

**Town of Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 23rd, 2023, 5:00pm
OB Town Hall Meeting Room/Zoom Conference**

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

Absent:

Others: Deborah Potter

Recorder: Juliet Mulinare

5:00pm Ms. Countryman called the Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee meeting to order.

Announcements

Ms. Countryman stated that a meeting next week might not be necessary.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the February 2nd, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Vrooman moved to approve the 2/2/23 minutes, seconded by Mr. DeBettencourt. No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passes unanimously **(7-0-0)**. (Taus/Fitzgerald not present at time of vote.)

*Mr. Fitzgerald joins the meeting.

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the February 9th, 2023 meeting.

Mr. Vrooman moved to approve the 2/9/23 minutes, seconded by Mr. Alley. No further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passes unanimously **(8-0-0)**. (Taus not present at time of vote.)

Discuss and Vote on Budget Recommendations

The Committee went through Department line items in the budget, including: Other Government Support, Selectboard, Finance, Accountant, Assessor, Treasurer/Collector, IT, Clerk, Board of Registrars, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Public Building Management, Unclassified.

There was discussion on legal costs, OPEB, the Assistant Accountant position, the new Compensation Plan and the town's unfunded liability.

*Mr. Taus joins the meeting.

The Committee continued with review of Department line items including Police, Fire, Ambulance, Building Inspector, Shellfish, Emergency Management, Marina, OB School & High School, Highway, Board of Health, Council on Aging, Library, Arts, Parks and Recreation.

There was discussion about the new Police Agreement to be ratified in March, the difficulty in finding administrative help, the new position in the Shellfish Department, and what to do on the floor of Town

meeting if the School's budget gets reduced. The Committee also discussed combining the Library and the Council on Aging due to the similar nature of services provided by each.

Ms. Potter stated that the Holiday Lights have been moved to a warrant article and the Committee discussed whether the band concerts and the fireworks should also be articles for the voters to decide on. The Committee reviewed the new cherry sheet for the Town.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. Vrooman to recommend approval of the FY24 Budget. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion carries **(8-1-0)**.

The Committee asked Ms. McGroarty about her vote against; Ms. McGroarty stated that she “just doesn’t agree” with the budget and thinks funds could be better allocated.

Discuss and Vote on Remaining Warrant Articles

- **SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES:**

These have all been voted. Ms. Potter noted one change: Article #8 is new to the STM warrant, but the Committee had already voted on this article when it was on the ATM warrant, so no further action is needed.

- **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARTICLES:**

#1 - \$37,659,924.39 to Establish FY24 Annual Budgets for Town Departments

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

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

Motion carries **(8-1-0)**.

#8 - \$1,070,520 for Various CPC Appropriations

1. Harbor Homes: \$120,000

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion carries **(8-1-0)**.

2. Island Autism Center and Neighborhood: \$159,800

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passes unanimously **(9-0-0)**.

3. Rental Assistance: \$128,000

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

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

Motion passes unanimously **(9-0-0)**.

4. PALS Program: \$188,800
*Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article.
 Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:
 Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye,
 Countryman – Aye, Alley – Nay, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.*
 Motion carries **(8-1-0)**.

5. Cottagers’ Corner Foundation: \$127,000
*Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article.
 Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, discussion.*
 The Committee discussed whether this building was open to the public or provided any public benefit. Ms. Potter stated that the building is historic, which is why CPC approved the request.
*No further discussion, roll call vote:
 Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Nay, Davisson – Nay, Weiss – Aye,
 Countyman – Abstain, Alley – Nay, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.*
 Motion carries **(5-3-1)**.

6. Penn Field/Veira Park: \$14,800
*Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article.
 Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, discussion.*
 The Committee discussed whether this could be done with fundraising or volunteers, instead of CPC money.
*No further discussion, roll call vote:
 Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Nay, Davisson – Nay, Weiss – Aye,
 Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Abstain, McGroarty – Aye.*
 Motion carries **(6-2-1)**.

7. East Chop Lighthouse: \$43,000
*Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article.
 Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:
 Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye,
 Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.*
 Motion passes unanimously **(9-0-0)**.

8. Sunset Lake: \$85,320
*Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article.
 Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:
 Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Nay, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Abstain, Weiss – Aye,
 Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.*
 Motion carries **(7-1-1)**.

9. Bluff Stabilization: \$20,000
*Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article.
 Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:
 Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Nay,
 Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Abstain.*
 Motion carries **(7-1-1)**.

10. Sailing Camp: \$30,000

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of this article. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, discussion.

The Committee discussed how to prioritize town building repairs.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Nay, Davisson – Nay, Weiss – Nay, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Nay, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.

