

FAC MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 4th, 2019 3:30pm

Members Present: Paulo DeOliveira, Les Baynes, Jim Carter, Steve Jordan, Jane Chittick.

Others Present: Margaret Serpa, Art Smadbeck, James Hagerty, Bryan Belanger, Juliet Mulinare

The meeting was called to order at 3:30pm.

Mr. Smadbeck informed the Committee that it was just announced through the newspapers that Oak Bluffs' Finance Committee voted against returning to the voters with a request to approve the feasibility study for the High School.

Mr. DeOliveira stated that the vote by OB FinCom was unfortunate. At the All-Island FinCom meeting that Edgartown FinCom members attended the week before, they made it clear that the study needs to be completed before the funding formula is renegotiated.

Mr. Hagerty introduced Mr. Belanger to the Committee. Mr. Belanger was hired as the Town's Purchasing Agent and FinCom Administrative assistant.

Mr. Smadbeck read aloud an article published by the MV Times on the decision by OB FinCom to vote down the feasibility study. He conveyed that he felt Oak Bluffs was playing games with this important issue and stated that perhaps the Edgartown FinCom should not even attend the AIFC meeting later in the evening.

Mr. Hagerty distributed a one-page summary of other Regional School agreements within the Commonwealth; a vast majority are funded on a per-pupil basis.

Ms. Serpa agreed with Mr. Smadbeck that Oak Bluffs seems never to be satisfied with their share of funding regional entities.

Mr. Baynes stated that there was no point in trying to rationalize the decision made by OB; he said that sustainability needs prioritization and education is clearly not a priority for OB.

Mr. DeOliveira stated that the Island's FinComs do not have the authority to make decisions on the funding formula, those decisions are for the Boards of Selectmen and the voters to make. Mr. Smadbeck stated that the School Committee handed this off to the FinComs to deal with.

Mr. Hagerty stated that he offered an option at the AIFC meeting the week before, which was to take a percentage of the land value of the HS campus and pay Oak Bluffs based on that. He also said that OB has major concerns with non-equitable assessments. Mr. Smadbeck was not in favor of this option because he said that Oak Bluffs will try to include the value of the building in this type of arrangement. He suggested instead that the High School delineate their expenses and make it clear what they need to operate; "tell us what your expenses are and we'll put it in the budget".

Mr. Baynes read aloud from another article published by the Times regarding the Chilmark FinCom's reaction to changing the funding formula for the HS – they are not in favor of it.

Mr. Smadbeck reiterated that since Oak Bluffs has made their position clear, there is no reason for Edgartown to return to the table. Ms. Serpa stated that the current formula has been working since the

50s. Mr. Smadbeck stated that all six towns voted for the amendment to the formula in 1989 (the amendment switched the funding to a per-pupil equation).

Mr. Carter asked how the cost of the building was initially funded. Mr. Smadbeck said it was not by student but that information has been lost.

Mr. Baynes stated that five of the six towns agreed to fund the feasibility study, only Oak Bluffs did not; Mr. Hagerty offered a pilot program option at the last meeting and it was turned down. Is Edgartown supposed to bend over backwards now?

Ms. Chittick commented that (based on the handout provided by Mr. Hagerty) the HS funding formula is in keeping with 92% of other schools in the Commonwealth. Mr. Hagerty said he tried to give a presentation to the AIFC regarding this, but was not warmly received by the AIFC.

Mr. Smadbeck suggested that Edgartown would not be opposed to a funding formula that was based on per pupil but as an average over five years.

The Committee discussed who would attend the AIFC meeting later in the evening and what the position of the Edgartown FinCom would be.

Mr. DeOliveira stated again that the study is necessary to determine what the scope of the project will be.

The FinCom discussed their course of action for the All-Island FinCom meeting.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:10pm.

Minutes submitted by Juliet Mulinare.