

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, December 13, 2023
by Zoom Cloud Conference

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Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Ruth Konigsberg, Alex Meleney,
Rachel Orr, Allan Rogers,
Others: Linda Gorham, Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Town: Select Board – John Cahill, Treasurer – Jonathan Snyder,
* TFC members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

• The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:31PM. (*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

Discussion of Capital Planning (See documents on file, & below: Actions.)

- Other Towns had capital planning committees, sometimes with staff or experts as ex-officio. Capital planning happened in early fall to be ready for the budget process. The committee sent out forms to all departments and then reviewed and prioritized projects, sometimes with liaisons to departments, setting a timetable from immediate to years away or high to low priority. FinComs or select boards consulted the plan and were more likely to recommend projects accordingly, and much less likely to recommend projects not on the plan. The plans were valuable but not rigid documents.
- Tisbury capital planning was the purview of the Tisbury Select Board (TSB) and should be a priority. Current Tisbury practice was for the Financial Director to send a 10-year project form to each department and then consolidate the requests into a list.
 - Unfortunately, this year the 2 most important Departments did not respond, the TSB and the Department of Public Works (DPW); and other departments listed mostly short-term needs. Treasurer Jonathan Snyder included some estimates (e.g. the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), Tisbury Town Hall, etc.) but some projects were entirely missing: the seawall, Library repair, Wastewater expansion, Katherine Cornell Theatre (KCT) renovation...
 - Also it was unclear who was responsible for municipal building maintenance projects: the TSB, Town Administrator, Facilities Manager, or DPW Director.
 - Tisbury capital project status changed on short notice, for example, a new Town Hall on the list for 40 years was suddenly at the forefront because of the Educomp building offer (see 10/25/23 Notes). This kind of unpredictable fluidity added to taxpayer and staff frustration and burdens.
 - Given Tisbury's high debt, capital spending relied heavily on Free Cash.
 - Select Board member John Cahill attested that the TSB was reactionary instead of strategic and basically "flying by the seat of their pants".

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- The FinCom understood the value of capital planning and was uncomfortable voting on projects without it, for example it was difficult to vote for a new Town Hall without knowing other capital spending and maintenance costs. A good capital plan increased taxpayer confidence, allowing people to dedicate funds and know what was coming.

The discussion then focused on solution factors.

- The DLS had agreed to help. Capital planning tools such as the Munis software unit were highly recommended. John Cahill reported Town Administrator Jay Grande would likely favor such a committee. An early fall timeline was compatible with other Finance Dept. duties.

- Capital forms should include: lifespan, estimates, funding sources (budget, revolving account, stabilization, Free Cash, borrowing, grants, etc.).

- Some capital needs were predictable, e.g.:

- department heads would know when equipment and vehicles would age-out;
- heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) systems needed replacement every 20 years.

- A complete list of all town property from snowplows to buildings was an enormous task but after initial groundwork, would only require yearly updates.

- The FinCom debated whether to appoint a task force to set up the process and then appoint a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) committee, or to appoint a CIP committee that would pioneer and then implement the process. Non

- It was too late for Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) but in time to plan for FY26.

- *ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO RECOMMEND THE TISBURY SELECT BOARD FORM A CAPITAL PROJECT COMMITTEE OF 3 TO 6 PEOPLE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A CAPITAL PLANNING PROCESS AND THEN TO DEVELOP A TEN YEAR PLUS PLAN FOR ALL TOWN CAPITAL EXPENDITURES; WITH A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT THAT IT BE COMPOSED AS FOLLOWS:*

- *2 FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTEES;*

- *2 SELECT BOARD APPOINTEES;*

- *1 PLANNING BOARD APPOINTEE;*

- *1 TOWN MODERATOR APPOINTEE;*

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

Approval of Minutes: 9/6/23, 9/20/23 Notes, 9/27/23 Amended, 10/4/23, 10/25/23 Notes, 11/8/23, 11/29/23

- *LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING MINUTES:*

- *SEPTEMBER 6, 2023, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 NOTES,*

- *SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 AS AMENDED,*

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- OCTOBER 4, 2023, OCTOBER 25, 2023 NOTES,
- NOVEMBER 8, 2023, AND NOVEMBER 29, 2023,
ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0
NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT; RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH
—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE,
NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Correspondence (See documents on file, & See Minutes: 6/21/23 p.2, 9/6/23 p.1-3, & 10/4/23 p.4, & below: Actions.)

