

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, June 21, 2023
Emergency Services Facility

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

Others: 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 6:34PM. (*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

- Introductions were briefly reviewed (see Minutes: 6/1/22 p.1-2, & 5/19/21 p.1) for new member Ruth Konigsberg, a reference librarian at Vineyard Haven library, also interested in journalism. Louise Clough had encouraged her to join the FinCom.

Review Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Budget Process (See below: Actions.)

The FinCom was happy with this year's process, voting the week after the interview, the more even approval process limiting long last minute meetings, prioritizing large departments or departmental budget spikes. Several improvements were discussed.

- The current bunched timing of departmental background information in large groups was difficult to navigate. The FinCom preferred either:
 - easy access information posted on the Town website (password protected); or
 - linked as a module as each department appeared on the agenda.
- The FinCom emphasized it's frustration with the condensed budget timeline and considered adding a paragraph to their annual letter stating departments not meeting the budget deadline would be voted down.
 - Zoning bylaws were slated for comprehensive revision/update so members proposed coordinating with the Planning Board for timely information.
- The FinCom was dissatisfied with the lack of foundational or global Town financial information needed as essential context for their work: Free Cash estimates (see 3/22/23 Minutes p.3 Article 11), levy worksheet, local tax projections (short-term rentals, excise, hotels/meals), etc.
 - The FinCom discussed the recent trend of consistently large Free Cash balances often more than 10-15% of the Town Operating budget. The \$7,000,000 Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) balance breakdown was:
 - ° funds rolled over from FY22,

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- \$2,000,000 under-budgeted short-term rental revenue,
- \$2,000,000 unspent funds.

FinCom noted the Town had substantial Stabilization reserves: General, Building and Infrastructure, Climate and Energy, Dredge, Ambulance, Fire...

- There was interest in participating in crafting a Town financial policy.

Feedback on Budget Presentation of County Programs – Nothing to report.
(See documents on file.)

Discussion of Special Event Fees (See below: Actions.)

Rachel Orr researched fees in a number of other municipalities—New York City, Chicago, Austin, Boston finding useful data despite the disparity of municipal size. (More rural events tended to be on private property.)

- A super or large event was defined as attracting 8-10,000 people or more—Tisbury Music Festival attracted 12,000.
- Fee structure might include: security deposit, base fee, square footage charge, alcohol charge, paid ticket percentage, profit or non-profit organization, etc.
- Total fees for a super-event ranged from \$138,000 to \$184,000 plus reimbursement for all additional police. Tisbury charge was ~ \$40,000 total.
- Boston did not charge for events except for a permit fee, however it required that it be a named party on event insurance and submitted claims for any damage to the venue.
- Event contracts were more thorough and inclusive than Tisbury's.
- The FinCom discussed the unsettled status of Veterans field:
 - continuing drainage issues and various remediation proposals,
 - inadequate 3-day timeframe for repairs after the Music Festival,
 - prioritizing Town use (Little League, public access, etc.),
 - use of event deposit to insure satisfactory remediation with Town oversight.
- Other Town committees and Boards (e.g. the Open Space Committee) were also concerned about the issue.

Discussion of Goals for 2023-24

Joint Meeting with Personnel Board, Tisbury Select Board (TSB) and Finance And Advisory Committee

(See below: Actions, & Meetings/Events, & Minutes: 3/8/23 p.3, & 5/17/23 p.1-2.)

A number of issues would benefit from this coordination, particularly as staff salaries were a large portion of the Town budget:

- staff holding multiple jobs without consultation with Personnel and/or Human Resources;

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- determining annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA);
- step policy and pay;
- early information on departmental restructuring;
- attraction/ retention of staff with Tisbury salaries below regional standards;
- increases within the context of Proposition 2 ½ restrictions.

Joint Meeting with Oak Bluffs Finance And Advisory Committee

- The Oak Bluffs FinCom was interested in a joint meeting. The Towns shared a number of concerns:
 - watershed/wastewater inter-municipal agreements,
 - port/embarkation fees (see 5/17/23 Minutes p.5),
 - possible staff sharing.

Committee Reports

- Alex Meleney found the Community Preservation Committee well-organized.
- The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) had a long meeting. The School Project was proceeding well. West Williams St. would return to 2-way traffic for the season but Spring St. would periodically close for underground utility work.

Future Meetings (See below: Meeting/Events.)

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

• *ALEX MELENEY MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:04PM; LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 9 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- **TFC/OBFC – 5:00PM, Thursday, July 20, 2023 – OB Town Hall/Zoom**

Appendix B: Actions

Nancy/Rachel – draft letter re: Music Festival fee/contract to TSB & Open Space Com.

Nancy – contact IT Dept. re: agenda & minute posting training.

Nancy – contact OB FinCom Chair re: OB/Tis. FinCom Zoom/Hybrid 7/19-20.

Marni – send Nancy OB financial policy.

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

Future Agendas

- Minutes: 3/22/23, 4/5/23, 5/17/23, 6/21/23

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Appendix B: Actions (cont.)

Budget Season Notes

- No new positions in FY25
- FY25 salaries/budgets will be higher due to classification raises.
- include budget deadline ultimatum in FinCom letter,
- department budget drafts posted on Town Website (password protected)? or
- attach budget/narrative modules to agendas.
- request/demand foundational information, levy, free cash estimates, etc.
- contact Planning Bd. re: zoning bylaw revision.
- 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.

\$100,000 FY24 Reserve Fund spending tally – Balance: \$100,000

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Gilfoy cover email 6/15/23 & Agenda 6/21/23 (2 p.)
- Ruskin/Meleney emails re: County Request 5/19/21

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 9/6/23