

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, January 17, 2024
by Zoom Cloud Conference

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Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Ruth Konigsberg, Alex Meleney,
Rachel Orr, Louis Pashman, Allan Rogers,
Others: Lynne Fraker, Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Town: Town Treasurer – Jonathan Snyder,
CPC – Heidi Dietterich, Paul Munafo,

* 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.)

Review of Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Recommended Warrant Articles – Heidi Dietterich, CPC Administrator

Paul Munafo, CPC Chair (See documents on file.)

- The Community Preservation Act (CPA) was designed to help municipalities fund projects that might be hard to vote—and carried a proviso not to be used for regular tax-covered expenses such as maintenance. The law required a set percentage of CPC annual income be spent on each of 3 areas: historic preservation, open space/recreation, and community housing—the initial reason for the Island's participation. Once the set percentages were fulfilled, all undesignated income could be spent among the 3 areas.
- The CPC declared applications not meeting CPA standards ineligible, e.g.:
 - Shellfish Dept. Quahog Testing was a regular farm expense, and
 - Teacher Housing did not pass State affordable housing standards and spending municipal funds on municipal employee housing was not yet legal
- Community housing projects had to include permanent deed restrictions, and had to meet State affordable or moderate housing standards.
- The Island CPCs had a tradition of funding regional projects (Gay Head Lighthouse, Martha's Vineyard Museum, Oak Bluffs Tabernacle, Tashmoo Overlook). Previous controversy was resolved by requiring regional projects to apply to all 6 Towns.
- The FinCom reviewed all recommendations.
- A) The MV Museum was preparing an exhibit on the fascinating Tisbury Oklahoma neighborhood.
- B) The Old Mill was the jurisdiction of one of the oldest conservation groups on the Island and desperately needed to be brought up to code and restored. All Towns except for Aquinnah were asked to pay the same amount.

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- C) This was the only part of the Vineyard Haven Library renovation project eligible for CPA funds as Open Space. The courtyard would be installed at the end of the project. The CPC had no jurisdiction over how projects were run.
- D) & E) The Town was hoping to make Lake Street a more family friendly park: protecting pickle-ball courts from dog walkers, skateboarders and vandals, adding benches, picnic tables, wifi, a pavilion, bike rack, etc.
- F) Would start to address safety issues at the Lake Street Dinghy Dock with temporary seasonal floats.
- G) The Municipal Housing Trust was established to be able to acquire property on the market for potential affordable/community housing without having to wait for an Annual or Special Town Meeting (ATM/STM). The CPC was eager to see the money put to use.
- H) The Affordable Housing Committee proposed contracting a consultant to survey all short-term rental houses in Tisbury (by street address, website scrubbing, etc.)—the CPC raised the recommendation to \$75,000 to cover any unforeseen expenses. The State collected all short-term rental tax through AirBnB type companies and property owners, generating significant Tisbury revenue: ~ \$1,400,000 in Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) and \$1,300,000 in FY24 to-date. The Town required all such properties be registered and inspected by Fire, Building and Health agents for an inclusive \$75 fee. Previous Building Inspector Ross Seavey was able to register ~ 285 properties but recently that number dropped to ~ 75. The CPC assumed that after the information was collected it would go to the Building Inspector. However, Chair Nancy Gilfoy reported the current Building Inspector submitted an article to create a position to monitor short-term rentals. The FinCom raised a number of issues (see below: Actions).
 - ° As a State tax the State should be responsible for enforcement.
 - ° This contract would only generate inspection/registration fee revenues.
 - ° Was Tisbury the only Island town requiring registration/inspection?
 - ° Were the Building Dept. and Affordable Housing Com. communicating?
 - ° In what way was this directly connected to affordable housing issues and eligible for CPC funding; e.g. dedicating short-term revenue to affordable housing?
- I) The Harbor Homes recommendation was the same as last year's (see 12/21/22 Minutes p.3) and was dependent on finding a property to develop.
- J) The Island Autism Center application was for two 4-bedroom residential units to house 8 autistic adults.
- K) Island Housing Trust (IHT) requested local seed moneys in order to apply for substantial State grants, so this Veteran Outreach Center project was contingent on State grant approval. K) and L) were regional projects.

