

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes February 13, 2007

Those Present: Al DeVito - chair, Sharon Estrella, Skip Manter and Brian Athearn.

Guests: Bruce Stone, Town Accountant; Brent Taylor, Tax Collector; Prudence Whiting, Town Clerk; Virginia Jones and Simone DeSorcy, Planning Board; David Vigneault, Dukes County Regional Housing Authority.

This meeting was taped for airing on MVTV

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

During tonight's meeting the proposed FY '08 budgets of the Tax Collector, the Town Clerk, the Planning Board and the Dukes County Regional Housing Authority were reviewed with the FinCom. Department/Committee heads were informed that votes taken were preliminary due to the considerable increase in the total budget. Some line items may need further review for possible cuts.

Tax Collector Budget:

Line item #146, Tax Collector. Brent stated that expenses were down because a new company is printing the bills (line #5300 Professional and Technical services). Bruce noted that the Personnel Board had voted last night for a 3.8% COLA. Skip asked why the increase in hours from 31 to 32. Brent explained that there is just more to do. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily accept line item #146. The motion passed 4-0.

While waiting for the Town Clerk's appointment Brian discussed his attendance at the Personnel board meeting. He found it to be interesting and felt that the entire process had been democratic and fair.

Al had attended the all-island Finance meeting where Noreen Flanders reported on the towns' health plan. It was felt that it is important to convince town employees to attend these meetings. Al suggested that the Board of Selectmen should recommend and urge attendance and that employees be authorized to take time from work to attend.

Minutes:

The minutes of the January 16 and 23 meetings were approved with minor corrections.

Al then discussed the draft brochure he had produced using information from the town report. On the back of the brochure there will be a statement that it was put together by the Finance Committee from information gathered from the town report. Al will present a modified version next week for discussion and, hopefully, finalization.

Al asked Skip if he had given Jen an article for the town warrant concerning withdrawal from the URSD. Skip said that Jen is reserving space, but that he had not yet written it. He will

finalize it this week. A motion was made and seconded to place an article in the town warrant for withdrawal from the UIRSD. The motion passed 4-0.

Correspondence:

Al reviewed a bill for \$810 from Reynolds, Rappaport and Kaplan for services dated August 1, 2006.

Skip discussed the school budget re transportation. \$250k was set aside by the UIRSD towards the purchase of six new buses. There is a 60-day wait period whereby the town can object to debt incurred by the school, but this would require a special town meeting. Al said the new buses are needed, but questioned who should pay for them. Skip said the UIRSD would buy them, but that they would also be used by Tisbury and Oak Bluffs who would thereby reap the benefits of a regional district without having to deal with any of the adversities. Each town will pay the same rate on a per run basis, including the UIRSD. Skip feels that the UIRSD, Tisbury and Oak Bluffs should each buy two buses. Bruce noted that only a regional district could be reimbursed, not an individual school. Skip further mentioned that the deterioration and liability fell on the UIRSD. Brian asked who would get the money if the buses were sold. Skip answered that the UIRSD, as the owners, would get any money from sale of the buses. Brian is concerned that with the impending conflict over withdrawing from the UIRSD perhaps choosing a battle over the bus purchase at the same time might not be prudent. Skip responded if the UIRSD bought only two buses then the remainder of the \$250k would go to tax abatement. When incurring debt it takes only one town to say no.

A recess was called at 5:03.

Meeting restarted at 5:17.

Town Clerk Budget:

Line item #161, Town Clerk. Al asked Prudy how often and for how long her assistant worked. Prudy responded that the busiest period was from January through April when the census and licenses were being handled. Ginny opens all the mail and deals with all the dog tags, working about 15-20 hours a week. This permits Prudy the time she needs to enter data into the computer. The increase in Ginny's salary is due to a step progression and an increase in hours. When asked why there was no increase in postage Bruce explained that Jen includes postage for the entire town hall in her budget. If need be, Prudy could break it out by multiplying the number of censuses and licenses mailed by their respective postage amounts. Al asked if the FY08 revenue would be above the FY06. Prudy said yes, but that it depends on the number of weddings, etc. that took place. She is considering raising the fees noting, for instance, that WT charges \$1 for a DBA while other towns charge as much as \$25. She and Al agreed it would be good to look into this for next year. Al questioned the insurance line to which Bruce responded that Prudy has to be bonded since she handles money. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily accept line item #161. The motion passed 4-0.

Line item #162, Elections. Prudy noted that the 2008 primary would have a big effect on her budget. There is some state reimbursement, but is small. The town pays to print the ballots, but most of the expense is for voting machine-related items such as the computer chip, etc. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily accept line item #162. The motion passed 4-0.

Line item #163, Registrars. After looking at the actual expense this line item was decreased by 7.7%, the only considerable expense being the printing of the census forms. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily accept line item #163. The motion passed 4-0.

Dukes County Regional Housing Authority Budget:

Al began by telling DCRHA Executive Director David Vigneault that it was not known yet whether this line item would be part of the budget or a warrant article. David announced that FY07 was the first year that the DCRHA was fully funded by all six towns. The FY08 proposed budget includes a 4% increase agreed upon by all towns to take effect after 2007. David expressed his appreciation for the funding provided by the towns. Town funding is for administrative/personnel costs. The administrative coordinator is low right now and includes a lot of bookkeeping. There will be a shift in this position from management to development. The savings from the ED position has been shifted to the administrative person who has done a good job tightening things up. The Ed position is at a moderate level. Skip said it looks to be completely in line. Brian asked why there is no county aspect. David explained that the "county" part of the title was in name only and that there is no actual county affiliation.

He said things are looking very good for the future both for rental and buyer programs. He will be meeting with the banks and some lawyers to tighten up the mortgage process in order to assist applicants as they work through the process. Brian asked if taxes are being paid. David said yes, by the two WT properties: Halcyon and Sepiessa. Al asked how the Sepiessa property would be developed. David explained that there is money from the CPC. There is a one-time subsidy to get the debt down, then the rents would pay to run the property. Most of the work now is for renovations and upgrades. Tax credits come with Federal codes and restrictions. Deed restrictions garner low interest rates. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily accept DCRHA FY08 proposed budget. The motion passed 4-0. Skip then made a motion to have a warrant article to appropriate the funds. This was seconded and passed 3 in favor, 1 abstention. Al will write to the Board of Selectmen requesting a warrant article to appropriate the funds to fund the DCRHA budget.

Planning Board Budget:

Line item #175, Planning Board. Ginny Jones of the Planning Board stated that the FY08 proposed budget was level funded. Simone explained that she no longer gets step progressions, only COLA. Ginny noted that most of the expenses are for advertising and printing. Revenue is from inspection. There was no further discussion. A motion was made and seconded to preliminarily accept line item #175. The motion passed 4-0.

Before adjournment Brian asked that the FinCom write a letter of recommendation for Bruce's review acknowledging the excellent job he has done. All agreed. Al will write a letter to be signed by all the FinCom members.

There being no other business, a motion for adjournment was made and seconded.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Rogers, Administrative Clerk