

**Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee**  
**6:30PM, Wednesday, March 12, 2025**  
**by Zoom Cloud Conference**

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**Present:** Chair – Nancy Gilfoy, Louise Clough, Russ Hartenstine,

Rachel Orr, Allan Rogers,

**Others:** Recorder – Marni Lipke,

**Town:** Finance Director – Jonathan Snyder,

Moderator – Deborah Medders,

\* TFC members late arrivals, early departures or absences.

**Call Meeting to Order**

- The Tisbury Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) was called to order at 6:31PM. *(Recorder's note: Discussions are summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity)*

**Reserve Fund Request Finance Committee** (See 3/5/25 Minutes p.5.)

- The unusually large number of meetings had exhausted and/or overdrawn the FinCom's Purchased Services line. The Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) FinCom budget had been similarly revised (see below: p. 2).
- *LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO AUTHORIZE THE TRANSFER \$5,000 FROM THE RESERVE FUND TO COVER THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OVERAGE; ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

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

Earlier in the meeting, Finance Director Jon Snyder reported the contract accountant completed a strong estimate for Free Cash, at \$10,000,000. The cause was not yet clear: over-budgeting, staff vacancies, under-estimated revenues or other sources.

- In consultation with the new Town Administrator and several Department Heads it was decided to distribute the excess as follows:
  - \$2,000,000 to General Stabilization,
  - \$2,000,000 to Building and Infrastructure Stabilization, and
  - \$800,000 to Fire Stabilization to contract for an engine for delivery in 2-3 yrs,
  - leaving \$2,600,000 to rollover into next year.
- An initial survey confirmed the levy limit and a \$1,000,000+ override.
- Mr. Snyder applied to the Department of Revenue/Division of Local Services (DOR/DLS) for permission to take the Wastewater contribution (see Minutes: 2/5/25 p.3-4, & 3/4/25 p.3 #21) out of Free Cash which would reduce the override to ~ \$630,000.

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- The FinCom was disturbed at this growing financial anomaly.
- They requested funds be used to re-activate and expand the Municipal Housing Trust for Tisbury residents in the housing crisis (see also below: p. 4).
- Readjusting local revenues would have immediate effects.
- It could not be used to eliminate the override, as DOR/DLS frowned on using Free Cash (unreliable revenue) for the tax rate; and Free Cash use would inflate the tax rate for the following fiscal year.
- Lifeguards line (\$40,000) was transferred from the Fire Dept. to the Department of Public Works (DPW) budget.
- The Council on Aging (COA) budget (see 2/12/25 Minutes p.1) was increased \$10,000 to expand the Elder Companion position (on current staff retirement) to include referrals and support, e.g. to Dukes County regionals social services.
- The Tisbury Select Board (TSB) budget (see 2/19/25 minutes p.4-5) was down \$14,000 from decreases in the several lines: Department Head, vehicle maintenance, instruction, copier, etc.
- The FinCom budget covered minute-taking, the Voter Guide and minimal funds for conferences.
- **ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR 2026 DEPARTMENT BUDGETS AS REVISED:**

**FIRE DEPARTMENT #220,**

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS #422,**

**COUNCIL ON AGING DEPARTMENT #541,**

**FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE DEPARTMENT #131,**

**SELECT BOARD BUDGET #123,**

RUSS HARTENSTINE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

• There was no further word on the short-term rental position (see Minutes: 1/29/25 p.1-2, & 2/12/25 p.5, & 2/26/25 p.3) so the Building Inspector Budget stood as presented at 5%. Building Inspector Other Budget was up 8.8% (\$9,000) for raises to the Plumbing and Wiring inspectors.

• **RUSS HARTENSTINE MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE BUILDING INSPECTOR #241 FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET AS PRESENTED:** LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

• **RUSS HARTENSTINE MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE BUILDING INSPECTOR OTHER #240 FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET AS PRESENTED:** LOUISE CLOUGH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED **UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS:** RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.

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- Police coverage was noted in light of the changing nature of Vineyard Haven culture by the steady relaxation of alcohol regulation. Edgartown and Oak Bluffs had higher police staff numbers despite lower call volume. Vacancies (see 2/12/25 p.1-2) and Town Administrator intervention were also a factor.
- *RUSS HARTENSTINE MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGETS AS PRESENTED:*

