

Provincetown Finance Committee

June 27, 2005

1:00 p.m.

Members Present: Sue Buerkel, Alice Foley, Edward Gage, Ruth Gilbert, Mark Leach, Tom Thurston, Robert Vetrick, and Walt Winnowski.

Members Absent: Matthew Clark, Gary Delius, & Virginia Ross
(all excused)

Others: Keith Bergman, Town Manager
Dennis Anderson, Cape End Manor
Mary Ann Bragg, Banner

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Meeting Agenda **Year-end budget transfers**

The Legal Budget was the first one discussed by the group. The transfer request was for \$4,800. Last year the amount spent for Gretchen Van Ness was approximately \$14,000. This year \$12,880 was expended for Ms. Van Ness' fees before the Town decided it could be represented by the pro bono attorneys from the ACLU. The cases before them are Johnstone vs Riley and Flynn vs Johnstone.

Mark Leach said that the FinCom has asked for pro-bono representation about a year ago. Mark wondered why it took so long? Ed Gage said, in essence, the Board of Selectmen (BoS) told Johnstone to break the law – so Mr. Gage felt the BoS should pay for the attorney that the BoS was intent on using – against the wishes and advice of the FinCom. Keith Bergman countered by saying that the funds expended for Ms. Van Ness were largely gift funds. (Precisely – the special gift fund expended \$8,846 and the budget expended \$4,034.) KAB also noted that Gretchen Van Ness has gone on into a new job.

Robert Vetrick agreed that the BoS should have been responsible for the expenditure since they told the town clerk to break the law. Mr. Bergman made an attempt to defend the BoS.

Ruth Gilbert, Chair of the FinCom, wanted to go on record that the FinCom requested the BoS to get pro-bono representation BEFORE the last \$12,880 was spent. She continued saying that the Town spent \$27K for the special counsel which we didn't have to spend. "We'd have the money to satisfy the legal budget if the BoS had done what we requested about a year ago."

There are \$342,950 worth of transfers. It was agreed to wait for Dennis Anderson's presentation before making the final transfer.

Keith Bergman said that in 2003, 4, 5, the BoS can agree to move money from one budget to another – but cannot exceed more than 3% of any budget.

Ruth Gilbert wondered why the unspent monies are so high? While the FY ends June 30, final bills can be processed up to July 15th. Keith Bergman (KAB) said that the “year to date” doesn’t include the final vouchers. Ruth wondered again if these are from purchases or money not expended. “What are these expenses? Maybe we should revisit the budgets, again.” She promised that after July 15th the FinCom can go over them again.

KAB, trying to find a bright note in the discussion, said that he was pleasantly surprised by group health budget. Ruth said that the FinCom knew they were being generous when they worked on this budget.

Mark Leach said he was confused on the water enterprise fund. He thought that this was a sacred cow and now we’re moving funds out of it?

KAB had an explanation for the Water Enterprise Fund.

Dennis Anderson showed up for his presentation:

Before he presented anything he told the FinCom that as of July 1st, he will be working as a consultant for NEDA. At midnight on June 30th he goes off the clock and will be taking a much-needed vacation.

He first explained his Personnel budget: He gave out a graph which explained the ratio from staff to patients. He said the bottom line was 7.2 productive hours per patient per day (it was noted on the blue line at the bottom of the graph). He said they had gone through 4 downsizes this year and reduced the staff to patient ratio.

The green line is the actual fluctuation and on August 6, 2004 they knew that they were off the mark. The top of the graph explained how – with the census climbing – the understaffing became evident and had to be adjusted.

The census has gone from 36 to 41. Dennis had earlier requested a budget cut of \$300K but KAB suggested asking for only \$200K. He explained that the very amount cut out of his budget (\$2K) was now requested for the transfer in.

He then explained his time clock and how the CEM is now two weeks behind based on the way Medicaid and Medicare reimburse. He is doing this to avoid a large balloon due at the end of 2006. It was a convoluted explanation regarding personnel changes. During this presentation the help of Alexandra Heilala was praised.

