

Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee
6:30PM, Wednesday, January 15, 2025
Emergency Services Facility

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Present: Chair – Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Russ Hartenstine,
Elaine Miller, Louis Pashman, Rachel Orr,
Others: Recorder – Marni Lipke,
Town: TSB Chair John Cahill, Finance Director Jonathan Snyder,
County: Manager Martina Thornton, Commissioners – Tristan Israel,
Randy Milch, Doug Ruskin, Norm Werthwein,
DCHCAP/Public Benefits – Lenore Manacia
Regional CFL – Leslie Clapp, Mary Holmes,
NonProfits: CORE – Victoria Barr, Ralle Greenberg, MVCS – Jessica Tartell
MVHH – Sharon Brown, Brian Morris, HAMV – Cindy Trish,
* TFC members late arrivals or early departures.

Call Meeting to Order

- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:32PM.

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

Review of Regional Services Budgets

All budgets were presented in the standard form developed last year. This year a clear distinction was made between Dukes County articles and other regional non-profits. The Dukes County Health Care Access (DCHCA) and Public Benefit programs were both County Departments.

Martha's Vineyard Center For Living (CFL/C4L) – Leslie Clapp and Mary Holmes

- Executive Director Leslie Clapp was retiring and introduced her successor Mary Holmes, who had been with and loved the CFL for 5 years. CFL started in 1985 at the Edgartown Council on Aging, 'Anchors', and has been at this location since 2006.
- Tisbury's 18% share of the total cost to the Towns by the 50% population/50% real estate value formula was \$121,828.
- The FinCom appreciated that their budget was 1% down from FY25, despite expanding the services. For example a new in-home respite care program had 3 new grant-funded employees—the grant to be replaced with fundraising and sponsorships when it expired. Except for a small overlap, in-home respite care clients were in addition to the daycare clients.
- Grant income was shown in summary. Another grant expanded software capability, allowing CFL to track programs and increase clientele without

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expanding staff. CFL was preparing for political climate shifts in grant funding.

- Administration was also looking at the fee structure as a revenue source, for example requesting payment in advance. Elder Services had a sliding scale for subsidizing qualifying clients, however CFL received the same fee per individual. The Center's policy was to be generous with private patients, free opportunities, open houses, etc.
- CFL paid building upkeep and expenses in the form of rent to the building's owner, Dukes County. This year liability and building insurance increases (projected at 15% over FY25) raised the 'rent'.
- The trend was for elders to age in place longer with increased services—in-home care was \$35-45 per hour.
- The FinCom and CFL representatives exchanged thanks.

Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard (HAMV) – Cindy Trish

- HAMV became a Non-Profit 501c3 on July 1, 2024 in order to take better advantage of grant opportunities—HAMV was aggressive in researching and obtaining grants, e.g. the millionaires tax for transportation. There were 3 additional grant-funded part-time staff. Programs were funded by grants and donations.
- Previously the Towns funded 100% of the HAMV budget, now they funded ~ 20% mostly for:
 - Executive Director – first salary increase in 4 years, (except for less than 2% Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) per year) plus health, dental, prescription, vision insurance;
 - operational costs (rent, Information Technology (IT), etc.). In separating from Martha's Vineyard Community Services (MVCS) HAMV was looking for a modest one-room office—possibly in a church or the CFL building 2nd floor.
- Tisbury's share was \$23,805. As robust users (Gogo Grandparent, Home Safety Audit, Matter of Balance trainings, and in-home Tech-Pro support), service costs for Tisbury residents' far out-weighed this sum. And in a mutually beneficial partnership HAMV and the Councils on Aging (COAs) attracted new clients for each other.
- HAMV was piloting or planning new programs:
 - a no-cost volunteer-based transportation programs for older adults,
 - a revenue-based Aging Camp at Stillpoint,
 - a directory and possible program on caring for an older adult,
 - time-banking volunteer work to trade in credits for various services or discounts (including taxes),
- With 25% of the population over 80 yrs of age, HAMV had grave concerns, as seen in the long wait list for Island Elderly Housing. The Island would have to think differently about funding and regionalizing services.

