

FY24 Budget Hearing #10 February 9, 2023 4:30 PM Meeting Minutes

Present: FinCom: chairperson Susan Murphy, Vicki Divoll, Don Leopold, Bruce Golden, Eric Glasgow, Rob Hannemann and Marshall Carroll. Select Board: Chairperson Bill Rossi and Jim Malkin. Warren Doty was not present. Others: Tim Carroll, Ellen Biskis, Diana DeBlase, Police Sargent Sean Slavin, Harbormaster Ryan Rossi, Marie Larsen. MVTV Videographer Lynn Christoffers.

At 4:30 PM Chairperson Murphy called the meeting to order in the Chilmark Community Center at 520 South Rd. Chilmark.

Chairperson Murphy opened discussion about the 4 departments that the Committee asked to review proposed budgets and warrants further before voting. They are Highway Department, Police Department, Fire Department and Harbor Department.

Highway Department:

Mr. Malkin said this budget will have 1 fulltime superintendent position and 1 full time laborer employee. There will also be a second laborer but not fulltime. Tim Carroll said this has an increase to the salary budget line of \$19,000.00. It was recommended by Select Board Chairman Rossi and Mr. Malkin to keep the requested additional \$19,000.00 for FY24 at this time. Accountant Biskis also outlined the two part-time positions for this Fiscal Year we are in; one at 26.5 hrs. per week other at 26 hrs. per week, for 42 weeks a year. Chairperson Murphy asked for a quick vote to assess the committees support: 5 ayes to recommend 2 nay, Eric Glasgow & Chairperson Murphy. These votes are not official they are place holder votes to go back to when we get the full picture of town budget.

Fire Department:

Fire department FinCom liaison Vicki Divoll gave update to changes since first presented. Ms. Divoll said the UTV is a need (needs to have the second one) wants to get truck with stabilization.

- Dress uniforms is \$20,058 subtract
- Alarm fee discussion. 100 to 150 for each subsequent offence so will collect fines like police department so rescind the yearly alarm fee of \$250.00, Last year alarm fees would have been 320,000 if they had collected. This revenue would go to general fund

Sean Slavin said he responds to 80% of the alarms in Chilmark. Anyone with alarm pays center \$75.00 annually. Police give 1 false pass on burglar alarms. Lightning strike will set them off. Lax on fee charging but would bring in couple hundred dollars. Tim Carroll said it's a State bylaw that we can't charge more than a \$300 fine. Mr. Leopold noted if we pass on first offence we may escalate all thereafter to \$300.00 each.

Mr. Hannemann said he knows Ms. Divoll put in many hours on the fire department budget and appreciates that, but the fire truck is a big ticket, that is the item he would like to see data on what it would cost for the older one to stay street safe.

Tim Carroll gave cost estimate \$100,000 to keep on road. Chairperson Rossi said this is from the stabilization, so well planned purchase. There was further discussion of bylaw 3rd alarm is a violation. Ms. Divoll may draft a new warrant article for the next STM, as the deadline already passed to submit article.

Harbor department:

Harbormaster Rossi proposed removing some harbor department warrant articles. This is in an effort to reduce overall cost increase to town. Water Ways funds would be used for these projects. Harbormaster Rossi said the state of budget needs to be considered this year. Harbormaster Rossi said he will bring these (warrant articles) back to the town later. If we have a public safety risk we could be in trouble. Dock underwater not a significant safety risk. There was discussion about traffic supervision and problem solving in Menemsha area.

Mr. Malkin said the Chilmark Planning Board spent time and study was completed. Two items came from the study for the town to work on. Two bus turn-arounds were proposed from the engineering company. The solution at end was removing some parking spaces to allow a safer flow of traffic so emergency vehicles could access the area. Tried something new last year having the Harbormaster manage the traffic in Menemsha. Harbormaster said after 2022 season he met with Police Chief John Klaren and Sargent Sean Slavin to assess how we can improve. Last year was a learning period. Number of issues need our attention.

