

Town of Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, January 13, 2022 5:00 pm
Via Zoom Conference

Present: Chair –**Bob Gaffey, Dion Alley, Sherry Countryman, Bernie Crossland, Maura McGroarty, Mike Taus, Walter Vail, Bill Vrooman,**

Absent: **Richard Weiss**

Others: Recorder - Debra Alley. Town Administrator - Deborah Potter. Harbor Master – Todd Alexander, Police Chief – Chief Blake, OBPD – Sgt. Nick Curelli, Fire Chief – Chief Wirtz.

5:00 pm The Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) came to order.

Review minutes December 7, 2021 meeting. Ms McGroarty asked to correct the amount under the Highway from \$16,000 to \$62,000. Otherwise, minutes approved. Mr. Taus moved the minutes be accepted with correction by Ms. McGroarty seconded by Mr. Vrooman.

Bill Vrooman – Aye, Mike Taus – Aye, Walter Vail – Aye, Maura McGroarty – Aye, Dion Alley – Aye, Sherry Countryman – Aye, Bob Gaffey – Aye. (7 –Aye). Crossland (Abstained).

Review FY23 Budget Submissions

○ **Harbor**

Mr. Alexander advised the biggest change to this year’s budget is the introduction of the daily mooring charges. This will require adding another mooring attendant. On the weekends there will be two mooring attendants instead of one. Mr. Vail asked the revenue impact of this change. Mr. Alexander replied an addition between \$40,000 and \$60,000; this will more than cover the new staff member which is \$5,800.

Mr. Vrooman asked about the Assistant Harbor Master position; this was on the budget last year but under pump out attendant.

Ms. Crossland asked the about the charge of the daily mooring fee. Mr. Alexander said \$20/day. Mr. Alexander said the slip fee is \$20 per hour or \$100 for the entire day compared to last year \$10 per hour and \$50 for the day. It will be interesting to see how the new daily mooring fee will impact the harbor activities. In the past thirty years we have not charged a daily rate.

Ms. Countryman asked if there was anywhere else in relation to the harbor the Town could look at generating more income. Mr. Alexander noted he could not see other areas; every year the harbor income has increased.

Ms. McGroarty asked about the two different positions of Asst. Harbormaster and Pump Out person, both are listed for 15 weeks. Is this one or two people. Mr. Alexander said its one person, but it’s split almost in half as the pump out position is 7 days a week and nobody can work over 40 hours. It is split with another part time person. Asst. Harbormaster was sworn in just recently.

Ms. McGroarty asked about the capital programs; the jetty permit. Mr. Alexander said the engineering company was sending over the contract for the engineering and planning phase. They are also doing the grant writing and searching for grant money. Mr. Alexander said you need an engineered plan before you ask for grant money.

Ms. Crossland asked if any other harbors charge a day mooring fee. Edgartown does charge a day charge, but it is one boat per mooring. You can’t really compare Oak Bluffs Harbor to Falmouth, Vineyard Haven and Menemsha. You do not have day trippers to those harbors. The day trippers are also paying the launch \$8/pp/trip.

Mr. Taus asked about other charges and expenses of \$20,000. Mr. Alexander said it was for the reservation software charges and office charges. – fixing moorings, electrical repairs etc. Mr. Taus asked about the electrical upgrades. Mr. Alexander said they were almost done. Deborah Potter commented expenses included Bardwell electronics for handheld radios, Darossa and Inkwell screen printing – uniforms.

Ms. McGroarty commented the launch money does not come back to the town. Does the new daily mooring get itemized? Mr. Alexander said yes it will be itemized and we do get some money back from the launch. Mr. Vail asked who runs the launch. Mr. Alexander said the Town does have some control over the launch. Mr. Alley asked how the new fee was going to be communicated. Mr. Alexander said the new fee structure would be on the reservation system, a press release will be done and work of mouth.

5:24 Mr. Alexander left the meeting.

o Police

Chief Blake noted the Police budget is level from last year except from contractual raises, came in under 2.5%. The Quinn bill has been spread out over the individual line items: patrol, chief and lieutenant sergeant.

Mr. Gaffey asked about re-org – training, uniforms, and seminars. Chief Blake said a certain amount was set aside to send officers to the academy. The training council has changed – future employees have either been to academy or bridge academy. Reallocation of money to camera system, body cameras money. The money was put aside for officers to attend the academy, if you don't have an officer attending the academy you need to accurately represent where the money is being used.

Deborah Potter noted during budget meetings with the Police Dept. they are planning to change one of the Sergeants positions to a Lieutenant position. Police structure would be – Chief, two Lieutenants, and three Sergeants. The original submission had four sergeants and one lieutenant. There will also be changes to object codes, need to record the money in a more transparent way where uniforms and training are going.

Mr. Vail asked about the unfunded liability. Overtime and COMP time. Chief Blake commented that anyone who was over the federal limit for COMP time accrued is now below. Two contracts ago the police have changed the way you earn comp time etc.; officers must use it or lose it. Officers are allowed to by law to have up to 450 hours on the books. Deborah Potter said at Special Town meeting \$200,000 was approved to buy back unfunded liability - this has been purchased back.

Mr. Vrooman asked how we can identify the SSA load. Chief Blake said you would need to take the summer special officers, the CSO's – the summer day shift special officers. We get money back from the SSA. Chief Blake said special officers and summer help is \$164, 000 and we take in about \$240,000 from the SSA.

Ms. McGroarty asked about the Quinn Bill - is it diminishing as people are retiring and education incentive is less, is it less than \$200,0000? Chief Blake said yes because Lt Williamson left, and Sgt Marchand have left and the were at 20% & 25%. Anyone who is hired now it is at a lower percentage -12.5% is the most you can get now.

