

Finance Committee Meeting
Minutes of Meeting 3-9-2018

Aquinnah Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room

Members present: Chairman Allen Rugg and Tom Murphy

Members not present: Mark Foster

Also present: Town Administrator Jeffrey Madison, Selectmen Chair Jim Newman, Town Accountant Emily Day, Board of Health Assistant Phoenix Becker, Board of Assessors Assistant Angela Cywinski and Board Administration Assistant Sophia Welch

- The meeting began at 10:00am

- First on the agenda was the review of minutes. Tom made a motion to approve the 3/2/18 minutes as presented. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed.

- Allen discussed the open issues from previous sessions. He noted that the Committee still needs to meet with Tri Town regarding the increase in retirement benefits, discuss the compensation of the Town Administrator and review issues raised by the Board of Health Assistant regarding her job and time. Allen noted that the Personnel Committee will be meeting with Jeffrey to discuss Town Administrator compensation and will make a recommendation to the Finance Committee. The Committee suggested that Jeffrey should follow up with Phoenix regarding her issues and the Committee will keep it on their radar. There was brief discussion regarding the issues that Phoenix had presented to the Committee via email. Regarding the Tri Town matter, Jeffrey noted that he will be receiving the information requested from Chief Retmier next week and will present it to the Committee next Friday.

- Next, Emily presented the proposed Library budget to the Committee in the absence of Rosa Parker, acting Library Director. The Committee reviewed the proposed budget and found that there was a \$2,000.00 increase from the previous year's budget. The FY19 budget of \$152,663.00 includes step increases for the Library Associates and the State Statutory required 2.5% increase (over a 3-year average). The Committee discussed the consequences of not meeting the State mandatory increase and found that if it is not met then the State could take away the certification from the Library as a State Certified Library which could prevent the Library from participating in inter-library loan program. Tom motioned to accept and approve the Library budget as presented. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed. Tom and Allen agreed that the Library is a great asset to the community.

- Next, Emily presented her budget to the Committee. Emily informed the Committee that the budget was shooting for a 3% increase which included the equivalent step increases for the herself as Town Accountant and the Accounting Clerk. Emily proposed to keep the Accountant salary where it currently is (no step increase or COLA) to accommodate the increase of the Clerk's hours from 10 hr./week to 11 hr./week. The Committee discussed the reasons for the time increase which Emily felt was necessary so that the Clerk could become more of a liaison for the Town staff and help produce monthly reports. The Committee felt that, while it was honorable for Emily to not give herself a step increase, they still would like to review a budget that includes the Town Accountant step increase (amounting to \$1,100.00). Allen made a motion to amend the budget as present to include the Town Accountant step increase and the 1-hour/week increase for the Clerk and to re-visit the budget when it is amended.

Tom seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed.

- Next, Emily presented the FY19 proposed Treasure budget which included a 3% step increase for the Treasure. There was no increase in expenses from the previous fiscal year. Tom made a motion to accept the Treasures budget as presented. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed.

- Next, Emily presented the Tax Collector FY19 proposed budget which included a 3% step increase for the Tax Collector base salary as well as longevity. There was brief discussion regarding the expenditure of FY18 expenses. It was noted that the expense line item for FY18 was still high because the invoice for printing of the tax bills had not been paid yet. Tom made a motion to accept the Tax Collector budget as presented. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed.

- Next, Emily presented the Town Clerk FY19 proposed budget. Emily noted that with the retirement of the Clerk, the salary line item has decreased due to the hiring of a new Clerk at step 1. Expenses will be increased from \$500.00 to \$1,500.00 to send the new Clerk to school. Tom made a motion to accept the Town Clerk proposed budget as presented. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed. Tom amended the motion by inserting the increase of \$1,000.00 to the expense line item making it a total of \$1,500.00 for the FY19 Town Clerk proposed budget. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed. There was brief discussion on benefits for the Clerk position.

