

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, May 17, 2023
Emergency Services Facility

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Present: Chair Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Alex Meleney, Rachel Orr*,
Louis Pashman, Allan Rogers, Dan Seidman

Town: Town Treasurer – Jonathan Snyder,

Others: Marilyn Wortman, Recorder – Marni Lipke,

* 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.*)

Introductions (See 6/1/22 Minutes p.1-2.)

Everyone introduced themselves giving their time on the FinCom and brief background of their lives. New members were welcomed.

- Alex Meleney's great grandparents were summer people so he and his family grew up here summers. He was a lawyer specializing in the local and state tax field, working around the country including Chicago. On the Island he was an active leader in the Vineyard Haven Yacht Club and sailing regatta, with an eclectic group of hobbies and was interested in further community service.

- Louis Pashman was a lawyer in general practice, with a 40 year history as a seasonal resident moving here full time 8 years ago. Select Board member John Cahill recruited him for the FinCom and this was his first assay into town governance

- The veteran members praised the FinCom as a congenial committee, and finance as a great way to learn a lot about everything in the Town in detail and holistically: departments, staff, regulation, projects, boards and committees.

Appointment to Personnel Board – Marilyn Wortman

(See 11/4/20 Minutes p.1)

- The Personnel Board consisted of appointees from: Tisbury Select Board (TSB), FinCom and Town Clerk. Marilyn Wortman had many years of professional experience in human resources and was willing to serve for another year. The FinCom praised her work and thanked her for taking on the responsibility.

- Last year the Board consultant finally (after a frustrating one-year delay) completed its Management and Professional (M&P) classification compensation

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study, interviewing staff, revising job descriptions, comparing positions and pay with other towns in the region. The Board generally heard complaints, considered promotions, etc. from non-union staff. The Human Resources Department and Director Pam Bennett, worked mostly with union staff. The Town dealt with three unions: general, police and schools.

- The Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) 6.9% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus steps and position changes was a steep raise, but it brought Tisbury in line with other Island towns which would help in staff recruitment and retention. In addition it was the first year the unions agreed to follow the M&P parameters. The Personnel Board considered such a high increase an anomaly.

- There was a discussion on those Town staff holding double jobs, for example:
 - Fire Chief and Ambulance Supervisor,
 - Assistant Fire Chief and Emergency Management Director (after the Natural Resource Assistant and Emergency Management Director left); and
 - the previous Building Inspector doubling as Assistant Town Manager (see 2/23/23 Minutes p.4-5).
- Issues included: overwork and burnout, salary for two 40 hr./wk jobs, and lack of communication with the Personnel Board.

- *DAN SEIDMAN MOVED TO APPOINT MARILYN WORTMAN AS THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE TISBURY PERSONNEL BOARD; LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Reserve Fund Transfer Request – Jonathan Snyder, Finance Director

(See documents on file.)

- The Reserve Fund was a FinCom controlled emergency resource for unexpected expenses beyond departmental budgeting, renewed (but not rolled over) each July 1st—current balance \$60,393 (see below: Actions).

- Town Finance Director Jonathan Snyder explained this request for Munis training costs. Munis was a huge municipal finance software system. Tisbury subscribed to a number of components some of which were under-used due to staff inexperience. The current Tisbury Munis version would sunset on December 31, 2023, and a new version would be installed, shifting from server-based to the internet/cloud. The \$7,200 total training expense (\$1,748 in the Finance Dept. budget plus \$5,500 Reserve Fund request) would cover 9 full days of remote training spread over 6-8 months, before, during and after the new version installation.

- The FinCom asked whether the cost could be covered by end-of-year inter-departmental transfers (see below), but there was a timing conflict since the contract would be signed and trainings start immediately.

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- The FinCom was glad to hear that Mr. Snyder's Financial Clerk had been hired as the Assistant Town Accountant (see 2/23/22 Minutes p.2-3) and there was a possible candidate for the now vacant financial clerk position.
- *PENDING APPROVAL OF THE TISBURY SELECT BOARD, ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER OF \$5,500 FROM THE RESERVE FUND TO COVER THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR MUNIS SOFTWARE TRAINING; DAN SEIDMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Authorize End-of-Year Interdepartmental Transfers

- *DAN SEIDMAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN ACCOUNTANT AND TREASURER TO MAKE FISCAL YEAR 2023 INTERDEPARTMENTAL AND LINE ITEM TRANSFERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW, CHAPTER 44 SECTION 33 B; ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- Jon Snyder thanked the FinCom for the actions and for their important work on Town finances.

