

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, January 8, 2025
Emergency Services Facility

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Present: Chair – Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Russ Hartenstine,
Elaine Miller, Louis Pashman, Rachel Orr*, Allan Rogers,

Others: Town: Finance Director – Jonathan Snyder,
Conservation: Chair Tom Robinson, Agent Jane Varkonda,
* TFC members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

• The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom or TFC) was called to order about 6:32PM.

(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

Review of Conservation Commission (ConCom)

(See documents on file & below: Actions.)

* Rachel Orr recused herself from this discussion due to conflict of interest.

• The ConCom was a regulatory board administering state and local bylaws on all activity within 100 ft. of wetlands, reviewing: construction, rebuilds, remodels, significant landscaping, anything water related such as piers, etc. Local bylaws took precedent and were somewhat stricter than the State's.

- The ConCom also advised other committees on such things as: improving harbor drainage, flooding studies, etc.

- The ConCom updated their fees to cover work and inspections involved in permitting—which could be quite expensive for the applicant. Although this generated substantial income the Department would never be self-sufficient. Fees should be placed in a separate revolving account for ConCom expenses but were currently deposited in the General Fund.

• After some experimentation and in accordance with the Cooperative Agreement, Agent Jane Varkonda worked 1 day for Tisbury and 4 days for Edgartown. She would retire at the end of Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). Sadly the Department's part-time Administrative Assistant Laura Barbera (shared with the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)) passed away recently, so the ConCom was in transition from two 30-year veterans.

- FY25 and FY26 expenses reflected new administrative assistant Alycelee Pigman's lower pay grade.

• Ms. Varkonda strongly advised her replacement be hired for 3 days or 24 hours per week. The pay grade was estimated at M2 Step 1, however the ConCom had not made a clear decision on hours. (The first year costs of a new position were placed in a warrant article.)

- It was agreed the budget should be clarified, re-voted and re-submitted.

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- ConCom Chair Tom Robinson thanked the FinCom for helpful questions. The FinCom thanked the ConCom representatives for their time and attention.

Capital Planning Inventory – Jonathan Snyder, Finance Director

(See documents on file, & 12/11/24 Minutes p.3-4, & below: Actions.)

* Rachel Orr entered the meeting about 6:52PM.

- The process was transitioning from this old capital spending spreadsheet with projections organized alphabetically by Town Dept., with Water Works and Wastewater as separate enterprise funds.

- The spreadsheet would be replaced when the Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) completed it's inventory. The CPAC was currently discussing groundwork issues: what is Tisbury's debt ceiling, what capital policies are needed, etc. and therefore were not ready to recommend 2025 warrant articles. Another stumbling block was Departments unable to project capital needs beyond the current year. Capital Planning was not a Tisbury Select Board (TSB) priority. Hopefully the Town Administrator's job description delineating better enforcement and guidance would help.

- The Fire Department recently purchased a brush-breaker/wildland fire rescue vehicle (see 3/31/21 Minutes p.3), and a new fire truck was projected in the next 10 years.

- The professional team for the new Tisbury School provided a maintenance and capital needs notebook. School needs (carpet, painting, etc.) and items should also be on the new capital planning list.

- The FinCom discussed various ways to facilitate the planning process:

- set up a subcommittee to discuss and draft capital policy, while the CPAC concentrates on inventory and recommendations;

- divide capital expenditures into ongoing maintenance (painting, police cruisers, etc.) that can be included in budgets, versus larger big ticket items requiring warrant articles.

- The Beach Road Seawall was deteriorating and Five Corner flooding continued to worsen but no remediation date was yet set. They were continued on the Capital Spreadsheet as a reminder of Tisbury's portion of a large upcoming multi-agency project (\$40-50,000,000), partially State Department of Transportation (MassDOT), partially Town owned, partially federal funding. Tighe & Bond Engineers were working on Seawall plans that would hopefully qualify the project with State regulatory boards and grants.

- A previous project to raise Beach Rd. and Five Corners was dropped due to lack of TSB support.

- If the Embarkation fees were raised (see 10/13/22 Minutes & below p.4) it might be possible to dedicate some revenue to a stabilization fund for harbor or Beach Rd. issues.

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Vote on Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and Embarkation Committee Proposed Articles

(See documents on file & 12/11/23 Minutes p.1.)

Both the CPC and Embarkation funds were already appropriated. These votes were about how the appropriations would be spent.

- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE ON **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION RESERVES** AS PRESENTED; RACHEL ORR SECONDED; MOTION **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: ELAINE MILLER—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—ABSTAIN, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

- *RUSS HARTENSTINE MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES ON **COMMUNITY PRESERVATION SPENDING/DISTRIBUTION** AS PRESENTED;*

- A) MV PLAYHOUSE 152 MAIN STREET (\$85,000),*

- B) GRANGE HALL (\$50,000),*

- C) VINEYARD HAVEN LIBRARY COURTYARD (\$153,000),*

- D) HARBORMASTER GROUNDS GARDEN (\$25,000),*

- E) OWEN PARK PIER (\$50,000),*

- F) PLANE AIR PODIUMS (\$14,000),*

- G) UPPER LAKE STREET PARK PLAN (\$66,900),*

- H) TISBURY PARK AMENITIES (\$10,000),*

- I) PLACE MAKING SIGNAGE TISBURY PARKS (\$12,000),*

- J) MUNICIPAL HOUSING TRUST (\$50,000),*

- K) DUKES COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY RENTAL ASSISTANCE (\$130,000),*

- L) ISLAND AUTISM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (\$183,300),*

- M) ISLAND HOUSING TRUST – VETERANS OUTREACH CENTER (\$185,600),*

- N) ISLAND HOUSING TRUST – LELAND AVENUE TOWN HOUSE (\$150,000),*

- O) ISLAND HOUSING TRUST – SCHOOL EMPLOYEE HOUSING ON OLD COURTHOUSE ROAD WEST TISBURY (\$464,000),*

- P) ISLAND HOUSING TRUST – CAT HOLLOW/LOBSTER ALLEY HOUSING UNITS (\$300,000),*

- Q) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES (\$25,000);*

*ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS**: ELAINE MILLER—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—ABSTAIN, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

- *LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING **EMBARKATION WARRANT ARTICLES** AS PRESENTED:*

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A) SEASONAL POLICE OFFICERS, SALARY, EQUIPMENT, ETC. (\$79,500),
B) MARTHA'S VINEYARD LAW ENFORCEMENT TACTICAL TEAM
MEMBERSHIP (\$6,250),
C) DREDGE PERMITTING, SURVEYS AND CONSULTANTS FOR HARBOR AND
NORTH GROIN FUTURE PROJECTS (\$15,000),
D) OWEN PARK PIER (\$100,000),
E) TOWN OWNED INNER AND OUTER HARBOR MOORINGS MAINTENANCE
(\$10,000),
F) 9 FIRE AND POLICE DEPARTMENT AUTOMATED EXTERNAL
DEFIBRILLATOR REPLACEMENTS (\$24,300),
G) GRINDER PUMPS AND CARBON FILTRATION ODOR CONTROLS AT MAIN
SEWER LIFT STATION (\$8,562),
H) DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS GATEWAY IMPROVEMENTS (\$30,000);
ELAINE MILLER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0**
NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ELAINE MILLER—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE,
RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—ABSTAIN, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE,
ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Minutes from 11/6/24, 12/11/24

- RACHEL ORR MOVED TO APPROVE THE:
 - NOVEMBER 6, 2024 AND
 - DECEMBER 11, 2024 MINUTES;

ELAINE MILLER AND LOUIS PASHMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 7 AYES,
0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: ELAINE MILLER—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—
AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—ABSTAIN, LOUIS PASHMAN—
AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

Committee Reports

- Senator Julian Cyr's office would be re-filing the Embarkation Fee bill. An attempt to attach it to an end-of-2024-session bill failed. There was some FinCom concern over:
 - Nantucket opposition as too steep an increase in commuter ticket prices, and
 - Barnstable appropriations requiring revenue percentages be dedicated to fire districts and shared harbors (see below: Actions).
- State Representative Thomas Moakley will be on Island Friday (see below: Meetings Events, & Actions) for local office hours.
- Earlier in the meeting, Chair Nancy Gilfoy reported that Jonathan Snyder announced his retirement in January 2026 at today's Tisbury Select Board (TSB) meeting. Mr. Snyder gave a year's notice in order to allow for an early

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search process and substantial overlap for training and hand over. The FinCom discussed the Town transitioning from veteran staff, Town Administrator, Finance Director, Accountant, Conservation, etc. and FinCom advocacy for incremental changes for a more efficient Town Hall with clear lines of authority.

- The TSB approved new Town Administrator Joe LaCivita's salary to start March 1st, although the contract had not yet been signed. Mr. LaCivita and family were here to look at the Town Hall Annex and looked at rental housing for his first year (shout out to Rick Homens for finding unpublicized rentals), after which it was hoped the house on Spring Street (the old Waterworks headquarters would be renovated. W.T. Rich, the Tisbury School Construction Managers, had been renting the house and made a number of improvements: sealing lead paint, enclosing basement flooding, installing a washer/dryer & air conditioners) however the Department of Public Works (DPW) had concerns about the 1914 house regarding lead paint, lead pipes, radon etc. that would require preliminary funding and inspections in FY25.