Chair Nancy Gilfoy reported on her exchange with Mr. Grande, who had immediately sent the FinCom letter about the Beach Road Music Festival to Festival owner Adam Epstein. There was some pushback and Nancy Gilfoy requested that Mr. Grande clarify his last email but had not yet received a response. Although the documents were public, the FinCom expressed surprise at Mr. Grande's prompt sharing with the vendor. Members praised Ms. Gilfoy's level responses. The FinCom hoped the conversation would continue with the goal for the Town to be better informed with more up-to-date policies and better prepared going forward.

Committee Reports

- The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) discussed the FY25 budget Draft #2 at 8.89% increase, however it did not yet include: a Facilities Manager or maintenance costs and utility expenses were not clear. FY24 Chapter 70 State reimbursements included over \$600,000 in Student Opportunity Act (SOA) funds and the same is expected for FY25 (see Minutes: 1/25/23 p.2, & 11/29/23 p.4)—almost halving the increase percent. A final Draft was expected at the January 9th meeting which would include a public hearing, and the budget vote.
- The Climate Committee was keeping solar panels for the new School in front of the public. There was a 30% rebate at this time, and they were talking to the architect Chris Blessen. There were a lot of resources available for green building.
- The TSB set the Annual/Special Town Meeting (ATM/STM) date on May 28, 2024 however warrant articles were due January 12th. Department budgets were due in February. (The FinCom would review regional and school budgets and CPC recommendations in January.)
- Community Preservation Committee (CPC) recommendations were voted.
 - \$811,000 went to housing for: a single-room-occupancy study, Municipal Housing Trust, Dukes County Regional Housing Authority, Harbor Homes, Autism Center, Veteran housing, Island Housing Trust worker housing.

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- \$21,000 for historic preservation,
- \$0 for open space but \$381,000 in recreation for the Library courtyard, Lake St. pavilion and the dinghy dock.
- Embarkation revenue came to \$529,000 and the Committee granted all 10 requests, leaving a residual of \$68,000 (see below: Actions). If the State legislation passes, embarkation revenue would be ~ \$2,000,000 (see 10/13/22 Minutes). The generator problem prompted the Tisbury Police Dept. to look at joining with Fire and Ambulance Dept. communications. (Oak Bluffs dedicated all embarkation revenue to their Police Dept. budget.)
- The MVRHS budget was not yet final at its December 11th Public Hearing. Overall the operating budget increase was over 7% although, like Tisbury they received substantial SOA funds for an assessed increase of just over 6%.
- The Oak Bluffs FinCom was looking at potential synergies and suggested another joint meeting. The FinCom acknowledged the advantages of sharing but suggested this was a busy time of year.

Future Meetings (See below: Meetings/Events.)

The next meeting would be an interview with the CPC.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

• *ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:14PM; LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALEX MELENEY—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUTH KONIGSBERG—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- TSC Budget Public Hearing – 4:00PM, Tuesday, January 9, 2024 - ESF
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, January 10, 2024 – Zoom**
- ATM Warrant Articles due – January 12, 2024
- **TFC – TBD - 6:30PM, Wednesday, January 17, 24, 2024**
- Special/Annual Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday, May 28, 2024 – PAC

Appendix B: Actions

Nancy – inform Select Board of Capital Planning Committee recommendation.

Nancy – contact Kirk Metell, Police, etc. re: Embarkation for generator rent.

Nancy – contact OB FinCom re: joint meeting delay.

Nancy – contact Heidi Diettrich re: CPC interview.

Jon Snyder – please PDF future reports.

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

Future Agendas – Minutes: 12/13/23

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.
- Request data on how much each Department turned back in FY23.
- Request projects for grant funding.
- Request capital projects
- 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.
- 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: \$29,650.25

- 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

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda 12/13/23
- Capital Planning in Arlington: A 36 Year Learning Process and Still Evolving, Association of Town Finance Committees, Charles Foscett, November 4, 2023 (39 p.)
- DLS, Division of Local Services, MA Department of Revenue, Capital Planning Fundamentals Presented by Kasey Bik, November 4, 2023, (17 p.)
- Town of Oak Bluffs, 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan For Fiscal Years 2025-2029 (151 p.)
<https://oakbluffsma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10613/20231128-FY2025-2029-CAPITAL-IMPROVEMENT-PLAN?bidId=>
- Town of Tisbury Financial Policies (28 p.)
- Gilfoy/Grande emails 11/13/23-12/1/23 (2 p.)
- Article Professional Services for Consolidated Town Hall Office Facility at 55 West William Street 11/23/23
- Gilfoy cover email re: Special Town Meeting update and late filed article 12/5/23
- Article Submission Form, Article – To Fund the Purchase of Police Station Generator from Embarkation Funds 12/4/23

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 2/7/24