Town of Oak Bluffs
Finance and Advisory Committee
Thursday, February 20, 2020 5:00 pm
Oak Bluffs Library Conference Room

Present: Acting Chair – Bob Gaffey, Bernie Crossland, Maura McGroarty,
Greg Thornton, Mike Taus, Walter Vail, Richard Weiss,

Absent: Sherry Countryman, Bill Vrooman,

Town: Town Accountant – Deb Potter,
Schools: Superintendent Matt D’Andrea, MVRHS Prin. Sarah Dingledy,
MVPS Interim Finance Manager – Mark Friedman,
OBS Principal Megan Farrell,
Others: ACE MV – Exec. Dir. Holly Bellebuono, Don Leopold, Norm Werthwein,
MV YTF – Mike Joyce,
Recorder - Marni Lipke

* Late arrivals or early departures,
noted solely to mark vote counts.

• The Oak Bluffs Finance and Advisory Committee (FinCom) came to order at 5:04pm. (Recorder’s Note: Discussions have been summarized and grouped for clarity and brevity.)

• Approval of Minutes

• MIKE TAUS MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 6, 2020 MINUTES;
WALTER VAIL SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 7 AYES,
0 NAYS, 0 ABSTENTIONS.

• Oak Bluffs School (OBS) Budget Review (See documents on file.)

• Principal Megan Farrell thanked the Town several times for supporting OBS instructional and capital needs, presenting a low Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) 2.98% Budget increase:
  - 0.41% Superintendent’s Shared Services,
  - 2.4% contractual obligations,
  - $19,963 constituted shifted transportation costs from the Martha Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) and the addition of a fourth OBS bus run—due to safety concerns and after school runs to the YMCA and Boys & Girls Club activities.
• Average class size was 18 from the smallest at 14 to the largest at 21. Enrollment trends showed a growing population with increased Special Education (SpEd) (not including the Shared Services Program), English Language Learners (ELL), and economically challenged proportions. Nonetheless MCAS scores exceeded expectations for all except ELL students—which was being addressed.
  - Prin. Farrell was monitoring SpEd designations, working with Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to make sure all needs were served and all children had access to regular classroom curriculums.
• Having addressed significant capital repairs such as the roof and heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC), Prin. Farrell considered the OBS to be in good physical shape, with a Maintenance Line at $24,000. (She was looking forward to signing roof/HVAC closing documents once the punch list was certified by the Owners Project Manager (OPM) and CX Agent.)
• The FinCom commended the OBS budgeting restraint and thanked Administrators for their time and attendance.
• Martha’s Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) Budget Review

(See documents on file for 1/30/30 & 2/6/20.)

- $25,000 Excess and Deficiency (E & D) offset was due to:
  - $25,000 for dust collection system engineering design, and
  - $500,000 as a contingency/reserve fund for unexpected expenditures such as corrective maintenance (facilities breakdowns), residential placements, etc. (with Selectmen notification of all spending) — replacing cumbersome E & D protocol involving Special Town Meetings (STMs).
- $243,000 covered about 11 Residential Tuitions — partially reimbursed by State Circuit Breaker on a one year lag.
- $354,000 was 2-2.25% contractual obligations.
- $66,000 for carefully and strategically examined capital projects.
- Increases were offset by staff reductions and
- level ($1,127,000) Other Post Employee Benefits (OPEB) Trust funding — goal was $2,000,000 annual contribution to get to 20-30 year pay-down. Island Towns were split as to how aggressively to address OPEB, some requesting fast pay-down, others finding it restricted a Town’s ability to pay its own OPEB liability.

• Oak Bluffs enrollment proportions would result in ~6% assessment increase.
• The October census showed enrollment at 681 although currently it was over 700, with trending at continued modest growth. Facilities capacity was probably 800 students.
• Class sizes were deceptive with teacher-load as a better indicator. As a comprehensive high school, Career Technical Education (CTE/vocational) as well as SpEd classes had mandated caps; for example, automotive, culinary, Compass, Navigator, etc. classes were less than 10 students (teacher load - 30-35). Most core subject classes (science, math, etc.) might be 30 students with teacher load - 160 students, so an English/Language Arts (E/LA) teacher might teach three core classes plus a Creative Writing Class with a smaller number. Total staff was 78-79 teachers.
• The Dust Collection Warrant Article total cost was estimated at $225,000:
  - $25,000 (10%) in engineering and design in the MVRHS operating budget (offset by E & D — see above);
  - $100,000 total request to the Towns;
  - $100,000 matching competitive State grant (same as matched Greenhouse — MVRHS optimistic but not guaranteed).

