

Chilmark FY24 Budget Hearing #5 January 26, 2023 4:30 PM Meeting Minutes

Present: Fincom: Chairperson Susan Murphy, Rob Hannemann, Eric Glasgow, Vicki Divoll, Bruce Golden, Don Leopold, Marshall Carroll. Select Board: James Malkin. Bill Rossi and Warren Doty were not present. Others: Town Administrator Tim Carroll, Town Accountant Ellen Biskis, Town Treasurer D. Barnes, Fire Chief Jeremy Bradshaw, Tri Town Ambulance Chief Ben Retmier, MVTV Videographer.

At 4:30 PM Chairperson Murphy called the meeting to order at 520 South Road Chilmark.

Chairperson Murphy said the Sheriff will be here January 31st not tonight as we had on our agendas.

Budget # 220- Fire Department:

Warrants:

- Additional UTV for North Shore area with forestry kit for brush fires
Cost to town \$39,500
- 3 sets of turnout gear we secured a grant for 3 but additional 3 is very important
\$13,500
- Class A uniforms (classes and special events) to represent town. \$1,671 per for 12 sets
\$20,5800
- Transfer from stabilization balance \$315,000 to purchase new apparatus
F550 for hard to reach spaces that 1 person can operate. When we get a first call fire we automatically call 2 other towns would like to be able to handle this with our own department. If goes to a second call fire would automatically call in 2 other towns for assistance.

Mr. Leopold asked about the UTV frequency. Chief Bradshaw said Great Rock Bighte we get numerous calls for people out walking that have a medical emergency. Mr. Hannemann asked how many times this year. Chief Bradshaw said 10 times. It is in the town report.

Accountant Biskis how many members of the department need gear. Chief Bradshaw said each member should get 2 sets we will still be short but get close. Mr. Glasgow asked how many members are in the Chilmark fire department. Chief Bradshaw said 41 but 30 are structure fire fighter members.

Tri Town Ambulance Chief Retmier expressed his support of the town purchasing a UTV. Mr. Hannemann asked how many brush fires Chilmark had last year. Chief Bradshaw said 2. Chief Bradshaw spoke to the fire fuel clearing of old dead trees standing. On town owned property we can work to mitigate the hazard. Chief Bradshaw discussed the defensible space around private homes and getting that information out to the homeowners.

Warrant Article for April 2023 Annual Town Meeting. Alarm fee - monitored alarm system fee \$250 each person who we sign up gets an extinguisher.

Budget # 220- Fire Department Continued...

Chief Bradshaw gave statistics and estimates for cost of each run when Chilmark Fire department gets an automatic alarm. This if passed would reduce the warrant articles in future and help to fund stabilization.

\$20.08 an hour for each responder. Mr. Glasgow asked for revenue estimate. Chief Bradshaw said at this time Chilmark has 505 houses tied into the auto alarm system would bring in \$126,250.00 annually. What fund this goes into is still being worked out.

Mr. Hannemann asked for the data to support for the responses. Mr. Hannemann said this is not revenue but to cover cost of the response. Tim Carroll said we can't charge more than the cost of service. Mr. Golden asked how many of the alarms on these houses are false alarms. Chief Bradshaw said 90% to 99%. Chief Bradshaw estimated about 300 this past year were false alarms. Chief Bradshaw said he would send the alarms report (30+page report) to Ms. Divoll to distribute to the FinCom members to review.

Town Administrator Carroll and Accountant Biskis spoke to the information available to the town through the Department of Revenue and the outcome of webinar they both attended. Tim Carroll spoke about some powerful tools on their website to help municipalities. Ms. Biskis said they also have free consulting.

Chairperson Murphy asked to bring discussion back to the Fire Department budget as we have not yet started that. Mr. Hannemann asked what the Sheriff's office charges for the false alarms. Tim Carroll gave some figures. Chairperson Murphy asked to discuss Fire Department budget and the Sheriff's budget can be discussed Tuesday January 31.

