

Town of Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 9th, 2023, 5:00pm
OB Town Hall Meeting Room/Zoom Conference

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

Absent: Richard Weiss, Bill Vrooman

Others: Deborah Potter, Matthew Rossi, Sherwood Ives

Recorder: Juliet Mulinare

5:02pm Ms. Countryman called the Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee meeting to order.

Announcements

The next meeting will be the last meeting before recommendations are due to the Selectboard.

Approval of Minutes

None available.

Budget Review

- **BUILDING DEPT:** Matthew Rossi, Building Commissioner

Mr. Rossi presented the FY24 budget request for the Building Department, which shares its budget with the Zoning Department. Mr. Rossi went over the objectives of the Department, which consist of enforcing the building code and zoning bylaws, issuing permits and conducting inspections. He then went over Department personnel, which includes himself, a local inspector, the Department Administrator and the ZBA Administrator. Also employed by the Department, but paid through separate revolving funds, are the other various inspectors (ie. Plumbing/Gas, Electrical, etc.). Mr. Rossi described the Department's activity in 2022 and his goals for 2023. The Committee discussed his coordination and collaboration with other departments and efforts to create a digital database for record-keeping.

The budget has only minor changes related to some reorganization within the Department. Ms. Potter stated that the local inspector was hired last year without an appropriated budget for his salary so she has had to finagle that a bit, but it was absolutely worth it to have a fully-staffed building department, which has not been the case for many years.

- **IT:** Sherwood Ives, IT Director

Mr. Ives presented the FY24 budget request for the IT Department. He started off by saying that there have been many changes and upgrades over the past year so the Accounting is a bit of a moving target that he will work with Ms. Potter to maximize. He is hoping to do a review of all expenses to streamline the Department's expenses. The Committee discussed the line item discrepancies in the proposed budget, most of which are due to reallocations of funds, not an overall increase. The Committee discussed the lease of computer equipment versus purchasing; they also discussed areas of the department that need improvement and how feasible it would be to collaborate with other towns in an effort to reduce software costs.

Budget Discussion

- MVC

The Committee discussed the large budget increase, which is the result of numerous law suits filed against the Commission in the past year. The Committee discussed whether the MVC has started operating outside the scope of what they should be doing and taking on things they shouldn't be. They discussed the town's attempt to back out of the Commission in 2004, which was denied by voters at the ballot box. The Committee also discussed the lack of information available on the Commission's website and how the DRI process adds substantially to the cost of projects and makes needed projects, like Affordable Housing, more difficult (and expensive) to accomplish. Some members of the Committee felt the MVC's budget request warranted further discussion on the floor of Town meeting.

- FIRE/EMS

The Committee discussed the Fire budget versus the Ambulance budget and the Chief's efforts to move his operating costs from Ambulance to Fire, where they should be.

Warrant Article Review/Discussion

- SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES:

#1 - \$150,000 for OPEB

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 1. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds, no further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

#2 - \$70,000 for Budget Shortfall, Unclassified Insurance

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 2. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds, no further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion carries (6-0-1).

#3 - \$39,200 for Ocean Park Budget Shortfall

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 3. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds, brief discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

#4 - \$25,000 to Offset Any FY22 Shortfall

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 4. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

Ms. Potter clarified that this money gives her the financial flexibility to avoid payments imposed by DOR that would otherwise affect Free Cash.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion carries (6-0-1).

#5 - \$55,000 for a Pilot Workforce Housing Assistance Program

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 5. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

After some discussion the Committee decided they would like more information before taking a vote.

Mr. DeBettencourt withdrew his motion to recommend Article 5.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to postpone a vote to recommend or not recommend STM Article #5 until the next meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion to postpone the vote passes unanimously (7-0-0).

