

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2007

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

Guests: Bruce Stone, Town Accountant; Jo-Ann Resendes, Cynthia Mitchell and Michael Colaneri, Board of Assessors; Carolyn Loch, Community Preservation Committee; Norman Perry, Personnel Board

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Tonight's meeting continues the review of warrant articles requiring recommendation by the FinCom.

Article 7:

Article 7 asks the voters to raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,000 to be used by the Board of Assessors for a valuation update of real and personal property. This is the full amount of re-valuation for the next three years. This year's re-valuation is already paid for. Article 7 begins the next three-year cycle. The total cost of the FY07 re-valuation is \$66,900. Jo-Ann clarified the bid process stating that an RFP (Request For Proposal) is issued every 3 years. Only one company, Vision, responded. Vision does the re-valuation for all the island towns with the exception of Chilmark. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 7. The motion passed 4-1.

Article 18:

Article 18 asks the voters to raise from Free Cash the amount of \$7,440 for the evaluation update required by state law for FY08. Cynthia explained that they had re-evaluated real estate and personal property, but were short this amount which is needed to re-evaluate businesses. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 18. The motion passed 5-0.

Al mentioned to the Assessors that all committees and boards were being asked to phase in salary/hour increases and asked the Assessors add half their requested hour increase for next year. Cynthia said the request was reasonable and understandable and that they would put the hours to the data collector. However, since there is already a bottleneck, she would like to reserve the right to increase other hours should matters become worse.

Request for Transfer:

There is a request for transfer from reserve funds the amount of \$2,400 to pay the County for services to the town of the county engineer. The County changed their formula after all the towns had set their budgets. Originally, towns were to be given an allotted amount of time, after which they would pay \$55 an hour. The County changed that formula so that the towns would pay \$35 an hour for the initially allotted time, then \$55 per hour thereafter. There was a consensus that the County should not be allowed to change its formula once the towns' budgets are set. A motion was made and seconded not to approve the request for transfer. The motion passed 5-0.

Article 38:

Article 38 asks voters to raise from free cash the amount of \$3,778 to fund a highway worker for the remainder of FY07. Al told Richie that other departments were being asked to phase-in increases to hours for personnel. He asked Richie if hiring someone for 20 hrs./wk. would be acceptable. Richie felt it might be difficult to attract someone for just half time, but he would try. Skip commented that other departments had made cuts with the thinking that the Highway Dept. would pick up some of their work. Since Jesse is doing a lot of building maintenance the roads are in need of attention. Richie added that with Jesse working a lot in the cemetery, he need to hire someone to do road trimming. A motion was made and seconded to reduce the time to 30 hours for next season, then move up to 40 hours the following year. The motion passed 4-1.

Article 42:

Article 42 asks the voters to permit the Superintendent of Streets to apply for a grant for small towns in the amount of \$343,860 for paving work on North Rd. Bruce explained that the town would receive the money, then pay back 30% over 10 years. The week would come in the form of a decrease to the cherry sheet of \$11k. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 42. The motion passed 5-0.

MVTV:

There was a discussion concerning the policy of MVTV for recording and airing public meetings. MVTV does not have the volunteer personnel to be able to hold to a contract to do all the meetings the town would like to have done. The town cannot hire someone to do it because of insurance costs. At present, there is \$2500 in the budget for publication and TV. With the probable lack of TV coverage it was apparent that not all of that money could be spent. A motion was made and seconded to reduce the amount by \$1,500. The motion passed 4-1.

Al gave an update on the final budget review meetings. He expressed the need by March 20 to have a brochure and recommendations to review, approve and finalize. This prompted a discussion regarding a reasonable amount to recommend at town meeting. Skip advocates recommending -0- funding.

Articles 22-26:

Articles 22-26 concern the Community Preservation Committee. Carolyn Loch, CPC Administrative Assistant, explained that Article 22 covered the funding formula. Sections A, B and C: \$57,000 each, 10% of which must be used for open space and/or historic properties. Section D; can spend upwards to 5% for administrative expenses. Section E: \$370,500 in reserve. This is what the town brings in with the state match. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 22. The motion passed 5-0.

Article 23 is to appropriate \$5,700 from the Community Preservation Historical Resources reserve to conduct a survey and planning assessment of existing properties in West Tisbury that are listed, or are eligible to be listed, as historic. The MV Museum has applied for this and is asking the town CPC for support. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 23. The motion passed 5-0.

Article 24 asks voters to appropriate the sum of \$29,500 to fund pre-development costs associated with additional units at Sepiessa. This money would be used to update the 40B permit and the DRI. It was noted that Article 18 has set this money aside for next year. The total money available this year is \$800k. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 24. The motion passed 5-0.

Article 25 asks to appropriate from the Community Preservation Committee Housing reserve the sum of \$18k for rental subsidies. The Dukes County Regional Housing Authority maintains a list of qualified applicants for rental assistance. Landlords set their rent at the fair market rate based on HUD figures. Qualified low-income clients pay what they can and the DCRHA, with money from the Island Affordable Housing Fund, makes up the difference. Right now there is not enough money to pay the subsidies for all the qualified WT residents. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 25. The motion passed 5-0.

Article 26 asks for money from undesignated reserve for the sum of \$80k to construct a path along the east side of Old County Rd. from Hopp Farm Rd. to State Rd. Carolyn explained that this project was a proposal from the Paths by the Road committee. Construction cannot begin until the spring of 08. The CPC thought this a good project to support given and is spreading the cost over two years. The CPC is allowed to spend money on recreation after it has spent 10% on open spaces/historic properties. A motion was made and seconded to recommend Article 26. The motion passed 5-0.

Skip made a motion to recommend the UIRSD budget at 0 funding. The motion passed 4 yes, 1 abstention.

Article 10:

Article 10 concerns the 3.8% salary adjustment. Norman Perry explained the process used by the Personnel Committee to reach this figure. The committee first goes to the CPI (Consumer Price Index). This is a fluctuating number and an average is taken. The committee then looks at each island town to see what percentage they are using. They then average out all the figures and this year arrived at 3.8%. The committee also looks at other island agencies and Falmouth as a check. Mr. Perry then commented that WT has a very good work atmosphere with happy employees and very little turnover. He also explained that the Personnel Board includes one town employee voted on by all the town employees. The Board of Selectmen appoints the rest of the board for a one-year term. The Personnel Board invites employees to meet with the to discuss their job which might result in an adjustment to their grade level. A motion was made and seconded not to recommend Article 10. The motion passed 2-1-1. (Richard Knabel had left by vote time.)

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

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Rogers, Administrative Clerk