

Financial Advisory Committee- January 15, 2014  
Recommendation Meeting – 3 pm

Members present: Donna Lowell-Bettencourt, chair; Les Baynes, co-chair; Alex Rentumis; Mort Fearey, Jr.

Others present: Pam Dolby, Town Administrator; Art Smadbeck, Selectman

Meeting called to order at 3:25 pm. Discussion took place about articles on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The Finance Committee will vote to recommend or not articles involving expenditure of funds. The Chairman read through the articles and members of the committee passed on the following:

Article 8 annual budget

Article 30 ACE funding \$27,765.00

Article 35 Shellfish programs \$44,000.00

Art 30 -Discussion took place regarding the ACE funding request. It was the general feeling that the town voters should have the opportunity to decide if they choose to fund the program. Since all six towns must approve the article, it was decided to keep it on the warrant. A motion was made, seconded and voted to keep the article on the warrant. Unanimous.

Art 35 – The amount of the article was originally \$44,000. The shellfish committee added hours to the part-time contractual employee for the oyster program rather than create a new position. The increase of \$20,000. is being added to this article for one year. A motion was made, seconded and voted to increase the article to \$64,000. Unanimous.

Art 8 – The budgets for the following departments were passed for discussion:

MV Commission; Planning Board; Police; Ambulance; Building Inspector assistant; Dredge; Trees; Waterways; Education; Cemetery; Library; Park/Recreation; Historical; Christmas Decorations and Beautification.

MV Commission: The FAC would like to meet with the commission to further discuss the increases of 15% to the budget. The assessment must be voted at a town meeting, the recourse for the FAC is to neither recommend/nor recommend on the warrant. They still want to have explanations from the commission. The two voted representatives were to come back to the fincom with information. A motion was made, seconded and voted to not recommend the budget until the Commission meets with the fincom. Unanimous.

Planning Board: A discussion took place regarding the percentage increase in the budget. It was explained that a 10hr p/t assistant position is now filled. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve recommending the article. Unanimous

Police: Discussion took place regarding the salary of the chief. It was explained that the person has been an employee for many years and has longevity at a higher scale. There is also a statute that the chief must be paid a higher salary than the next officer in line. There are contracts that are approved by the Board of Selectmen for departmental salaries. There are also new officers who are still on the step increase scale which adds to the budgets. It was noted they receive the same COLA as town hall employees. A motion was made, seconded and voted to recommend the budget for the police. 3 yea; 1 abstain.

Ambulance: A question was asked about the percentage increase. It was explained that there are still employees who receive step and longevity increases. A motion was made, seconded and voted to recommend the ambulance budget. Unanimous.

Building Inspector: A question was asked about the increase to the assistant. The personnel board approved the increase from 30 hrs to 40 hrs. An increase in training was also added. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the building inspector budget. Unanimous.

Dredge: A question was asked if the dredge is actively seeking projects that would generate revenue back to the town. At this time, it is working on Great Pond and expects to either use the same for beach nourishment or sell it if there is interest. They are still available to bid on any dredge project that comes up. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the dredge budget. Unanimous.

Care of Trees: A question was asked about the increase to the budget. It was explained that tree diseases are requiring treatment or replacement of certain trees. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the care of trees budget. Unanimous.

Waterways: A question was asked about the increase in salaries. It was explained that the part-time position was increased 8 hrs from 32 hrs to 40 hrs. A motion was made, seconded and voted to recommend the waterways budget. Unanimous.

Cemetery: A question was asked about the change in the budget. A new superintendent, at a lower step, replaced the previous person who retired. They still have the same number of summer employees. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the cemetery budget. Unanimous.

Library: A question was asked about the changes to the salary of the librarian and staff. Some older employees retired; a new director is now in the first full year of her step and some other staff positions were changed to better serve the public while the library is open. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the library budget. Unanimous.

Parks/Recreation: Discussion took place about the parks budget. Questions were answered. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the parks budget. Unanimous.

Historical: A question was asked about the increase. Last year the position was turned over from the building inspector's office and a clerk was hired for 15 hrs. a week. She is still receiving step increases. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the historical budget. Unanimous.

Christmas Decorations: A question was asked about the 2.5% increase. It was explained that because of the nature of the outside elements, there is always repair work to the wires and stands that takes place, plus increase in electrical costs. The committee also will keep the lights on longer next season as requested by various townspeople. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the Christmas Decorations budget. Unanimous.

Beautification: A question was asked about the increase in the budget. The Beautification committee sends out bids for all the hanging baskets and planted pots along Main St. They are also responsible for the upkeep of the new triangle area near the Square Rigger. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the Beautification budget. Unanimous.

Education: Discussion took place about the significant increases in the budgets. It was noted that Edg. School's expense budget is only up a small percentage. The greatest increase is in the superintendent's shared school budget and salaries. It was also explained that Edgartown would pay significantly more if these shared school expenses if each town paid on its own. At this time, Edgartown has 30% of the students enrolled in the programs. Careful watch of future expenditures will be necessary to keep the regular town budgets from absorbing the increases. A motion was made, seconded and voted to approve the education budget. Unanimous.

In review, all articles and budget items, except the MV Commission, were approved and recommended to be placed on the annual town meeting warrant.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gail Avakian, assistant