

Chilmark FY25 Budget Hearing January 17, 2024 4:00 PM Meeting Minutes

Present: Select Board: James Malkin, Marie Larsen, Bill Rossi was not present. FinCom: Chairperson Susan Murphy, Deb Hancock, Bruce Golden, Marshall Carroll and Don Leopold. Vicki Divoll was not present

Others: Linda Coutinho, Tim Carroll, D. Barnes, Sarah Smith, Jennifer Christy, Alison Kisselgof.

4:00 PM Tim Carroll announced that the budget software has been going through updates and the company confirmed ours will not be available till Monday 1/23/24.

Chairperson Murphy confirmed there would not be a meeting tomorrow as scheduled the next meeting will be 1/23/24.

At 4:04 PM Chairperson Murphy called the meeting to order in the Select Board meeting room. Mr. Malkin called the Select Board meeting to order.

Chairperson Murphy said we have a volunteer to fill the vacancy when Eric Glasgow resigned. Linda Coutinho is this volunteer. Chairperson Murphy said Ms. Coutinho has served as an elected member on the FinCom for many years past and would like to accept her offer to serve till the Annual Town Election. Mr. Leopold move to elect, Mr. Carroll seconded. Roll Call: Marshall Carroll: Aye, Bruce Golden: Aye, Don Leopold: Aye, Susan Murphy: Aye, Deb Hancock: Aye. Select Board roll call: James Malkin: Aye, Marie Larsen: Aye. Bill Rossi not present. Chairperson Murphy thanked Linda Coutinho for joining the FinCom.

Town Clerk #161:

Chilmark Town Clerk Jennifer Christy presented this budget.

Ms. Christy supplied supportive documents and highlights of the election and Clerk office budget. In printed format and had also connected to the budget software.

- We are in a 4 year election cycle with increases due to it being an election year.
- Hire approximately 30 election workers
- Professional development – bring assistant clerk to conferences for training
- Course to achieve master clerk certification (online course)
- Toner cost increase for printing
- So much has changed since 2020 and we have 2 hour webinars weekly on the changes to elections.

Tim Carroll noted that the Assistant Clerk Stipend was dropped but should be put back into this budget.

Chairperson Murphy thanked Ms. Christy for this presentation.

Planning Board #175:

Jennifer Christy the Administrative Assistant to the Planning Board presented this budget. This budget is level funded. No increases. Chairperson Murphy thanked Ms. Christy for this presentation.

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) # 176:

Alison Kisselgof the Board Administrator for the ZBA presented this budget.

Ms. Kisselgof said the step and COLA are the increases to the salary line. Professional development was increased slightly to the actual cost of classes. Advertising line was also increased due to uptick in applications. The telephone was increased to actual cost adjustment.

Postage was also increased due to the required increase to extended abutters. Increase is .08 % is the percentage this budget has increased.

Housing 1# 85 / DCRHA:

Alison Kisselgof the Board Administrator for the Housing Committee presented these budgets. Ms. Kisselgof said she was sorry she did not invite David Vigneault the Duke County Regional Housing Authority director. However we have the information he would have shared. DCRHA has a 5% increase overall, Chilmark's portion is only 2.5% increase from last year.

Mr. Carroll asked why the dues and membership line was deleted. Ms. Kisselgof said she asked the members of the Housing Committee if they would like memberships to any of the resources for housing Committee and they said no so that is why was removed from budget.

Chairperson Murphy thanked Ms. Kisselgof for these presentations.

Conservation Commission (ConCom) # 171:

Carolyn Stoeber the Board Administrator for the ConCom presented this budget.

2 factors for increase of budget. Ms. Stoeber said her predecessor worked for ConCom in 2 towns and could split the cost of training certification between the 2 towns. Ms. Stoeber is conservation agent for Chilmark only. The other is we are shifting from online training during COVID to in person training so travel is a factor for the increases.

Ms. Stoeber said we have 4 new ConCom members and staff (self) so the professional development line has also been increased.

Community Preservation Committee (CPC) # 179:

Carolyn Stoeber the Board Administrator for the CPC. Ms. Stoeber said this budget is flat except for advertising. Public hearing was increased as we needed to post 2.

Ms. Stoeber said the warrant articles are complete and available for review.

Chairperson Murphy thanked Ms. Stoeber for these presentations.

Animal Control # 292 & Animal Inspector # 296:

Chairperson Murphy said Chris Murphy is our ACO and Animal inspector. Tim Carroll said there should be a kenneling fee line in this budget as well so when we have the software up make sure gets added.