Election of Officers

Chair Nancy Gilfoy reported she felt she was just beginning to learn the complexities of the Chair-ship. The Vice Chair worked with the Chair and facilitated meetings in the Chair's absence. Rachel Orr volunteered to support the Chair and Vice Chair unofficially.

- *ALLAN ROGERS NOMINATED NANCY GILFOY AS CHAIR; ALEX MELENEY, RACHEL ORR AND DAN SEIDMAN SECONDED; NANCY GILFOY ACCEPTED; NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED; NOMINATION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY; 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- *DAN SEIDMAN NOMINATED LOUISE CLOUGH AS VICE CHAIR; ALLEN ROGERS SECONDED; LOUISE CLOUGH ACCEPTED; NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED; NOMINATION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY; 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Committee Appointments and Assignments

- The FinCom appointed voting members to 4 Town organizations.
- The FinCom Chair was part of the Town Cabinet.
- The Embarkation Committee (3-4 members including: Select Board, FinCom, and Jonathan Snyder ex-officio) met 2 or 3 times a year in November early December to recommend embarkation revenue spending (usually about \$250,000) for Annual Town Meeting (ATM) vote.

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- The State allowed a 50¢ embarkation fee on all ferry passenger tickets (Steamship Authority, Sea Streak, Island Queen, Hyline, etc.). Revenues were restricted to remediating port town impact: e.g.: traffic, dredging, beautification, security, etc. The fee applied to all Massachusetts harbor/ports—on Martha's Vineyard Tisbury and Oak Bluffs. A current initiative sought to increase the fee to \$2.00 (see below: Committee Reports).

- Water Resources Committee oversaw all Town water issues, wastewater, stormwater runoff, nitrogen loading, etc. Membership included: Select Board, FinCom, Planning Board and Sewer Advisory appointees and 3 at large members.

- The Sewer Advisory Board covered Wastewater Plant and flow issues.

- Rachel Orr was interested in the Sewer Advisory and Louise Clough in Water Resources but both agreed that continuity was important, particularly during the current work on the Comprehensive and Targeted Wastewater Management Plans (CWMP/TWMP).

- *RACHEL ORR MOVED TO APPOINT THE FOLLOWING FINANCE COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES:*

- *TOWN CABINET – CHAIR NANCY GILFOY*

- *EMBARKATION COMMITTEE – ALLEN ROGERS,*

- *SEWER ADVISORY BOARD – DAN SEIDMAN,*

- *WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE – NANCY GILFOY;*

ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

The FinCom also attended a number of Town committee/board meetings to keep members updated on and involved with Town actions.

- Louise Clough and Rachel Orr were members of the Climate Committee.

- Dan Seidman was a member of the Affordable Housing Committee.

- The Community Preservation Act regulated revenues (usually over \$1,000,000) from a 3% addition to local real estate taxes augmented by a State match. Spending was restricted to Open Space (with a subset of Recreation), Historic Preservation, and Community Housing—with some portion meeting the State definition of affordable housing. The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) met from September to early December to review applications and recommend projects for ATM vote. Alex Meleney volunteered to be liaison.

- Louise Clough volunteered to be liaison to the Tisbury School Committee (TSC), which included authority over the current School construction project. Tisbury School Building Committee (TSBC) considered materials, minor design changes and recommended actions to the TSC. Nancy Gilfoy covered Martha's Vineyard Regional High School Committee (MVRHSC) meetings.

- Planning Board meetings were long and conflicted with the TFC schedule. Currently Rachel Orr and John Oliver were covering meetings when possible.

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- The Town was working on a Master Plan and there was a vacancy on the Master Plan Steering Committee.
- The FinCom discussed various decisions lacking FinCom input such as residential versus standard tax rates and COLA increases. A joint TSB, Personnel Board and FinCom meeting was planned.

