

Minutes
West Tisbury Finance Committee Meeting
February 8, 2011
Public Safety Building

Present: Sharon Estrella - chair, Al DeVito, Greg Orcutt and Jonathan Revere.

Guests: Bruce Stone, Town Accountant; Richard Knabel, Skipper Manter and Cynthia Mitchell, BoS; Jen Rand, Executive Secretary; Joyce Bowker, UICOA; Joseph Gervais and Kathrine Triantafillou, candidates for empty seats on FinCom.

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. As this was a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen, Richard Knabel convened a meeting of the BoS, as well.

Applicants

The first applicant interviewed was Joseph Gervais. Mr. Gervais was asked why he was interested in this position. He explained that he was looking for a way to be active in the community. He has lived here since the '80's and owns his own insurance company. Mr. Gervais has taken out papers to run in April for Brian Athearn's vacated seat. He feels he has a developed ability to make a presentation of facts and details.

The Second candidate, Kathrine Triantafillou, has owned a home here since the '80's, but has only lived here full time for 2-3 years. She has a law practice here and in Boston. Ms. Triantafillou served on the Cambridge City Council where she developed an interest in finances and budgets. She explained that, though the size of the budgets are quite different, the concerns of the taxpayers in Cambridge and West Tisbury remain the same. The work of the city council includes reviewing the budget, much as our FinCom. Ms. Triantafillou is not certain she would like to run for office at this time.

Sharon suggested the BoS and FinCom make a decision right away. Jonathan made a motion, seconded by Greg, to approve the appointment of both candidates, Mr. Gervais to begin immediately to fill Brian's seat, and Ms. Triantafillou to begin when Al leaves next week. The motion passed with a vote by the FinCom 4-0 and the BoS 3-0.

After the vote, Jen Rand swore in Mr. Gervais so that he could take a seat at the table for the remainder of the meeting.

Up-Island Council on Aging #541

Joyce explained that there are no increases in salaries beyond step/longevity and COLA, if implemented. Expenses are up only minimally. The Friends of UICOA contribute \$10,000 - 20,000 each year to help with maintenance. Joyce is writing grant applications and expects to receive \$10,000+ for operating costs.

Given the unexpected maintenance issues this year, Sharon suggested Joyce add \$1,000 to her maintenance line #5240. Jen felt the budget was too close to the bone. Skipper also recommended an additional \$1,000.

Jonathan made a motion, seconded by Al, to preliminarily approve the UICOA budget with an additional \$1,000 added to line #5240 Repairs and Maintenance. (From \$5,000 to \$6,000.) The motion passed 3-0.

UIRSD

A lengthy discussion followed concerning the Up-Island Regional School District. The BoS and FinCom members brainstormed to find ways to enhance communication with the UIRSD and to have a better understanding of the budget.

Possibilities discussed included:

- A budget format in line with the MVRHS
- A request for level funding, leaving the “how” up to the UIRSD.
- A means to address a correlation between decreasing enrollment and the size of the budget.
- When will there be a savings from declining enrollment?
- Have UIRSD structured like a true district rather than two separate entities.

Richard noted that the Gazette had published a story about the January 18 FinCom meeting with the UIRSD that misrepresented what was said at that meeting. Jen made the correction that the reporter was reporting on statements made at the Chilmark meeting by a member of the UIRSD school committee. An off-hand remark by one member was taken to be a statement of the FinCom as a whole and was used to indicate that the WT FinCom wanted the Chilmark school closed. This misrepresentation of the meeting resulted in a Gazette editorial taking the WT FinCom to task. Richard recommended a letter of clarification be sent to the paper. A letter will be sent.

Dr. Weiss and the UIRSD school committee will be invited back for further discussion.

At this point, with their business ended, Richard adjourned the meeting of the BoS.

Minutes

Minutes of the January 4 meeting were approved, and minutes of the January 25 meeting were approved, with corrections.

Other Business

Sharon had a bill of \$400 for the ads for filling the vacant FinCom seats, and a bill of \$500 for MVTV. Al moved, with a second by Jonathan, to approve payment of the bills. The motion passed 4-0-1.

Bruce handed out an updated summary of all budgets, noting that the statutory formula for the schools will not be available until February 22.

Al announced that he had received a response from the MVC in answer to his questions regarding expenditure discrepancies in their budget. The MVC accountant reported that the discrepancies were “confusing but accurate.”

Jonathan made a motion, seconded by Al, to take no action on the MVC budget. The motion passed 5-0.

Finally, and regretfully, Sharon read Al’s letter of resignation effective February 19, 2011.

Jonathan made a motion, seconded by Greg, to regretfully, and with many thanks, accept Al’s resignation. The motion passed 4-0-1. Best wishes to Al.

Future meetings

Tuesday, February 15 and 22, 4:30 at the Public Safety Building.

There being no other business, a motion for adjournment was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:26pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nancy Rogers, Administrative Clerk