

**Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee**  
**6:30PM, Thursday, February 13, 2025**  
**Tisbury Senior Center**

1

**Present:** Chair – Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Russ Hartenstine,  
Elaine Miller, Rachel Orr, Louis Pashman,  
**Others:** Recorder – Marni Lipke,  
**Town:** Finance Director Jonathan Snyder, BOH – Drew Belski,  
Library – Director Amy Ryan, Trustee – Pamela Street,  
\* TFC members late arrivals, early departures or absences.

**Call Meeting to Order**

- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:35PM. Thanks for being here  
(*Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.*)

**Review of Library Budget and Warrant Articles**

**Amy Ryan, Director**

(See documents on file, & Minutes: 10/30/24 p.2-3, & 11/6/24 p.1-2.)

The FinCom thanked the Library representatives for their Budget which was only up 3.4%.

- The first Project Request For Proposal (RFP) failed to find sufficient bids. After re-working, (eliminating primary heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) designation) the second package would interview and award in early March. The Owners Project Manager (OPM) was soliciting contractors hopefully resulting in at least 2 bids. Bidders had to be Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM) certified but could engage some local sub-contractors. Director Amy Ryan would keep the FinCom informed.
  - Work could start before the summer to be completed within a year but if the start date was delayed there could be budget implications. The building would be vacant but the Department would still pay utility bills. Temporary space rent was reasonable and paid by the Endowment Fund. Moving and storage were included in construction costs.
- If bids came within estimate (depending on the impact of federal tariff actions) there should be enough contingency to pay for solar installation within the project timeframe and by the same General Contractor (the roof would be solar ready). As a renovation project grants were also uncertain/unlikely, so some additional funds were requested in an article (see below).
- State library certification required a certain percentage of the Department budget be spent on library materials, which increased as staff costs rose,

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee**  
**February 13, 2025**

**2**

although the State waives the regulation for libraries under construction.

- The Library was fully staffed, so salaries rebounded after the Covid pandemic dip. Retiring veterans and turnover brought some volatility and part-time staffing fill—although summer was busier, winter had more hours.
- Instead of lay-offs during construction Amy Ryan hoped workers would segue into other Town Departments needing temporary support.

Warrant Articles:

- Solar installation (\$150,000) see above p.1).
- The request to increase the Reference Librarian position to Assistant Library Director was proposed last year but postponed by Town Administrator's Jay Grande to await union reclassification. As the Library was often open 7 days a week an Asst. Director could cover with vendors, emergencies, etc. and add a layer of responsibility during construction. The Reference Librarian had the most flexible time. The fairly small salary increase could be absorbed from summer temporary positions.
- The FinCom thanked the Library representatives for their attendance.

**Review of Board of Health (BOH) Budget and Warrant Article**

Malcom Boyd, Chair, Board of Health *(not present)*

**Drew Belski, Health Agent** (See documents on file & below: Actions.)

- Everyone introduced themselves to new Health Agent Drew Belski and complimented the Island's BOH's regionalization work.
- Budget – Mr. Belski commended former Health Agent Maura Valley for setting up the BOH for success despite the loss of 40 years of tenured staff.
- Island Health Agents were part of a grant group able to hire 2 regional staff: a shared health inspector and a tick biologist for Lime Disease and Alpha-gal. In future it might be necessary to hire an Islandwide caseworker. (The grant thru fiscal agent Dukes County partially funded the Shared Services Coordinator.)
- Currently each Town BOH had to fill 6 or 7 roles. Of the 3 Tisbury staff members, Drew Belski inspected septic and nitrogen-loading, Second Health Agent Fred Hehre inspected food vendors, camps, etc. and Administrative Assistant Valerie Soushek was working well above her pay grade—paperwork/reporting had burgeoned in the last 30 years.
- 2024 State Economic Legislation mandated inspectors be additional certifications: BOH and registered sanitarians, in addition to the Serve Safe and Pool Operators, etc., which might require more staff Instruction/Training.
- Fees did not cover all Department expenses and the FinCom would include them when reviewing service fee levels.
- A Tisbury fund to subsidize Innovative/Alternate (IA) septic systems by low interest loans replenished itself as loans were paid back, but many residents preferred The Resource Inc. (TRI) which forgave loans after a certain period.