By way of line by line expenses, Dennis said that the prevalence of infection in people returning from the hospital drove up the infectious waste budget by \$7K. There was \$4K more for IGT (inter government transfer). Also he said that Drs. Whelan and O’Malley had helped to keep the patient transfer cost down. It costs \$1,250 to send a patient to the CCH Emergency Room when it is unnecessary and when they could have been treated in-house. The two aforementioned doctors helped in this reduction by treating the patients in the CEM.

He also said that New England Deaconess Association (NEDA) had a better handle on supply costs; they have a kiosk system which controls supplies.

Their B budget is \$129,140 over budget and the total transfer requested is only \$114,981. They found the differential somewhere else.

Mark Leach asked a general question, “How is everything going with NEDA?” Answer: “We’re 95% on target. The area focused on last week was more attention on surveying the land and now they are dealing with the Cape Cod Commission.”

There will be key managers brought down on July 1st; the VP of Operations will be brought down to kick-off their take-over. Eileen Thomas, even though she will have retired, will be available during July to help with transitional matters.

The FinCom was also informed that the Deaconess has a laugh therapist.

Overall, Dennis said, “We’re moving ahead.” As of May 18th the CEM capacity will be going from 69 beds down to 49 beds. Also only 4 people are retiring.

It was announced that the target date is mid September when they will be sharing therapy with Willy’s Gym in Eastham.

Grant opportunities are also being pursued. Robert Wood is favoring NEDA with four or five grants. As they were described by Dennis, they are exciting cutting-edge technologies.

Ruth Gilbert said that the FinCom is looking for anything over and above what is usually spent i.e., the net savings.

Dennis said he also had a call from Delahunt’s office to apply for Teledoc; this program can transmit data from stethoscopes directly to a doctor and receive a diagnosis and preferred treatment almost immediately.

Provincetown qualifies for these grants because we’re geographically remote and/or isolated.

Dennis Anderson was thanked for his presentation.

Motion: Robert Vetrick made a motion to approve the transfer of \$342,950.02; Sue Buerkel seconded the motion and it was passed 8-0-0.

Reorganization of Committee:

Motion: Robert Vetrick made a motion to nominate Ruth Gilbert as Chairman of the Finance Committee. Ed Gage seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ruth said she will accept but will serve for only one year more. She feels they have done well this year and wants to spend time digging into the School Committee’s budget. Mark Leach said he had run into Betty White and has volunteered to help her transfer her budget information into Excel so that they’re all on the same page. He anticipates that instruction will be finished by Labor Day.

The BoS, in their June 22nd memo, also indicated that they would like to delve into the School Budget

and the BoS would like joint meetings with the School Department and Finance Committee. They should be contacting the FinCom soon.

Motion: Mark Leach made a motion to nominate Sue Buerkel as Vice Chair; Ed Gage seconded the motion and it, too, was approved unanimously.

Sue accepted but said that she too will do it for her last year. She felt they had one of the best years after many years of frustration.

Mark Leach said he is just finishing up his second year on the FinCom and he felt they had been more effective in the first year and not so in the second year. He would like to delve into the Public Works Budget a bit more.

Ruth said she is anxious to see the July 15th finals. Everyone agreed.

Robert Vetrick feels that the budgets have come in cleaner.

Motion: A motion was made by Robert Vetrick to nominate Matthew Clark as Secretary. It was seconded and unanimously approved.

Ruth then handed out a Finance Committee handbook contained on a CD. If you did not attend the meeting, not to worry. Ruth is saving your CD for you!

The FinCom also received a large paperback on a Book on Laws related to Finance and taxation. It will be kept in the Town Hall library.

There was a motion to adjourn at 2:17 p.m. and it was unanimously accepted.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Gaudiano

Evelyn Rogers Gaudiano

Approved by _____ on _____, 2005
Ruth Gilbert, Chair