

Town of Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, March 3, 2022, 5:00 pm
Via Zoom Conference

Present: Chair –**Bob Gaffey, Dion Alley, Sherry Countryman, Maura McGroarty, Walter Vail, Richard Weiss.**
Absent: **Bernie Crossland, Bill Vrooman,**
Others: Deborah Potter - Town Administrator / Accountant. Debra Alley - Recorder.
Kris O’Brien, Sean DeBettencourt.

5:02 pm The Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee came to order.

Review minutes from February 24, 2022, meeting. Mr. Vail moved the minutes be approved seconded by Mr. Alley with a brief description added for each article due to warrant article numbers changing.

Countryman - Aye, Vail - Aye, Weiss – Aye, Alley - Aye, Gaffey - Aye. **(5- Aye)** McGroarty – Abstain.

Committee Discussion and Possible Vote on FY23 Budget

5:06 Mike Taus joined the meeting.

Review and vote on comments relating to votes

Deborah Potter has reached out to Dr Farrell but due to school vacation no further detail available on this article.

Special Article 9. \$600,000 School Boiler Moved Mr. Vail seconded by Mr. Taus

McGroarty - Aye

Countryman - No

Weiss - Aye

Taus - Abstain

Alley - No

Vail - Aye

Gaffey - Aye (4- Aye, 2 – No, 1 Abstain)

MSBA funding to be looked at in the future, this article has been on the capital agenda in prior years.

5:38 Bill Vrooman joined the meeting

Article 1 Comment

Mr. Alley made the motion to approve Seconded by Mr. Weiss

“Although the budget passed the Finance Committee with a majority of votes, many members of the Finance Committee (including those who voted YES) have a heightened level of concern about the budget. Concern is primarily caused by High School budgetary increases that substantially exceed a 2.5% increase over their budgets for FY '22, thereby putting pressure on other areas of the budget that are not able to increase as much as the schools' budgets so that the overall budget is able to remain within the levy limit.”

McGroarty - Aye

Countryman - Aye

Weiss - Aye

Taus - Aye

Alley - Aye

Vail - No

Vrooman - Aye

Gaffey - Aye

(7- Aye 1 - No)

MVRHS – discussion and response to Planning Board

Mr. Vail is going to draft a response and forward to the committee for approval prior to sending to the Planning Board.

Member Comments

Mr. Vrooman asked for the Fin Com to send a letter to the Oak Bluffs Select Board advising the board was against the letter regarding the school funding sent by Chilmark.

Ms. McGroarty asked why the Water Commission is on the Town Ballot for election and if they are involved financially in Circuit Ave Streetscape. Water Commission is not paying toward Streetscape; they are working in conjunction with construction timing, so they don't have to cut sidewalks and interrupt at another time.

Highway and Parks Department have issues with recruiting and retaining seasonal employees; is there anyway the Town could have an end of season/year bonus. A lot of the Highway and Parks employees are union contracts and don't negotiate salaries; it would be difficult to apply a yearend bonus. The HR department is looking into increasing the minimum starting salary for seasonal employees to make it more competitive.

What happened to the stipends which were taken away from the Health Department, Cemetery Commission, and other elected officials? To address this, it will need to be made an agenda item for a future meeting.

M Vrooman commented he has spoken to Colleen Morris (Town Clerk) there are five finance committee members rolling off (Vrooman, Vail, Taus, Crossland and Alley) and no people have pulled papers to run for the positions. Discussion about reducing the number of people on the finance committee from nine to a smaller number; but this would require a by-law change.

Mr. Sean DeBettencourt commented he is going to run as a write in candidate for the finance committee.

The Finance Committee will need to recruit a new person to take over as recorder of meeting for the next financial year. This vacancy would need to be posted and advertised

Adjourn: 6:48 Mr. Taus motioned to adjourn the Finance and Advisory Committee Meeting Seconded by Mr. Vrooman. McGroarty - Aye, Countryman -Aye, Weiss - Aye, Alley - Aye, Taus – Aye, Vrooman - Aye, Vail – Aye, Gaffey -Aye. **(8- Aye)**

Meetings/Events:

Action Items/Future Agenda Items:

Stipends for Elected Officials (Health Department) to be an agenda item in September / October 2022.

Documents on file

Updated Article 24 email.

Email to Planning Board

Email to Select Board

Respectfully submitted



Debra Alley, Office Administrator

Approved 03/31/2022