- Traffic and parking issues are island wide. We identified areas of concern parking for people working in Menemsha without changing infrastructure. Fishermen & workers possible parking to use the shell lot, parking by permit.
- We will encourage off-site parking.
- Possible proposal included shell-lot permits to: 2 each for fish markets and 1 for each charter fishermen. Lease lots permit parking as of now not permitted but will put restrictions and clarity lessor not to permit to others.
- Tour van parking on the bridge while they talk. Communicate with the Van drivers so there are not van drivers and VTA busses at the same time. Public transportation for 5:00 PM to sunset and increased awareness. Traffic officers will have info cards to handout. 2 traffic officer areas. At Galley traffic highest 11-2:00 PM to help free up flow. Traffic uniform up police visibility TRAFFIC CONTROL to show their authority. Plan to work closely with Police Chief to ensure 5-8 pm. Traffic control supervisor

Harbormaster Rossi said our present (this past summer) work pool is young and not well experienced with public service. The proposed position of Traffic Control would be in charge of using harbor electric vehicle. This position would be under the direction of Harbormaster and police officers. Sargent Slavin explained it as a co-parenting model. At beginning of season have a joint meeting with harbor employees and police department.

Police plan for traffic is 40 hours between two people a week. This is an increase from last year it is \$16,000.00 cost for this salary of two traffic officers.

Sargent Slavin said the traffic officer budget was \$35,000+. Chairperson Rossi said this was recommended by Chief Klaren as he could not get traffic officers. Sargent Slavin said people don't seem to want to become a police officer at this time so the traffic officer is not a good feeder position anymore.

Ms. Divoll thanked Sargent Slavin and Harbormaster Rossi for narrative of their new plan. Chairperson Murphy said we appreciate extra time you spent on explaining why we need these increases.

Mr. Hannemann said the Energy Committee has taken on a lot more and we have requested Administrative Assistance so have requested this funding in the town budget for 5 hours a week. The position would cover scheduling the meetings and doing the minutes.

Tim Carroll noted that budget #192 gets \$45,000 for the cleaning services added in. Tim Carroll asked to go through the Warrant articles and for FinCom to keep in mind at this time we still do not have certified free cash.

- FinCom reserve up to \$75,000 from \$40,000.
- Tim Carroll suggested some cost reductions for Telephone System replacement - upgrades \$25,000 to lease equipment instead of \$70,000 for purchase cost.

There was discussion of the proposed Preschool location on the Community Center / School campus. Working on an RFP to lease for 20 years for preschool. For 36 preschool kids. Legal counsel is reviewing this at this time. Mr. Glasgow shared his concern about low lease (only 20 years) to effect quality of the build. Tim Carroll said the collective total estimated for warrant articles outside of the town budget is \$1,500,000.00 for raise and appropriation.

Chairperson Rossi said pertaining to the short-term rental income we (Select Board) not confirming putting into housing yet. They want 75% at this point would be foolish this year we need it in the budget. Accountant Biskis said it could be near \$900,000.00. Mr. Hannemann mentioned increasing the rental tax from our 4% to the 6% like other towns are doing. Chairperson Rossi said we will address this at Select Board meeting. Marie Larsen said raising short-term rental tax, increases our area into too elite.

The FinCom full committee voted the Warrant articles.

All votes were unanimously voted in favor with exception to Mr. Leopold recusing himself from the Dukes County Supplemental income request. And to unanimously take no action on articles with no funding requested and the Peaked Hill Housing and the Community Preservation articles.

Tim Carroll asked if FinCom would vote the town budget or reconvene after budget is certified for MVRHS.

Marshall Carroll moved to re-convene March 8th after the MVRHS budget is certified and maybe have free cash. Mr. Golden seconded the motion. Mr. Malkin said the Select Board supports the budget; we have reviewed it all. Chairperson Rossi thanked FinCom for all the work that was put into this process. SO VOTED: FinCom 7 Ayes

Tim Carroll requested a Zoom meeting when we reconvene on March 8th

At 6:27 PM Chairperson Murphy requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Divoll moved to adjourn, Mr. Glasgow seconded the motion. SO VOTED: FinCom 7 Ayes

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana DeBlase. **FinCom Approved 03/16/2023**
Select Board Approved 04/04/2023

Document list:

- Town Administrator's Annual Town Meeting warrant article list.