

Aquinnah Joint Finance Committee and Select Board Meeting

March 8th, 2021

Minutes

This meeting was held via videoconference

Members Present: Allen Rugg, Tom Murphy, Mark Foster & Howard Goldstein (alternate member)

Also Present: Accountant Emily Day, Town Administrator Jeff Madison, Select Board Chair Jim Newman, Select Board Gary Haley, Select Board Julianne Vanderhoop, Treasurer Sibel Suman, Tri Town Chief Retmier, Nancy Slate

- Allen called the meeting to order at 9:35am

- Allen gave a brief Tri Town update: Tri Town Committee met the prior week, but a new allocation formula has not yet been addressed and will not impact budget until FY'23; Chilmark is preparing to present an 11 million bond to build the fire station and Tri Town facility; Chilmark first needs to pass this bond then the Aquinnah and West Tisbury will address the lease contributions; Funding for the lease contributions will become an issue for Aquinnah to discuss for FY'23.

- Chief Retmier gave an overview of the proposed Tri Town FY'22 budget: Tri Town Committee has not yet addressed the allocation formula (a presentation has not been made); This should be addressed in April and will affect the FY'23 budget; Salary has increased by 2.9% (step and grade increase); Expense line items are being level funded as much as possible and overall expense budget will increase by 1.75%; Due to the decline in call volume this past year, Tri Town has decided for one year only, to change the MOU and allocate 100% of the insurance revenue to offset the budget; Typically, 75% goes to offset the budget and 25% funds the ambulance reserve receipt funds for capital purchases; Due to this change, the net budget is increasing approx. \$58,000 (1.32% increase and a \$19,000 increase for each town assessment). Allen informed the Committee that the Chilmark Finance Committee has a policy where if department or institution budget is below a 2% increase, they do not need to present to the Committee. Allen suggested that Aquinnah consider a similar policy in the future.

- Emily reviewed the **General Town Expenses** budget: overall budget reflects a 3% COLA (there was no COLA in FY'21); not accounting for the increase in Tri Town, the budget is under the levy limit by \$69,000; certain line items will increase (e.g., telephone and advertising) to account for annual cost of services, which have not been accounted for in prior years; included in the advertising budget, there is an effort to promote the Homestead and Gabbi will discuss this at the next meeting.

Moderator: budget to remain the same.

Town Administrator: 3% COLA and step increase.

Selectmen: 3% COLA.

Finance Committee Reserve Fund: budget to remain the same (fund is used for unexpected expenditures); Emily will be requesting a \$5,000 transfer for payment of work completed in the treasury department as advised by the auditors.

Audit: remaining at \$17,000.

Accountant: 3% COLA, step increase and an increase in budgeted hours for both Accountant and Assistant (hour increase as suggested by the auditors); Fin Comm supported the suggested increase in hours.

Assessor: budget will increase by \$6,000 (15% increase which is an annual contractual obligation and deficiency in FY'21 payment); There was question on whether the re-evaluation costs were included in the contract or if a separate warrant article would be requested.

Treasurer: 3% COLA, step increase and an increase in hours as suggested by the auditors; Sibel was still uncertain about the increase in hours and the Committee agreed to revisit this issue.

Tax Collector: 3% COLA and 1% longevity.

Legal: budget to remain at \$90,000.

Data Processing: 10% increase to accommodate updates and support of the current programs that the Town uses.

Town Clerk & Elections: to be reviewed with the Town Clerk.

Insurance: 5% increase (3% increase in prior years).

Town Report: increase of \$500 (\$7,500 to \$8,000); Budget includes set up and printing of the report.

Travel: budget to remain the same (town vehicle gas and ferry); There was discussion regarding this line item and whether it needs to be further broken down because it is misleading; Budget includes gas for Police vehicles.

Debt: 7% decrease in budget due to a decrease in interest; Fire Truck: \$50,000 principal and \$1,645 interest; Manning Property: \$30,000 mortgage payment and \$855 interest; Both are annual rollovers.

Employee Benefits: minimal increase in insurance premiums.

- Allen identified the following issues as open issues to be revisited: continuing the discussion of proposed 3% COLA; whether the re-evaluation is included in the assessing contract; and Treasurer's hours.

Meeting adjourned at 10:54am.

Respectfully submitted, Sophia Welch