Motion carries (5-4-0).

11. Union Chapel Park – This article has been removed from the warrant.

#13 - \$15,000 from Waterways Account for Harbor Maintenance

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 13. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.

Motion passes unanimously (9-0-0).

#14 – Fix Compensation for Elected Officials

All new stipends were removed from this article. Only the stipends that were previously given are being proposed with this article.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 14. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Abstain.

Motion carries (8-0-1).

#16 – Petition to Remove Oak Bluffs from Membership in the MVC

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 16. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, discussion.

Ms. Potter stated that, per legal counsel, the wording of this article may have to change. The Committee asked where this article originated from; Ms. Potter responded the Selectboard. The Committee discussed whether it was premature to put this on this year's warrant, before giving townspeople a chance to discuss publicly. The Committee discussed what the process would be and what would happen if Edgartown also voted to leave.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

Taus – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Nay, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Nay, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Nay, McGroarty – Aye.

Motion carries (6-3-0).

*Mr. Taus departs the meeting.

#19 - \$350,000 to Fund Phase 2 of the Farm Pond Culvert Replacement

Ms. Potter stated that this is phase 2 of 4. Mr. Vrooman stated that this needs to be addressed soon or the pond will die. This is a borrowing article.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 19. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.

Motion passes unanimously (8-0-0).

#20 – Ballot Questions

Ms. Potter stated that the Committee has already voted on the first five questions as articles so only votes on Questions #6 and #7 are needed.

QUESTION 6: Funds to Stabilize and Increase Accessibility to the East Chop Bluff
Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Ballot Question 6. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Abstain, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Abstain, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.
Motion carries **(6-0-2)**.

QUESTION 7: Funds for Wastewater Plant Improvement and Downtown Sidewalk Improvement Bonds
Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Ballot Question 7. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Nay, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Nay.
Motion carries **(6-2-0)**.

#25 – \$42,880 for the DCHCA Building

The Committee discussed their 0-7 vote against and noted that the County should have requested the use of ARPA funds, or explored other funding options, for this work.

#29 - \$200,000 to the Stabilization Fund

Ms. Potter stated that the amount in this article has been reduced from \$300k to \$200k but she's confident this lower amount can still allow the Town to achieve a AAA bond rating.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 29. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.
Motion passes unanimously **(8-0-0)**.

#40 - \$30,499 for Gear/Uniform Lockers for the OB Police Station

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 40. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.
Motion passes unanimously **(8-0-0)**.

#41 - \$50,000 for Building Repairs to the OB Police Station

Ms. Potter stated that the Committee had previously voted this but she has reduced the amount of the article from \$100k to \$50k so a re-vote is needed.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 41. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.
Motion passes unanimously **(8-0-0)**.

#44 - \$15,000 to Fund Independent Solar Consultant for Future Town Solar Projects

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 44. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.
Motion passes unanimously **(8-0-0)**.

#48 - \$20,000 to Fund Holiday Light Display

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 48. Mr.

Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Nay, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Nay, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.

Motion carries **(6-2-0)**.

#50 - \$19,965 to Fund Lease for New Public Service Computers at the Library

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 50. Mr.

Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Fitzgerald – Nay, DeBettencourt – Nay, Davisson – Nay, Weiss – Nay, Countyman – Nay, Alley – Nay, Vrooman – Nay, McGroarty – Nay.

Motion does not carry **(0-8-0)**.

#52 – Amend and Adopt the Compensation and Classification Schedule C

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. DeBettencourt to recommend approval of Article 52. Mr.

Fitzgerald seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.

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

Budget Policy Amendment

Ms. Potter stated that this amendment would prevent the allocation of local estimated receipts to anything other than the Town's General Fund. This amendment was brought forth after the Affordable Housing Committee requested that a percentage of the short-term rental tax be allocated to their budget annually. Ms. Potter also stated that the Finance Committee is not voting to approve this, they are voting to make a recommendation to the Selectboard.

Motion placed on the floor by Mr. Vrooman to recommend the amended policy as presented. Mr.

DeBettencourt seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:

Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Nay.

Motion carries **(7-1-0)**.

Committee Updates

None.

Town Administrator/Accountant Comments

None.

Member Comments

None.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

The Committee will meet again in two weeks, on March 9th.

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

Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Weiss – Aye, Countyman – Aye, Alley – Aye, Vrooman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.

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

Meeting Documents on File

1. 20230411 ATM WIP1
2. 20230411 STM WIP1

*Respectfully Submitted
Juliet Mulinare, Recorder*

Minutes Approved: 4/6/23