

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
at the Emergency Services Building
5:05PM, Wednesday November 8, 2017**

Present: Chair – Jeff Kristal, Pamela Brock, Paul Cefola, Nancy Gilfoy,
Tom Keller, Jynell Kristal, Mary Ellen Larsen, Lesley Segal,
Sarah York;
Town: Selectman Larry Gomez, Treasurer – Jonathon Snyder*,
Tisbury Sch. Prin. John Custer, TSBC – Reade Milne,
Govt. Study Com. Chair - Bruce Lewellyn,
Others: Sch. Bldg Project OPM – Richard Marks,

* Late arrivals or early departures

• Call 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.)*

• School Building Owners Project Manager (OPM)

In accordance with Town requests (as often happened), the Architect/Designers were able to reduce building size/cost through: smaller 4th-8th grade classrooms, smaller locker rooms, elimination of the computer lab, flexible multi-use maker space, etc. adding up to 8% in bulk changes from 81,000 to about 75,000 sq. ft. Unfortunately the cuts were to reimbursable spaces giving the Town 60¢ on the \$1. The FinCom discussed a series of issues.

- MSBA landscape reimbursement was complicated as only certain spaces were reimbursable; for example site work reimbursement was capped at 8%, but playgrounds were reimbursable and might modify the total.

- Private donations (e.g. for a playground) would signal to the MSBA that the Town could pay its own way and half the reimbursement would be withdrawn.

- The present building façade was deteriorating, another boiler had to be replaced and all the windows had failed. However it was not only the physical condition of the building that pointed towards a new school, but the opportunity to better meet student needs with adjacencies, technology, support space and efficient design.

- Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) member Reade Milne stated that repairing the current building was not a viable option since it would still be inadequate to educate students. A price on base repair would therefore be comparing apples to oranges.

- The current building had no space for those students most in need of extra instruction, one of the reasons Tisbury was accepted into the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) grant program. Acoustically separate break-out classroom spaces were used for new learning method activities such as:

- a small student group working on a project,
- a teacher and student(s) working on remediation or enrichment;

Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
November 8, 2017

2

- staff member consultation, etc.
- The Shared Service class of about 16 children would be in one large room and serve half special needs and half non-special needs for a mixed class of pre-kindergarteners (pre-k). All other Martha's Vineyard Public Schools (MVPS) hosted at least one Shared Services class.
- Prin. John Custer had fielded numerous calls from other school districts eager to enter the MSBA program (only 10% were accepted), so that a failed Tisbury vote would result in the loss of MSBA funding to those further down the line. In addition construction inflation was very high (partially due to recent storm damage) and was likely to remain so.
- For example, Lincolnshire failed to get the 2/3 vote to approve a \$60,000,000 MSBA new school project and was now bonding for \$90,000,000 to build a new school on their own.
- Political and 'marketing' discussion included:
 - need for a list of current building problems;
 - citizen attachment to the iconic current building;
 - Tisbury School Committee (TSC) ethics limitations, requiring statement of facts without political advocacy;
 - resident tendency to not attend meetings, get information or speak up and then vote no at the ballot box;
 - the consequent need for Town officials to unanimously back the project as fiscally and educationally responsible;
 - the difference between the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) votes and ballot votes;
- The Tisbury average home tax bill would rise about \$400. At the OPM's suggestion the Town was also looking into 25-30 yr. borrowing—but Treasurer Jonathon Snyder felt the difference would be minimal.
- Selectmen Larry Gomez warned that the other two selectmen would speak for themselves, which could kill the project.
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE TISBURY FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE THAT THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN SHOULD CO-SPONSOR THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT ARTICLE.
- The FinCom would not vote its recommendation until February with all the other ATM articles.
- Estimated project budget numbers would be available by the end of November but any FinCom feedback should be on short notice, as the final submission vote was a December 12th joint TSC/Selectmen meeting.
- OPM Richard Marks thanked the FinCom for the chance to have an open discussion.