Committee Reports

- The embarkation fee increase initiative representatives met with State Senator Julian Cyr's office which reported the bill amendment's slow progress through the Joint Committee on Revenue. The representatives would draft an advocacy letter (see below Actions and Minutes: 10/13/22, & 12/21/22 p.1-2).
- *LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO AUTHORIZE CHAIR NANCY GILFOY TO SIGN THE EMBARKATION FEE INCREASE LETTER TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE; ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*
- There would be a Water Resources Committee in-person/Zoom hybrid meeting about the many different nitrogen reduction technologies. A more public meeting would be scheduled when the field was narrowed.
- Tisbury could opt to add 2.75% to the short term rental tax to enter a regional pool funding 0% interest loans for watershed and wastewater issues. Martha's Vineyard Commission (MVC) Director Adam Turner attended meetings but it was suggested Tisbury also send a representative.
- A revenue neutral community housing incentive would exempt year-round Tisbury rentals from some taxes. The FinCom discussed the resulting increase on other taxable real estate as well as enforcement and labor.
- Affordable housing in similar resort communities urged speed in instituting reforms.

Future Meetings (See below: Meeting/Events.)

- The FinCom schedule was reviewed, including frequent budget season meetings January through March. 6:30 Wednesdays was still convenient.
- Some members requested Zoom meetings in case of travel or necessity, and hybrid in-person/Zoom meetings were considered. Hybrid meetings were possible with a technician running the proper remote technology equipment. Tech training and dedicated laptops were discussed (see 3/15/23 Minutes p.1).
- The June meeting would focus on: FinCom goals, which Departments to interview and review of this year's budget process.
- (Chair Nancy Gilfoy would be out of the country for 2 weeks.)

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

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Adjournment

- *DAN SEIDMAN AND RACHEL ORR MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:07PM; ALEX MELENEY AND ALLEN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, June 21, 2023 – ESF and/or Zoom**

Appendix B: Actions

All – consider FinCom goals, department interviews, budget review process.

Nancy – request dedicated ESF Zoom laptop and hybrid training.

Marni – send CPC contact to Alex, & TSC contact to Louise.

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

Future Agendas

- Minutes: 3/22/23, 4/5/23, 5/17/23
- (New School Maintenance Budget)

Budget Season Notes

- No new positions in FY25
- FY25 salaries/budgets will be higher due to classification raises.
- redraft FinCom letter
 - include deadlines and send to Committees/Boards
 - consider Budget/Free Cash anomalies;
- 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.
- Ask departments: general energy efficiency and emergency preparedness.

\$100,000 FY23 Reserve Fund spending tally – Balance: \$54,893

2/8/23 – Animal Control - \$14,607 heating repair

3/15/23 – IT - \$10,000 hybrid meeting equipment

4/5/23 – Building Inspector - \$15,000 Temporary Commissioner compensation

5/17/23 – Finance Director - \$5,500 Munis training

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Gilfoy cover email 5/13/23 & Agenda 5/17/23 (2 p.)
- Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund Finance Dept. 5/4/23
- Gilfoy email re: Martha's Vineyard Commission Housing Action Task Force Launch (2 p.) 4/27/23
- Snyder memo re: Request for blanket authorization of interdepartmental year-end Transfers 5/10/23

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair
Minutes approved 9/6/23

Date

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee

OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM

To: Tisbury Town Accountant Suzanne Kennedy

From: Marni Lipke, Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee Recorder

Re: Notification of Vote Taken

Date: Friday, May 19, 2023

CC: Finance and Advisory Committee Chair Nancy Gilfoy,
Tisbury Finance Director Jonathon Snyder

In the presence of Tisbury Finance Director Jonathon Snyder, the Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee took the following vote at its Wednesday, May 17, 2023 meeting:

- *DAN SEIDMAN MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE TOWN ACCOUNTANT AND TREASURER TO MAKE FISCAL YEAR 2023 INTERDEPARTMENTAL AND LINE ITEM TRANSFERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAW, CHAPTER 44 SECTION 33 B; ALEX MELENEY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*