This was best practice if not a straight health issue, freeing up floor space and replacing a defunct system.
• There were two layers of tile at the MVRHS, the first layer contained asbestos that was sealed in, the second layer did not. No lead paint had been found.
• The FinCom would discuss the warrant article as a capital spending issue. There were two MVRHS long-term liabilities, the large facilities project and OPEB. If a feasibility study were voted tomorrow, construction would be 5-7 years while staff dealt with aging equipment. MVRHS continued to be extremely challenged by capital planning — a number of other small projects were not voted forward but would have to be addressed. The MVRHS would appreciate support for strategic projects until the larger issue was settled.
• Richard Weiss asked if Administrators had made it clear that Oak Bluffs would not move forward on capital spending without formula amendment but met a general FinCom response that this was not the purview of the MVRHS Administrators.
• The FinCom commended the MVRHSC for their hard work restraining the budget and thanked all for their time and attendance.
• Public Comments
  - For 14 years the Martha’s Vineyard Youth Task Force (MVYTF) was funded by State and Federal grants until last year (see documents on file & 2/14/19 Minutes p.2), when the renewable Federal grant aged out. Fundraising had not been successful, however MVYTF was well positioned for a new Federal grant program that would replace and expand previous funding—in which case any Town-voted funds would be returned.
  - MVYTF President Mike Joyce reviewed the MVYTF mission, work and results: supporting high quality speakers, working with the Island Wide Youth Collaborative, funding Police Narcan programs and drug disposal lock-boxes, etc.
  - Staffing consisted of two Coordinators, one State grant funded the other Town funded.
  - Office space was rented at the Nathan Mayhew Center.
  - MVYTF focused on prevention especially with school-age children (Martha's Vineyard Community Services (MVCS) focused on recovery. A grant to cover 18-26 year olds had to be discontinued after failure to attract the target group. MVYTF worked closely and collaboratively with many Island non-profits.
  - The Town $21,630 ask was predicated on the 50/50 County formula.
  - Superintendent Matt D'Andrea emphasized that both MVYTF and Adult Community Education Martha’s Vineyard (ACE MV) were tremendously beneficial in addressing the increasing challenges for Island youth mental health and career advancement, as well as teacher Professional Development (PD). ACE MV addressed Island youth who never went or failed at college and were then directionless and untrained.
  - ACE MV Treasurer Norm Werthwein, President Don Leopold and Executive Director Holly Bellebuono reported a conservative break-even budget with minimal overhead (2 employees, no vehicles, rented office, etc.). Tuition and grants covered direct course costs but ACE MV was deficient in donations/fundraising needed to cover administrative expenses. Town funding had been instrumental in keeping the programs going. Part of the ACE MV mission was affordability and competitive course costs, as expensive courses were shown to be a disincentive to youth.
  - FY21 Budget included adding a 0.75 Programs Coordinator with health insurance.
  - Most adult education programs were within school budgets but this would mean mandates/regulations on staff benefits, less flexibility and the MVRHS assessment formula. As a 501c3 organization ACE MV was eligible for Federal and State grants.
  - The FinCom emphasized increased tuition, on-line courses and market course costs as a way to relieve the Town burdens and again raised the issue of increasing number of non-profits asking for Town support. Holly Bellebuono stated that it was unlikely ACE MV would ever be entirely self-sufficient. She reported that other Towns also pushed back: Tisbury limiting funding to $10,000 and West Tisbury funding pending other Town votes.
  - The FinCom thanked her for her honesty, and ACE MV for their attendance and time.

• Accountant’s Comments
  - Town Administrator Bob Whritenour would attend next week’s meeting for the final budget review, the Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) presentation and the warrant article final draft. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) did not have a quorum.
  - Town Accountant Deb Potter presented the sick-leave/comp-time/vacation liability counts noting that the total non-current liability would be mitigated by actual spending and practice. For example:
- if Ms. Potter were to retire her sick-leave would zero out, but if she became ill during her tenure she could take the full amount of time off;
- the FY20 Police budget would require a transfer because an officer elected to buy-back sick-leave over a three year timeframe.

• Member Comments
  • Richard Weiss objected to FinCom response when he asked MVRHS Principal Sarah Dingley about advocating for assessment changes (see above: p.2). The discussion covered:
    - asking questions that wasted time,
    - Chair allowing interruptions,
    - allowable questions in public meetings.

• Adjourn
  • WALTER VAIL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE FINANCE AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AT 6:56PM; GREG THORNTON SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Meetings/Events:
Nomination Form Deadline - Thursday, February 27, 2020
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, February 27, 2020, OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 5, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 12, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, March 19, 2020 - OB Library
OB FinCom Budget recommendation deadline March 20, 2020
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, April 2, 2020 - OB Library
Special & Annual Town Meeting - 7:00PM, Tuesday, April 14, 2020
Town Election -Thursday, April 16, 2020
OB FinCom - 5:00PM, Thursday, April 23, 2020 - OB Library

Action List
• All – contact Chair if you can’t attend 2/27/20 meeting.

Ongoing Action List from previous meetings
• Bob G. – keep Greg informed of all meeting issues.
• Sherry/Bob/Maura/Richard – pick up nomination forms for 2/27/20 submission deadline.

• Future Agenda Items:
  Trash/Waste Analysis Reserve Fund Increase
  Town Cleaning Services Analysis Embarkation Fund Policy

Documents on file:
• Agenda 2/20/20
• Sign In Sheet 2/20/20
• Oak Bluffs School FY’21 Budget Analysis Draft #2 12/17/19
• Oak Bluffs School Student Demographics
• Potter cover email re: Updated State Aid 2/14/20
  - State Aid Comparison for the Cape and Islands Multi Year View of Net Receipts
• Potter cover email re: Updated State Aid Comparison 2/14/20
  - State Aid Comparison for the Cape and Islands Multi Year View of Net Receipts continued
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Documents on file (cont.):
• Potter cover email re: Historical Actuals 2/14/20
  - Historical Actuals...FY16 Actuals...FY17 Actuals... (10 p.)
• Hourly Rate 6/30/2019...Vacation Carry Over 6/30/19 (2 p.)
• Hourly Rate 6/30/2019...Vacation Accrual6/30/19... Police
• ACE MV Information for Oak Bluffs for a Warrant Article to Support Adult Education Programming July 1, 2020-June 30 2021 (6 p.)
• Martha’s Vineyard Youth Task Force (3 p.)

• Minutes approved as corrected for typos by the OB FinCom 2/27/20.