SRO (School Resource Office) is part of the 18 employees. The Town only receives \$100,000 for the SRO. Deborah Potter commented that if you don't have a senior officer assigned as SRO the \$100,000 covers salary and health plan. Chief Blake said from June 25 September 3 each year the SRO works for the OBPD, current SRO is at \$83, 900. Chief Blake and Deborah Potter are due to negotiate the SRO contract.

Ms. McGroarty would like to see an updated vehicle list by department.

Mr. Taus asked how many current employees the OBPD has. Chief Blake replied 18 Full Time and 4 specials. Discussion about special officer and CSO with the changes in training and the academy.

5:44 Chief Blake and Sergeant Curelli left meeting.

Fire / EMS

Deborah Potter said over past three years a concerted effort has been made to reclassify a lot of positons from revolving account into the general fund.

Mr. Gaffey asked about the difference on the salary work sheet to the budget line items. Deborah Potter said she is moving salaries around and the Fire budget is still a work in progress. The Fire Chiefs salary is now in the general fund, as is the new deputy chief. The Fire Chief salary is now split 50% fire 50% ambulance in the general fund. Deputy Chief is a new position and this in now in the Fire Dept. budget.

Mr. Gaffey asked about numbers of employees. Chief Wirtz said currently in ambulance there are 4 full time medics, including a first lieutenant who is the EMS coordinator. Chief Wirtz would like to have a 5th medic who is in the budget just not staffed currently. In EMS there are 12 employees including Chief Wirtz, Deputy, and admin staff. Ambulance – admin assistant. The Fire Dept fluctuates depending upon recruitment and retention – right now around 50. Admin staffs, Deputy Chief and Chief Wirtz are in the Fire Dept budget.

Ms. McGroarty has been thinking of the departments Fire/ EMS/ Ambulance Reserve. What is ambulance reserve doing these days? Not all of the employees are listed on the salary sheet they are still on the revolving budget. Two years ago the fire inspection

revolving account – these inspection are now being done by Chief Wirtz and Deputy Chief. The money generated will help offset the salaries under the general fund.

Mr. Vrooman asked how much including all the expenses the budget had increased. Deborah Potter said the budget has not increased too much except for contractual obligations, the budget shows an increase because of moving salaries; may be between 2.5 and 5. The ambulance revolving fund is not producing the levels of revenue as expected. The idea is to get the ambulance revolving account to address specifically related expenses – maintenance of the ambulances, associated costs like billing company.

Mr. Vrooman asked exactly what the ambulance fund revenue is Deborah Potter said in 2021 actual was \$1.3 million, to date showing \$347,000 in revenues.

Ms. McGroarty asked how many medics? Chief Wirtz said 5 medics in the budget.

Mr. Vrooman asked about the situation with the ambulance billing. Deborah Potter said currently we are not incurring additional expenses.

Mr. Gaffey asked about total number of staff for ambulance. Chief Wirtz said the stipend was for per diem employees who cover weekend and night shifts. Chief Wirtz said transports are currently off, due to staff levels. The hospital does their own transports.

Mr. Vrooman asked about the extra ambulance. Chief Wirtz said there are two active ambulances. The fourth ambulance is going to be sold, third ambulance is held in reserve in case 1 or 2 goes down. Fourth Ambulance is being classified as surplus.

Ms. McGroarty asked about the rechar of the ambulance that was started on capital. Chief Wirtz said the work is complete on both front line ambulances 1 and 2. Deborah Potter said this is the last time we can rechar the ambulances.

Mr. Vail asked about when we would have more firm numbers. Deborah Potters said when she gets the numbers from Cape Cod Municipal.

Mr. Gaffey asked about staffing with the Fire Dept. Chief Wirtz said there are about 50 call members,, Chief, Deputy Chief and the admin person. Three Full time employees in the fire budget, half of the chief's salary is in this budget. The remainder of the budget is stipends and training. Deborah Potter said the Deputy Fire chief is a new position so these accounts for part of the budget increase.

Mr. Alley asked about age demographics within the Fire Dept. Looking at recruitment, retention and staffing. Chief Wirtz said there may be 4 people who are aging out in the coming years. They are recruiting through the ambulance personnel who are interested in cross training; this will allow the growth on the volunteer side. Also recruitment through the high school, trying to get some young people involved. Chief Wirtz said under OSHA, national fire protection and other professional associations there is no difference in the training required for a full time fire fighter to an on call volunteer firefighter.

Mr. Vrooman commented about the change from 12 in the rescue team down to none. Chief Wirtz said he did not know where the 12 came from in last year's budget. The rescue team is a specialized technical rescue - rope rescue, trench rescue, confined space rescue and structural collapse etc. There is a technical rescue team presence on the island about 5/6 members, there is a trailer in Tisbury with about a quarter of a million dollars' worth of equipment. Initially there were people trained up – but they are no longer with the department.

6:30 Chief Wirtz left the meeting.

Other Business

Mr. Alley asked where we going to talk about health insurance. Deborah Potter said this is held until numbers received from Cape Cod.

Adjourn:

Mr. Taus motioned to adjourn the Finance and Advisory Committee Meeting at **6:35** seconded Mr. Vail. Motion passed unanimously. 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 Abstentions:

Maura McGroarty – Aye, Bernie Crossland – Aye, Bill Vrooman – Aye, Dion Alley – Aye, Sherry Countryman – Aye , Walter Vail. – Aye,

Meetings/Events:

Oak Bluffs Finance Committee – 5:00 PM Thursday, January 20, 2022

Documents on file

Budget Calendar Fiscal Year 2023

FY23 Budget

Respectfully submitted by Debra Alley, Office Administrator