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- L) Similarly the elder and family neighborhood project of nine 1-bedroom units for residents over 60 yrs. was seed money contingent on State funds. It was designed to accommodate those grandparents raising grandchildren.
 - M) was the annual Dukes County Regional Housing Authority (DCRHA) Rental Assistance request (see 6/22/17 Minutes p.2-4).
 - N) The FinCom commended Heidi Dietterich as a bargain in administrative expenses and thanked CPC Agent Heidi Diettrich and Chair Paul Munafo for their time and thorough information.
 - Towards the end of the meeting—and leaving out #H:
 - **ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2024 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES ON COMMUNITY PRESERVATION SPENDING/DISTRIBUTION AS PRESENTED;**
 - A) MV MUSEUM OKLAHOMA NEIGHBORHOOD RESEARCH (\$11,450),**
 - B) OLD MILL RESTORATION/RENOVATION (\$10,000),**
 - C) VINEYARD HAVEN LIBRARY COURTYARD (\$150,000)**
 - D) LAKE STREET PARK FENCING, BENCHES, BIKE RACK, ETC. (\$95,887),**
 - E) LAKE STREET PARK PAVILION (\$72,600)**
 - F) LAKE STREET DINGHY DOCK EXPANSION (\$63,200),**
 - G) MUNICIPAL HOUSING TRUST (\$50,000),**
 - I) HARBOR HOMES HOMELESS SHELTER DEVELOPMENT (\$100,000),**
 - J) ISLAND AUTISM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (\$125,838),**
 - K) ISLAND HOUSING TRUST – VETERANS OUTREACH CENTER (\$88,350),**
 - L) ISLAND HOUSING TRUST – ELDERS NEIGHBORHOOD (\$70,680),**
 - M) DUKES COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY RENTAL ASSISTANCE (\$130,000),**
 - N) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES (\$25,000);**
- LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: RUTH KRONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Review of Embarkation Committee (CPC) Recommended Warrant Articles
– Jon Snyder – Embarkation Committee Chair (See documents on file.)

- Embarkation revenue was dedicated to mitigating the impact of the ferry. FY23 income was ~ \$270,000 however unspent previously granted funds were repossessed for a total balance of \$475,794. (The initial list was incomplete.)
- A) The FinCom expressed concern about the Police emergency generator replacement (see Minutes/Notes: 9/20/23 p.1, & 10/4/23 p.5., & 11/29/23 p.1-2) in terms of the Station being in a regular flood zone. Embarkation funds were available immediately upon approval vote, however the order could not be

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placed until funds were available and there was a long lead time for the equipment. In the meantime the Department had worked out communication sharing with other emergency services.

- B) The Department of Public Works (DPW) oversaw the gateway improvements (previously called beautification and signage).
- C) Seasonal police traffic safety staff.
- D) Annual MV Law Enforcement Tactical Team support—with the hope the planning will never need to be used.
- E) Annual harbor dredging.
- F) The Tisbury Select Board (TSB)/Harbormaster sponsored an overdue update to the Harbor Management Plan.
- G) Design and permitting for the Owen Park dock replacement—the Dock was often underwater. The FinCom noted the project had been collecting funds for many years and asked when work would begin.
- H) The last year paying for Fire Dept. breathing apparatus (see 1/19/22 Minutes p.2) so hopefully there would be a brief hiatus before the next round.
- I) Lifepak monitors were the most used equipment on an ambulance.
- J) Ambulance pro-stair chair.
- K) Pressure from Steamship Authority ferries pumping their effluent tanks forced an air discharge, so the Wastewater Dept. requested \$14,950 for an odor control system. Tanks were emptied when full, at Falmouth or the Vineyard.
- Towards the end of the meeting—excepting # K pending specific language:
- *RACHEL ORR MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FISCAL YEAR 2025 EMBARKATION WARRANT ARTICLES AS PRESENTED:*

A) POLICE STATION GENERATOR REPLACEMENT (\$110,000)

B) DPW GATEWAY IMPROVEMENTS (\$30,000)

C) SEASONAL POLICE OFFICERS (\$70,000),

D) MV LAW ENFORCEMENT TACTICAL TRAINING (\$6,225),

E) HARBOR DREDGING (\$136,000),

F) HARBOR MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE (\$10,000),

G) OWEN PARK DOCK PERMITTING (\$25,000),

H) SELF CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (\$23,519),

I) AMBULANCE 2 LIFEPAK MONITOR/DEFIBRILLATOR (\$45,100),

J) STYKER CHAIR-PRO STAIR CHAIR (\$5,000);

ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** RUTH KRONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

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Update on Bill to Increase Embarkation Fee

(See Minutes: 10/13/22, & 12/21/22 p.1-2, 5/17/23 p.5)

The bill to raise the fee from 50¢ to \$2 was slowly winding its way through the State legislature—currently in the Joint Committee on Revenue. Chair Nancy Gilfoy and Oak Bluffs FinCom Chair Sherry Countryman were working with Senator Julian Cyr’s office to try attaching the one-sentence bill to other legislation. Chairs Gilfoy and Countryman were soliciting an advocacy letter to be signed by all Massachusetts port towns.

Committee Reports

- Town Administrator Jay Grande discouraged both Climate Committee articles (see below: Actions).
- The Water Resources Committee reported the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) was moving forward.
- The TSB reviewed 2025 warrant articles, including some new ones not yet listed (see documents on file).
- Recent Town Accountant Suzanne Kennedy only trained John Minnehan (now Acting Town Accountant) and Libby Cleary in specific roles so the Finance Dept. was struggling with some unfamiliar procedures. For temporary relief they were working with the auditors and looking for an accounting firm with Munis software and municipal regulatory skills.

Future Meetings (See below: Meetings/Events, & Actions.)

- As requested the Center for Living (CFL), Dukes County Health Care Access (DCHCA), and Harbor Homes would return for the January 17th meeting. A spike was noted in Tisbury’s proportion of the County assessments. (Dukes County Commissioner votes were weighted by real estate value.)
- Chair Nancy Gilfoy was working on scheduling Schools interviews.
- Town Administrator Jay Grande asked if the FinCom wanted any FY25 Department budgets before February.
- There were FinCom vacancies for the 2024 elections.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

• *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:01PM; ALEX MELENDY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: RUTH KRONIGSBERG—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, ALEX MELENEY—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

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Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- Affordable Housing Committee – 4:00PM, Thursday, January 18, 2024
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, January 24, 2024 – Zoom**
- **TFC – TBD - 6:30PM, Wednesday, January 31, 2024**
- Special/Annual Town Meeting – 7:00PM, Tuesday, May 28, 2024 – PAC

Appendix B: Actions

Nancy – email questions to Martina Thornton

- why is Tisbury FY25 share of 50/50 formula so high?
- how many clients are served by HAMV?

Nancy – ask Mark Friedman for minimum foundational spending amount(s)

Nancy – schedule Affordable Housing Committee interview next week.

- request Town Counsel opinion re: CPC eligibility of short-term rental contract

Allen/Jon S./Nancy – send updated list of embarkation articles

Jon S. – do bonding regulations require the Town to own the School solar?

Jon S. – ask about FY24 YTD actual spending reports w/FY25 Dept. budgets

Rachel O. – email/distribute Grande letter re: School solar.

All – contact Nancy with any requests to discuss articles and/or Dept. budgets

All – recruit new FinCom members for 2024 elections.

Future Agendas – Minutes: 12/13/23, 1/10/24, 1/17/24

- CPC Article #H (Short-term rental contract) – Vote
- Embarkation Article #K (Wastewater Odor Control) – Vote

Budget Season Notes

- No new positions in FY25
- FY25 salaries/budgets will be higher due to classification raises.
- 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: \$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 1/17/24
- Gilfoy cover email re: Warrant Articles Received as of 1/16/24, 1/17/24
- PDF attachment (47 p.)

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Appendix C: Documents on File (cont.)

- Article Submission Form, January 8, 2024, Community Preservation Committee (5 p.)
- Tisbury Community Preservation Committee, 2024-25 CPA Final Recommendations, November 27, 2023
- Article Submission Form ATM, Article – Embarkation Fund Expenditures (2 p.) 12/22/23
- Article Submission Form ATM, Article – Embarkation Fund Expenditures (2 p.) 12/22/23 (*final copy*)
- Town of Tisbury, Office of Clerk memo re: Nomination Papers 1/12/24 (3 p.)

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved as amended 2/7/24