

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
at the Emergency Services Building  
5:05PM, Wednesday September 25, 2017**

Present: Chair – Jeff Kristal, Pamela Brock, Paul Cefola, Nancy Gilfoy,  
Tom Keller\*, Mary Ellen Larsen, Lesley Segal\*;  
Town: Treasurer – Jonathon Snyder, Accountant – Suzanne Kennedy,  
Police Chief – Dan Hanavan, Fire Chief – John Schilling,  
Others: Elaine Eugster, Darren Lobdell, Allan Rogers, Sarah York,  
Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Robert Ogden, Peter Graczykowski,  
\* Late arrivals or early departures

**• Call to Order**

The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 5:05PM. *(Recorder's Note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)*

**• Sheriff's Department Budget Discussion** *(Sheriff Ogden)*

(See documents on file.)

- Sheriff Robert Ogden presented and argued for an assessment to the Towns to cover Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) Communications Center costs, formula based on 2017 call volume—9,424 (22.9%) Tisbury out of about 41,000 total calls, \$155,512.54 (~\$25 per dispatch). He explained the situation as follows.
  - The Department was created by a 1964 Act of Legislation which included the obligation to provide emergency communications services to the Towns in Dukes County. Until 2009 the Towns paid for the service through their Dukes County assessment.
  - In 2009 the Sheriff Office came under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with the understanding that the State would make the Department financially whole, an obligation they have failed to fulfill.
  - State funding for all Commonwealth Sheriff departments were calculated by staff to inmate ratio, and consequently did not support the Communications Center, for which there was no separate 'cut-out' or consideration. The State paid \$261,000 but charged back for payroll services reducing it to \$188,000 that Sheriff Ogden was forced to use paying for personnel only.
  - The Department had been spending in deficit since 2009 just to cover personnel expenses. In the past the shortfall was mitigated in the State Supplemental Budget but clear signals and a change in Section 86 language, indicated the Legislature would cease supplemental funding.
  - In addition, this process failed to address any capital issues and consequently the System ran on antiquated Plain Old Telephone System (POTS) with failing copper lines that Verizon was no longer maintaining.

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\* Lesley Segal entered the meeting at 5:09PM.

The FinCom asked about a number of issues.

- The State suggested the Department cut 'waste' which amounted to personnel already stretched very thin and understaffed with three vacant positions. Communications required three shifts and an alternate. Sheriff Deputies had been cross-trained, everyone multi-tasked and shifts were long. If the House of Corrections was eliminated, leaving only a jail/lockup, the State formula would not apply, thus drastically decreasing funding.

- The deficit was inherent in each year's budget. The Department was still awaiting FY17 supplemental funds and Legislative actions were unpredictable. Sheriff Ogden performed due diligence:

- speaking with State Representative Dylan Fernandes and Senator Julian Cyr, freshmen legislators with scant influence, still learning the process;
- approaching the Legislative Administration and Finance, and House Ways and Means Committees;
- working with the Massachusetts Sheriff's Association (MSA) subcommittee on communications centers;
- approaching all six towns (Tisbury, Edgartown and West Tisbury so far).

- Separate Town communications centers were cost prohibitive, at initial capital investment at about \$1,500,000 plus the above mandated staff.

- Four other Massachusetts sheriff departments covered communications: Plymouth to a minimal extent, Barnstable, Berkshire and Essex. These Departments covered their deficits with town (and sometimes hospital) assessments. For example, Barnstable charged a flat \$100,000 fee per town, plus \$36 per dispatch.

- Next generation technology would be a major capital investment (\$ millions) and could include fiber optics, microwave, or First Net AT & T—which was some years away. The system needed to support Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) and receipt, tracking and information transmittal.

- There was some confusion over this request and Mr. Ron Berson's charges for technology repairs. Federal and State grants were available but would take a year to implement. The Department did not have grant writing personnel but could utilize Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) or Martha's Vineyard Public Safety Communications Committee (MVPSCC) resources. Some mutual aid agreements were in place between various towns and counties.

- The request would likely take the form of a Warrant Article. As with the other Counties, the Town assessment would be placed in a separate dedicated trust with an advisory committee of town representatives, allowing for complete transparency.