Chief Bradshaw said he increased budget lines for:

- Fire officer's salary line up to \$39,000 up from \$28,000.
- On-call compensation increased.
- Electricity as new building is all electric (estimated 40%).
- Vehicle maintenance increased to \$19,000.00
- Equipment maintenance up \$2,000
- IT Software maintenance increased by \$3,000.00 for upgrades and tie-ins for system to submit fire reports.
- Gasoline (vehicle fuel) almost doubled in cost so increased this line.

Accountant Biskis said we did not get some of these items you are discussing for this budget and you will need to submit to us to put into the budget software. Accountant Biskis worked with Chief Bradshaw to add these in real-time. Chairperson Murphy said big increases are to Fuel, electricity and Fire Officer Salaries.

D. Barns asked about the administrative support -Katie Carroll's pay.

Budget # 220- Fire Department Continued...

Chief Bradshaw said he had budgeted this position at grade 6 step 8 but Ms. Carroll brought to his attention she has been being paid at a step 3 \$26.68 per hour vs the \$31.70 that it should be. Chief Bradshaw said he requests that that position be changed to grade 6 step 8. Treasurer D. Barns said this is what is going to the HRB to move forward. Tim Carroll said for years the Fire Department has been outside of the HRB bylaws but with an administrative support that is within the HRB. Part of the problem is this position was never properly advertised as a vacant position and applications were never processed. Tim Carroll said that could be corrected by advertising for the 7 hour a week position. Chairperson Murphy said this comes back to the faulty step system what is the rationale behind someone jumping from a step 3 to a step 8. This HRB meeting on February 2 would be important for some Fincom members to attend.

Chairperson Murphy said we won't be reviewing Highway and snow & Ice budget tonight.

Budget # 230 & 231 Tri Town Ambulance (TTA):

Tri Town Ambulance Chief Ben Retmier presented this budget.

Warrant Articles:

- \$225,000 to purchase new Ambulance 2 year lead-time
- \$50,000 oxygen system for the new Headquarters

Both come from the ambulance reserve fund transfers. Town Administrator said Allison G the administrator support for the TTA has done a remarkable job collecting. This needs to be voted out of the fund to spend it.

Budget review proceeded for salaries:

- Increase 6.21% step grade and adjustment and COLA.
- Vacation coverage increase by 12%
- Special events increased by 25% (this is a reimbursable item)

Chairperson Murphy asked if the nightshift and offseason increased pay rate is working for staffing the shifts. Chief Retmier said he has been in contact with other island EMS chiefs and has heard they intend to increase their rates. Chief Retmier said if that happens he may return with increase to that line to stay competitive.

Expenses:

- Actual expenses increased to lines that needed it.
- New HQ electrical line increased to \$15,000.00

Chairperson Murphy asked about the solar installation on the new buildings. Mr. Hannemann said we (energy committee) are working with options.

- Facilities maintenance line up 100% as this is a new structure
- Vehicle maintenance up \$1,000
- Computer maintenance up 9% (\$1,000)

Mr. Glasgow asked about the budget revenue. Fee structure should go up to adjust the cost increases. Discussion ensued.

Budget # 230 & 231 Tri Town Ambulance Continued...

Marshall Carroll asked where the reserve fund balance is, and if all three towns support this. Accountant Biskis explained that that budget is not shown here but in section #299 and that Tri Town Ambulance Committee has representatives from each town and they approved submitting these budget requests. Operating budget; if anything unspent funds get returned to all three towns equally.

- Increased professional development line to recruit more EMTs
- Contractual obligations increased

Chief Retmier said overall budget up 6.29% but there is revenue offset. Chilmark call percentage of calls was 37% of the volume of calls.

Tim Carroll discussed new building costs that will need to be added: Cleaning 8 hours each building.

Chairperson Murphy thanked both Chiefs for their clear presentation of their budgets.

At 6:01 PM with no further items for discussion, Chairperson asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Divoll moved to adjourn, Mr. Golden seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 7 Ayes**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana DeBlase.

APPROVED 01/31/2023