

Finance Committee Meeting
Minutes of Meeting 4-5-19

Aquinnah Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room

Members present: Chairman Allen Rugg, Tom Murphy
Not Present: Mark Foster

Also present: Town Administrator Jeffrey Madison, Selectman Gary Haley, Selectmen Julie Vanderhoop, Town Accountant Emily Day, Town Treasurer Sibel Suman, BOA Elise LeBovit, Jean Lince, Up-Island Council on Aging Board member, Liz Witham, June Manning, Up-Island Council on Aging Board member, Tanya Larsen, Up-Island Council on Aging Asst. Director, Bethany Hammond, Up-Island Council on Aging Outreach Program Coord., Bruce Stone, West Tisbury Town Accountant, Derrill Bazzzy, Skipper Mantor, Up-Island Council on Aging Board Chairman, James Malkin, Peter Temple, Assistant Assessor Angela Cywinski

- The meeting began at 9:35am.

- Review of minutes were deferred to the next meeting.

- The Committee met with Up-Island Council on Aging representatives Tanya Larsen, Asst. Director, Bruce Stone, West Tisbury Town Accountant, Bethany Hammond, Outreach Program Coord., Skipper Mantor, Council on Aging Board Chairman, and Council on Aging Board members June Manning and Jean Lince. Bruce Stone gave a brief overview of FY'20 significant budget changes: salary decrease (replacement of senior position with junior staff), direct expenses decrease (program services at the Howes House) and health insurance increase (2 new enrollments at family level). The total FY'20 budget is increasing by 3.6%. Town assessments are based on the following: total personnel related expenses are based on the percentage of seniors in the town (Aquinnah's percentage is 11% - data based on July 1st town street list showing date of birth), \$20,000 of the \$440,000 direct expenses for the Howes House is split 1/3 between each town (Aquinnah assessment is increasing \$1,500 or 2.9%). Currently, West Tisbury covers most of the capital expenses. In addition, approx. \$18,000 in direct expenses are paid by State grants (each town receives approx. \$6,000 in State grants each year). Discussion ensued on the following: history of the Up-Island Council on Aging, current programs/services available, and utilization of programs and services by Aquinnah residents. The Committee thanked the representatives for coming.

- The Committee met with Brian Vanderhoop, Harbor Master, to review his FY'20 budget. The FY'20 budget only reflects a step increase and COLA for the Harbor Master (total budget increase of 2.5%: \$95,677 to \$98,037). The Shellfish assessment has not increased. There was discussion concerning mooring fee and shellfish permit fee increases. The Committee took no action on the matter and requested that Brian finalize a recommendation for the Committee to review including current fees, proposed fee increases, and current number of mooring permits and shellfish permits (to be reviewed at the next meeting).

- Next, the Committee met with Liz Witham, town Web Master. She gave a breakdown on her current responsibilities as Web Master: main contact with vendor services, maintaining the email and website servers and consulting on website technical issues with town employees. There was discussion concerning the time frame and workload of transitioning to a new website platform. Liz noted that the new website is only a platform and will require future technical services. There was brief discussion concerning the history of the Web Master and budget (no current contract). The Committee stated that in looking at the joint proposal (Liz's budget proposal and the

proposal of the new website) there would be a substantial increase in the expense of the website and that within this environment it is not constructive to have a 100%-line item increase. The Committee requested that Jeffrey and Liz meet to further discuss the budget and present a final budget at the next Fin Comm meeting. Liz suggested that she remove the \$3,000-line item and return to the Selectmen to request payment if she exceeds the \$600/month expense. There was brief discussion on whether Liz's position is a continuous position or just a transitional position with the new website. Elise questioned why the town is considering outsourcing a position that is held by a local person. The Committee stated that from their perspective, they are looking at the budget. Review of the proposals were continued to the next meeting. Liz mentioned the idea of grant funding to pay for the new website (Best Practices grant) and accepting credit card payment via the website. Jeffrey suggested that he and Liz continue the discussion in the coming week. The Committee thanked Liz for her time.

- The Committee met with Peter Temple, Planning Board Chairman. Peter informed the Committee that the Personnel Comm has not made any final decisions on the proposed job description changes for the PB assistant, but he felt it was important to continue with the budget to be able to cover either way. Peter presented the following budget changes: PB assistant salary increase with a grade step and COLA (job is going to be treated as an upgrade rather than a new position with greater responsibilities – no additional hours), and expense increase for Tree Warden and Zoning Administrator fee payment. Tree Warden and Zoning Admin will be paid per decision/application fee: \$150/application for Zoning Admin and \$50/decision for the Tree Warden. Based on the number of permits/decisions last year the proposed expense line item increase would be \$4750 (25 Zoning permits at \$150 admin fee and 20 tree permits at \$50 admin fee). Planning Board has not finalized a Zoning application fee but will determine a fee schedule that will add some revenue to the budget. There will be no fee for Tree permits. There was brief discussion regarding impact fees (larger developments would pay a higher building fee), the archeological bylaw (shifting cost burden from applicant to the Tribe) and the Town Bylaw regarding maternity leave. Elise suggested that the Town look into and adopt the Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-off Abatement Program: a program giving seniors the opportunity to volunteer services in a municipality in exchange for a property tax reduction. The Committee thanked Peter for his time.

- The Committee met with Derrill Bazy to discuss the MV Housing Bank. The following was discussed: State has expanded the existing Hotel/Motel tax by including a short-term rental tax (Aquinnah will get an additional 4% on top of existing tax); MV Commission short-term tax revenue projections: Aquinnah revenue at the 4% rate would be approx. \$187,000 and at 6% rate would be approx. \$280,000; Town administration tax process; Citizen petition warrant articles: one requesting the formation of an island wide Housing Bank (set up similar to Land Bank) with no financial requests and the other article requesting 50% of the short-term tax to fund the Housing Bank (Aquinnah Housing Comm will be recommending an amendment on town floor to reduce the 50% to 1/3). Derrill noted that the warrant articles are a home-rule petition meaning that the town meeting will only initiate the process: if they pass, they will go before the legislation and then return to the Town to vote on again with a ballot.

- Derrill gave a brief update on the CPA budget: FY'20 budget is \$185,000 (50% is paying off the borrowed amount for work at the Circle and affordable housing land purchases). The town has had CPA for over 19 years where approx. \$2.3 million of CPA money has been appropriated to town projects. CPA will have multiple warrant articles this year including an out of town project request of \$8,000 to fund Harbor House (purchase of a home for homeless residency on the island).

- Elise, Assessor, briefly discussed a 2% senior tax relief warrant article and tax relief for people who own 2 homes where one is used for family members.

- The Committee discussed Town Debt. Emily confirmed that the budgeted amount is excluded from the override.
- The Committee reviewed the Library FY'20 budget: 3.6% increase including step increases and COLA and slight increase in materials line item (increase driven by State requirement).
- The Committee reviewed the Clerk's FY'20 budget: 5.2% increase due to a step increase and COLA and a decrease in the election line item from \$3,000 to \$1,500 because there will be no primary election this coming year.
- Emily presented a revised Police Dept. budget showing a reduction in the budget. The Committee requested that Chief Belain attend the next meeting to review the budget and proposed vehicle warrant article. The following were deferred to the next meeting: final review of warrant articles, meeting with the County, meeting with the Police Chief, Web Master, and town debt (to be revisited when budget is being finalized). The Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-off Abatement Program was discussed again (warrant article to be added).
- 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 11:40am

*Respectfully submitted,
Sophia Welch
Board Administrative Assistant*