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee**  
**February 13, 2025**

**3**

- Warrant Article – The Article was for a grant writer for watershed planning (\$50,000) closely connected with the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) (see 2/5/25 Minutes p.4). The amount was based on the current consultant's FY24 fees; the source to be determined by the Finance Director.
- The FinCom thanked Drew Belski for his report and work. Mr. Belski thanked the FinCom for their hard work.

**Review of Finance Director's Budgets and Warrant Articles**

**Jonathan Snyder, Finance Director**

(See documents on file, & below: Actions.)

Budgets – Treasurer/Collector – The largest component was salaries, Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) and steps.

- In addition Mr. Snyder included double salary for 3-4 months of overlap with his successor (see 1/8/25 Minutes p.4-5). He expected to urge the TSB to start the hiring process in July 2025 to be ready for his January 2026 retirement.

- Credit card fees were up 11% to match spending trends. New Dockwa charges reverted to the customers. On-line tax billing fees were regulated differently.

- Last year expensive postage meter cartridges were inadvertently left out of this budget which accounted for the steep rise in FY26 Office Supplies.

- There was enough space in other lines to pay for any increases in Travel/Mileage, Dues/Subscriptions, and Instruction/Training, during the Treasurer transition. On the principal that more education was better both he and the Assistant Treasurer attended the August 2024 Treasurer's School.

- Debt & Interest – This Budget reflected the sewer and library bonds. The Tisbury School bond was slightly lower due to less capital but would remain level for the next 28 years. The DPW \$5,000,000 bond had been completely borrowed with \$2,000,000 remaining to be spent (see 2/5/25 Minutes p.2). The Town was considerably above its debt limit facing 2 other major projects, the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), and a new Town Hall.

- Unfortunately rising interest rates made it impossible to pre-pay capital.

- The FinCom suggested shorter term bonds to stabilize the debt. The Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) would examine these larger issues.

- County Assessment – rose 5% (\$89,000) to pay down the Dukes County Contributory Retirement pension liability.

- Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) – was shifted to Free Cash funding last year during the temporary override crisis and was now returned to the Budget.

- Mr. Snyder gave an update on Department status (see Minutes: 1/10/24 p.3, & 1/17/24 p.5). Originally Mr. Grande only allowed \$10,000 for consulting to relieve the Dept. staffing shortfall and educate staff, the sum had run out before the \$40,000 Reserve Fund transfer (see 12/11/24 Minutes p.2-3) for continued support could be instituted. After the RFP process the consultant should be available in 1-2 weeks—in the meantime the Auditor would Zoom in.

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee**  
**February 13, 2025**

**4**

- Massachusetts Dept. of Revenue (DOR) informed Tisbury it was egregiously late in filing Schedule A—the FY24 closing and Free Cash summary. (The Assessors office lost 2 of its 3 staff—another strain on Town finance filing.)
- Interim Accountant Libby Cleary would complete certification in 6-12 months.

Warrant Articles:

Most of these were standard housekeeping articles.

- There was some concern over a prior year insurance bill, which had involved questions that were never answered. The Martha's Vineyard Insurance Agency covered the payment gap.
- Annual contributions to the Fire and Ambulance Stabilization funds were doubled in consideration of rising costs—proposed and then pulled last year (see 3/6/24 Minutes p.4).
- Mr. Snyder requested guidance becoming a member of the Fish Committee.

**Discussion and Potential Votes on Budgets and Articles Previously Reviewed** (See documents on file.)

• LOUIS PASHMAN MOVED *TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING 2025 SPECIAL AND ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES AS PRESENTED:*

- HEAR AND RECEIVE REPORTS,
- OFFICIAL BONDS,
- BORROWING TO ANTICIPATE,
- COMPENSATING BALANCE,
- PRIOR YEAR BILLS (\$33,481.56)
- SICK VACATION TRUST (\$110,000)
- LOCAL DROP OFF (LDO) (\$135,000)
- CONTINUING AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION (ACE) (\$10,000),
- DUKES COUNTY COMMUNICATION (\$46,133.74),
- ASSESSORS QUINQUENNIAL (\$20,000)
- NON-UNION RECLASSIFICATION,
- MANAGEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL (M&P),

LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

• The FinCom noted that whereas there was sufficient Free Cash and Stabilization, the difficulty was the tax levy and Town budget.

