

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
at the Katherine Cornell Theatre  
6:30PM, Wednesday, March 27, 2019**

Present: Chair – Jeff Kristal, Pamela Brock, Nancy Gilfoy, Larry Gomez  
Jynell Kristal, Mary Ellen Larsen, Laura Rose, Leslie Segal,  
Sarah York  
Town: Selectmen Tristan Israel, Treasurer Jonathon Snyder,  
Others: Seth Gambino  
Recorder Marni Lipke,

\* Late arrivals or early departures

**• Call to Order**

The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:34PM. *(Recorder's Note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)*

**• Update on Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

- Selectmen Tristan Israel remembered his first experience with Town government as a FinCom member and saluted the present Committee.
- A joint Selectmen / Tisbury School Committee (TSC) meeting on Article #9 \$800,000 (Borrow) Tisbury School Renovation/Addition Professional Services, achieved general consensus to remove the phrase "...and to fund extraordinary emergency repairs of the existing Tisbury School Facility..." however technical problems involving the ballot question would require advice from Counsel.
- As compensation there might be increases to Article #8j Repairs to the Tisbury School and/or School maintenance line items.
- The TSC and Selectmen also discussed professional services costs (\$4-500,000)—using information from the previous Feasibility Study.
- Speculation put last year's school project failure partially to cost and partially to affection for the current façade. The Selectmen and the TSC were working hard to move forward together and there would be another joint meeting next week (see below: Meetings/Events). Final article revisions would take place on Annual Town Meeting (ATM) floor. After a brief discussion on ATM vote and consequences of failure the FinCom endorsed the concept and had faith in the TSC and Selectmen cooperation.
- Tristan Israel advocated for a general override to relieve the tax levy limit and speculated that Article #13 Underground Utilities might fail (see 3/6/19 Minutes p.6).

**• Sheriff Discussion**

Towns Selectmen disagreed on the allocation formula and were concerned about firmer financial oversight, as well as the tower change from Tisbury to Oak Bluffs. The Sheriff was likely to amend Article #28 Regional

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee**  
**March 27, 2019**

**2**

Communications Center on ATM floor. Mr. Israel suggested tabling it at ATM and delaying action a year to negotiate details.

**• Clerk's Warrant Article Discussion with Tristan Israel**

(See 3/6/19 Minutes p.1-3 & p.8 #11.)

- Mr. Israel outlined the history of his long advocacy for changing to an appointed position including discussions with previous Town Clerk Marion Mudge, and current Clerk Hillary Conklin. He strongly endorsed Ms. Conklin and expected that she (or whoever was then Clerk) would be appointed in 2023 when/if the measure passed. The timeline, which could be elongated if necessary, allowed job description and logistical details to be set.
- During the last 10-15 years the Clerk's duties had become increasingly complex, requiring a steep learning curve, high standards, professional skills and ability as the official record keeper of a \$27-28,000,000 municipality. (Hillary Conklin had to obtain considerable training on her own.) These were better gauged through a hiring/interview process than by election.
- As to possible cronyism, a third of all Massachusetts Clerks (including Edgartown) were appointed with no ill effect. The position would go through the usual hiring path, including the Human Resources Dept. Selectmen were elected and could be recalled if their hiring actions dissatisfied the voters.
- The FinCom raised concerns that once appointed the person would essentially remain for their working life. However Mr. Israel responded it was more difficult to remove an elected official for malfeasance.
- There might be savings as salary/longevity, etc. would be tied to the Management and Professional (M & P) standards. In addition the current 30 hr./wk. position could be changed to 40 hr./wk.—to match other Town staff.
- The Clerk's Administrative Assistant lacked municipal authority, e.g. could not validate Bond signatures.
- An elected official had to reside in Tisbury; an appointed official did not.
- Tristan Israel was lobbying for the same shift for the County Treasurer position for similar reasons: skills, professionalism, experience, etc.
- Later in the meeting the FinCom debate raised other issues:
  - quality and history of Town appointees, including nepotism;
  - Clerk position under State oversight and accountability;
  - Ms. Conklin's last two opponents as ignorant of the job scope;
  - election process conflicts during the clerk election years;
  - election versus job interview process
- STM Article #10 – Change Town Clerk Position from Elected to Appointed
- ***NANCY GILFOY MOVED THAT THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND APPROVAL ON SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE #10 TO CHANGE THE TOWN CLERK FROM AN ELECTED TO AN APPOINTED***

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee**  
**March 27, 2019**

3

**POSITION; PAMELA BROCK SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 1 NAY—LARRY GOMEZ, 1 ABSTENTION—MARY ELLEN LARSEN** due to conflict of interest. Mr. Gomez saw no reason to change a good thing.

**• Update on Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

Chair Jeff Kristal reported some towns were raising the personal property exemption to \$10,000. The tax was levied on 5% of all residential homes or commercial businesses, current exemption was no tax under \$5,000. Tisbury Treasurer Jonathon Snyder explained the exemption reduction to \$2,000 was put forward by the Board of Assessors (the Assistant Assessor opposed the action) as a simple means of raising \$24,000 in revenues.

