

**Provincetown Finance Committee
Judge Welsh Hearing Room
February 6, 2007
2:30 p.m.**

FINAL

Members Present: David Bedard, Frederick Biddle (arr. 2:40p), Thomas Coen, Gary Delius, Edward Gage, Ruth Gilbert, Virginia Ross, Tom Thurston, and Walt Winnowski.

Members Absent: Alice Foley and Robert Vetrick

Others: Alexandra Heilala, James Meads, Steve Roderick, John Thomas and 2 EMTs.

The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

Everyone was given a budget notebook and Mr. Delius went over the budget process, the tools, and how to use them. The income and expense numbers for the Town are the ones reviewed by the Board of Selectmen (BoS) in our Joint meeting January 29, 2007. The budget before FinCom is the one passed by the Board of Selectmen on January 30, 2007 and many of the departmental budgets have not had an extensive review. The Police Department's budget has been increased by the BoS as has the budget for the Health Agent.

Mr. Delius then said, "The 'Rules of the Game' are – the FinCom can't add anything. We can only take away". Schools will be here on the 26th at 2 p.m. The FinCom will, hopefully, be able to meet with the candidates before the final selection for Town Manager. A reception for the new Town Manager is anticipated and the FinCom will meet him or her at that time - if not before.

Minutes for January 23, 2007 meeting.

Motion: Accept the minutes as amended.

Motion: Walt Winnowski Seconded: Virginia Ross Vote: 9-0-0

Lower Cape Ambulance Service - 231

Chief James Meads, Steve Roderick, and Chief John Thomas from the Truro Police Department were in attendance to discuss their budget. Chief Meads is the CEO, Mr. Roderick is the treasurer, and Chief Thomas is the clerk.

LCA is responsible for transporting people to the Cape Cod Hospital and that is their primary function. Provincetown pays 70% and Truro pays 30% of the unreimbursed expenses remaining at the end of each operating year.. Since 1937 LCA has been operating on a calendar basis, this year however, they will be changing over to a July 1 fiscal year to be more in sync with the other Town budgets. A number of things led to their increased budget. Their personnel was increased from 12 to 15 people. Necessary because the driver must also be an EMT. LCA further explained that both Town's populations are aging so our demographics are changing as well. In addition LCA is establishing a sinking fund to plan for the cost of new equipment. LCA purchased a new ambulance in '06 and they would like to put money aside to purchase new vehicles in the future without incurring debt. The average life of an ambulance is four years; Provincetown owns 2 and Truro owns 2. Osage is the new ambulance company LCA is using as their ambulance provider and every other year LCA would like to replace one ambulance. The Rescue Squad responds to accidents and LCA transports. Another piece of good news is that the Fire Departments have decided to put their vehicles in the LCA vehicle rotation so all vehicles receive the same level of availability and use.

The J1 Visa workers who arrive for seasonal work have catastrophic insurance and they are usually gone when the bills come in. Many of the catastrophic insurance coverage for these workers do not fully cover an ambulance ride.

Fred Biddle wondered how you can really plan given all these uncertainties? Steve Roderick responded that their goal is 80% collections. There have been changes in billing and residents now have to provide documentation that they can not pay before their bill is added to the Town's portion to be paid from the annual appropriation.. They have a new billing company that is doing a better job at collections than their previous company. (\$1,250 is the billing rate for a run to CCH.) LCA is meeting with the Board of Selectmen in March to discuss pursuing grants for replacement vehicles. The Collection Agency and LCA's attorney are currently recovering about 72%. A lot of people have payment plans, i.e. 10 dollars a month, etc.

Mr. Delius asked, "What do you need us to do to help you try to control these large increases in budget requests from year to year?" LCA said they have eliminated any unnecessary expense, changed their healthcare provider and are working hard to control their costs as tightly as possible.

Maybe a capital fund drive might be in the works. Maybe get the Chamber of Commerce and the Provincetown Business Guild to request that people coming over have proper insurance.

Motion: Approve the 231 budget for Lower Cape Ambulance in the amount of \$405,300.

Motion: Virginia Ross Seconded: Ed Gage Vote: 9-0-0

Motion: Let the PBG and the Chamber know that the reason the LCA budget has increased

because seasonal workers come here with inadequate insurance to cover possible ambulance costs. The FinCom would like help in addressing this issue.

Motion: Ruth Gilbert Seconded: Tom Coen Vote: 9-0-0.

135 Town Accountant

Alex Heilala, Town Accountant, explained the increase of \$6K in her budget as mostly due to union increases. Also the \$40k which covers the cost audit. The Audit report has just been received with no adverse findings.

Computers and consumables should be a centrally purchased item to save on inventory costs and to enforce equipment standards.

Alex has cut a lot of expenses. For FY 07 her budget has already been spent due to the cost of rewriting the Chart of Accounts. This year's audit expenses hit the budget hard. Auditors get a per diem and then the town pays the going rate for rooms plus \$60/day for food.

Motion: Approve the 135 budget in the amount of \$190,564.

Motion: Tom Thurston Seconded: Virginia Ross Vote: 9-0-0.

141 Board of Assessors

Alex began but thought it would be best to call in Paul Gavin, Head Assessor. Paul said he was pretty much level funded in his general operating costs. He is seeking an \$8,200 one time appropriation to place the Assessor's Data base online so property owners can see their property records in the exact format as the Assessor's office . Also, the personal property tax for businesses has to be done every three years. Problem is businesses come and go very rapidly so the consultant that Paul hired charges per property and he will use the same consultant over the three-year period.

Ruth Gilbert said the Assessors Office is doing a great job and they provide a great service to the public.

Motion: Accept the 141 Board of Assessors budget in the amount of \$197,279.

Motion: Ed Gage Seconded: Tom Thurston Vote: 9-0-0.

145 Treasurer and Collector

Alex presented this budget to the FinCom. She said there was actually a decrease from last year.

Motion: Accept the 145 Treasurer and Collector budget in the amount of \$177, 310.

Motion: Tom Thurston Seconded: Virginia Ross Vote: 9-0-0.

710 Debt Service

Motion: To table this budget until Mr. Bergman can explain it.

Motion: Ruth Gilbert Seconded: David Bedard Vote: 9-0-0.

820 Tax Title

There are 17 properties listed for delinquent taxes.

Motion: Accept the budget in the amount of \$29,000.

Motion: Tom Thurston Seconded: Fred Biddle Vote: 9-0-0.

910 Retirement/Benefits/Insurance

Alex said she would like everyone to go on the Harvard Pilgrim HMO. Some of the differences in the budget are because the Cape End Manor is no longer included.

Motion: To table this budget until Keith Bergman is here.

Motion: Ruth Gilbert Seconded: Ed Gage Vote: 9-0-0.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Motion: Ruth Gilbert Seconded: Tom Thurston Vote: 9-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Gaudiano

Evelyn Rogers Gaudiano

Approved by _____ on _____, 2007
Mr. Gary Delius, Chair