

Chilmark FY25 Budget Hearing January 30, 2024 4:00 PM Meeting Minutes

Present: Select Board: Chairperson Bill Rossi and James Malkin. Marie Larsen was not present. FinCom: Chairperson Susan Murphy, Deb Hancock, Bruce Golden, Marshall Carroll. Don Leopold and Linda Maida were not present. Others: Tim Carroll, Diana DeBlase, D. Barnes, Sarah Smith, Adam Turner, MVTV Videographer Lynn Christoffers. Attending via Zoom: Isaiah Scheffer, Emma Green-Beach

At 4:00 PM Chair Murphy and Chair Rossi called the meeting to order in the Select Board meeting room

Chairperson Murphy asked to allow Adam Turner from the MV Commission to present budget first and take Shellfish department after.

MV Commission (MVC) # 840:

Executive director Adam Turner of the MVC was present for this budget.

Ms. Divoll said legal litigation is down what does that mean. Mr. Turner said last year we were in court at the time of hearing and we won that case and at the moment we don't have any new litigations cases. There are still some existing \$150,000 that we owe. Mr. Turner said many of the issues are applications to teardown buildings.

Budget increase is due to salary obligations. Mr. Turner said we had a strong year for services to the towns. Working on grant to fund Army Corps of Engineers infrastructure planning so budgeted consultant to do this.

Mr. Golden puzzled about artificial grass getting passed for the MVRHS turf. Mr. Turner said we had 4 months of public hearings, state of art review of the project. 8-8 first vote now 10-6 in favor of allowing them to move forward. Mr. Golden was disappointed with this outcome.

Mr. Malkin said Superintendent of School requested non-binding warrant for ballot question on for or against artificial turf.

Mr. Turner said we are working with hybrid meetings have 17 commissioners so we had to buy screens and cameras. Issue in future of storage of meetings on cloud now.

Chairperson Murphy thanked Mr. Turner for his presentation.

Shellfish # 299 and MV Shellfish Group

Isaiah Scheffer was present via zoom but connectivity was not strong enough to hear his discussion.

Emma Green Beach of MVSG budget up this year due to salary obligations but many deferred maintenance has really come to a point to replaced roof of 2 shellfish growing buildings.

Mr. Scheffer aquaculture equipment has gone up 50% to 60% this past year.

Chairperson Murphy asked about the health of the eelgrass. Mr. Scheffer gave a positive report at this time; extending from the coves into the pond. Got some seeds from Cape Pogue for some genetic diversity. Marshall Carroll asked how the Chockers dredging permitting was coming. Mr. Scheffer still in the permitting process may be a few years yet.

Scalloping looks promising for next year. If seed survives will be a banner year.

Mr. Malkin said he replaced Mr. Doty on the Shellfish Committee. Discussion has been active on where gear should be on bottom or on top for propagation. Oyster Aquaculture farming has been difficult takes about 3 years to mature to size. Oysters are good for our water.

Ms. Divoll asked if Mr. Scheffer is involved with the private pond dredging. Mr. Scheffer said they are keeping him updated on where they are in process. Dredging projects taking place all over the island we need to get dredge together maybe purchase equipment for all island towns. Mr. Scheffer and Ms. Green-Beach thanked Chairperson for accommodating them with Zoom option.

Ms. Smith said she is actively working with Zobrio software personnel to get updates and may step out to do that now.

Retirement of Debt Principal # 710

D. Barnes Town Treasurer gave these reports.

- Middle Line Road Housing loan will close out 8/1/24 at this time balance is \$100,000
- Fire station & EMS HQ Buildings Bond is payment due is \$665,000
- School HVAC payment due is \$230,000

Retirement of Debt Interest # 751

D. Barnes Town Treasurer gave these reports.

- Middle Line Road Housing \$1,500
- EMS HQ & Fire Buildings \$579,300
- School HVAC \$124,687.50

Short Term Borrowing # 752

- Bond Anticipation \$1,000

Tim Carroll said we are working on clarity with what the 2 other towns will be paying for the EMS and HVAC borrowing.

Chairperson Murphy said so other than the School HVAC and TTA and Fire station we are almost at 10% of our capacity. Really good shape for our Bonding rating.

Employee Benefits & Contributions # 910

D. Barnes reported on these budget lines. Health insurance is estimate as it won't be set till February. We are using a 5% increase.

Health care budget line #5174 life insurance coverage is for 23 active Chilmark Employees, 14 active retirees and 7 on Tri Town Ambulance.

OPEB actuarial is \$369,093.00 our determined employer contribution.

D. Barnes said town had only 4 employees signed up for the high deductible HAS insurance plan. With incentives we now have 13 on HSA plans. HAS plan holder can continue to put \$ into HSA till they are 65.

Line #5204 of \$24,000 is town's contribution to each of these plans. The HAS still saves the town a sizable amount of money even with the contributions.

Health Insurance #5173 estimated increase 5% active employees \$520,695

Tim Carroll explained about past years he had filed for seasonal exemption employee status but it has been repeatedly turned down. Now we are doing Workers compensation insurance.

Liability Insurance # 945

Insurance premiums Tim Carroll said we are part of a pooled group. The training credits are still available and departments can help us decrease the cost to the town.

Police and Fire are a policy as they are not eligible for workman's comp.

Harbor has a few policies for the boat and Marina insurance.

Emergency Management # 291

Next year will be asking for more because there will be a benefited position.

Ms. Divoll asked chairperson Murphy if she could give an update on her information from the Fire Chief. Ms. Divoll said her information from last night was incorrect, the \$6,000 are the fines from the existing alarm fines policy.

Tim Carroll said we should have Chief get legal counsel advice about the proposed policy. Mr. Malkin said it must come to Select Board, this new program that the Fire Chief outlined.

Warrant Articles:

Tim Carroll said we don't have free cash certified yet so can't determine our actions for the funding any of the proposed warrant articles.

Mr. Malkin requested to wait till we have real numbers.

Chairperson Murphy said we have School presentation Thursday 2/1/24 we will not meet tomorrow. Members of both Select Board and FinCom agreed to meet February 21, 2024 for warrant articles and budget wrap-up with votes.

Tim Carroll asked all to please send him your concerns on any items that were presented.

At 5:29 PM with no further items for discussion FinCom: Ms. Divoll moved to adjourn, Mr. Golden seconded the motion. SO VOTED: 6 Ayes, 1 not present.

Select Board: Mr. Malkin moved to adjourn, Chairperson Rossi seconded. SO VOTED: 2 Ayes 1 not present.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana DeBlase. **Approved by FinCom 03/05/2024**
Approved by Select Board 02/06/2024