

Town of Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 15th, 2023, 6:30pm
Via Zoom Teleconference

Present: Chair – Nancy Gilfoy, Allan Rogers, Louise Clough, Rachel Orr, Dan Seidman, John Oliver, Mary Ellen Larsen

Others: Pam Bennett, Jon Snyder, Jay Grande, Elena DeFoe, Ann Marie Cywinski, Deborah Medders, Abbe Burt, Melinda Loberg*, Ben Robinson*, Ruth Konigsberg

Recorder: Juliet Mulinare

Call to Order 6:32pm

Ms. Gilfoy called the Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee meeting to order.

Discussion of FY24 Levy Limit and Reductions

Jon Snyder, Finance Director, was present to review options for reducing the budget. He explained that the levy limit restricts only what can be raised with the tax levy, it does not restrict free cash. He also stated that free cash should not be used for recurring expenses as it not a sure thing; it must be certified each year and it is the result of receiving more in revenue than what was budgeted. Mr. Snyder tries to be conservative with estimating the town's revenue in case there is an off year. Currently, free cash is used to off-set the tax rate but Mr. Snyder would like to get away from that practice. Mr. Snyder reported that a meeting with the bond analyst earlier in the week went well and the Town should hold onto its AA+ bond rating, which will be received in 10 days. Free cash has not yet been certified.

Review of Human Resources and Personnel Board Budgets and Warrant Articles

Pam Bennett, Human Resource Coordinator, presented the FY24 budget request for Human Resources. Ms. Bennett explained that the HR Department was created at Town Meeting last year so this will be the first year the Department is funded independently from the Select board's budget. Mr. Grande stated that he does not currently have a job description for the new HR Department Head, but the step and grade have been determine. This would promote Ms. Bennett to a Department Head and would provide the town's employees with an HR person who is independent from the Select Board and Town Administrator's office. The Committee reviewed the three Personnel Board warrant article requests: two to amend classification plans for non-union employees (part-time and seasonal plus management and professional) based on the 6.9% COLA., the other to fund the increases resulting from the M & P reclassification study. The Committee discussed the reclassification increases in addition to the 6.9% COLA having a huge impact on the budget. Mr. Snyder stated that inflation is not predictable and if the Town wants to retain their employees, these increases are necessary to remain competitive. The Committee discussed the COLA formula used and whether it's mandated.

Review of Affordable Housing Committee Warrant Article

Dan Seidman, Affordable Housing Committee Chair, presented the FY24 warrant article request from the Affordable Housing Committee. The amount of the article is \$50k; \$40k will be used to fund an administrative assistant for the Committee and the remaining \$10k will be used for legal and advertising costs. Mr. Seidman said the Committee has new members with new energy and ideas and skilled administrative support would be a huge benefit. This would be a contractual position, not benefitted. The Committee discussed the salary range and qualifications for the position; this person would require experience enough to take on issues with zoning, managing mortgage loans, administering the STR tax, etc.

Discussion on Climate Committee Warrant Articles

Melinda Loberg, Climate Committee Chair, was present to discuss the warrant article requests from the Climate Committee. Mr. Grande stated there are several article requests, one is for \$50k to be added the Energy Fund that was established at ATM 2022, which will serve as a reserve fund for future improvements. Another article would create a position that would ideally serve as a Facilities Manager but could also be classified as an Energy Manager or Sustainability Administrator. A third article asks for funding to install EV chargers at the Park & Ride. Mr. Grande suggested that the EV chargers could be funded in the future with Embarkation Fee revenue or grants. Ms. Loberg advocated for at least one or two charging stations as there are currently none in Tisbury; she will pursue grants for these as well. The last article is to install a solar array on the roof of the Senior Center.

