

**Finance Committee Meeting**  
Minutes of Meeting 2-22-19  
Aquinnah Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room

Members present: Chairman Allen Rugg and Tom Murphy

Not Present: Mark Foster

Also present: Town Accountant Emily Day and Board Administration Assistant Sophia Welch, Town Administrator Jeffrey Madison, Chief Belain, Chief Bolin and Chief Retmier

- The meeting began at 9:35am

- First on the agenda was a review of minutes. Tom made a motion to approve the 2/4/19 and 2/15/19 minutes as presented. Motion was seconded by Allen. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed.

- The Committee met with Jeffrey before they began their budget review. Jeffrey informed the Committee of a potential solution to lessen the financial impact of warrant articles: re-appropriating prior years approved warrant articles that remain on the books to ease the override that the town is facing this year. Legally, Jeffrey didn't think there were any concerns with this process. The process would be as follows: the town would need to vote on reducing past unspent articles and vote to fund new articles with the prior year's unspent funds. The Committee agreed that this is worth considering. Jeffrey discussed the DPW truck purchase (approved allocation for purchase was \$46,000) and informed the Committee that leasing the truck would be a way to save money. Leasing a new truck through the municipal lease program would cost just under \$14,000/year for 4 years. At the end of the 4 years the town could own the truck for \$1. Should the town not appropriate the funds for the lease in a given year, the town would give the truck back. Jeffrey noted that the old truck can be sold and there has been interest in purchase. There was brief discussion concerning the Tribe Casino and recent development on Tribal lands.

- Next, the Committee met with Chief Belain to review the FY20 Police Dept. budget. Chief Belain presented the Committee with two budgets: one without an additional officer and one with an additional officer. The Committee found that the total budget without the addition officer would be \$701,000 and with would be \$741,000 (which would increase in year 2). Not knowing the uncertainty of the Tribal Casino and Town impact, Chief Belain would like to hire an additional officer. Should the Town approve a budget to hire an additional officer, that new officer would not be brought in for at least 6 months due to academy training, depending on time frame of the academy. In addition, the budget would not capture any decrease in the budget within that 1<sup>st</sup> year of hiring the additional officer. There was discussion on how to proceed financially without knowing the demands of the Tribal Casino should the Town not hire the additional officer. Historically, at year end the Police Dept recaptures money (last year they recaptured \$68,000). If there is a demand for an additional later this year, the Police could absorb the over spent budget by using the years recaptured funds, they could request a year end Chapter 77 transfer after May 15<sup>th</sup>, or they could request use of Fin Comm reserve funds. If there were to be an emergency, such as the building burning, then the town could use deficit funds to respond to the emergency (but must be declared an emergency). Emily felt that based on these options (not including deficit funds), the Town could accommodate an unexpected increase. Chief noted that the only concern with this route is that it would delay the time frame of hiring an officer. There was further discussion on the time frame of hiring an additional officer and the possibility of extending a special officer contract into the fall to cover for potential short fall. There was brief discussion on the Police Dept request for \$40,000 for a new vehicle, but that request will be in the form of a warrant article. The Committee thanked the Chief for his time. No action was taken on the budget as the Committee wanted to continue to review it.

- Emily gave a brief run down on the updated budget and warrant articles: without the additional officer the override is currently at \$462,000 and with the additional officer it would be at \$500,000. Emily left the meeting.

- Next, the Committee met with Chief Retmier to review the Tri-Town Ambulance assessment. The Tri-Town Ambulance budget increased by 2.09% from last year: major increase is in salaries with a 4.38% increase from last year due to step in grades and COLA (no new hires and no increase in hours), event expenses decreased (Presidential detail will no longer be provided), and overtime and holiday pay increased (now have a better understanding of what is needed for overtime – coverage for training). OPEB and retirement is now included in the budget under expenses. For FY20, Aquinnah's assessment is \$371,290.03 (approx. \$7,598 increase from FY19 an 2.09%). The total budget is split between all three towns (each town assessment is \$371,290.03). There was confusion on the presented budget calculations. Chief Retmier will consult with the Tri-Town accountant and resend the Committee an updated budget reflecting the correct percentage increases. The Committee thanked Chief Retmier for his time.

- Next, the Committee met with Chief Bolin to review the Fire Dept. budget. The proposed budget showed a \$15,000 salary increase (\$10,000 increase in the Chief contract, \$5,000 increase for adding 3 new firefighters (\$1,500 each) and an officer promotion (\$500 increase)). There was brief discussion on the requirements of a firefighter. Chief Bolin noted that he will be requesting a warrant article for \$10,000 for gear for the new firefighters. The Committee thanked Chief Bolin for his time.

- With no other business to discuss, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn. **The Committee voted 2-0 in favor, the motion passed.**

- The meeting ended at 10:45am.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sophia Welch, Board Administrative Assistant*