

**Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, July 9, 2009 3:30PM
Oak Bluffs Library**

Present: Chair Mimi Davisson Thad Harshbarger,
Bill McGrath*, Mike Perry, Mac Starks,
Hans Von Steiger
Others: Town Administrator – Michael Dutton
Finance Director – Paul Manzi
Wastewater – Joe Alosso
Police – Suzanne Cioffi,
Recorder - Marni Lipke

Absent: Doug Best, Frank Case, Linda Marinelli,

* Late arrivals or early departures
noted solely to mark vote counts.

The meeting was called to order at 3:34PM.

- Town Administrator Michael Dutton and Town Finance Director Paul Manzi were welcomed as was FinCom alumnus and Wastewater Operator Joe Alosso.
- Doug Best was unable to attend this meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

• Approval of June 18 Minutes

• THAD HARSBARGER MOVED THE JUNE 18, 2009 MINUTES AS AMENDED; MIKE PERRY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY; 5 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS

• Finance Update -- Wrap-Up FY2009 (INFO SHARE – Manzi / Dutton)

Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09) was now closed except a few outstanding warrants.

- Revenue showed a \$466,000 shortfall.
- Stabilization stood at \$1,400,000 (the goal being \$2,000,000).
- Departments were commended for tight budget management, turning back \$450,000
- The remaining ~\$15,000 free cash deficit would be carried over to next year on the Mass. State balance sheet.

The FinCom thanked Mr. Dutton, Mr. Manzi and all the Town Departments.

• FY2009 Budget Transfers (DECIDE) (See documents on file.)

- To relieve the burden on the next the Special Town Meeting a number of small, intra-departmental transfers were submitted to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen.
- Most of the discussion focused on longevity pay for the Tax Collector and its implications for the Town Clerk (see 3/10/09 Minutes p.5 #17, 3/24/09 Minutes p.1-2, 4/2/09 Minutes p.1-2 #3). The issues being:
 - the shift from elected to appointed position,
 - salary history and retroactivity.
- Snow and ice removal were not reimbursed unless a State of Emergency was declared.
- Wastewater overtime was expected to increase during the Ocean Park remediation.
- Trash stickers did not cover tipping fees.

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- **THAD HARSBARGER MOVED TO APPROVE TRANSFERS #2 (POLICE), #3 (HIGHWAY) AND #4 (WASTEWATER) AS PROPOSED; BILL MCGRATH SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**
- **THAD HARSHBARGER MOVED TO PROVISIONALLY APPROVE TRANSFER #1 (TAX COLLECTOR) PENDING THE PERSONNEL BOARD DECISION; MIKE PERRY SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 6 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.**

• Possible Revision to FY2010 Budget (INFO SHARE/BRAINSTORM – Dutton)

- There was a long discussion on solid waste options to eliminate the yearly \$118,000 operating shortfall. The disposal process, fees and Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) requirements and incentives were explained, and a number of studies were available on different household tax and sticker options as it was important to regulate how much people recycled, trashed, and/or dumped. This was a complex issue which should involve extensive public discussion and therefore would not be voted before FY11 at least.
- Representatives from all relevant boards, committees and departments would form a committee to study the matter. IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE OAK BLUFFS FINANCE COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE HANS VON STEIGER AS REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE.
- Budget stringency was forcing reform of municipal personnel, services and technology.
 - Technology now allowed for some on-line operations such as licensing applications.
 - Everything was “on the table”, i.e. being considered for possible savings, including the Town’s 75% share of benefits.
- The FinCom discussed the Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) assessment politics, the Oak Bluffs School (OBS) and union negotiations as well as the pros and cons of regionalization.
- As a town with a tourist centered economy it was important to maintain a level of service and appearance.
- Michael Dutton welcomed any ideas on cost savings. The FinCom thanked both him and Paul Manzi. (see below: Actions).

• Wireless Network Plans (INFO SHARE– Larsen) (See documents on file.)

The main goal of the Municipal wireless plan was to substantially reduce town communications costs which included wastewater pumping stations signals, data cards, cellular phone service, internet fees, police cruisers, highway, etc. A private option with possible advertising revenue could be added. Depending on various implementation and service scenarios the payback would be 2 to 4 years.

- Other towns and a regional project were explored.
- The system operated by line of sight and would require a certain amount of redundancy to be dependable and stand up to emergency situations such as hurricanes.
- Even in its current and very restricted pilot phase a surprising number of people used it.
- Private ownership/capital costs were explored but might be slow and more expensive.
- The project was on the capital plan (see below: Actions).
- The Information Technology (IT) Dept. was in a difficult political position.

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- The FinCom made several recommendations.
- The Plan needed a summary, timeline, cost breakdown and implementation plan.
- Funding needed to be regularized and accounted for.
- An informed committee should be created to support Travis Larsen.
- There was a brief discussion on the timing and technology of the new website.
- The FinCom thanked Travis Larsen and invited him to return.

NEW BUSINESS

• Preparation for August 13 meeting with Selectmen and Schools (DECIDE)

- Next Meeting: **3:00PM** Thursday, August 13, 2009 at the Oak Bluffs Library
- The Selectmen, School Committees and Personnel Board were invited for 3:30PM.
- The Agenda would focus on the FY10 Budget shortfall and the FY11 Budget guidelines.

THAD HARSHBARGER MOTION TO ADJOURN 5:34PM; MIMI DAVISSON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Action List:

- Marni Lipke – Batch and send PDF minutes to Travis.
- Mimi Davisson – resubmit stipend recommendations (\$15,000 savings).
- Michael Dutton – explain paving funding to public at Selectmen meeting
- Travis Larsen - correct Wifi Project dates on Capital Plan cc: Mike Perry/Bill McGrath

8/13/09 Agenda:

- Emergency Planning Reserve Fund Request
- FY10 Revenue Shortfall / Expenditure Reductions
- FY11 Budget Projections and Guidelines

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings.

- Chair and Vice Chair
 - keep up timely communications with FinCom members and Town Government.
 - Inform the Selectmen in writing of all significant FinCom decisions.
- FinCom - talk about Federal Stimulus money at Town Meeting.
- FinCom – Continue to emphasize \$2,000,000 Stabilization Fund goal.
- 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.

Future Agendas:

- Capital Planning Com. Report (quarterly)
- Ambulance Fund Report.
- Board of Health – solid waste issues
- Finance Dept. Reorganization

Documents on file:

- Agenda 7/9/09
- OB Revenue Fiscal 2009 (2 p.) 7/9/09
- OB FinCom Fin. Director / Town Admin. Update (2 p.) 7/9/09
- Year-End Transfers FY2009
- Town of OB Year To Date – Revenue (21 p.) 7/8/98
- boston.com *excerpt* Mass. revenues plummet again (2 p.) 7/8/09
- OB Wireless Project (42 p.)
- **These Minutes approved by the Oak Bluffs FinCom 11/19/09.**