

**Town of Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, June 23, 2022, 5:00pm**  
**OB Town Hall Meeting Room/Zoom Conference**

Present: Chair – **Sherry Countryman**, Vice Chair – **Richard Weiss, Dion Alley, Maura McGroarty, Mike Taus (zoom)**

Absent: **Reuben Fitzgerald, Mimi Davisson, Sean DeBettencourt**

Others: Deborah Potter – Town Administrator/Accountant, Jason Balboni

Juliet Mulinare – Recorder.

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

Ms. Countryman informed the Committee that Mr. Gaffey has resigned from the Committee; a new member will need to be appointed. Ms. Countryman stated she had taken the Open Meeting Law training and it was very helpful, she requested that all members take the training and let her know when they have completed it.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the June 7, 2022 meeting. Mr. Taus moved the minutes be approved, seconded by Mr. Alley.

The Committee offered some minor modifications that provided additional clarity to the minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Weiss to approve the 6/7/22 minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Taus. No further discussion, vote taken, approved unanimously (**5 – Aye**).

**End of Year Transfers**

Ms. Potter distributed an updated rundown of the Requested FY22 Budget Transfers under MGL 44:33B (see Meeting Documents on File). She informed the Committee that the first four requests are interdepartmental transfers from salary to operating lines, or vice versa.

Ms. McGroarty asked why the increase to the Fire Chief's salary was needed and Ms. Potter explained that Chief Wirtz was hired at a higher rate than Chief Rose's contract.

Regarding the second request, Ms. McGroarty stated that the Zoning Board of Appeals meetings are time consuming and there is an administrative cost associated with that. She suggested the ZBA employ better time management practices to keep their administrative costs down. Ms. Potter responded that the volume of issues the ZBA has to deal with has increased three-fold recently and much of their responsibility is regulatory, meaning it must be done a certain way.

The Committee had no comments on the third and fourth request for transfer.

Mr. Taus motioned to approve transfer requests 1-4, seconded by Mr. Alley. No further discussion, vote taken, approved unanimously (**5 – Aye**).

Transfer request #5 is from the County. Ms. Potter explained that the County assessment changed and the revenues for the Center of Living are now adequate to support the program so that request for transfer has been withdrawn, however, the transfer request for Vineyard Health Care Access is still needed.

Ms. McGroarty motioned to approve transfer request #5, seconded by Mr. Taus. No further discussion, vote taken, approved unanimously (**5 – Aye**).

Transfer request #6 is from the Police Department. The Committee discussed the difference between “comp time” and “accrued time”. Ms. McGroarty asked about the payouts for the officers who left the department; Ms. Potter responded that those payouts were covered by the Sergeant’s salary line and with money appropriated at Special Town Meeting. This request covers the departing Police Chief’s accrued time, as well as allocating funds to other salary line items where needed.

Mr. Taus motioned to approve transfer requests 1-4, seconded by Mr. Alley. No further discussion, vote taken, approved unanimously (**5 – Aye**).