#6 - \$100,000 to Replenish Municipal Housing Trust

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 6. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

Ms. Potter clarified that the Housing Trust previously received \$1 million. Those funds were spent on the Noyes Building, Southern Tier, Prospect Ave and Bellevue Vets Housing projects. These funds are to replenish their fund.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

#7 - \$50,000 to Fund August Fireworks

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 7. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

The Committee discussed that the Town has taken over funding the fireworks because the Civic Association has chosen to no longer do so. There was some back and forth amongst the Committee around the benefit to the town and whether the businesses should contribute more to the event.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion carries (6-0-1).

▪ **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES:**

#2 - \$80,611 to Support Regional Human Services

1. DC Public Benefits Access: \$9,932

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Public Benefits Access funding. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

Discussion about concern over duplicate services.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion carries (6-0-1).

2. Homelessness Prevention Program: \$12,771

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Homelessness Prevention Program funding. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

Discussion about the large budget for this program and how the program already receives CPC funding from the Town.

Davisson – Abstain, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Abstain, DeBettencourt – Aye, Countryman – Nay, Alley – Nay, Taus – Abstain.

Motion does not carry **(1-3-3)**.

3. CORE: \$21,813

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend CORE funding. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Nay, Countryman – Nay, Alley – Nay, Taus – Abstain.

Motion does not carry **(2-4-1)**.

4. Healthy Aging MV: \$25,677

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Healthy Aging MV funding. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Abstain, DeBettencourt – Nay, Countryman – Nay, Alley – Aye, Taus – Abstain.

Motion does not carry **(2-3-2)**.

5. SUD Coalition: \$10,418

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend SUD Coalition funding. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Nay, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Nay, DeBettencourt – Nay, Countryman – Nay, Alley – Nay, Taus – Abstain.

Motion does not carry **(0-6-1)**.

#3 – \$6,186.60 for Dukes County FY24 Projected Budget Deficit

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 3. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

The Committee discussed that the County did not give any ARPA funding to the towns.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion does not carry **(0-7-0)**.

#4 - \$42,880 for Dukes County Health Care Access Building Improvements

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 4. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

The Committee discussed that the County should have planned for this better and not let the burden of funding these improvements fall to the taxpayers.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Nay, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Nay, DeBettencourt – Nay, Countryman – Nay, Alley – Nay, Taus – Nay.

Motion does not carry **(0-7-0)**.

#5 - \$56,112.13 to Upgrade the Dukes County Regional Emergency Communication Center and Radio System

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 5. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Countryman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Taus – Abstain.

Motion carries **(6-1-0)**.

#6 - \$14,796 to Fund OB Portion of All Island School Committee's Contract with MVCET
Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 6. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion.

The Committee discussed that the services provided by MVCET are good for the island but could be more tailored to the islands needs.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion carries **(5-2-0)**.

The Committee discussed the start time for the next meeting and decided to begin the 2/16/23 meeting at 4:00pm.

*Mr. Taus departs the meeting.

#7 - \$1,164,388.86 to Appropriate CPC Funds as Recommended by the CPC

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 7. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Fitzgerald – Abstain, DeBettencourt – Abstain, Countryman – Aye, Alley – Aye,

Motion carries **(4-0-2)**.

#8 – Postponed until next meeting.

#9 - \$75,534 to Fund 3rd Year of Police Cruiser Lease for Four Vehicles

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 9. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Countryman – Aye, Alley – Aye,

Motion carries **(5-1-0)**.

#10 - \$137,400 to Purchase & Equip 2 Police Vehicles

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend Article 10. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Davisson – Aye, McGroarty – Nay, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Countryman – Aye, Alley – Aye,

Motion carries **(5-1-0)**.

Committee Updates

None.

Town Administrator/Accountant Comments

None.

Member Comments

None.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

At 9:00pm a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. DeBettencourt and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald. No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passed unanimously (6-0-0).

Meeting Documents on File

1. 2022 Embarkation Fee Report
2. 20230129 DRAFT Budget for FY24 for FinCom
3. 20230411 ATM WIP1
4. 20230411 STM WIP1
5. FY23 01155 IT Budget Form
6. FY24 01241 Building Department Budget Form

Respectfully Submitted
Juliet Mulinare, Recorder

Minutes Approved: 2/23/2023