• RACHEL ORR MOVED *TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING BUILDING MAINTENANCE WARRANT ARTICLES AS PRESENTED:*

- DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING LOCKS (\$33,200),
- EMERGENCY SERVICES FACILITY DOORS (\$22,000),
- SENIOR CENTER FLOORS (\$18,000),

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
February 13, 2025**

5

- **SENIOR CENTER HEAT PUMPS (\$64,300),**
- **POLICE STATION ROOF (\$55,000),**
- **HARBORMASTER'S BUILDING (\$150,000);**

LOUIS PASHMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.** (See 2/5/25 Minutes p.2-3.)

- ELAINE MILLER MOVED **TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS WARRANT ARTICLE ON THE PURCHASE OF A ROLLER FOR \$15,000** AS PRESENTED; LOUIS PASHMAN SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

- RUSS HARTENSTINE MOVED **TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AMBULANCE DEPARTMENT WARRANT ARTICLE ON THE PURCHASE OF A LUCAS CARDIO-PULMONARY RESUSCITATION DEVICE FOR \$15,000** AS PRESENTED; ELAINE MILLER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

(See Minutes:1/29/25 p.4, & 2/12/25 p.3)

The FinCom debated the repairs to the rescue boat:

- the benefit of a range of vessels and a Town boat in Tashmoo for emergencies;
- damage during training when learning to work with new equipment;
- the expensiveness of the repair;
- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO DIRECT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT TO INSURE THE BOAT TO COVER FUTURE REPAIRS.

- RUSS HARTENSTINE MOVED **TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FIRE DEPARTMENT WARRANT ARTICLE ON THE REPAIR OF THE RESCUE BOAT FOR \$25,000** AS PRESENTED; ELAINE MILLER SECONDED; MOTION **PASSED: 5 AYES, 1 NAY—NANCY GILFOY, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

- RACHEL ORR MOVED **TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HARBORMASTER DEPARTMENT WARRANT ARTICLE ON THE OWEN PARK PIER REPLACEMENT FOR \$150,000** AS PRESENTED; ELAINE MILLER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.** (See 2/12/25 Minutes p.3.)

- The 70 new moorings raised a number of issues (see 2/12/25 Minutes p.3):

- a sound way to significantly increase Town revenue;
- reduction of the years-long mooring waitlist for residents;
- whether the small Department could support the extra moorings;
- installation the same year as Owen Park Pier and building renovation;
- whether bulk buying was cheaper;
- allowing the purchase to give the Dept. flexibility on installation timing.

The FinCom would request further information from the Harbormaster.

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
February 13, 2025**

**6**

- RACHEL ORR MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HARBORMASTER DEPARTMENT WARRANT ARTICLE ON THE NEW MOORINGS FOR \$200,000 AS PRESENTED; ELAINE MILLER SECONDED; MOTION WITHDRAWN.

The Library solar panels would pay for themselves in a short timeframe. Grants were on a reimbursement basis.

- *RUSS HARTENSTINE MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE ON **LIBRARY DEPARTMENT SOLAR INSTALLATION FOR \$150,000** AS PRESENTED; LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.***

**Discussion and Potential Votes on Other Budgets** – Tabled

**Committee Reports** – Tabled

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

Chair Nancy Gilfoy thanked everyone for tonight's progress. The FinCom commended her leadership. She reported the following updates.

- Spring Street House renovation drew concern from the Tashmoo Spring Building Board including septic issues so close to the Town water source.
- Building Inspector Greg Monka met with Personnel's Pam Bennett.
- The FinCom started to discuss global Town issues, an absent Town Administrator, short staffed departments, budgets that were 70% personnel, lack of strategic planning...
- Wednesday 2/19/25 – Meeting on TSB budgets and warrant articles, including the Town Administrator Bylaw (after the discussion at the December Special Town Meeting (STM)) and the Leaf Blower bylaw with Department Heads and community feedback.
- Thursday 2/20/25 – The FinCom would meet to discuss global Town issues.

**Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair** – None

**Adjournment**

- LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 9:08PM; ELAINE MILLER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events**

- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, February 19, 2025 – In-person ESF**
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Thursday, February 20, 2025 – Zoom**

**continued**

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
February 13, 2025**

7

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events (cont.)**

- TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, February 26, 2025 – TBD
- TFC/TSB – 6:30PM, Wednesday, March 5, 2025 – KCT In-person/Hybrid
- TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, March 12, 19, 26, 2025 – TBD
- STM/ATM – 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 29, 2025 Tis. Sch. Gym

**Appendix B: Actions**

Drew B. – send permit revenue information in categories.