Transfer request #7 is a General Transfer. Ms. Potter explained that the MVRHS Regional Assessment required the School to return \$247k in excess E&D funds to the Town. Ms. Potter would like to redistribute this money, along with funds from the Town Administrator salary line, to the Police Chief, the Self Insurance Trust, the Care of Trees (due to a storm-related issue last winter where the Town did not qualify for FEMA funding to help with downed trees), the Town Hall construction bond and Other Benefits. Ms. Potter stated that the \$145,000 requested for Other Benefits would be a one-time payment (stipend) to Town employees to help with inflation and a way for the town to show appreciation to its employees for their work over the past year. The funds for the construction bond are a one-time payment that covers the discrepancy between the bond anticipation notice and the actual cost of the construction. Mr. Weiss asked whose idea it was to give a one-time stipend to the employees and who would be included. Ms. Potter stated that all town employees except the School would be included. Mr. Weiss asked if it would be possible to get a breakdown for how the stipends would be distributed. Ms. Potter stated that she could provide that if the Committee votes to approve the request but it would be too much work without confirmed approval. The Committee briefly discussed the Town’s wage scale and how hard it is to find staff, especially seasonal, when hourly rates for town jobs are lower than what other employers can offer. Ms. Potter stated that the request for the stipend is a one-time deal; addressing the wage scale is another issue that needs to be looked at, which she is currently doing. Mr. Weiss asked if the Selectboard was in favor of the stipends. Ms. Potter stated that if the FinCom approves the request, they will find out if the Selectboard is in favor. Ms. Countryman asked if a one-time stipend had ever previously been offered. Ms. Potter stated that she didn’t think so and definitely not in the last six years. Ms. McGroarty asked why the School was not included. Mr. Alley responded that the School employees negotiate their salaries through the union contract so any stipends would be also. Ms. Potter stated that a one-time stipend would be very well received by the employees and encouraged the Committee to take the opportunity to do something unique that people will appreciate. Mr. Weiss asked if it would be better to put the money towards the the OPEB liability. Ms. Potter stated that other funds have already been allocated to paying down the OPEB and the Town is well ahead of funding it as it is being addressed on multiple levels. Ms. Countryman asked whether the money could be put into a stabilization fund. Ms. Potter said that this is money to be moved from one expense account to another. Stabilization funds are funded with free cash, not expense budgets. Ms. Countryman asked what would happen to the money if it was not used for a stipend and Ms. Potter said, most likely, it would be returned to the General Fund. Ms. McGroarty stated that although she is not opposed, she has concerns about this endeavor being rushed through and would prefer to wait until Special Town Meeting. Ms. Potter responded that it cannot be assumed that Free Cash will be certified by November so the only way to guarantee this money is to approve it now.

Ms. Countryman called for a vote on transfer request #7 for all lines except Other Benefits.

Mr. Weiss motioned to approve all lines included in transfer request #7 with the exception of the allocation to Other Benefits, seconded by Mr. Alley. No further discussion, vote taken, approved unanimously (**5 – Aye**).

Mr. Weiss then made a motion to approve the transfer request to Other Benefits. After brief discussion as to whether Mr. Taus needed to abstain due to his employment with the School, the consensus was that he did not need to abstain. Mr. Taus seconded the motion, no further discussion, roll call vote: Weiss – Nay, McGroarty – Nay, Taus – Nay, Alley – Abstain, Countryman – Nay (**4 – Nay, 1 – Abstain**).

Transfer request #8 is to use Fincom Reserve Funds towards OPEB.

Motion placed on the floor Mr. Weiss to approve transfer request #8, seconded by Mr. Alley. No further discussion, vote taken, approved unanimously (**5 – Aye**).

Transfer request #9 is a General Authorization to allow the Accountant to authorize transfers after the fiscal year ends of June 30<sup>th</sup> as this is the deadline for departments to submit any requests. Ms. Potter stated that this approval can be done at a July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting when she will have a better idea of any last minute transfers that are needed. Mr. Weiss suggested the Committee wait to vote on this until July 7<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Countryman agreed.

### **Accountant's Comments**

None.

### **Member Comments**

Mr. Alley updated the Committee that State Labor Relations did not accept the School Committee/Union's request for arbitration so they are back to negotiating. He thinks the State saw how close both sides were to reaching a solution so arbitration isn't necessary. The current contract will end on the first day of school this September.

Mr. Weiss stated that with Mr. Gaffey's departure, the Committee no longer has a representative on the Harbor Committee.

The Committee discussed the date of the next meeting. Ms. Countryman said she had invited representatives from the School Committee to join the FinCom for a meeting on June 30<sup>th</sup> so the Committee will hold its next meeting then.

### **Adjournment**

At 6:04pm a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. No further discussion, approved unanimously (**5 – Aye**).

The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.

### **Meeting Documents on File**

1. Requested FY22 MGL c. 44:33B Transfers

*Respectfully Submitted*

*Juliet Mulinare, Recorder*

Minutes Approved: 6/30/2022