

Chilmark FinCom FY24 Budget Hearing #2 January 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Present: FinCom: Chairperson Susan Murphy, Rob Hannemann Vicki Divoll and Marshall Carroll. Bruce Golden, Don Leopold and Eric Glasgow were not present. Select Board: James Malkin. Warren Doty and Bill Rossi were not present. Others: Town Administrator Tim Carroll, Accountant Ellen Biskis, Treasurer D. Barnes, Diana DeBlase, Liz Oliver, Clarissa Allen, Jane Kaplan, Ebba Hierta, Jessica Bradlee, Marie Larsen, and MVTV videographer Lynne Fraker.

Budget #610- Library:

Chilmark Library director Ebba Hierta presented this budget along with Jane Kaplan of the Library Trustees. Ms. Hierta said the circulation rebounded. Unfortunately the computer's server died and it was catastrophic to operations. Ms. Hierta reported that the town's IT support jumped in and rescued us but it was costly. The cost to get server backup and running was about \$8,000.00. Ms. Hierta said we have asked them (IT/ RDA Softnet) to come in and do a complete assessment of our entire infrastructure.

Increases are due to COLA and steps when budget goes up 20% of that increase figure must go to purchasing materials. Ms. Hierta said with the 3% onetime adjustment to employee salaries was not sure how to document. Called library board for guidance. Ms. Hierta said this will need follow-up.

Chairperson Murphy said the town completed updates to wages to be on par with other towns but we are not getting positions for circulation positions because pay still not desirable. Ms. Hierta said the Library requested hiring at a step 5. This was reviewed by HRB and supported by the Select Board so we may attract circulation positions.

Mr. Malkin said to give content to this discussion the HRB went over COLA and looked at the policy we have of min of 1% and max 3% but with the actual cost of living and inflation HRB worked on a recommended 4% COLA with a 3% onetime adjustment. The formula that the town uses had the COLA come in at 7.5% increase.

Chairperson Murphy thanked Ms. Hierta for presenting this budget.

Budget #146 Tax Collector:

Jessica Bradlee, Chilmark's Tax Collector presented this budget. Ms. Bradlee said the increases are due to cost increase; tax bills, office supplies all reflect the cost increase. Marshall Carroll noted that the software maintenance line last year was \$14,000 and now it is less. Marshall Carroll asked if that may need to be increased. Ms. Bradlee said last year software maintenance budget had included a onetime transition cost associated with new software. Ms. Bradlee said that is why down a bit now. Ms. Divoll asked if Chilmark was making efforts to bulk purchase with other island towns. Tim Carroll said yes, he is working on that.

Budget # 141- Assessors:

Pam Bunker Assistant Assessor presented this budget. Assessors Clarissa Allen and Elizabeth Oliver were also present for this budget review. Ms. Bunker gave apologies for not having the software budget process updated, she had a death in the family but was able to print a copy for everyone. Ms. Bunker distributed a printed proposed FY24 budget for the Assessor department.

Budget # 141- Assessors Continued...

Ms. Bunker said she removed the temp employee salary line and replaced with Artificial Intelligence and the data is phenomenal. Ms. Bunker is referring to a company that has a flyover with very detailed data collected. Ms. Bunker said this data is not public but other town departments can utilize this data.

Ms. Bunker said we added to mileage allowance, professional development and in state travel. Will decrease the software line because what was there was same as last year but the onetime transition fee will not be needed this year. Accountant Biskis said the 3% increase is not included here so will need to be added into budget.

Mr. Malkin said with fact we were late with filing this year are going to have repercussions. Ms. Bunker said this was a revaluation year with log jam of many towns submitting. Accountant Biskis said the State can withhold State aid but we don't get any. Ms. Bunker said this pushes back appeals dates. Ms. Bunker said impact is bills will be due a month later. Tim Carroll said many people pay them early to try and get payment in before end of the year. Ms. Bunker said we will have a \$2.63 tax rate, average tax bill went up as values went up.

Budget #145 –Treasurer:

Town Treasurer D. Barns presented this budget. Ms. Barnes said change to budget is increase for education and travel to become certified. Working on Harpers Payroll time and attendance for online timesheets. Many different formats used would like to bring together for all departments to use this. Assistant as temporary will continue into FY24 for 15 hours a week. Ms. Barnes said we are still 6 month behind in balancing accounts. Still have not closed out FY22. Ms. Bunkers said (pertaining to question from Select Board member Malkin) if this position is consistently 6 month behind in balancing the accounts then this will cause continuation of late filing like this year. Need to get timely. Tim Carroll asked if that was stated now as supporting continuation of temporary assistant for treasurer. Ms. Bunker said yes. Mr. Malkin said what about outsourcing payroll. Ms. Barnes said this Harpers plan will work well when we implement it. Have not looked at cost difference between outsourcing vs Harpers and assistant to treasurer. Tim Carroll said we also hired a consultant who is a retired Treasurer. Tim Carroll said temp help (assistant to Treasure Sarah Smith) we have now is also a treasurer so very helpful asset. Mr. Malkin said we are working on town organization and bringing an additional position as we are a bigger town now.

Ms. Barnes said you (town) did not hire someone who was shy (for treasurer) they hired her, and she has 30 years municipal experience. Ms. Barnes said she bluntly lets folks know what she needs. Ms. Barnes stressed that the town have more crossover time between new hires put into vacating possessions.

Budget #151-Legal:

Tim Carroll presented this budget. Mr. Carroll said this budget is level funded, but did reduce advertising line by \$5.00. Mr. Carroll reported we have spent \$19,000 in the six months into this year so on target but we have 2 cases in courts now. Mr. Malkin said we are fortunate town counsel bills us minimally.

At 5:27 PM with all items on agenda addressed Chairperson Murphy asked members to review draft minutes from the 1/18/23.

Marshall Carroll moved to approve minutes as presented. Ms. Divoll seconded the motion.

SO VOTED: 4 Ayes, 3 not present.

At 5:35 PM Chairperson Murphy asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Divoll moved to adjourn, Mr. Carroll seconded the motion. **SO VOTED: 4 Ayes, 3 not present.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana DeBlase.

APPROVED 01/24/2023

Document list:

- Assessors draft FY24 budget – printed excel spreadsheet
- Budget software