

**Provincetown Finance Committee
Judge Welsh Hearing Room
February 26, 2007
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

Members Present: Frederic Biddle (arr. 10:13 am), Thomas Coen, Gary Delius, Ruth Gilbert, Robert Vetrick, and Walt Winnowski.

Members Absent: David Bedard, Alice Foley, Edward Gage, Virginia Ross, and Tom Thurston.

Others: Pat Benatti, Keith Bergman (arr. 11:05a), Alexandra Heilala, Arthur "Butch" Lisenby, Lou Ann Bowen

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Article 499: Cable Advisory Commission

Lou Ann Bowen presented the budget and told the group that there was no seated Cable Advisory Commission, inasmuch as all four Selectmen-appointed positions are currently vacant. Instead, Ms. Bowen said she is in the process of formulating a new contract with Provincetown cable provider Comcast (current contract expires 11/29/09), which is also in negotiations with other Cape towns. Truro and Wellfleet are renegotiating their contracts as well. Bowen said that a seated Cable Advisory Commission is needed to appropriately negotiate this contract.

Each year PTV, the town's community programming network, attempts to increase the number and scope of the meetings that they cover, Ms. Bowen said. Their budget is set up in such a way that the taxpayers don't pay a thing for all this. They receive \$11K/year for their service from Comcast. Alex said this is a flat fee based on the number of subscribers (.50 per subscriber).

(Fred Biddle at arrived at 10:13 a.m.)

Ms. Bowen invited the Committee to tour PTV's studio at Whaler's Wharf. She said they now have 600 sq. ft in the rental at Whaler's Wharf and they'd ideally love to have about three times that much space.

Ruth Gilbert told Ms. Bowen that she was doing a great job running it on her own. Comcast would like to phase out their Orleans studio, Ms. Bowen said, but you still need a studio in Town.

Ms. Bowen said that they do courses at PTV and want citizens to learn to use the equipment. She said that she also set up meetings with students and suggested, why not relocate to the high school and film their sports with good cameras? Ms. Bowen also said that if we were housed on Town property we'd have a little bit of growing room. As an example, if we had the top two floors of the old library and we joined with Truro and Wellfleet, we could charge these other towns rent. It would be a way to make money.

Mrs. Gilbert objected to paying \$14K to house this facility in a commercial building in town, when there is a lot of underutilized space in Provincetown-owned buildings. Mrs. Gilbert said just looking at the Community Center and at any room at the High School or the Veterans Memorial School would suffice as a studio. .

Gary Delius said the contract that we're using today was orchestrated with MediaOne. They sold it to

Comcast. We have to make sure we have a commission to negotiate this contract, he said.

Motion: Approve Article 499 in the amount of \$76,000.

Motion: Ruth Gilbert Seconded: Walt Winnowski Vote: 6-0-0.

Article 299: Parking

Pat Benatti said that her department is level-funded, and the only unknown foreseeable expense would be the repair of maintenance equipment. Fred Biddle asked what percentage of ticket revenues are actually recovered. Ms. Benatti said the total was unknown, although \$152,810 was collected on more than 5K tickets issued in 2006. Ms. Benatti said that when the tickets come back from Plymouth County, the computer says they're in error and they have to be inputted manually.

Mr. Delius suggested that she check with Plymouth County, which processes the tickets, given the contribution of ticket revenues to the town's income. He said we've used money for computer equipment and that should tell us the answer. Mr. Delius said to call Ames (computer support) because this is way too much money that we've expended and way too much work. Also, make sure that Beau Jackett, Manager of Information systems, is made aware of this. "We have to have you online because this is one of our biggest money-making departments," Mr. Delius said. If we have to get Ellen from Ames to come out here to get it fixed, then so be it."

Ms. Benatti said that she has looked into ways to make the Grace Hall parking lot more productive. Also, that the Jerome Smith lot is experimenting with special rates, i.e., \$35/week.

Tom Coen asked about the probability of having a change machine installed at the West End lot. He felt that it leaves a very bad impression when people get a ticket because they lack change. Or perhaps, have parking meters where you can pay with a credit card. Pat did not respond favorably to either the change machine or the charge card parking meters.

(Keith Bergman arrived at 11:05 a.m.)

Robert Vetrick suggested that perhaps we could get a grant for parking meters. Maybe that would be something that the Visitors Service Bureau (VSB) could look into. The availability and practicality of meters is a problem affecting people's perception of the Town, he said.

Ruth Gilbert thought that a change machine would solve the problem but Gary Delius felt that we have to explore both options because parking is a money-maker and it should be made easy.

Walt Winnowski asked about the amount that we pay the Fall River Catholic Diocese (The Bishop of Fall River) for 40 parking spaces in the Grace Hall Parking lot which were transferred from the Town as part of the Cape end Manor Care Campus land exchange, effective 12/18/06. Winnowski said the amount is being charged to a line item that we don't have. Mr. Bergman said that the ten-year lease agreement is for \$35K/year to the Diocese; it's a percentage of the revenue or \$35K - whichever is greater.

Motion: Approve budget 299 in the amount of \$383,968.

Motion: Robert Vetrick Seconded: Tom Coen Vote: 6-0-0.

Article 240: Inspections

Keith Bergman said there are no changes; we have 2 full-time inspectors and an interim Building Commissioner in place. The original budget proposed adding staff but was not allowed.

Mr. Bergman has reorganized the department at least 3 times. Ruth Gilbert thought that the volume overwhelms this department and they've never done well. It just needs the right mix and hasn't gotten

it. Tom Coen said we have a Permit Coordinator who does a fairly reasonable job, but why do so many people leave the department? He said there seemed be widespread frustration that every permit entails layers of interpretations.

Mrs. Gilbert also commented that those files downstairs are not in good shape. Walt Winnowski said he gets such a negative feedback from friends who try to get information, and that this is a serious problem that needs to be fixed.

Mr. Bergman said that part of the solution is looking at some of the regulations that we don't need. Mrs. Gilbert said that a potential home buyer is sometimes turned off when they look into regulations regarding change. It creates a lot of frustration, she said, and is definitely an area that the new Town Manager will have to look at.

Motion: Approve Article 240 in the amount of \$158,523.

Motion: Robert Vetrick Seconded: Walt Winnowski Vote: 6-0-0.

Article 241: Community Development

Discussion after the motion was made: Why does The Department of Community Development need \$2,500 to purchase 10 new desks (Line item 54200)? Answer: Building Commissioner Doug Taylor was trying to make the space a little more professional. Mrs. Gilbert said she suspected that the expenditure was more for morale than for anything else.

Motion: Approve Article 241 in the amount of \$110,734.

Motion: Ruth Gilbert Seconded: Robert Vetrick Vote: 6-0-0.

482: Airport Commission

Airport manager Butch Lisenby presented his budget. He said there are revenues received by the Town and when you compare the two – the rental income is going up slightly but the total expenditure for the department is going down. Mr. Lisenby then fielded a few questions about the size planes that can utilize Provincetown Airport, and how additional staffing requirements by the Department of Homeland Security are funded. The Town is reimbursed for the services of a Provincetown police officer, Mr. Lisenby said.

Motion: Approve Article 482 in the amount of \$87,800.

Motion: Robert Vetrick Seconded: Fred Biddle Vote: 6-0-0.

Motion to adjourn for lunch at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Gaudiano

Approved by _____ **on** _____, 2007

Gary Delius, Chair