

Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 7, 2023, 5:00pm
OB Town Hall Meeting Room/Zoom Conference

Present: Chair – Sherry Countryman, Reuben Fitzgerald, Sean DeBettencourt, Mike Taus, Bob Malecki
Maura McGroarty, Ryan Ruley (zoom)
Absent: Richard Weiss, Bill Cleary
Others: Deb Potter, Gail Barmakian, Mark Leonard
Recorder: Juliet Mulinare

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

Announcements

The Committee discussed changing the meeting day to the first the third Tuesdays of the month, instead of Thursday. Everyone present agreed to the change, Ms. Countryman will check with Mr. Weiss and Mr. Cleary. If they agree, the next meeting will be on Tuesday, 9/19/2023 at 5:00pm.
Ms. Countryman invited the Assessor to the next meeting.
The Special Town Meeting (STM) Warrant needs to be approved by the FinCom by 9/21/23.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the July 13, 2023 meeting.
Mr. DeBettencourt made a motion to approve the 7/13/23 draft minutes. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. Brief discussion to make minor edits.
No further discussion, roll call vote:
Ruley – Abstain, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Malecki – Aye, Countryman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Taus – Abstain,
Motion carries **(5-0-2)**.

The Committee reviewed the draft minutes from the July 20, 2023 meeting.
Mr. DeBettencourt made a motion to approve the 7/20/23 draft minutes. Mr. Fitzgerald seconds the motion. Brief discussion to make minor edits.
No further discussion, roll call vote:
Ruley – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Malecki – Aye, Countryman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Taus – Abstain,
Motion carries **(6-0-1)**.

Budget Calendar/Process Discussion

The budget calendar will start about a month earlier this year, giving the Committee more time to meet with Department Heads before budgets and article requests are due. The Committee discussed the various processes required for budget season, including the COLA and the various capital projects.
Mr. DeBettencourt suggested that the FinCom schedule additional meetings during budget season so that they don't last as long as they did last year. Ms. Countryman stated that she intends to take advantage of the time available now to speak with Department Heads about their upcoming requests, that way they won't have to take as much time to understand each department's operations during the January and February budget meetings. She asked Committee members to email her which departments they would like to speak with and learn more about over the next couple months.

The Committee reviewed the Budget Request Letter that gets sent to Departments; it is very similar to last year's and the Committee had no comments.

The Committee also reviewed the STM draft warrant but decided to wait until the next meeting to take any action on it.

The Committee discussed various other initiatives that Ms. Potter is working on, including a recodification of the town bylaws and a comprehensive review of all town properties to determine what to do with them. The lots with cloudy titles will be offered to Affordable Housing, while other lots may be sold off to generate revenue for the town and return the land to the tax rolls.

DropBox for FinCom Documents Update

Mr. Malecki stated that he set up a DropBox account for the FinCom so there is a centralized location for all relative documents. He stated that everyone on the Committee can view the files but comments and edits will be restricted so there is no risk of "deliberation" outside of a public meeting. The Committee discussed putting a link on the website to allow the public to access the documents as well.

The Committee then discussed why the DropBox is needed when the website contains all the information that is discussed during a meeting. Ms. Potter stated that she had concerns about Open Meeting Law violations with the arrangement and reiterated that all the FinCom documents can be found on the website. Mr. Ruley cautioned that if there is any doubt about the legality of using DropBox, it shouldn't be used.

Motion placed on the floor by Ms. McGroarty to have Ms. Countryman make a request to engage town counsel on the issue. Mr. Taus seconds the motion, brief discussion regarding the cost of such an inquiry.

No further discussion, roll call vote:

Ruley – Nay, Fitzgerald – Nay, DeBettencourt – Aye, Malecki – Aye, Countyman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Taus – Nay. Motion carries (4-3-0).

Feedback from Selectboard

- Paid Parking
Ms. Countryman reported that the Selectboard was not very enthusiastic about the idea to create paid parking areas.
- Community Impact Fee
Ms. Countryman said there is not much else to look at regarding the CIP. Most communities that have implemented it have also implemented a local registration process.
- PILOTs
Ms. McGroarty said the Selectboard was "warm" on this. She would like to put all the data she has collected into a usable format but is not sure how. It was noted that there is a PILOT included on the STM warrant, indicating that the Town is already pursuing this to some extent.

PR/Outreach/Survey Discussion

Ms. Countryman stated that Ms. Davisson has resigned from the Committee but her work on outreach is very much appreciated. She asked the Committee whether they should move forward with Ms.

Davisson's idea to put out a survey to the community. The Committee wondered about the cost. Ms. Potter stated that if the Committee put together the questions for the survey, she can send it out to the public at no cost through the town's subscription to Survey Monkey.

Discussion Regarding Joint FinCom Meeting with Tisbury/Possible Collaborations

Ms. Countryman stated that she intends to continue with quarterly joint meetings with the Tisbury FinCom to stay on top of synergies and share ideas. The Committee discussed and compared the differences in Free Cash and debt between the two towns.

TA/ATA Report and Finances

None.

Committee Updates

None.

Town Administrator Comments

Ms. Potter stated that the new compensation plan has been completed. It was presented to the Selectboard on Tuesday and the Personnel Board on Thursday.

Member Comments

Ms. McGroarty stated that financial forms should be sent out to the non-profits and social services now. Ms. Countryman said she spoke with Doug Ruskin (County Commissioner) who has promised to get information from the County over in the next couple weeks.

Ms. McGroarty requested a list of all town-owned vehicles. Ms. Potter said to ask Assistant Town Administrator Wendy Brough, who can provide that information based on the insurance policy.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment

At 6:40pm a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Taus and seconded by Mr. DeBettencourt. No further discussion, roll call vote:

Ruley – Aye, Fitzgerald – Aye, DeBettencourt – Aye, Malecki – Aye, Countryman – Aye, McGroarty – Aye, Taus – Aye,

Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0).

Meeting Documents on File:

1. 20230813 FY24 Estimated COLA
2. 20230906 STM WIP
3. Cleary – Moderator Appointment – 2024
4. TA-ATA Report 2023.08.22
5. Budget Documents:
 - FY25 Budget Calendar 20230904
 - FY25 Budget Instructions
 - FY25 Budget Letter
 - FY25 Department Goals and Objectives Form
 - FY25 Department Goals and Objectives Letter

- FY25 GFOA Guidance on Budget Presentation
- 6. CIP Documents
 - 20230904 CIP Letter
 - CIP FY24 Final
 - CIP FY25 Calendar
 - CIP FY25 Project Request Form
 - Town Capital Planning Policy

Respectfully Submitted
Juliet Mulinare, Recorder

Minutes Approved: 10/31/2023