Tim Carroll said 296 should be unchanged.

Moderator # 114:

Tim Carroll said this budget is unchanged from last year.

Select Board # 122:

Tim Carroll said the Select Board Elected official's salary is the same. Tim Carroll said he has a 3 year contract. Tim Carroll noted there are incorrect and missed lines on these budgets at this time that should be cleared up with Zobrio for the next meeting on 1/23/24.

Accountant # 135:

Town Accountant Sarah Smith presented this budget. Ms. Smith said not much has changed. The salary is less than last year. There is an addition of the Assistant Town Accountant. There will be a position that will be supporting the Accountant for 16 hours a week. The software expenditure is contractual. And there is additional for professional development.

Tim Carroll spoke of the plan to have position from the Building department build into that additions to assist Board of Health and Accountant assistant combined altogether to have a benefited fulltime position at 40 hours a week.

Audit # 149:

Tim Carroll said at the Select Board meeting last night the board authorized him to sign a new engagement letter. Mr. Carroll said our auditors Powers & Sullivan were bought out by a National company.

Chairperson Murphy asked if we could add the Treasurer's budget to tonight.

Treasurer # 145:

D. Barnes the Town Treasurer presented this budget.

Ms. Barnes noted the changes and why there were a few increases. Administrative support is expected to be between 10 to 15 hours a week.

With time available Chairperson Murphy asked if there were additional budgets we could add for tonight. Tim Carroll recommended Legal

Legal # 151:

Tim Carroll said we are keeping this the same. Tim Carroll gave some information when the town needs to hire special legal counsel when our Town Counsel has conflict as they represent land owners. Mr. Malkin said we are extremely fortunate in:

- A.) The amount we have been charged by Town Counsel / Ron Rappaport.
- B.) Amount of litigation is limited. *Knock knock*

Tim Carroll said we have good news about the rate of the Bonds for the Fire Station / EMS HQ and School HVAC.

Treasurer D. Barnes said the town went through the S&P rating process and we held on to our AAA rating. Mr. Malkin said that is huge. D. Barnes said we went out to the market for bonds today and we attained under 3% interest rate. With that the amount we thought we were borrowing dropped by about half a million dollars.

Chairperson Murphy asked for some clarity about the limits to our borrowing power. Tim Carroll explained we have a fiscal policy in place. We were paying an accelerated OPEB amount. And we are funding 15% of the budget reserves. All of those things added together put us in a good financial status. Tim Carroll said the amount of borrowing in our policy is limited to 10% at this time we are above that but just the first year of the bonding with the Fire station & EMS HQ.

There was discussion about why Chilmark was the town that borrowed all the funding rather than up island towns sharing the costs of borrowing. Tim Carroll said we are retiring debt this (FY25) year so we will be back in the under 10%.

Ms. Larsen we have more projects that require funding coming up.

Tim Carroll said the Peaked Hill Pastures Housing project that is coming up will be utilizing 1 million from CPA funding, 1 Million from the Molly Flender Affordable Housing Trust and other options.

Tim Carroll said we are spending from the stabilization funds to purchase a new police cruiser, and spending stabilization for our paving projects. So the reserves are changing. Tim Carroll said a possible big one on the horizon is the High School.

D. Barnes said she would give the S&P report to the Fincom to review.

Tim Carroll noted some of the concerns that are in the S&P report:

- availability of staffing
- silver tsunami (aging out)

Mr. Leopold asked where we were now with the 10% limit to borrowing ratio. Tim Carroll said about 12%

Tim Carroll said we will have capacity to borrow again in 5 years, and gave the Harbor docks as an example even with grants we need to have 25% of the grant and that could be 1 million.

Capital plans from the town departments. Tim Carroll said the new facilities manager has been putting together projects we need to do. Tim Carroll advised to priorities the projects and will include some in this year's ATM warrant articles.

Ms. Coutinho asked where the HVAC bond figures are kept. Tim Carroll said in the School figures. D. Barnes said she is finalizing a spreadsheet for this data to be easily followed.

There was discussion on budget materials and being able to print the items to review for the next meeting. Accountant Smith will print a report prior to each meeting (meeting just before) and distribute to FinCom and Select Board.

At 5:20 PM with no further items for discussion Mr. Golden moved to adjourn. Mr. Leopold seconded the motion. SO VOTED: 6 Ayes, 1 not present.

Select Board members moved to adjourn SO VOTED: 2 Ayes, 1 not present.

Meeting was adjourned.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Diana DeBlase.

APPROVED 3/5/2024