

Finance Committee Meeting  
Minutes of Meeting 4-6-18

Aquinnah Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room

Members present: Chairman Allen Rugg, Tom Murphy and Mark Foster

Also present: Town Administrator Jeffrey Madison, Selectmen Chair Jim Newman, Town Accountant Emily Day, Board Administration Assistant Sophia Welch, Board of Assessors Assistant Angela Cywinski, Assessor Chair Elise LeBovit, Assessor Marsha Shufrin, Assessor Adam Wilson and Board of Health Assistant Phoenix Becker

- The meeting began at 10:01am

- First on the agenda was the review of minutes. Tom made a motion to approve the 3/21/18 minutes as presented. Mark seconded. The Committee voted 3-0, the motion passed.

- Next, the Committee met with the Board of Assessors to discuss their proposed FY19 budget. Angela informed the Committee that the BOA had approved the proposed budget. The BOA voted to keep the Assessor Assistant hours at 32hrs/week and did not review a decrease in hours. There was discussion regarding the increase in hours that the Assessor had requested the previous year, which the Committee recalled was due to the impending work on the re-evaluation. Angela did not agree and stated that the increase was due to the job evolving. She added that the State is requiring more from the Assessors including more statistical work. There was discussion on the comp-time that Angela has accrued which she attributed to the re-evaluation that occurs every 3-years (now every 5-years). The Committee asked if there was anything that could be eliminated from Angela's duties. There was brief discussion again regarding Angela's time spent answering phone calls, however, that is now no longer a problem because of the new phone system and Dukes County changing the Towns phone number on the website (which used to be Angela's direct phone). In terms of decreasing hours, Angela noted that the Committee should have requested for the Board to review a decrease in her time prior to this meeting. In addition, she asked if the Committee was asking for all departments to review a decrease in budgets. The Committee stated that they were only focusing on the responsibilities of the Assistant Assessor but in past years they have asked departments to review decreases. It was noted that the Assessors budget was 1.7% of the Towns budget. The Committee reviewed the statistical analysis between Aquinnah and other small towns in Massachusetts that Angela had compiled (this included a comparison between Chilmark and Aquinnah). She noted that her costs are higher for the same services provided than that of Chilmark. Angela further noted that Aquinnah does have less houses than Chilmark, but it doesn't mean she has less work than Chilmark (there is still a base for the same costs). The Committee reviewed the cover sheet for the proposed budget pointing out that it clearly defines the major component of the Assessor's Assistant job as appraisal fieldwork. The Committee referred to the prior meeting with the Assistant Assessor where they figured that the home appraisals (each home appraised every 5 years) takes approximately 1 hour of fieldwork and 1 hour to input the fieldwork data, equating to 2 hours of work per home in a Town that has around 375 homes (750 hours spread out over 5 years). Angela stated that there is more to the job than the field appraisals, such as the background analysis to the fieldwork. The Committee asked if there was a job description for the Assistant Assessor (a copy was given to the Committee). There was discussion on the percentage breakdown of fieldwork that Angela carries out. Elise noted that there are other things coming into the Assessors department that take up Angela's time, such as public inquires, business of the board and new State requirements. Elise continued to note that even though there are more houses in Chilmark, there is still the same amount of work that needs to be done in Aquinnah. There was brief discussion on re-evaluation years (conducted every 5 years) and the work that

Angela is obligated to prepare for the contracted company that does the re-evaluation.

The Committee reviewed the warrant articles presented by the Board of Assessors. There was discussion regarding the \$15,000.00 request for software for an archival computer. Angela noted that the software needs to be purchased by the end of this year because the current system she uses will not be supported and older records need to be preserved. There was discussion on the request for funds for a car for the Assistant Assessor to use to conduct fieldwork. Angela stated that she did not ask for a car but did request access to one. The BOA asked if the Committee had found the need for a Town car from other departments. No other department has requested a vehicle or vehicle use. Elise noted that the Assessors would need a vehicle for 3 weeks out of the year. Before the meeting with the BOA ended, Angela asked for the Committee to review the analysis that she had conducted against other small towns (same population as Aquinnah) in the State. She pointed out that her analysis proved that no matter how large or small the town is, the Assessors need to carry out the same amount of work. The Committee thanked the BOA and Angela for their time.

- Next, the Committee discussed the Town Administrator's compensation and reviewed the proposal that Jeffrey had sent them. Jeffrey informed the Committee that the Selectmen had reviewed the proposal and unanimously approved an increase of hours to 40 hrs./week and an increase in salary to \$117,000.00/year. The Committee agreed that the Town has been well served by Jeffrey as the Town Administrator. While the Committee agreed that Jeffrey's time should be increased, they felt that the increase in pay, especially during an override, would be hard to approve. There was discussion on how Jeffrey determined the increase. Jeffrey noted that when he took the position, he had agreed to begin at step 1 of the Town Administrator pay scale but his contract was to be reviewed again (5-year contract). He felt his expertise and knowledge should be compensated with a higher level than what he is currently being compensated at. The Committee agreed to defer discussion to the next meeting so that they could further review the proposal. The Committee set the next meeting date for Friday April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

- Next the Committee discussed the Tri-Town conversion to the retirement system. No detailed documentation has yet to be received. Jim informed the Committee that he will get the requested information for the Committee.

- Next the Committee discussed the Town Retirement Assessment. Emily informed the Committee that she is still waiting for the assessment.

- Next, Emily discussed the hiring of an additional officer. The Committee noted that they were in favor of the proposal, but the discussion was supposed to continue with the Board of Selectmen. Jim informed the Committee that Chief Belain had not met with the Selectmen yet.

- Under New Business, the Committee reviewed the proposed warrant. Jeffrey noted that the warrant was lengthy because of an article for Personnel Bylaw amendments and one article pertaining to Planning Board Zoning amendments. The Committee reviewed each article. There was brief discussion on the remaining amount in free cash. The Committee agreed to recommend the following articles: 1-14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 31 and 33. The Committee recommend removing article no. 15 (\$1,800.00 to replace locks in the Town Hall) from the warrant. The Committee took no action on the following articles: 16, 19, 21, 24-30 and 32.

- With no other business to discuss, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn.

**The Committee voted 3-0 in favor. The motion passed.**

- The meeting ended at 12:00pm.

*Respectfully submitted, Sophia Welch, Board Administrative Assistant*