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Harbor Homes Martha's Vineyard (HHMV) – Brian Morris and Sharon Brown

- HHMV was the only organization dedicated to the homeless, a population and problem both seasonal and permanent that continued to worsen. Tisbury's share was \$13,674 which paid for specialists such as caseworker Sharon Brown. Services included:
 - prevention,
 - shelter,
 - service to clients in preferred alternatives—the forest, cars, etc., and
 - emergency related homelessness.
- Executive Director Brian Morris highly commended Caseworker Sharon Brown for her skill, tact, perseverance and success in relating to and providing services for a wide variety of clients.
- The FinCom described personal experiences with the growing homeless and given the smallness of the request asked if there was anything further the HHMV needed. The Shelter referred to the need for a shelter facility with office space and IT capability still in extended search, unfortunately due to general neighborhood opposition.
- HHMV representatives thanked the FinCom for their understanding, the FinCom thanked HHMV for their work, time and attention.

Counseling, Outreach and Referral for Elders (CORE) – Martha's Vineyard Community Services (MVCS) – Victoria Barr and Ralle Greenberg

Tisbury's share was \$18,468 which included the 14% MVCS allocation for financial pass-through. Clinical supervisors Jessica Tartell and Ralle Greenberg were paid by MVCS. CORE provided services (mostly mental health) to at risk elders 55 years and up—although most of the 108 Islandwide clients were over 80 and homebound. There was also 1 weekly support group social worker (not part of the budget) for families concerned about their elders. Grants funded an additional 1.5 staff members. The Towns funded the Director and Assistant Director who also did substantial counseling. CORE did not receive any direct Medicare or Medicaid funds. HAMV, CFL, CORE, the MVCS Counseling Center, Martha's Vineyard Hospital (MVH) and Martha's Vineyard Hospice were in constant contact.

- The CORE representatives and FinCom exchanged thanks.

Dukes County Health Care Access (DCHCA) and Dukes County Public Benefits Access – Lenore Maniaci

Public Benefits coordinated closely with MVHH's Sharon Brown. Tisbury's share was \$10,895 which included a request for support staff caseworker Wendy Maseda. Dukes County Manager Martina Thornton and the FinCom praised Ms. Maseda's impressive bureaucratic knowledge and skill.

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- Due to a vacant position, the County would return unspent FY24 funds as soon as the audit was complete and the fiscal year certified.
- As Director of Health and Human Resource Director Lenore Maniaci (see 1/10/24 Minutes p.20) had substantially relieved Ms. Thornton's work load.
- DCHCA – Tisbury's share was \$107,794. In 2023 Tisbury and Oak Bluffs were the leading users of the service. The service struggled to serve the growing clientele. The only competitive grant was for Vineyard Smiles which was raised from \$12,500 to \$18,500.
- The 61% increase in phone, utilities, etc. was due to increased technology services to increase staff efficiency and reduce manpower hours; staff licenses, security audits, e-signatures, faster document transmittal, streamlined data collection, etc. More updates were needed for data systems, website and client information. County Commissioner Doug Ruskin commended Ms. Maniaci for her forward thinking.
- Like the CFL, DCHCA paid building upkeep in the form of rent to Dukes County. The building was not big enough for all the needed staff—Ms. Maniaci spent most of her time at the County Administration Building. Security and confidentiality made it impossible to see clients in other locations.
- The program had been understaffed in prior years and the numbers continued to fluctuate due to housing, maternity leaves, etc.

Review of County Supplemental Income Request

Martina Thornton, County Manager

Doug Ruskin, Randy Milch, Norm Werthwein, County Commissioners

(Further County budget explanation – see 11/22/16 Minutes p.1-2.)

