

**Town of Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, May 18, 2023, 5:00pm**  
**OB Town Hall Meeting Room/Zoom Conference**

**Present:** Chair – Sherry Countryman (zoom), Maura McGroarty, Mimi Davisson, Mike Taus (zoom)\*, Bob Malecki, Sean DeBettencourt, Ryan Ruley, Reuben Fitzgerald

**Absent:** Richard Weiss

**Others:** Deborah Potter

**Recorder:** Juliet Mulinare

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

**Announcements**

Ms. Countryman reminded everyone to complete the Conflict of Interest Training.

Ms. Countryman stated that she spoke with Selectboard Chair Green- Beach about a possible joint meeting with the Finance Committee. Ms. Potter suggested a date of 6/1/23, which worked for the Committee.

Ms. Countryman also reported that she met with stakeholders to discuss the progress of the Embarkation Fee legislation, which has not progressed through Committee. Senator Cyr’s office suggested drafting a letter for all the port towns to sign and send to Susan Moran to keep things moving along.

*Ms. Davisson made a motion to authorize Ms. Countryman to draft a letter for the OB Selectboard, other port town Selectboards, and Senator Cyr’s office to sign and submit to the appropriate Committee. Mr. DeBettencourt seconds the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote:*

*Countryman – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Malecki – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, Ruley – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.*

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

Ms. Countryman stated that she spoke with Tisbury FinCom Chair Nancy Gilfof about an All Island FinCom Meeting. Ms. Gilfof was not in favor of an All-Island meeting but would like to work with Oak Bluffs on issues that both towns are facing.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the April 6, 2023 meeting.

*Ms. Davisson moved to approve the 4/6/23 minutes, seconded by Ms. McGroarty.*

Brief discussion to clarify remarks made under Public Comment.

*No further discussion, roll call vote:*

*Countryman – Aye, Davisson – Abstain, Malecki – Abstain, DeBettencourt – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, Ruley – Abstain, McGroarty – Aye.*

*Motion carries (4-0-3). Taus not present at time of vote.*

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the May 4, 2023 meeting.

*Ms. Davisson moved to approve the 5/4/23 minutes, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald. No further discussion, roll call vote:*

*Countryman – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Malecki – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, Ruley – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.*

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

## **Discussion and Ranking of Goals for Year**

Ms. Countryman distributed a list of Committee Goals for 2024 and asked each Committee member to share what their priority item is.

Ms. Davisson stated that streamlining the budget process was her priority, but she also would like to add a review and possible reorganization of how the County's call center budget is allocated, based on the number of calls from each town.

Mr. Malecki said his priority is research on parking meters.

Mr. DeBettencourt's priority is any and all revenue-generating ideas.

Mr. Fitzgerald wants to focus on helping support seniors who are on fixed incomes.

Mr. Ruley would like to look at parking, but also revenue potential for the Harbor.

Ms. McGroarty's priority is the budget process and the County's social services. She is also very interested in the potential for PILOTs from Non-profits.

Ms. Davisson then changed her priority to public relations and public outreach.

Ms. Countryman said she would like to focus on revenue-generating ideas, specifically the additional tax potential for short term rentals, as well as the 3% Community Impact Fee that could be added

The Committee then discussed the options for the additional STR taxes and how to potentially regulate those so that Corporations are not able to keep purchasing single family homes to turn them into commercial vacation properties.

The Committee also discussed the logistics of implementing paid parking in town. Ms. Potter stated that the Roads and Byways Committee is looking at the issue holistically across town and they are putting together a report to submit to the Selectboard. Ms. Potter is looking into the financials of parking kiosks, potential locations for paid parking and other needed infrastructure.

## **Begin Strategizing How Best to Implement Chosen Goals**

The Committee discussed the importance of collaborating with other Committees and keeping lines of communication open. Mr. Ruley suggested reaching out to the Selectboard to get their input on which issues to pursue.

The Committee also discussed how to get information out to the voters before town meeting that demonstrates that amount of time and effort the Committee puts into the annual budget review. Ms. Potter suggested the Committee draft a letter to the voters to be included in the warrant, that outlines some of the discussions had and the reasons for split or No votes. Ms. Countryman will check with the moderator about what would be an acceptable way to present information to the voters at Town Meeting. The Committee discussed the need to address the County's social services budgets earlier in the budget process, and brainstormed ways that the information could be better presented to the FinCom.

\*Mr. Taus arrives via zoom.

The Committee discussed streamlining the way budgets are presented and asking the County and other Regional entities to use the same form that Town departments use to submit budget requests so that there is consistency to reduce confusion.

Mr. Taus said he started looking into the potential for revenue from paid parking, and it looks like it could be substantial. Ms. Potter cautioned against taking an aggressive approach to the issue, saying there will be a lot of pushback. The Committee discussed assigning certain members to look into some of the ideas being discussed.

Mr. Taus and Mr. Malecki will look into paid parking.

Ms. Countryman and Mr. Malecki will do more research on the short term rental and community impact taxes.

Ms. McGroarty will look into PILOTs.

Ms. Davisson will start thinking about public outreach and relations.

### **Review of TA/ATA Report and Finances**

The Committee reviewed the report and Ms. Countryman encouraged everyone to review regularly and bring questions to meetings.

### **Committee Updates**

None.

### **Town Administrator/Accountant Comments**

Ms. Potter stated that the next round of Year-End transfers will take place at the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

### **Member Comments**

Mr. Malecki said he looked into the use of Drop Box as a file-sharing option. There is an option to restrict files to “Read Only” so that any violation of the Open Meeting Law is avoided. Mr. Malecki will continue to work on getting this set up.

### **Public Comments**

None.

### **Adjournment**

*At 6:42pm a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Taus and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald. No further discussion, roll call vote:*

*Countryman – Aye, Taus – Aye, Davisson – Aye, Malecki – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, Ruley – Aye, McGroarty – Aye.*

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

### **Meeting Documents on File:**

1. FinCom Goals 2024
2. TA/ATA Report 2023.04.25
3. TA/ATA Report 2023.05.09

*Respectfully Submitted  
Juliet Mulinare, Recorder*

Minutes Approved: 6/15/2023