

**Minutes**  
**West Tisbury Finance Committee Meeting**  
**March 22, 2011**  
**Public Safety Building**

Present: Sharon Estrella – chair, Greg Orcutt, Jonathan Revere, Joe Gervais and Katherine Triantafillou.

Guests: Skipper Manter, BoS; Bruce Stone, Town Accountant.

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m.

**ATM Handout**

There will be a handout for the Annual Town Meeting with brief comments regarding the articles that either included a descending vote, or were not recommended. Sharon, Jonathan and Greg will distribute the handout prior to the ATM at the post offices and other public places.

Jonathan will give the minority viewpoint for Art. 16; Joe for Arts. 18 & 19; Greg for Art. 31; and Sharon for Arts. 34 & 37.

**Article 16**

Since it seems to be apparent that the need and the site for a new superintendent's office have already been determined, a feasibility study is redundant and should not be paid for by the towns. If a feasibility study is required by statute then it should be paid for by the superintendent's budget.

**Articles 18 & 19**

Increasing the size of the library from 5,640 square feet to 13,200 is a very large change. This is a growth factor of almost two-and-a-half times. The question to ask is: How much are we willing to pay for the heating, cooling, staffing, roofing and siding of this building? Putting our resources into maintenance of such a large building will limit the Town's ability to do items which may be more needed. A "no" vote on this addition should not be interpreted as a lack of support for the library staff. The library is well used and well run. The library expansion committee should revisit the plan and come up with a more modest proposal.

**Article 31**

A sidewalk in this area is not in keeping with the character with the Town of West Tisbury. Additionally, in a year of tight budgets it is an inappropriate expenditure. As a point of reference, the sidewalk paths along State Rd. in North Tisbury and along Edgartown/West Tisbury Rd. diminish the rural character of the town.

**Article 34 recommended 2-1**

The town does not belong in the business of real estate and the funding proposal (using CPA funds) for this purchase is unsatisfactory. There is an article in the warrant asking the voters to consider a reduction in the percentage surcharge for the Community Preservation Act. Next year there may be a citizen petition to completely revoke participation in the CPA. Should that pass the remaining four years of debt would be shouldered by the taxpayer in the form of a continuing yearly surcharge.

**Article 37**

The descending vote was due to the lack of requiring all six towns to participate.

### **UIRSD**

Sharon wanted to clarify that a “no” vote on the school budget would trigger the statutory formula and would require refiguring the assessment. All three must approve the budget or the statutory formula is implemented for all three towns.

Katherine asked if the BoS was the body responsible for approving the school budget. Skipper explained that the BoS only approves budgets of the departments under their authority such as the police, fire, highway and animal control. The budgets outside their authority are determined by the department heads. All budgets must be approved by the voters at the ATM.

### **Budget meetings and process discussion**

Sharon asked the members for their impressions on the budget meetings just completed.

Joe was confused by the fact that he had been told the FinCom requested level funding, yet voted to approve a new position at the library and a new boat for the shellfish warden. Jonathan explained that level funding is hoped for, but is not always possible. Sharon added that in a small town people often use their own resources to do their work, but reach a point where that is no longer reasonable/appropriate.

Katherine suggested upcoming meetings should include a discussion about how to tackle future issues. What is and is not the town’s responsibility?

Jonathan felt the expanded attendance of the BoS at FinCom meetings was very helpful to the FinCom in its work. Also, that the airing of meetings on MVTV has been informative to a larger audience. Sharon hoped it gave people a chance to see what goes into the decisions of the FinCom.

Overall, members were positive about the process. There is more talk in town about the financial issues.

Sharon commended the two new members, Joe and Katherine, on their ability to seamlessly fit into the work of the committee. Sharon would like to revisit the idea of forums. Perhaps have just a Q&A with the public/FinCom.

### **Minutes**

Minutes of the February 22 meeting needed a clarification and were re-approved with correction. Minutes of the March 15 meeting were approved.

### **Other Business:**

Sharon asked Bruce for a printout of the reserve fund budget. There is app. \$25K right now.

The handout will be finalized and approved at the March 29 meeting. Nancy will make 200 copies on Wednesday, March 30 and leave them in the FinCom mailbox at the town hall for pickup by members. She will also email them to the MV Times, the Gazette, and to Bob Potts for the Broadside.

### **Future meetings**

March 29 at 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 5:37pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Nancy Rogers, Administrative Clerk