- The County was working on two further regional services:
 - a \$500,000 grant for an Islandwide Board of Health (BOH) shared employee to help with food inspections, seasonal rush, etc.;
 - \$100,000 from previous pandemic funding to hire an Islandwide emergency management consultant for disaster preparedness.
- The County was restricted by law to a 2.5% allocation increase per year and had no way to raise revenues or impose taxes, and the County Advisory Board (CAB) scrutinized the budget line by line and was very strict on returning funds to the Towns.
 - The COVID related spike in Registry of Deeds income (see 12/8/21 Minutes p.1) when the County returned over \$1,600,000 to the Towns, hid the growing gap in the Town/County allocation. In addition, the Trial Courthouse rent decreased, due to a “don't spend previous year can't charge next year” bylaw. For example: in FY24 the Town ask was \$42,000, in FY25 \$97,000, in FY26 \$120,000—despite a \$38,500 interest residual from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

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- These asks covered the fairly standard budget increases:
 - insurance rates: 15% in liability, \$11,000 in building, 8% in health,
 - COLAs/steps—the average Island COLAs were ~ 4%, the County's ~ 1.5%,
 - \$52,000 Dukes County Retirement Benefits (required).
- The law also required the County budget be submitted by November 1st, 8 months before spending commenced and well before important information such as insurance rates were released. It was a very bare bones budget that remained fairly stable, funding only:
 - County Manager's office,
 - legal services,
 - Treasurer's office,
 - Registry of Deeds,
 - Veterans office,
 - and a janitor.

The only place that could legally be reduced/cut were social services such as Health and Human Services—which would not effect the County budget.

- A previous attempt to raise revenues through State Beach parking ticket violations ended disastrously. As a State-owned County-managed beach, the revenue went to Massachusetts; there were front page press protests, and the County Engineer (who was writing the tickets) resigned in the uproar.
 - Remediation of last year's storm damage to the Beach was managed by Edgartown—hopefully with Massachusetts/Federal Emergency Management Agencies (MEMA/FEMA) funds.
- County Representatives expected to return after the Annual Town Meetings (ATMs) to propose and discuss legislative changes around community support for the County budget.
- There was a discussion on the Island aging population and growing need for social services most sustainably funded on an Islandwide basis. As a primary user of these services Tisbury residents were being subsidized by the County's equalized value formula.

Committee Reports – Tabled

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

The budget interview schedule was as follows:

- January 22nd – Tisbury School, Martha's Vineyard Regional High School & School Building Committee and the Superintendent Shared Services;
- January 29th – Fire, Ambulance, Emergency Management and Department of Public Works;
- February 5th – Shellfish and the Harbormaster;
- February 12th – Police Department.

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The Treasurer/Finance Department, Select Board, Library, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning Board and Martha's Vineyard Commission were still to be scheduled.

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – None

Adjournment

The FinCom welcomed Select Board (TSB) member John Cahill, and thanked all the non-profit and County representatives for their time and attendance.

• *ELAINE MILLER MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:42PM; RUSS HARTENSTINE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, LOUIS PASHMAN—AYE, ELAINE MILLER—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

Appendix A: Meetings/Events

- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesdays, January 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

CFL – please report grant revenue info more prominently.

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, 1/15/25

- Conservation Commission Revised Budget
- May/June/July – reconsidering Dukes County/Towns budget allocations.

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

continued

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Appendix C: Documents on File

- Agenda 1/15/25
- FY2026 ATM – Tisbury, Submitted on December 13, 2024, 4 funding requests submitted by Dukes County As Part of Oak Bluffs FY2026 Budget (2 p.)
- FY2026 ATM – Tisbury, Submitted on December 13, 2024, 4 funding requests submitted by Dukes County (2 p.)
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Martha's Vineyard Center For Living 12/27/24
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Dukes County Health Care Access Program 12/27/24
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Public Benefits Access 12/27/24
- Harbor Homes of Martha's Vineyard 12/27/24
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Martha's Vineyard Community Services, Inc./CORE 12/27/24,
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard, Inc. (HAMV) 12/27/24
- FY2026 County Request for Funding
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Martha's Vineyard Center For Living (4 p.) 12/27/24
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard, Inc. (HAMV) (4 p.)12/27/24
- Harborhomesmv.com. Regional Program Funding Request – Summary (4 p.) 12/27/24
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Martha's Vineyard Community Services, Inc./CORE (4 p.) 12/27/24,
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Public Benefits Access (4 p.) 12/27/24
- Dukes County Regional Programs, Dukes County Health Care Access Program (8 p.) 12/27/24
- FY25 to FY26 Changes that affect the County General Fund Budget
- County of Dukes County, Budget Summary

Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

Date

Minutes approved 2/5/25