

**Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee  
in Joint Meeting with  
Tisbury Select Board and  
Tisbury Personnel Board  
6:30PM, Wednesday, September 27, 2023  
Hybrid Meeting in the Katharine Cornell Theatre and  
by Zoom Cloud Conference**

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**Present:** Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Ruth Konigsberg,  
Alex Meleney, Rachel Orr, Allan Rogers, Dan Seidman,  
**TSB:** Chair Roy Cutrer, John Cahill, Christina Colarusso,  
**Personnel:** John Schilling, Marilyn Wortman,  
**Town:** Town Administrator – Jay Grande, Pam Bennett, Elena DeFoe,  
Treasurer – Jonathan Snyder, DPW Director – Kirk Metell,  
Planning Bd. - Ben Robinson, Asst. Fire Chief – Patrick Rolston,  
**Others:** Lynn Fraker, Daniel Greenman, Recorder – Marni Lipke, MVTV  
\* TFC, TSB or Personnel Bd. members late arrivals or early departures.

**Call Meeting to Order**

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

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

**Discussion and Votes** (See documents on file & 9/20/23 documents on file.)

The FinCom called this meeting to examine issues around personnel finances (salary, unused vacation, benefits, etc.) which were 70% of the Town budget. The Personnel Bd. appreciated FinCom Chair Nancy Gilfoy's attendance at their meetings for a mutual learning opportunity.

**Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Formula Discussion**

(See: 9/27/23 & 9/20/23 documents on file & 3/8/23 Minutes p.3.)

- Last year's high inflation (6.9%), steps, and Management and Professional (M&P) reclassification, amounted to 10+% raises for some staff. This confluence of events was a "perfect storm" unlikely to occur again.
- The Personnel Bd. spent considerable time making Tisbury competitive with other towns to attract/retain staff, particularly seasonal/temporary employees.
- Investment in employees was fiscally responsible and an important Town asset and conversely long-term vacancies were a financial liability.
- Setting the COLA was the sole purview of the Personnel Board. For at least 11 years the Tisbury COLA has been based on a formula averaging each year's

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Boston/Brockton Consumer Price Index (CPI)—the same formula as Edgartown and West Tisbury. The annual COLA was applied across the Board with the exceptions of the Police Chief's contract and school unions.

- The meeting debated the FinCom proposal for a 3 to 5 year averaging of the CPI in order to smooth out COLA spikes.
- The COLA was designed to compensate staff for inflation. Although an individual would receive the same compensation in the long run, 3-5 year averaging would disrupt the yearly inflation/increase match—which was likely to cause employee dissatisfaction in low years. Low years could also disadvantage retiring staff regarding pension/social security determination based on final year pay.
- Similarly budget staff and committees were likely to be discontent in years when the COLA was higher than inflation.
- Average/smoothing worked better when figures moved up and down, but historically inflation only went up.
- This year the Town had finally persuaded the union to match the M&P COLA. Consequently it was strongly advised not to switch formula's back and forth; any decision should be relatively long-term.
- Smoothing would benefit the Town as a whole in: more predictable budgeting and taxpayer bills as well making it easier to conform to Proposition 2 ½.
- A universal Island formula was the best solution, however Mr. Snyder and two others spent 6 years trying unsuccessfully for consensus.
- The Personnel Bd. had not been informed of the proposal and would take the complex issue under advisement. The deadline to set the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) COLA was next week. The FinCom had not yet voted a recommendation.

**Employees with More Than One Job/Dual Positions**

(See Minutes: 2/23/23 p.4-5, & 2/8/23 p.1, & 5/17/23 p.1-2.)

The FinCom analyzed budgets based on personnel structure so this issue was raised as a communication problem and to understand how decisions were made. Several past and present examples were cited but were not the intent of the discussion: Building Inspector/Assistant Town Administrator, Deputy Fire Chief/ Emergency Management (EM), Fire Chief/Ambulance Coordinator.

- Savings were important but not paramount. Accounting protocol was often confusing, i.e. Ambulance Coordinator dual salary charged to the Fire Dept.
- There were repeated concerns about working people 50+ hrs./wk. and losing good staff through burn-out.
- Burn-out was especially noted around public safety officials as they were required to be competently on call 24/7. Minimum rest and safety regulations should be closely watched. Earned time-off was a possible solution.
- Other Island Towns also housed EM in the Fire Dept. Advantages included ready access to trained and easily mobilized volunteers.

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- Another concern was conflicting commitments, e.g. EM responsibilities to the Islandwide crisis and simultaneously to Tisbury's local crisis needs.
- Administration distinguished temporary fill-ins from long-term vacancies.
  - Dedicated Town staff volunteered for extra work when needed. This created learning/career opportunities and might be compensated with stipends.
  - Other short-term fill-in methods were: succession planning, cross-training and rotating responsibilities.
  - Long-term vacancies put the Town in a weakened position, e.g. Federal emergency funding was predicated on a robust EM Department.
- Job descriptions for dual or fill-in positions were also an issue and were important for M&P compensation/classification studies. Human Resources Director Pam Bennett was putting together a Town Staff diagram/flow chart.
- The FinCom emphasized the goal of stakeholder awareness in staffing decisions.
- Thanks were exchanged for the informative discussions.

**Adjournment**

• LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:35PM; ALLEN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: DAN SEIDMAN—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

• John Schilling moved to adjourn the Personnel Board meeting at 7:35PM; Marilyn Wortman seconded; motion passed unanimously: 2 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

• Mr. John Cahill moved and Ms. Christina Colarusso seconded a motion to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:36PM, which passed unanimously: 3 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions.

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events**

- **TFC Orientation – 6:30PM, Wednesday, October 4, 2023 – EMF**
- **TFC/TSB/Planning – TBD,**
- **Special/Annual Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday [May 28](#), 2024 - PAC**

**Appendix B: Actions**

FinCom – vote COLA recommendation.

John Schilling – set up hybrid technology for Personnel Bd. meetings.

All – Please remember not to hit “Reply All”.

Future Agendas

- Minutes: 9/6/23, 9/20/23 Notes, 9/27/23 as amended for spelling.

**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.
- Ask about Music Festival budget impact.
- include budget deadline ultimatum in FinCom letter,
- department budget drafts posted on Town Website (password protected)? or
- attach budget/narrative modules to agendas.
- request/demand foundational information, levy, free cash estimates, etc.
- contact Planning Bd. re: zoning bylaw revision.
- include Building 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: \$100,000

**Appendix C: Documents on File**

- Agenda 9/27/23
- West Tisbury Personnel Board, Wage Adjustment Formula

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Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

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Date

Minutes approved as amended 12/6/23