

**Town of Oak Bluffs  
Finance and Advisory Committee  
Thursday, April 2, 2009 3:30PM  
Oak Bluffs Library**

Present: **Chair Thad Harshbarger, Steve Auerbach  
Doug Best, Bill McGrath,  
Peter Palches, Mike Perry,**

Others: Board of Selectmen – Kerri Scott  
Town Administrator – Michael Dutton  
Town Clerk – Deborah Ratcliff, Laura Dunston, Nat Woodruff  
Tax Collector – Cheryl Sashin  
Recorder - Marni Lipke

Absent: Frank Case, Mimi Davisson, Hans Von Steiger  
\* Late arrivals or early departures  
noted solely to mark vote counts.

The meeting was called to order at 3:47PM.

**1. Review of Minutes of Prior Meetings.**

The March 24th Minutes were not yet finished.

There was a brief discussion on FinCom candidates and available slots.

**2. Pick Date for Next Regular Meeting: 4/23, or 5/7? Do We Want To Wrap Up After Town Meeting, or Take a Break? New Members Won't Be Elected by the 16th, So We Should At Least Go to the 23rd. Elect Officers, Plan End of FY09 and Next Year.**

**DOUG BEST MOVED THAT THE NEXT MEETING DATE BE 3:30PM MAY 7, 2009 AT THE OAK BLUFFS LIBRARY; MICHAEL PERRY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

- It was acknowledged now and throughout the meeting that this would be Peter Palches' last meeting (see below p. 4).
- There was a brief general discussion on the agenda issues as well as the warrant and journal transfer processes.

**3. Meet with Deborah Ratcliff re: Stipend Recommendation About 4:00**

Town Clerk Deborah Ratcliff and Selectmen Kerri Scott advocated for the Town Clerk's proposed pay increase (see 3/19/09 Minutes p.4 #17 & 3/23/09 Minutes p.1 and documents on file). The issues were:

- lack of longevity and past compensation for such,
- lack of Personnel Board jurisdiction, the Personnel Board appeals process and Deborah Ratcliff's change of stance regarding her agreement to abide by the Classification and Compensation study recommendations,
- Town Clerk duties, especially in regards to the MV Hospital,

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- comparisons with other towns, including mitigating factors, duties, assistants, hours, seniority, etc.
- BILL MCGRATH MOVED THAT THE TOWN CLERK'S POSITION BE TIED TO A POSITION IN CLASSIFICATION STUDY WITH LONGEVITY; THERE WAS NO SECOND.
- **DOUG BEST MOVED TO SUPPORT THE TOWN CLERK SALARY INCREASE IN ARTICLE # 17 AS WRITTEN AT \$74,360 BUT THAT THE POSITION CONTINUE TO BE STUDIED; BILL MCGRATH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED: 3 AYES, 1 NAY – PETER PALCHES, 2 ABSTENTIONS – MIKE PERRY, STEVE AUERBACH.**
- The FinCom expressed its support of the Personnel Board.

**4. Prepare for Town Meeting. We Need to Re-Visit Article 3 on the Special Town Meeting. Then We Should Look at Town Meeting Articles 5 (The Budget), 6,7, and 8,10,12,16,17. Others?**

Special Town Meeting #3. Journal transfers

- See 2/19/09 Minutes p. 1 #3 and documents on file.
- Town Administrator Michael Dutton clarified the transfers and updated the information.
- The bulk of the salary transfers covered union salary raises after the FY09 budget had been passed.
- The transfer of \$13,515 into Michael Dutton's salary was probably a duplicate entry and would be corrected accordingly.
- Residuals in the Tax Collector's salary from an unfilled position and reductions in street lights were the major sources for transfers.

• **DOUG BEST MOVED TO SUPPORT SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLE #3 ON JOURNAL TRANSFERS AS AMENDED TO REDUCE THE UNCLASSIFIED NEGOTIATED SALARY TRANSFER TO \$55,931; BILL MCGRATH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6, AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

Town Meeting #5. Oak Bluffs FY2010 Budget (See 3/19/09 Minutes p. 5-6 #7.)

- Wastewater issues were: clarification of payment for bonds, and previous concerns re: funds needed for the remediation of Ocean Park.
- **PETER PALCHES MOVED TO SUPPORT PART B TRANSFERING TO THE WASTEWATER FUND FOR WASTEWATER HALF SHARE OF THE BORROWING; MICHAEL PERRY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6, AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**
- **DOUG BEST MOVED TO SUPPORT PART C TRANSFERING TO THE WASTEWATER FUND FOR THE PAYMENT OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2010 LEONARDO BOND; BILL MCGRATH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6, AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**
- **PETER PALCHES MOVED TO SUPPORT PREVIOUS CONSENSUS ON PART D: ON DISTRIBUTION OF THE FERRY FEE FUNDS (SEE 3/19/09 MINUTES P. 3 #5); BILL MCGRATH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6, AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

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• The FinCom reviewed previous decision(s) on the Oak Bluffs School (OBS) and the MV Regional High School (MVRHS) (see 3/5/09 Minutes p. 2-3, 3/12/09 Minutes p. 2, 3/19/09 Minutes p. 5-6 #7, 3/24/09 Minutes p. 2-3 #2). It was generally felt that next year would be worse than this year. Both schools would begin contract negotiations in September 2009.

