN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, JYNELL KRISTAL—AYE, LESLIE SEGAL—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.
- JYNELL KRISTAL MOVED TO APPROVE THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF:
 - JULY 7, 2021 AND JULY 28, 2021, AND
 - AUGUST 24, 2021 AND AUGUST 25, 2021,MARY ELLEN LARSEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT (1 was not a member at the time): SUSAN YORK—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—ABSTAIN, MARY ELLEN LARSEN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, JYNELL KRISTAL—AYE, LESLIE SEGAL—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.
- LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO APPROVE THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 29, 2021; JYNELL KRISTAL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTIONS due to absence: SARAH YORK—ABSTAIN, RACHEL ORR—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, MARY ELLEN LARSEN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, JYNELL KRISTAL—AYE, LESLIE SEGAL—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Future Meetings - See below: Meetings/Events.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair - None

Adjournment

- LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:27PM; ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 9 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: SARAH YORK—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, JYNELL KRISTAL—AYE, DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, MARY ELLEN LARSEN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LESLEY SEGAL—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- **TFC – TBD - 6:30PM, Wednesday, December 8, 2021 by Zoom**
- **STM/ATM – Tuesday, April 12, 2022**

continued

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Appendix B: Actions

- Tracey: contact Pam Bennett immediately re: ambulance personnel shifts for re: contract negotiations.
- Nancy/Marni: send Jon Snyder Budget Policy amendments.
- Rachel/Jon S.: propose EV charging station as part of tennis courts project.
- Sarah: contact Rachel re: meeting postings for TSBC/Publicity.
- Rachel/Nancy: draft action minutes/record meetings during Marni's leave.
- Mary Ellen/Sarah: contact MVRHS Administration re: Budget Subcommittee schedule

FY22 Reserve Fund spending tally – Balance: \$75,000

8/25/21 – Selectmen Other/Finance - \$25,000 Insurance shortfall

Appendix C: Documents on File:

- Agenda 11/3/21
- FY2022 Budget Plan Department 231 Ambulance/EMT (5 p.)
- Total Call Volume / Revenues (2 p.)
- Tisbury Ambulance – Billing Reconciliation Report FY17 – FY18 – FY19
- Tisbury Ambulance – Billing Reconciliation Report FY20 – FY21 – FY22
- FY 2022 Capital Planning Worksheet, Draft – need Water Dept.
(2 p.)10/22/21
- Gilfoy cover email re: Agenda for FinCom Meeting 10/27/21, 10/22/21
- Budgets
- Gilfoy cover email re: Latest Proposed Amendment to Town Budget Policy
11/1/21
- Budgets
- Gilfoy email re: Updated 2021 Finance Committee Handbook 10/22/21

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 2/2/22