- It was suggested that the Department limp along another year, forcing the State to supplemental fund it.

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- No union was involved. The Towns were being asked to fund the deficit, mostly going to personnel but this would allow the Department to utilize State funds for capital improvement.
- Sheriff Ogden noted the presentation was to raise public awareness and start the conversation for a long-term solution. He would also present to the All Island FinCom (AIFC) on Thursday.

**• Town Study Panel Interviews**

These interview were for the Committee on Town Governance established in 2017 Warrant Article 35 (see Minutes: 2/22/17 p.14 #40 & 3/15/17 p.7 #17).

- Ms. Elaine Eugster was a Professor of Mathematics from Goucher College who retired here in 2001 (having bought property in 1984). She expressed her love for the Island and Tisbury and was active with Friends of the Library. She noted the same problems at Annual Town Meeting (ATM) she'd seen at faculty meetings. She'd been very active in the college governance, head of department, preparing agendas, participating in the President's Council. After her interview with the Planning Board she thought deeply about Town problems and considered the primary goal was to involve more towns people, other concerns included reforming Annual Town Meeting (ATM)—Tisbury was the only town with habitual two-night ATM.

- Mr. Darren Lobdell graduated from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, University of Massachusetts Amherst in Finance and finally Harvard Business School before working in commercial banking and hedge fund management in Texas and Ohio. A car accident left him in a wheelchair, and he semi-retired and moved back to the Island, using his home as a rental property for minimal income. To increase his revenue he expanded the rental to include events such as weddings and ran into Town regulation difficulties. Unfortunately he was now mired in Court with the Town and unable to find an out of court solution. He expressed his sense of malaise, mistreatment and animosity, but also noted the sense of Town dysfunction, buildings in disrepair, lack of accountability, referral from department to department, communication lags, etc. He had previously avoided politics since his father was actively involved.

\* Tom Keller entered the meeting at 6:12PM.

- Mr. Allan Rogers and his wife, who was from the Island, bought a house four years ago and sold their home in Houston, TX in June. As a new resident he was interested in how the Town worked but not yet sure where he wanted to participate. He was retired from the National Guard, and failing physical or college requirements for a Navy fighter pilot or Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) he worked in business as director of distributions all over the United States. He suspected the Town was about 95% competent and about 5% showing problems, but he didn't know what those problems were.

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- At the end of the meeting, there was a discussion on the FinCom power of appointment. Members felt Mr. Lobdell was an interesting candidate and appreciated his honesty, however they preferred an appointee without such a strong agenda.

- *NANCY GILFOY MOVED TO NOMINATE ELAINE EUGSTER FOR THE GOVERNMENTAL STUDY COMMITTEE; MARY ELLEN LARSEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—TOM KELLER* who was not present for the complete discussion.

- **New Member Interviews/Discussions**

Sarah York – expressed some interest in the Town Governance Committee but was more interested in becoming a FinCom member. She was very active in the Tisbury Business Association. She ran CB Stark jewelers on Main St. for 16 yrs., commuting for eight years and now living here. She was interested in eventually running for Selectmen, and heard the FinCom was an excellent way to learn about Town government. She had two small children and was active on many other Boards. She felt she could bring a younger or fresh perspective to the Committee and did not always agree with Jeff Kristal, who had recruited her. She had a positive relationship with each of the three selectmen and was not set in her opinions. The FinCom introduced themselves talking about their years on the Committee and what prompted them to serve.

- The position was appointed until the next election when it would enter the three-year term rotation.

- At the end of the meeting, everyone expressed their enthusiasm.

- *PAMELA BROCK MOVED TO RECOMMEND THAT SARAH YORK BE APPOINTED TO THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE IN A JOINT MEETING WITH THE TISBURY SELECTMEN; LESLEY SEGAL SECONDED: MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION – MARY ELLEN LARSEN.*

- **Reserve Fund Transfer Continuation:**

- **Selectmen Request (Review Selectmen's Meeting on MVTV.org  
Tisbury Selectmen 9-12-17 at minute 20:00 of the Meeting for Start  
of Discussion**

The Selectmen agreed to pay for the implementation of the Police study out of their budget if it failed to get FinCom Reserve Fund approval. Chair Jeff Kristal emphasized the Reserve Fund was mandated for unforeseen emergencies and it was generally agreed that it was very early in the fiscal year to be requesting such funds. The Police Survey Report had been emailed to FinCom members.