- Next, Emily presented the proposed Fixed Costs FY19 budget. Emily noted that the County Retirement Assessment has not been received yet and the budget before the Committee is the same budget from FY18. Emily noted that the budget might increase with the assessment, but she will follow up on this and will present a modified budget for the Committee to review in the coming weeks. Allen added the review of the Employee Retirement Benefits to the Committee's list of open issues. There was further discussion regarding the line items within the Fixed Costs proposed budget. Tom made a motion to table the review of the Fixed Cost budget until further information is procured. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed.

- Next, the Committee met with Angela Cywinski, Board of Assessors Assistant. Allen informed everyone that the Board of Assessors have not approved the budget that Angela had submitted. The Committee agreed to have a discussion with Angela, but, in terms of making any final decisions, they will wait until the Board of Assessors present the budget to the Committee. Angela noted that she has always presented the budget as the department head and that the Board has seen the budget and has given a "nod of approval" but did not take any formal action. Angela presented the proposed budget and discussed the tax re-cap noting that the Assessors raised 98% of all the revenue for the Town. There was brief discussion of the Board's duties and the Assistant Assessors duties. Angela gave a brief breakdown of her work and explained the field work aspect of her job. It was noted that there are 832 properties in the Town of which 424 have houses. There was brief discussion regarding the 32hrs/week that Angela works, and the 25% time increase that was approved the prior year so that the re-evaluation could be completed. There was further discussion of Angela's comp time. The Committee discussed the process of inspecting the 424 homes (inspection is done every 10 years) and the time that it takes to inspect and update the data system. It was agreed that these inspections take approximately 2.2 weeks to complete every year. Angela noted that this year it will be easier to complete the inspections and the work because her phone number is no longer listed on the Dukes County website, which had been problematic because she was receiving calls for different department inquires. Angela noted that 4 years ago the Board of Assessors voted to increase her time to 35 hrs./week. There was discussion regarding Aquinnah and Chilmark's Assessors duties and time. It was noted that the Chilmark Assessor works 38.5 hrs./week and has approximately 1,500 properties to assess. Angela stated that Chilmark has outsourced

some of the work such as field work. She further stated that, because Aquinnah is a District of Critical Planning, she has the same work load as the Chilmark Assessor. With the new program that Angela proposes to purchase, this work load will be decreased. The Committee reviewed the two options regarding Angela's work time that she proposed. Option one proposed that the job remains at 32 hrs./week with a step increase. There was discussion on payment for the Board of Assessors if they become appointed. Option two is to increase the Assistant Assessor hours. Allen felt that the general feeling of the Finance Committee is that the Town is overpaying for this service and rather than discussing increasing the position's hours, there should be a review of diminishing the hours. He added that there should be a review of the economic feasibility of outsourcing some of the work. The Committee asked Angela to inform her Board that this is what they would like to discuss with them at the next Finance Committee meeting on March 23rd. There was brief discussion regarding the recent Special Town Meeting.

- Next, Emily and Jeffrey presented the warrant to the Committee. Jeffrey noted that the warrant articles had not yet been approved by the Selectmen. The Committee agreed to discuss the articles at the next meeting. There was discussion regarding the current override. Jeffrey discussed the idea to appropriate free cash (between \$100,000.00 and \$150,000.00) to reduce this year's override and the remaining balance being distributed into various stabilization funds and other areas. He noted that the only issue with this plan is that the tax levy would not increase and that would need to be taken into account the following year. Jeffrey also noted the need to discuss school choice for Aquinnah children. He felt that the Selectmen, Finance Committee and the Aquinnah School Representative should meet with Aquinnah parents to discuss the matter and make them aware of the costs that the Town incurs for each school. There was brief discussion regarding school costs and the funding formula. There was discussion on how the override carries into the next year in terms of taxes. All agreed that this is something to discuss further. Jeffrey added that \$50,000.00 from free cash could be contributed to reducing the Town's OPEB account.

- The Committee reviewed their open issue list and agreed that it should be revisited every week until there is nothing on the list.

- 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 11:15am

Respectfully submitted,
Sophia Welch
Board Administrative Assistant