

## Chilmark FinCom October 19, 2023 4:00 PM Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Chairperson Susan Murphy, Vicki Divoll, Deb Hancock and Bruce Golden. Marshall Carroll, Don Leopold and Eric Glasgow were not present. Marie Larsen (Select Board member).

At 4:03 PM Chairperson Susan Murphy called meeting to order in the Select Board meeting room at Chilmark Town Hall.

Minutes: June 2 2023 minutes tabled

### Responsibilities of the liaisons and assignment of departments:

Chairperson Murphy distributed assignments from last year and asked for review. Chairperson Murphy said we have a new member Debby Hancock who was elected at our Annual Town Meeting. Chairperson Murphy said as Debbie is also on the Harbor Advisory Committee she thought both Debbie and herself (Susan Murphy) would do the harbor department together.

Chairperson Murphy said we assigned Marshall Carroll the Town Buildings; CCC, Town Hall, Select Board maintenance budget town owned property and the Comfort Station. As Marshall has always wanted to make sure there is oversight on facilities.

Chairperson Murphy said Eric Glasgow had interest in the health insurance review issues. Ms. Hancock would liaison to Library, Beach, Shellfish, Park & Recreation and share Harbor with Chairperson Murphy. Chairperson Murphy would do Up Island Schools. Chairperson Murphy asked if Mr. Golden would do the MVC.

*At 4:12 Don Leopold joined the meeting.*

Mr. Leopold will continue for Social Services, Board of Health and MVC.

Mr. Golden will be liaison for MVRD, Cemetery and Highway department and Snow & Ice.

There was discussion of how the process works in preparing for the budget process. Chairperson Murphy said as there is a Select Board member here tonight she wanted to mention that the Select Board has asked the departments to submit level funded budgets this year.

Marie Larsen said if a department really needed extra funding that has to be really clear and they will need to defend the request with substantial research and supporting data.

### Schedule for budget hearings:

Chairperson Murphy proposed in person Town hall at 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Ms. Divoll said she needs budget hearings to be done by 9<sup>th</sup> of February if only in person. Mr. Leopold said he would defer to Tim Carroll for timing of schedule, but would request the option of hybrid (zoom

& in person) meetings. Chairperson Murphy said we can ask Tim Carroll. Ms. Larsen said the public likes the hybrid meetings. Chairperson Murphy said we can keep that topic open. Chairperson Murphy said she would follow up with Tim Carroll (Town Administrator) about the dates and if we can tighten up the schedule a bit.

Chairperson Murphy said Nov 2, 2023 is the first Capital Improvement Planning Committee meeting at 4:30 at town hall. Any capital expense over \$50,000 is considered to need review from CIPC. This is for multiple year planning.

The CIPC: 2023 members are Tim Carroll, Dawn Barnes, Sarah Smith, James Malkin, Susan Murphy, Eric Glasgow and Bruce Golden.

Ms. Larsen said Facilities Manager and Building Commissioner have done a walk through and site visit for each town building and are creating recommendations for upkeep for the buildings. And there information should be shared with the CIPC.

Mr. Leopold said the CIPC should reach out to departments and request their 5 year forecast for any items estimated to be over \$50,000.00.

- Buildings
- Roads
- vehicles
- docks

#### Update on MVRHS by Ms. Divoll:

Ms. Divoll gave a quick synopsis of Martha's Vineyard Regional High School Committee process for getting their budget approved last year. She summarized that three towns at town meeting defeated the entire MVRHS budget last spring and the school committee then responded by passing two motions to satisfy those towns' concerns. One motion limited further spending on the turf lawsuit to the remaining \$20,000 in the FY23 legal budget line. The second motion denied any spending in FY24 on the turf lawsuit or the turf project. The three up island towns then passed the high school budget in reliance on those two promises by the school committee. But beginning right after July 1 2023, at the start of FY24, the MVRHS school committee continued to incur legal expenses with no money in the budget to pay for them. The committee intended to "roll over" money from FY23 to pay the FY24 bills.

#### Divoll 's Update Continued...

Under pressure, the school committee asked the school lawyers if this was proper, and they were told that it is not lawful to spend FY23 funds for FY24 bills. After being told that by the lawyers, the school committee then started using anonymous cash donations (\$2000 and \$3000) to pay for these costs. Ms. Divoll said the school committee, also under pressure, has now sent another request for written legal review on the legality of those donations. When that legal opinion is provided, she is concerned that the committee will not share the legal

findings with the FinCom or the public. Ms. Divoll reminded members that this is not about the playing field itself, it's about the ongoing fiscal misconduct by the school committee. The FinCom's job is to conduct oversight of the school committee's conduct on behalf of Chilmark taxpayers. One of the biggest problems we are facing, and have been for several months, is the lack of transparency by the school committee with the public.

Mr. Leopold said would like us to consider the amount of time Richie, Susan, Sarah etc. we are paying to be our educators are spending so much time doing budget presentations. To all towns I propose we attend a presentation and then if we have particular reasons for Chilmark to review. Ask MVRHS to do presentation once to all six towns. At MVRHS.

UIRSD to all three towns. Then Mark Friedman and Richie Smith can attend our budget hearing meeting in Chilmark. FinCom members were in favor of this recommendation. Several members expressed the desire that Richie and Mark continue to come to a Chilmark FinCom meeting to answer our questions. Don concurred with that approach.

Ms. Hancock asked when we start talking to the departments. The consensus was starting now is a good idea. Chairperson Murphy said all departments must have submitted their budgets for FY25 by January 4, 2024. It was advised to reach out to the assigned departments and introduce yourself as their Finance Committee liaison and let's talk budget.

Discussion turned to having a budget form and a Capital plan form to have as an aid for working with the departments.

At 5:08 PM Chairperson Murphy asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Divoll moved to adjourn. Mr. Golden seconded the motion. SO VOTED: 5 Ayes 2 not present.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana DeBlase.

**Approved 01/24/24**