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Police Chief Dan Hanavan reluctantly stated he did not agree with several aspects of the report, particularly its criticism of the hiring process the same firm had put in place and overseen. Mary Ellen Larsen asked whose idea the study was.

- *NANCY GILFOY MOVED TO RESPECTFULLY DECLINE THE REQUEST FOR A RESERVE FUND TRANSFER TO COVER POLICE STUDY IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE ABOVE MENTIONED REASONS: TOO EARLY IN THE FISCAL YEAR AND MONEY IS AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE IN THE BUDGET; SECONDED BY PAUL CEFOLA, MARY ELLEN LARSEN AND LESLEY SEGAL; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY, 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

- The request for the Senior Center alarm system was resolved as voted.

- **Munis Fix/Harper Payroll Services Update** *(Jon Snyder)*

The letter to Harper's was drafted and sent about a week ago but no response had yet been received. The problems were briefly reviewed (see 9/6/17 Minutes p. 1).

- **Capital Planning Documents** *(Jon Snyder and Nancy Gilfoy)*

This was another piece of the Town's financial planning, which allowed a look ahead at coming projects. The Program would increase as Departments were encouraged to plan and send in information on facilities and equipment. It should also allow the Town to prioritize projects and maintenance. There was a brief discussion on renting, sub-contracting or sharing expensive equipment with other towns.

- **Year End Department Report** *(Suzanne Kennedy)*

FY17 had not yet been closed and no final numbers were available. The FinCom noted the meals and lodging tax contribution to the General Fund and speculated on an increase with the new alcohol regulations.

- **Department of Public Works (DPW)/Buildings and Maintenance Discussion**

There was a movement to garner a Facilities budget out of department maintenance lines (see 10/19/16 p.2-3). However Suzanne Kennedy reminded the FinCom that most 'Maintenance' lines in individual departments paid for cleaning and upkeep expenses (light bulbs, keys, rug mats, etc.) that were too small to be Facility Manager issues.

- **Minutes: 4-5-17, 4-12-17, 4-25-17, 5-31-17, 7-24-17 as amended, 9-6-17**

- *PAUL CEFOLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF:*

- *APRIL 5, 2017, APRIL 12, 2017, APRIL 25, 2017,*

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- MAY 31, 2017,
- JULY 24, 2017 AS AMENDED, AND
- SEPTEMBER 6, 2017;

MARY ELLEN LARSEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT.

The FinCom commended the minutes.

**Meetings/Events:**

MVRHSC Budget Subc. - 8:30AM, Wednesday, September 27, 2017 at MVRHS

**AIFC/Tisbury FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, September 28, 2017**

**TFC - 6:30PM, Wednesday, October 11, 2017 at the EMS Bldg.**

**AIFC/West Tisbury FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, October 26, 2017**

**TFC - 6:30PM, Wednesday, November 8, 2017 at the EMS Bldg.**

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

**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.**

**• Adjourn**

- NANCY GILFOY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:10PM; JYNELL KRISTAL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

**Action List:** None.

**Documents on file:**

- Agenda 9/25/17
- Sign In Sheet 9/25/17
- Ogden letter re: Request for an Agenda Item for Finance Committee and Selectmen Meetings Relative to the Dukes County Regional Emergency Communication Center Funding Request for FY2019 8/31/17
- Dukes County Sheriff's Office Regional Emergency Communication Center FY2019 Funding Request (2 p.)
- Kristal email re: Establishment of Regional 911 Center 9/25/17
- Mass.gov excerpt re: Part 1 Title 11 Chapter 6A, Section 180 Regional 911 Emergency Communication District Planning Committee
- Chapter 410 An Act Authorizing the County of Dukes County to Establish and Maintain a Radio Communication Center for Police, Fire and Other Emergency Purposes.
- Gilfoy email re: Capital Planning Worksheet 9/24/17
- Town of Tisbury Capital Planning Worksheet 2017-2022 (3 p.) 9/17/17

Minutes approved 12/6/17.