

Finance Committee Meeting  
Minutes of Meeting 3-21-2018

Aquinnah Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room

Members present: Chairman Allen Rugg and Tom Murphy

Members not present: Mark Foster

Also present: Town Administrator Jeffrey Madison, Selectmen Chair Jim Newman, Town Accountant Emily Day, Dukes County Manager Martina Thornton, Police Chief Belain and Board Administration Assistant Sophia Welch

- The meeting began at 10:00am

- First on the agenda was the review of minutes. Tom made a motion to approve the 3/9/18 minutes as presented. Allen seconded. The Committee voted 2-0, the motion passed.

- Next, the Committee met with Martina Thornton, Dukes County Manager. Martina gave an overview of the seven financial assistance requests from Dukes County for island-wide programs. She noted that the requests are not equal across the board for all towns and are calculated using a 50/50 formula based on equalized evaluation (by Dept. of Revenue) and the population of each town. Martina informed the Committee that Aquinnah's rate is 2.84. The Committee reviewed the Vineyard Health Care Access Program (VHCAP), a proposed \$372,471.00 all Island request. The Committee found that Aquinnah's portion of the request is \$10,578.00. There was brief discussion on VHCAP services.

Martina presented the \$16,879.00 request (Aquinnah's portion) for Martha's Vineyard Senior Services. She noted that this request would be funding for the Center for Living, a non-profit organization contracted with Dukes County and supported with revenue from the towns. There was brief discussion regarding the history of the organization and services provided. Martina noted that the \$16,879.00 request is for services and a separate request of \$6,318.00 is for the bond payment on the building that houses the program. Emily informed the Committee that the bond payments had already come before the town and she believed that the vote was to include the payments in the debt and to excluded them from the levy limit, but she will confirm with Sibel.

Next, Martina presented the Counseling and Outreach Referral for Elders (CORE) request, one of three requests that ultimately end up funding MV Community Services. There was brief discussion on the history of CORE and the services it provides. Martina informed the Committee that First Stop was created out of CORE and focuses on outreach and referrals using a software program. The total request for CORE is \$80,000 with Aquinnah's portion of \$2,272.00. For First Stop, an all island request of \$47,500.00, Aquinnah's portion would be \$1,349.00. The third request associated with CORE was Healthy Aging MV, an advocacy planning program (no direct services) for the growing elder population on the Island. There was brief discussion on the needs of the program, primarily administration funding. The island-wide request for Healthy Aging MV is \$71,126.00 and Aquinnah's shared portion request is \$2,020.00. There was discussion regarding the role of Dukes County with these programs. It was noted that the County does not receive any funds from these requests for administrative fees because they are already funded through the Dukes County assessment budget.

Martina presented the final two requests from Dukes County: Dukes County Social Services and Substance Use Prevention. Dukes County Social Services addresses other needs of VHCAP clients, such as self-sufficiency programs (food stamps, fuel assistance, etc.). Martina noted that VHCAP doesn't have the capacity to address these needs. The funding request would go towards administration for the program. Aquinnah's portion of the Social Services request is \$1,550.00. There was brief discussion on the process if a town rejects any of these warrant

articles. The Committee and Martina reviewed the changes that Jeffery made on the Dukes County warrant articles. Martina discussed the final request for the Substance Use Prevention program. The Committee found that the program aids different initiatives dealing with substance use prevention such as the school prevention program and a harm reduction program. There was brief discussion on why this specific request is coming from the County and not the school system. Martina stated that the County is trying to help pay for the school's prevention curriculum, not the staffing or administration of the program. Aquinnah's shared portion for this request is \$1,420.00. The Committee thanked Martina for her time. Jeffrey asked Martina to email him a Dukes County FY'18 report for the annual town report.

- Next, the Committee met with Chief Belain to discuss an economic cost and benefit analysis of adding an additional officer to Aquinnah's Police Department in effort to decrease the proposed budget. Chief Belain presented his analysis and noted that there wasn't much of a difference between adding another officer and the FY'19 budget he submitted. The Committee reviewed the proposed budget if the Town were to hire an additional full-time officer. Chief Belain pointed to the line items that had the most effect from adding another officer: salary line item increases by \$52,000.00 (step one salary of new officer), summer reserve officer expense line item decrease payment of only 1 officer (still would need to hire 2 part-time officers) and time-off relief expense would decrease slightly (shifts would still need to be covered). There was brief discussion on how Chief calculated the figures presented and he explained time-off relief and overtime. Emily pointed out that the officer would be eligible for health coverage and retirement, which is not included in the presented budget. However, the Town does budget for an additional family plan every year (\$25,000.00). There was discussion on whether hiring another officer would keep the budget down. The Committee found that, while the additional officer would aid in decreasing overtime, the existing officers still have their collective bargaining agreement and the new officer could only cover so many shifts. The idea of hiring two officers was briefly discussed. The Committee thanked Chief Belain for conducting the analysis and stated that it is very beneficial for everyone. The Committee asked Chief Belain what his recommendation would be after conducting this analysis. Chief Belain stated that he is worried about the Tribe's casino plan and being prepared for it. In addition, Chief noted that the current schedule and coverage would become more flexible if another officer was hired. The Committee briefly discussed the concern of the potential Tribal casino and safety coverage (EMT, police, etc.). Chief Belain recommended to hire additional officer because it keeps coming back to the table and it is comparable to the current submitted budget. It was noted that the bottom line police budget, if another officer was hired, would increase from \$650,000.00 to \$700,000.00. The Committee discussed the hiring procedure beginning with a request made to the Selectmen. The Committee thanked Chief Belain for his time and noted that they will keep this on their "open issue" list.

- Next, the Committee discussed the Town Administrator's compensation. Jeffrey noted that he has met with the Personnel Committee and their recommendation is to increase the Administrator's hours from 32 hrs./week to 40 hrs./week. However, the other half of the discussion is the pay rate which needs to be brought to the Selectmen. The Committee will keep the matter on their "open issue" list until Jeffrey meets with the Selectmen.

- Next, the Committee discussed the Tri-Town detailed documentation of the calculation of the financial effect of converting the retirement system. Allen noted that they received a set of minutes from the Tri-Town Board approving the issue, but it did not contain any explanation or support. Jim ensured the Committee that he will follow up on this matter.

- The Committee reviewed their "open issue" list and set the next meeting date for Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am. The Committee briefly discussed the issues brought forth by the Board of Health Assistant. Jeffrey noted that the Chair of the Board has stated that the issues have been addressed. The Committee removed it from their "open issue" list.

Remaining on the Committee's "open issue" list: Tri-Town, Town Administrator, Assessors proposed budget, Police proposal of hiring additional officer, review of warrant, and review of the retirement assessment.

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

**The Committee voted 2-0 in favor. The motion passed.**

- The meeting ended at 11:39am

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sophia Welch  
Board Administrative Assistant*