

## Aquinnah Finance Committee Meeting

March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – Minutes

Meeting was held via videoconference

Members Present: Allen Rugg, Howard Goldstein, Mark Foster

Also present: Town Administrator Jeff Madison, Town Treasurer Sibel Suman, Select Board member Julianne Vanderhoop, Select Board member Tom Murphy

Allen called the meeting to order at 9:33am

- *Minutes*: Mark motioned to approve the 4/14/21 minutes. Allen seconded. Committee voted 3-0, motion passed.

Howard motioned to approve the 2/18/22 minutes. Allen seconded. Committee voted 2-0-1, motion passed. Mark abstained as he was not present at the meeting.

Mark motioned to approve the 1/19/22 minutes. Howard seconded. Committee voted 3-0, motion passed.

Howard motioned to approve the 1/7/22 minutes. Allen seconded. Committee voted 2-0-1, motion passed.

Mark abstained as he was not present at the meeting.

- *FY 23 Budget Review*: During the review process, Fin Comm will comment on the budget as it is being generated and will note items that merit further discussion or objection. Any issue Fin Comm does not comment on will be part of the budget that will ultimately be voted on at the end of the process.

Jeff reviewed the wage classification chart. Proposed plan is to change all employees grade and step resulting in an overall 5% adjustment to budget (\$71,000 increase). Proposal does not include the police as they have their own wage classification chart. Sibel reviewed other town COLAs, inclusive of Aquinnah, within the past 3 years. Select Board has not reviewed the proposal. Looking at the suggestion as a COLA adjustment, Allen felt that the proposed average 8% employee raise was excessive for the typical employee, is out of step with other towns and would suggest that the Select Board take the same stance. Jeff's reasoning for the proposal was due to the historical underpayment of employees and the need to readjust the classification chart (created and adopted in 2017). In addition, he felt that it was fair considering the Select Boards reaction to the recent police contract. Sibel noted that the classification chart was suggested to be updated every 5 years and other town wage charts vary. After a lengthy discussion, Fin Comm agreed that they would not take a stance on the issue yet and would wait to see where it fits in when the budget nears completion. Fin Comm requested that Sibel inquire about the cost for a re-evaluation on the wage chart and to perhaps include it in the FY 23 budget (in 2017 the cost was around \$10,000). Committee also requested that Sibel project cost of increases at 2.5%, 3.5% and 4.5% inclusive of the police.

*Treasurer*: figures to change with compensation plan.

*Debt*: Currently at \$600,000 inclusive of town (fire truck) and CPC (mortgage on #9, #13 & #15 Aquinnah Circle properties); FY 23 interest will be 0.50%.

*Medicare and Benefits*: overall increase to health insurance is 28.33%; 25% is due to new enrollments and 3% due to health coverage premium increase; within last 3 months town has taken on 3 new employee plans who declined coverage in the past; budget includes an additional plan should an employee opt in.

*Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB)*: \$50,000 (had been eliminated from FY 22 budget).

*Contractual Obligations:* will remain the same unless new contracts arise.

*Lighthouse Expenses:* Jeff anticipates that Lighthouse will open full time this season (schedule to return to pre-pandemic); salary is budgeted at \$28,938 based on 7-hour shifts for two docents at \$19.50/hour; last year there was a junior position at \$17.50 and if the town is able to recruit that position again, the expenses would decrease to reflect that position; expenditures for maintenance falls under budget for town building upkeep; committee briefly discussed operational versus revenue figures for the prior year and potentially raising entrance fees (historically reviewed and recommended by Lighthouse Advisory Board).

*General Town Expenses:* Committee agreed to wait to review budget until Jeff can meet with Emily or Emily can present.

- Next meeting: Tuesday March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting presenters include Housing Bank Coalition, Fire Dept, Tri Town and Town Clerk.

- Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:30am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sophia Welch