The issues on the OBS were:

- use of the School Choice Fund as a means of reducing the OBS budget,
- failure to level fund,
- staff reduction and adherence to the Town hiring freeze,
- student / staff ratio and class size.

The issues on the MVRHSC were:

- level funding versus increase Oak Bluffs assessment,
- MVRHS budget and assessment formula history,
- comparisons with other town assessments and fairness,
- actions of the All Island Finance Association,
- failure to level fund.

• The FinCom also discussed the Police Department increase in terms of:

- the Quinn bills and Mass State share reductions,
- implications of requesting a hiring freeze and level funding.

• The FinCom considered its role of financial oversight and value as an independent perspective, as well as political strategies in regards to keeping the issue before the town, crying wolf or choosing battles (see below: Actions).

• Kerry Scott thanked the FinCom for their work.

Town Meeting #10. Community Preservation Act Fund Expenditure Recommendations

The issue was public moneys for church and/or private projects, there was no motion to reconsider (see 3/19/09 Minutes p. 4 #10).

Town Meeting #12. Affordable Housing (See 3/19/09 Minutes p. 4 #12.)

PETER PALCHES MOVED TO RECONSIDER FOR PURPOSES OF DISCUSSION: THERE WAS NO SECOND.

Town Meeting #16. \$500,000 to Dredge Sengekontacket Pond

The issue was whether or not the FinCom supported the article as a debt exclusion. The original motion was supported (see 3/19/09 Minutes p. 5 #16).

Town Meeting #17. Compensation for Town Personnel (See 3/19/09 Minutes p. 4 #17.) (See 1/22/09 Minutes p. 4 #11 and documents on file.) The issue was proper procedure (see below: Actions).

**• PETER PALCHES MOVED TO RECONSIDER THE FINCOM MOTION ON THE STIPENDS PART OF ARTICLE #17; BILL MCGRATH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**• PETER PALCHES MOVED TO RESCIND THE FINCOM MOTION ON THE STIPENDS PART OF ARTICLE #17;; DOUG BEST SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

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• **PETER PALCHES MOVED TO SUPPORT THE STIPENDS PART OF ARTICLE #17 AS LISTED, WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WAS STUDYING THE STIPENDS AND WOULD MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011; DOUG BEST SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

• There was a brief discussion on the physical configuration of Town Meeting.

• **BILL MCGRATH MOVED TO COMMEND PETER PALCHES FOR HIS EXCELLENT YEARS OF SERVICE ON THE FINCOM AND THAT THE MEMBERS WOULD REALLY MISS HIM; MIKE PERRY AND THAD HARSBARGER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**6. Adjourn or Continue [Peter]**

**PETER PALCHES THANKED THE FINCOM, STATED HE HAD HAD A GREAT TIME, WAS GLAD HE DID IT, AND MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 6:24 PM; BILL MCGRATH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

**Action List:**

- Michael Dutton/Paul Manzi – amend journal transfers re: Town Administrator salary.
  - let FinCom know if FY09 pay goes down.
- Michael Dutton/Paul Manzi – correct the Leonardo bond payment - \$132,500
- Thad Harshbarger
  - request draft of FY10 budget amendment for Town Meeting re: Highway vs. schools.
  - email to FinCom for comments,
  - submit to Bd. of Selectmen.
- Personnel Board/FinCom Stipend Subcommittee – meet with recipients of stipends before making recommendations.

**Ongoing Action List from previous meetings.**

- FinCom - talk about Federal Stimulus money at Town Meeting.
- FinCom – Continue to emphasize \$2,000,000 Stabilization Fund goal.
- Thad - Inform the Selectmen in writing of all significant FinCom decisions
- Inform Depts. - any item not in dept. budgets will not be recommended for free cash.
  - update Capital Improvement Plan regularly.
- Regular meetings with Bd. of Selectmen and Personnel Board re: Financial Team.
- Ask about end-of-year transfers in the FY09 budget season.

**4/3/09 Agenda:**

- Welcome new members
- Minutes 3/24/09, 4/2/09
- Reorganization

**continued**

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Future Agendas:

- Discussion with School Representatives on school budgets / override decision.
- Ambulance Fund Report.
- Dukes County Charter Commission Report
- CDC - Cost of Services Survey Results.
- Reconsider Finance Dept. Reorganization

**Meetings**

- Town Meeting – 7:00PM Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at the MVRHS PAC.
- OB FinCom - 3:30PM Thursday, May 7, 2009 at the Oak Bluffs Library.

**Documents on file:**

- Agenda 4/2/09
- Payroll Transfers 2009
- Transfers for Special Town Meeting – Fiscal 2009
- Letter re: Town Clerk salary (4 p.) 3/31/09

- **These Minutes approved as written by the Oak Bluffs FinCom 5/21/09.**