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
November 8, 2017**

3

• **Reserve Fund Transfer Request from Clerical Serviced for the Town Study Group (Article 35)**

Town Study Group (Blue Ribbon Committee) Chair Mr. Bruce Lewellyn approached the Selectmen for clerical support to take minutes, post meetings, research and copy documents for the Study Group. A candidate had been identified and meeting times adjusted to accommodate their availability. The Selectmen referred Mr. Lewellyn to the Finance Committee for a reserve fund transfer request (\$4,000). The FinCom discussed:

- citizen committee impressive membership;
- using Town staff until the 2018 ATM at which time funds could be voted;
- utilization of Town staff versus the need for an independent secretary;
- Study Group timeline: created in April 2017, appointed in October 2017, mandated to report at the April 2018 ATM;
- lack of clear conception and planning for the 2017 Article (#35);
- parameters of Reserve Fund expenditure (unforeseen or emergency funding);
- early timing for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) and previous precedents of refusal (see Minutes: 9/6/17 p. 2-3 & 9/25/17 p.4);
- confirmation of estimated cost.

• The FinCom supported the request as valid but maintained the Reserve Fund was not the correct funding mechanism. They proposed costs be paid within the FY18 budget (e.g. Town Moderator line) with a possible transfer for any end-of-year deficit.

• *JYNELL KRISTAL MOVED TO DENY THE TOWN STUDY COMMITTEE RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUEST, BUT EMPHASIZED THEIR SUPPORT OF THE INTENTION AND SUGGESTED THE TOWN FIND THE FUNDS IN AN APPROPRIATE FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET LINE ITEM; NANCY GILFOY AND MARY ELLEN LARSEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

• **Budget Letter from the Town Finance Director for Department Heads (Review)** (See documents on file.)

Departmental forms would be distributed November 15th, were due back December 1st and should be ready for FinCom consideration by December 15th. The letter was similar to last year's, requested level funding (except for contractual changes), required any increases be justified and was amended to include the following provisions:

- every department is requested to submit a 5-year capital needs spreadsheet;
- a change in protocol: failure to submit a department budget in time will result in being funded at last year's level.

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
November 8, 2017**

4

• *MARY ELLEN LARSEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE LETTER AS AMENDED; LESLEY SEGAL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

• **Cherry Sheet Discussion** (See documents on file and below: Actions.)

Tisbury State reimbursement was negative \$213,000. It was noted that Oak Bluffs Town Administrator was lobbying the legislature to cap negative aid and/or exempt Towns inadvertently penalized by the Cherry Sheet formula.

• **Harper Payroll Update**

A letter was being drafted requesting that Harper return payment.

• **Quarterly Report and Auditor Update**

Town officials were meeting with the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority to demand quarterly billing for Tisbury.

• **Meeting Minutes Approval** – Tabled

• **Future Dates for Meetings** (See below: Meetings/Events.)

The following departments could be reviewed early in the process:

- Fire Chief/Ambulance,
- Adult Community Education Martha's Vineyard (ACE-MV),
- Tisbury and Martha's Vineyard Regional High Schools.
- The Embarkation Committee was sending its annual letter to Departments.
- The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Conference was always interesting and informative (see below: Meetings/Events). Town reimbursement was available for travel costs.

Meetings/Events:

TFC - 6:30PM, Wednesday, November 29, 2017 at the EMS Bldg.

AIFC/Edgartown FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, November 30, 2017

TFC - 6:30PM, Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at the EMS Bldg.

TFC - 6:30PM, Wednesday, December 13, 2017 at the EMS Bldg.

AIFC/West Tisbury FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, December 28, 2017

AIFC - TBD - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 8 or 15, 2017

MMA Conference – January 18-20, 2018 Hines Convention Center, Boston

Tisbury ATM – 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 10, 2017.

• **Adjourn**

• *NANCY GILFOY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:21PM; MARY ELLEN LARSEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.*

continued

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee
November 8, 2017**

5

Action List:

- All – consider hidden finances in “non-monetary” warrant articles.
- Jeff – email FY19 Cherry Sheet to FinCom members.
- Jynell – Pamela Brock in interested in serving on the Embarkation Com.
- Agenda Items - Minutes 9/25/ & 11/8/17

Documents on file:

- Agenda 11/8/17
- Cherry Sheet History Tisbury
- Kristal letter re: FY2018 Town Department Budget Increases 11/10/17

Minutes approved as amended 12/6/17.