**- POLICE #210 AND**

**- POLICE TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT #211;**

*LOUISE CLOUGH AND ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

- The FinCom was disappointed that Tisbury School declined to reduce its budget (see Minutes 1/22/25 p.2-5, 3/4/25 p.2&5). Tisbury School Committee (TSC) liaison Louise Clough reported on their concerns about:
  - higher than expected and unknown electricity bills,
  - lower than usual School Choice as their only reserves, and
  - loss of federal grant funding.
- A tentative agreement with the Teachers Union could be ratified next week.
- Superintendent Richie Smith, Business Administrator Mark Friedman and Principal John Custer offered to attend a FinCom meeting.
- Island school districts consistently spent 200% over Chapter 70 State funding parameters, while other State districts averaged 145%.
- Public Safety and School budgets were driving the override.
- The Warrant deadline was getting close (see below: Meetings/ Events).
- The FinCom could delay their recommendation or split their vote now.
- The Town Operating Budget Warrant Article language had to encompass spending with and without the override. Override language stated “for School and Town expenses”.
- *LOUISE CLOUGH MOVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE TISBURY SCHOOL #300 FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET AS PRESENTED: ALLAN ROGERS SECONDED; MOTION WITHDRAWN.*
- A reporting error in the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) FY25 Budget resulted in significant assessment miscalculation. The MVRHSC cut \$600,000 from the FY25 Budget so Tisbury would be \$209,769.80 less.

**Approve Minutes 2/26/25**

- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 26, 2025 MINUTES; RUSS HARTENSTINE SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT: LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

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**Committee Reports** (See below: Meetings/Events.)

- In response to Community Preservation Committee (CPC) requirement an Affordable Housing Committee letter requested the Municipal Housing Trust become active (see above p. 2, & documents on file, & below: Actions).
- Tomorrow was the joint (and hybrid) meeting on the Comprehensive and Targeted Wastewater Management Plans (CSMP & TWMP).
- Climate Committee members Bill Straw and Daniel Phelan were interested in being part of building committees, including the New Town Hall Location Task Force—current members: Town Administrator Joe LaCivita, Lindsey Famaris, and Rick Homans. Russ Hartenstine requested FinCom participation and would volunteer if no one else was interested. FinCom speculation put the project cost at \$16,000,000.

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

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

**Adjournment**

Chair Nancy Gilfoy thanked everyone for all their work and the little left to do.

- *ALLAN ROGERS MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 7:30PM; RACHEL ORR SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS: LOUISE CLOUGH—AYE, RACHEL ORR—AYE, ALLAN ROGERS—AYE, RUSS HARTENSTINE—AYE, NANCY GILFOY—AYE.*

**Appendix A: Meetings/Events**

- CWMP, 4:30PM, Thursday, March 13, 2025 – ESF/Hybrid
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, March 19, 2025 – Zoom**
- **TFC – 6:30PM, Wednesday, March 26, 2025 – TBD**
- Ballot/Override deadline – Tuesday, March 25, 2025
- TFC Recommendation Deadline – Friday, March 28, 2025
- TSB signs Warrant 4/1/25
- STM/ATM – 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 29, 2025 Tis. Sch. Gym

**Appendix B: Actions**

Nancy – contact Jon S. re: Free Cash to Municipal Housing Trust.

Nancy – invite School administrators to March 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

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

**Future Agendas**

- Minutes: 3/4/25, 3/5/25, 3/12/25,
- Tisbury School Budget
- Municipal Housing Trust

**continued**

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**Appendix B: Actions (cont.)**

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: \$155,000

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

- 3/12/25 – FinCom - \$5,000 – Purchase Services Overage

**Appendix C: Documents on File**

- Agenda & Gilfoy cover email (2 p.) 3/12/25
- 2025 ATM – FY26 Budgets (2 p.) 3/6/25
- 2025 ATM/STM – Articles (3 p.) 3/6/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 241 Building (7 p.) 1/8/25
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 220 Fire (8 p.) 1/8/25  
*(revised)*
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 220 Fire (6 p.) 1/8/25  
*(revised)*
- Gilfoy cover email re: Fire staffing 2/9/25
- Weekly Portrait of 24-Hour Schedule on 1-page.
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 541 Council on Aging (3 p.) 1/3/25 *(revised)*
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 131 Finance Committee (3 p.) 1/3/25 *(revised)*
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 422 Public Works & Narrative (8 p.) 1/3/25 *(revised)*
- FY 2026 Budget Plan Town of Tisbury Department 122 Select Board (18 p.) 1/8/25 *(revised)*
- Gilfoy/Custer email re: Tisbury School FY26 Budget 3/12/25

**continued>**

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

- Tisbury School FY'26 Budget Analysis, Version #3.0, Approved, Tisbury January 14, 2025
- Tisbury School Budget for 2025/2026, Version #3.0, Approved, Tisbury January 14, 2025 (8 p.)
- Munafo (Community Preservation) letter re: Municipal Housing Trust 3/11/25
- Gilfoy cover email re: letter from CPC RE: Municipal Housing Trust 3/13/25
- Chat: Deborah Medders 7:21PM – Good night – thank you for what you do preparing for ATM!

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Nancy Gilfoy – Chair

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Date

*Minutes approved as amended 3/26/25*