Jon S. – research why is Telephone up,

– are Travel Mileage & Instruction/Training sufficient for transition

Hillary – delete Prudent Investor article.

Nancy – ask re: 70 new moorings, staffing/timing harbor bldg., Owen pier, etc.

Nancy – post 2/20/25 Zoom meeting on global issues.

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

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

Future Agendas – Minutes: 1/29/25, 2/5/25, 2/12/25, 2/13/25

**Budget Season Notes**

- Request data on how much each Department turned back in FY24.
- Request projects for grant funding.
- Request capital projects.
- Attach budget/narrative modules to agendas.
- Request/demand foundational information, levy, free cash estimates, etc.
- include fee revenues (offsetting expenses) in budget interviews;
- ask departments to project 5 years of needs i.e. like a capital plan but on other factors—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.) 1/13/25
- Town Clerk memo re: Draft #2 (8 p.) 2/5/25
- Gilfoy cover email re; Revised agenda for meeting tonight and list of department budgets under 5% increases 2/13/25
- Budgets with less than 5% increase (or close)
- 2025 ATM/STM – Articles (2 p.)
- 2025 ATM FY26 Budgets (2 p.)
- Gilfoy/Snyder emails re: Free Cash (4 p.) 2/12/25
- Town of Tisbury – FY2026 Budget & Levy Limit (3 p.) 2/10/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 610 Library (4 p.) 1/16/25

**continued >**

**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
February 13, 2025**

**8**

**Appendix C: Documents on File (cont.)**

- Article Submission Form – ATM – Capital Appropriations and Other New Equipment (2 p.) 12/11/24 - Library Solar
- Article Submission Form – ATM – Library Solar Installation 12/13/24
- Article Submission Form – STM – Establish the New Position of Assistant Library Director/Adult Services Librarian at the Vineyard Haven Public Library 1/29/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 510 Board of Health (4 p.) 1/9/23
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 510 Board of Health (4 p.) 1/3/25
- Town of Tisbury, Board of Health, 2025 Annual Town Meeting, Warrant Article, Implementation and Management of watershed management plans... 1/16/25
- Board of Health Revenues
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 145 Treasurer/Collector (4 p.) 1/8/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 146 Treasurer/Collector Other (3 p.) 1/8/25 & Revised 2/14/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 135 Accountant (3 p.) 1/3/25 & Revised (3 p.) 1/16/23
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 700 Debt & Interest (2 p.) 1/8/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 830 County Assessments (2 p.) 1/8/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 919 OPEB Benefits (2 p.) 1/8/25
- Article Submission Form – ATM (2 p.) 12/4/24
  - Hear or Receive Reports
  - Bills of Prior Years
  - FY2026 Budget
  - To Fund General Stabilization Fund
  - To Fund Capital Building and Infrastructure Stabilization Fund
- ATM 26 General Fund Prior Year Bills, Annual Town Meeting (2 p.) 1/21/25
- Article Submission Form – STM (2 p.) 12/4/24
  - To Obtain Official Bonds
  - To Borrow in Anticipation of Revenues
  - To Enter into a Compensating Balance Agreement

**continued >**



**Tisbury Finance & Advisory Committee  
February 13, 2025**

**9**

**Appendix C: Documents on File (cont.)**

- Article Submission Form (Revised) – ATM – To Add Funds to the Stabilization Fund for Fire, Ambulance, and Public Works Departments 11/18/24 (\$370,000)
- Town Meeting Articles – 12/4/24
  - Quinquennial Certification of All Real Estate and Personal Property Amend Classification Plan for Managerial & Professional Employees
  - Amend Classification Plan for Non-Union Part-Time, Seasonal and Temporary Employees
- Town of Tisbury, Warrant Article to Support Continuing & Community Education on Martha's Vineyard (3 p.) 12/6/24
- Town of Tisbury ATM – To Fund Maintenance Costs of the Martha's Vineyard Public Safety Communications System (4 p.) 11/25/24
- Gilfoy/Kovack emails re: Follow-up questions 2/18/25

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Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

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Date

Minutes approved as amended 2/20/25