

## Aquinnah Finance Committee Meeting

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – Minutes

*Meeting was held via videoconference*

Members Present: Allen Rugg, Howard Goldstein,

Not present: Mark Foster, Jim Newman (alternate)

Also present: Town Administrator Jeff Madison, Morgan Hodgson, Town Accountant Emily Day, Laura Silber (Coalition to Create an MV Hosing Bank Rep)

Allen called the meeting to order at 9:30am

Minutes: Howard motioned to approve the 3/8, 3/31 and 4/1/22 minutes. Allen seconded. Committee voted 2-0, motion passed.

Warrant: Fin Comm will hold off on final review of the warrant until the Select Board approves warrant.

Open budget issues:

Printing of town report – Per M.G.L, there is \$50/select board member penalty if not printed. Until State addresses this law universally, the Town should continue making the reports available. Jeff was unsure if the reporting requirement includes all reports other than financials that town has been printing and was unsure if that would substantially reduce cost of report. Decision is on the Select Board. Fin Comm recommended that the town comply with the statute.

Highway Dept – DPW Director has recommended to increase the Foreman's hours from 37.5 to 40 (last year's request was to increase to 40 but difference was split at 37.5). Given that the DPW Director is on medical leave, the Committee endorsed the increase. Request has been included in the budget.

Admin Assistant – Jeff has requested to increase positions step and grade. Fin Comm recognized the Admin Assistant's work but urged Select Board to consider the overall morale and impact on the other 20 town employees. Request also needs to be addressed by Personnel Comm.

Current budget:

DPW – Foreman hour increase calculates to a 13.2% increase (\$8,413). DPW Director has also requested to add a temporary seasonal worker (5hrs/day x 5 days a week for 13 weeks) which calculates to an additional \$6,568 to the budget. No other increases to budget.

Library – Budget is coming in higher than originally projected. There will be an open position soon, but the Library Director does not want to reduce the step and grade should the replacement be at the same level/qualification the current employee is now. State is requiring a budget at \$162,142 and actual budget is \$5,000 higher. Library Director has reached out to the State to find reductions in budget but needs to consider budgeting for staff needed.

Warrant articles - number of articles that are not financially related: Housing Bank, discharge of radioactive waste in Cape Cod Bay, electrification of new or substantial remodeled buildings, process for collecting parking fees, Mullin Rule, and proposed CPC expenses that do not come out of town budget. Fin Comm has consistently taken the position to not make comment on articles that have no financial impact on the town. However, Fin Comm would like to speak with CPC regarding the proposed \$400,000 borrowing for affordable housing development. Fin Comm declined to recommend a position at town

meeting on the articles listed above. Laura Silber, Housing Bank, requested that the Fin Comm share their position at town meeting should the question arise. She felt that the Fin Comm message was positive message in that the housing bank does not impact the budget.

Override: with the budget as it stands inclusive of all articles presented, the town faces an override of \$379,646. Borrowing of debt to finance town improvements may not be subject to levy limit as a one-time capital investment expenditure (\$200,000 town improvements would be treated as separate item at town meeting but would not raise overall tax limit). Jeff is waiting on definitive advice from town counsel on this matter. Should this be the case, the override would be at \$179,646. If \$86,732 of free cash was used to cover singled out articles, town would still be over the levy limit by \$92,914. Couple of options: one override for \$105,000; if no override vote, there is potential to table some articles and reduce OPEB to \$25,000 which would bring town under levy limit and the only override would be borrowing for town improvements. Allen noted that the Parking Committee projects that the \$26,000 parking system will generate up to \$50,000 in additional revenue this year. Other articles are self-explanatory. Jeff noted that if the parking system was eliminated from the warrant, it wouldn't be a direct reduction in appropriations (town will need to hire seasonal staff to work the parking lot). If there is an override in addition to the \$200,000, Allen urged the Select Board to consider keeping the OPEB contribution. Jeff is going to strongly suggest that the Select Board not consider the \$36,000 contribution request from the MV Shellfish Group (contribution is 1/6 of cost to extend water line from Hughes Hatchery to lagoon). It is likely that this request can return this fall on a Special Town Meeting warrant when there is free cash available.

Next meeting: April 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am for final budget wrap up.

*Adjourn 10:08am*

Respectfully submitted,

Sophia Welch