

Town of Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 2nd, 2023, 5:00pm
OB Town Hall Meeting Room/Zoom Conference

Present: Chair – Sherry Countryman, Bill Vrooman, Reuben Fitzgerald, Sean DeBettencourt, Dion Alley, Maura McGroarty, Mimi Davisson (zoom), Mike Taus (zoom)

Absent: Richard Weiss

Others: Deborah Potter, Ryan Ruley, Joan Malkin, Adam Turner, Nelson Wirtz

Recorder: Juliet Mulinare

5:03pm Ms. Countryman called the Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee meeting to order.

Announcements

The next meeting will be review of Building Inspector, Information Technology and warrant article review. Ms. Potter sent out an updated budget.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the January 19, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Vrooman moved to approve the 1/26/23 minutes, seconded by Mr. Alley. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, Taus – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Alley – Aye, Countryman – Aye, Vrooman – Aye.

Motion passes unanimously **(8-0-0)**.

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the January 26, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Vrooman moved to approve the 1/19/23 minutes, seconded by Mr. Alley. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, Taus – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Alley – Aye, Countryman – Aye, Vrooman – Aye.

Motion passes unanimously **(8-0-0)**.

Budget Review

- MVC: Adam Turner, Executive Director, and Joan Malkin, MVC Chair

Mr. Turner presented the FY24 budget request for the Martha’s Vineyard Commission. The budget request is higher this year due to numerous law suits that have been filed against the Commission. Mr. Turner stated that he and his staff make every effort to generate their own funding but the one exception is litigation; that must be funded by the towns. Mr. Turner added that the Commission has been successful with every law suit filed against them thus far.

There are no new positions being added to the budget. Mr. Turner stressed that, while the volume of DRIs is increasing, the Commission has other functions as well. They assist the towns with planning initiatives in addition to conducting their own research and reports on topics like Traffic, Climate Change and Stormtide Pathways.

Ms. Potter stated that the Commission's budget is increasing by 34% this year, which means the town is having to cut costs elsewhere to accommodate. The increasing trend (up 68.4% over the past five years) is not sustainable for the town.

The Committee discussed the MVC's staff and how the Commission interacts with and provides direction to the Executive Director. Mr. Turner stated that they are currently working on updating policies and procedures to increase communication and engagement with the public.

The Committee discussed concerns with asking other Departments to keep budget increases within 2.5% and whether the value the MVC provides to the island is worth the cost of the litigation that comes as a result. The Committee discussed the real estate owned by the MVC and whether the town could be compensated with a PILOT for these properties.

- FIRE/EMS: Nelson Wirtz, Fire Chief

Chief Wirtz presented the FY24 budget request for the Fire and EMS Departments. He explained that he is in the process of moving operating expenses over to the General Fund, instead of funding them from the Ambulance Revolving Fund. The Revolving Fund is meant to support capital projects; regular expenses should come from the General Fund. Ms. Potter clarified that the FinCom does not have jurisdiction over the Ambulance Revolving Fund. Chief Wirtz described the Departments annual activity, ie how many calls they responded to, how many structure fires, etc. He stated that there is intra-island collaboration on training initiatives and the Departments are working together to streamline equipment types so that any fire fighter arriving to a scene is familiar with how to operate the equipment.

Budget Discussion

- OAK BLUFFS SCHOOL

The Committee was in agreement that increases to the budget for the OB School made sense and that Dr. Farrell makes a strong effort to keep her budget low and use alternative funding sources whenever possible. The Committee discussed the impact that the future affordable housing developments could have on the School and whether the Town should take on more building maintenance responsibility, although Dr. Farrell has done a great job taking care of the school building. The Committee discussed, and agreed with, Dr. Farrell's suggestion for a town-wide facilities manager.

Additional Budget Review

The Committee reviewed and discussed the budget requests from the Selectboard, the Assessor, the Treasurer/Collector, the Town Clerk, the Board of Registrars, the Planning Board, the Building Inspector, the Council on Aging, Vet Services, the Principal and Interest line, the Unclassified line, and the OPEB Contribution. The Committee also discussed the stipends that are given to various boards. Next meeting the Committee will discuss the warrant article requests.

Committee Updates

None.

Town Administrator/Accountant Comments

Ms. Potter stated that Free Cash has not been certified yet. Some of the warrant article requests will likely have to be withdrawn, depending on the amount that gets certified. Some of the warrant article amounts may change, those will have to be voted on again.

Member Comments

None.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

At 8:20pm a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Fitzgerald and seconded by Mr. DeBettencourt. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Alley – Aye, Countryman – Aye, Vrooman – Aye.

Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

Meeting Documents on File

1. FY24 01220 Fire Department Budget Form with DP_1
2. FY24 01231 Ambulance-EMS Department Budget Form_1
3. FY24 14231 REVOLVE draft_1
4. FY24 Fire-EMS Departmental Goals and Objectives Form
5. FY2024 MVC FINAL Budget 2023-01-19 v2

Respectfully Submitted

Juliet Mulinare, Recorder

Minutes Approved: 2/23/2023