Review of Selectboard Budgets and Warrant Articles

John Grande, Town Administrator, presented the Selectboard's FY24 budgets and warrant article requests. He explained that the reduction in the payroll budget is due to the HR Coordinator position going into a separate budget. There are three full-time positions in this Department. Mr. Grande went through the budget line by line but said he needs to review further. The Selectboard has a number of warrant article requests including funding for professional services to conduct a feasibility study for Town Hall. Other articles include contributions to the General and Capital Building Stabilization funds, and an article to authorize negotiations with Stop & Shop regarding property acquisition of various properties downtown.

Vote on Articles and Budgets Reviewed on 2/8/23

The Committee reviewed the FY24 Planning Board budget and warrant article request.

Motion placed on the floor by Ms. Orr to recommend the budget. Ms. Clough seconds the motion.

There are still some reductions possible in this budget so the suggestion to postpone the vote to recommend was made. The Committee agreed and Ms. Orr withdrew her motion.

The Committee reviewed the two warrant articles submitted by the Planning Board: one to increase the Department Assistant from grade 5 to grade 7 and the other to fund a re-codifying of the zoning bylaws.

Motion placed on the floor by Ms. Orr to recommend the two warrant articles. Mr. Rogers seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Oliver – Aye, Seidman – Aye, Rogers – Aye, Larsen – Aye, Clough – Aye, Orr – Aye, Gilfoy – Aye Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

The Committee reviewed the FY24 Fire Department budget and warrant article request.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. Rogers to recommend the warrant article request for funding for SCBA equipment. Ms. Clough seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Oliver – Aye, Seidman – Aye, Rogers – Aye, Larsen – Aye, Clough – Aye, Orr – Aye, Gilfoy – Aye Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

The Committee then discussed the budget request. There were concerns about the annual increases, due mostly to salary increases, and the overlap with the Ambulance budget.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. Oliver to recommend the Fire Department budget. Ms. Clough seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Oliver – Aye, Seidman – Aye, Rogers – Aye, Larsen – Aye, Clough – Aye, Orr – Aye, Gilfoy – Aye Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

The Committee reviewed the FY24 Ambulance budget and warrant article request. The warrant article request is for a Paramedic Supervisor position.

Motion placed on the floor by Ms. Larsen to recommend the warrant article for a Paramedic Supervisor. Mr. Oliver seconds the motion.

The Committee discussed whether the Union would have to accept this position.

No further discussion, roll call vote: Oliver – Aye, Seidman – Aye, Clough – Aye, Gilfoy – Nay, Rogers – Nay, Orr – Aye, Larsen – Nay. Motion carries (4-3-0).

The Committee discussed the budget request, which has a 15% increase.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. Seidman to recommend the Ambulance budget. Mr. Oliver seconds, no further discussion, roll call vote: Oliver – Aye, Seidman – Aye, Rogers – Nay, Larsen – Aye, Clough – Aye, Orr – Nay, Gilfoy – Aye. Motion carries (5-2-0).

The Committee reviewed the FY24 Emergency Management budget.

Motion placed on the floor by Ms. Clough to recommend the Emergency Management budget. Mr. Seidman seconds, no further discussion, roll call vote: Oliver – Aye, Seidman – Aye, Rogers – Aye, Larsen – Aye, Clough – Aye, Orr – Aye, Gilfoy – Aye Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

Future Meetings

Next meeting will be in one week. Review of the Finance, Assessor, Library and Wastewater budgets will be on the agenda.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair None.

Adjournment

At 9:37pm a motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Orr and seconded by Mr. Seidman. No further discussion, roll call vote: Oliver – Aye, Seidman – Aye, Rogers – Aye, Larsen – Aye, Clough – Aye, Orr – Aye, Gilfoy – Aye Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

Meeting Documents on File

1. BLDG MAINT BDGT24
2. HOUSING TRUST BDGT24
3. HUMAN RESOURCES BDGT24
4. Levy Analysis 230201
5. PERSONNEL BOARD BDGT24
6. SELECT BD BDGT24
7. SELECT BD-OTHER24

*Respectfully Submitted
Juliet Mulinare, Recorder*

Minutes Approved: **3/1/23**

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date