- STM Article #11 – Amend/Reduce Small Personal Property Exemption

- *MARY ELLEN LARSEN MOVED TO RECONSIDER AND RESCIND THE TISBURY FINCOM VOTE ON THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE TO AMEND THE SMALL PERSONAL PROPERTY ACCOUNT EXEMPTION TO \$2,000; LARRY GOMEZ SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 9 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

- *NANCY GILFOY MOVED THAT THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLE **#11 TO AMEND THE SMALL PERSONAL PROPERTY ACCOUNT EXEMPTION TO \$2,000; LARRY GOMEZ SECONDED; MOTION FAILED UNANIMOUSLY: 0 AYES, 9 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.***

- Later in the meeting, the FinCom reviewed the 5% Dukes County administration fees. The Vineyard Health Care Access Program (VHCAP) and Center For Living (CFL) were in the Budget and would be read without the 5% fee. All other regional social funding in Articles #28 & #30 contained the fee.

- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE TO AMEND ALL REGIONAL SOCIAL SERVICES ARTICLES TO ELIMINATE THE DUKES COUNTY 5% ADMINISTRATION FEE ON TOWN MEETING FLOOR.

**• Blue Handout Discussion and Layout**

(See documents on file & below: Actions.)

- The FinCom reviewed the letter on the Housing Bank.

- The Housing Bank funding Article (#39) directly allocated 50% of short term rental revenues without going through Town General Funds.

- It was suggested that instead a small percentage of short-term rental revenues could be dedicated to the Tisbury Municipal Housing Trust. The Trust created by Robert Wheeler in 2010 to allow the Town to take advantage of housing opportunities (defaults, market, etc.) outside the cumbersome ATM timeline. It had been piecemeal funded by Community Preservation (CPC) revenue and had given grants to Habitat for Humanity. The Trustees were: three Selectmen, an Affordable Housing Committee representative and two

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
March 27, 2019**

4

members at large, however as there were currently no members at large and it was very difficult to convene meetings, it was de facto run by the Selectmen.

- Others issues were:
  - using short term rental revenues to reduce the tax rate;
  - middle income earners who did not qualify for assistance unable to afford ownership on the Island;
  - lack of public understanding of the Tisbury Municipal Housing Trust;
  - Housing Bank oversight committee;
  - Town affordable housing spending/mechanisms (tax exempt land, Dukes County Regional Housing Authority (DCRHA) Rental Assistance, property gifts, etc.;
  - ancillary Short Term Rental article on inspections, compliance, etc.
  - Town control of other revenue allocations (e.g. MVTV).
- *LAURA ROSE MOVED TO APPROVE THE HOUSING BANK LETTER AS A FINANCE COMMITTEE DOCUMENT / POSITION LETTER WITH AMENDMENTS AS DISCUSSED; SARAH YORK SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 9 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- Nancy Gilfoy thanked everyone for their editorial comments.
  
- *JYNELL KRISTAL MOVED TO APPROVE THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2019; LAURA ROSE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—SARAH YORK due to absence.*
- *LARRY GOMEZ MOVED TO APPROVE THE TISBURY FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES OF MARCH 6, 2019; MARY ELLEN LARSEN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 8 AYES, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSTENTION—LARRY GOMEZ due to absence.*

• **Liaison Updates with Other Town Committees** – *if any* - Tabled

• **Adjourn**

• *MARY ELLEN LARSEN MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:35PM; SARAH YORK SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.*

**Meetings/Events:**

**TSC/BOS – 9:00am, Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at the KCT**

**TFC – 6:30PM, Tuesday, April 9, 2019 – Tis. Sch.**

Special & Annual Town Meetings – 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 9, 2019 – Tis. Sch.

Town Elections/Ballot – Tuesday, April 23, 2019 – EMS Bldg.

**Action List:**

- Voter Guide
  - apply FinCom recommendation to all Housing Bank Articles (#37, 38, 39);
  - #7B Waterways add parentheses.

**continued**

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee**  
**March 27, 2019**

5

**Action List (cont.):**

- Housing Bank position letter
  - mention Tisbury Municipal Housing Trust in;
  - mention other Town affordable housing mechanisms.
- Jeff – coordinate with Deborah Medders re: Regional Social Services 5% fee.
- Larry – email Town Warrant and Town Report to FinCom.

**Documents on file:**

- Agenda 3/27/19
- Kral memo re: Please see below: ATM & STM Article list reflecting all withdrawn or amended articles (4 p.) 3/7/19
- Town Meeting Procedure (30 p.)
- Edgartown Selectmen letter re: Martha's Vineyard Housing Bank (2 p.) 3/4/19
- Town of Tisbury FY 2019 – Owen park Dock Art #18J Balance Report (5 p.) 3/19/19
- Town of Tisbury FY 2019 – Budget Balance Report, Balance Report (38 p.) 3/19/19
- Gilfoy cover email re: 2019 Voter Guide Draft 3/25/19
- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee's Voter Guide, Special Town Meeting and Annual Town Meeting, Tuesday, April 9, 2019 (9 p.)
- Kristal email re: Housing Bank Version #2 3/27/19

---

Chair Jeff Kristal

---

Date

Minutes approved 4/4/19.