- Retiring Oak Bluffs Town Clerk was hired as the new Assistant Town Clerk.

- After persistent advocacy by Business Administrator Mark Friedman and Principal Sara Dingley the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) received a \$437,549 Rural Aid grant—which had to be spent within FY25. The December/January timing of the grant was a challenge to budgeting.

- Water Resources will meet Friday, January 10th to consider proposals for a 20 year plan for sewerage the Tashmoo and Lagoon Pond watershed.

- Sewer Advisory Board met today, and aside from individual lot requests, worked to standardize the application and extension of permits processes.

- An 88 seat fast food restaurant was proposed for the Golden Bowl location. Fast food restaurants had minimal sewer flow (less dishwashing), but generated more solid waste (paper plates, etc.).

- The Climate Committee elected new Chair Daniel Phelan. The Committee had a number of warrant articles that should be reviewed/coordinated with DPW Director Kirk Metell who, unfortunately, was struggling with health issues.

- The Tisbury School Committee (TSC) would meet next week to approve its FY26 Budget.

- Chair Nancy Gilfoy was able to tentatively schedule a meeting on the MVRHS Building Project for January 29th.

Future Meetings (See below: Meetings/Events, & Actions.)

The FinCom explored the FY26 Town budget process and how to better engage with the TSB.

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- None of the TSB members had been on the FinCom, (usually stepping stone to Select Board election) and so all were unfamiliar with the budget process.
- The TSB relied on and took seriously FinCom recommendations and often altered Department budgets accordingly. Consequently, it was agreed that the Departments should come to the FinCom first. However, the FinCom requested the TSB review proposed staffing requests.
- The lack of an active Town Administrator retarded/challenged the process.
- The FinCom requested a Select Board member attend their meeting.
- The FinCom again requested information on the: tax levy, Free Cash estimate, local receipts, etc. It was difficult to recommend budgets and articles without knowing this important information.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

• *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO ADJOURN ABOUT 8:04PM; LOUIS PASHMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ELAINE MILLER—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—ABSTAIN, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- Moakley Office – Friday, January 10, 2025 – 11:00AM-1:00PM OB Library
2:00-4:00PM, West Tisbury
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesdays, January 15, 22, 29, 2025 – Zoom**
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesdays, February 5, 12, 2025 – TBD**
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesdays, February 19, 26, 2025 - TBD**
- STM/ATM – 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 29, 2025 Tis. Sch. Gym

Appendix B: Actions

ConCom – provide income/fee revenue.

ConCom – re-discuss/vote FY26 budget/agent hours & pay, consult Pam Bennet & resubmit to Elena DeFoe.

Nancy – contact Kirk Metell & Erik Blake re: putting ongoing capital maintenance items in budgets.

Nancy – check Embarkation law re: exempting MV from Barnstable appropriations.

Nancy – contact Rep. Moakley re: Embarkation Law advocacy.

Nancy – contact TSB re: requesting a member at all FinCom budget meetings.

Jon S. – *Please provide tax levy limit/free cash estimate/local receipts, i.e. big picture of FY26 Town resources.*

continued

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Appendix B: Actions (cont.)

Jon S. – add to capital planning spreadsheet

- new fire truck
- contact Mike Taus re; Tisbury School expenses (e.g. carpet, painting, etc.)

All – contact Nancy with any request to review a department budget.

All – Please remember not to hit “Reply All”.

Future Agendas – Minutes: 1/8/25,

- Conservation Commission Revised Budget

Budget Season Notes

- Request data on how much each Department turned back in FY23.
- Request projects for grant funding.
- Request capital projects
- attach budget/narrative modules to agendas.
- request/demand foundational information, levy, free cash estimates, etc.
- include Building Dept. fee revenues (offsetting expenses) in budget interview;
- ask departments to project all needs 5 years out i.e. like capital planning but on staffing, program changes, etc.

\$200,000 FY25 Reserve Fund spending tally – Balance: \$160,000

- 12/11/24 – Accounting - \$40,000 – Ongoing Consultants

Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda/Revised Agenda (2 p.) 1/8/25
- Capital Planning FY 2025 – 2035 (2 p.) 1/7/25
- Gilfoy email re: FinCom in January 1/4/25
- To Establish and Fund a Conservation Agent Position for the Town of Tisbury
Conservation Department 12/4/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 171 Conservation
(3 p.) 1/3/25
- Article Submission Form – December 13, 2024, Community Preservation
Committee (6 p.) 12/13/24

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved as corrected 2/5/25