

# Provincetown Finance Committee

Judge Welsh Hearing Room

August 4, 2006

1:30 p.m.

## FINAL VERSION

**Members Present:** Frederic Biddle, Thomas Coen, Gary Delius, Edward Gage, Ruth Gilbert, Virginia Ross at 1:39 p.m., Tom Thurston, and Robert Vetrick at 1:38 p.m.

**Members Absent:** David Bedard, Alice Foley, and Walt Winnowski.

**Staff:** Keith Bergman

**Others:** Pru Sowers, reporter from Banner

The meeting was called to order at 1:33 p.m.

**Approve minutes from previous meetings.**

**Motion: Approve the minutes of the June 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

**Motion: Tom Thurston Seconded: Ed Gage Vote: 6-0-0.**

Gary Delius felt the July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes needed work. Gary asked the members to please mark-up the minutes and return the changes to him.

**Review the proposal from Mark Abrahams, financial consultant.**

Ruth Gilbert stated she had read Mr. Abrahams' proposal and feels he's responding to all the questions FinCom had requested.

**Motion: Hire Mark Abrahams for phase 1 and phase 2 of his proposal as outlined in his correspondence of July 20, 2006 in the amount of \$5,000 and that the funds be transferred from the reserve funds. All extra costs need to be approved before they occur. Also, when possible FinCom's meetings with Mr. Abrahams will be coordinated with his other work in Provincetown. Finally, a prospective timeline should be provided.**

**Motion: Ruth Gilbert Seconded: Ed Gage Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Discussion on above motion before it was finalized:**

Phase 1 is to provide us with an interpretation and training on the EOY reports that have been received from the State DOE. Phase 2 will analyze the data and contained in these reports and establish baselines and analysis. He'll analyze 2003, 4, 5, and 6 noting trends. At the same time the Schools are doing their own studies.

Virginia Ross asked for a clarification on schools. She was told that Mark will develop a baseline so the town can see where we are. Conversation followed about our goal to understand the complex world of school finance.

Mr. Bergman, in defense of the situation, said that the figures are difficult for the professionals, much less for the laymen. Grants, revolving funds, school lunch, transportation, etc. are all options and/or

expenditures that the school department has. It takes a lot of work to put all these pieces together and they never really did that in the past.

Ms. Gilbert feels it is time to hire someone and have the whole process explained to the FinCom – thoroughly. Virginia Ross said there has always been adversity between schools and FinComs. Robert Vetrick said the state has finally looked at our great imbalance. Ruth continued, saying that it would be negligent of the FinCom to ignore this. We have to have someone help us understand school finance in order to make the proper decisions when we review the School's budget.

At the 2 day conference convened for the schools, the challenge was: what should we do that's best for educating Provincetown's children? Ultimately the school committee's goal was to save the high school. What the FinCom is doing is consistent with that question: what does the future look like? The FinCom agrees - we want to get the best education we can afford for the children of Provincetown.

Gary said that we need to look at this problem. We have a new administrator and she's working very hard to include all concerns and address them.

Virginia Ross wants the FinCom's concerns about the school's finances written down so they can be discussed. Gary said that we can ask for this.

### **Minutes of the May 31, 2006 meeting**

**Motion: Approve the minutes as written**

**Motion: Tom Thurston    Seconded: Ed Gage    Vote: 6 in favor and 2 abstentions (Fred Biddle and Virginia Ross)**

Gary received a letter dated July 25<sup>th</sup> from Jessica Waugh, Superintendent of Schools thanking us for including her in the July 12 meeting. Gary contacted the state and MUNIS on following the last meeting to inquire about the appropriateness of using MUNIS as the School accounting system and was informed by DOE it is used in many school districts and can be completely compatible with the DOE reporting requirements if properly setup. The revision of the Chart of accounts now underway includes this setup. Mr. Delius communicated with Supt. Waugh and informed her of the compatibility MUNIS – and it's important to the taxpayers to get everything under one system. Ms. Waugh reported she has ordered Munis bridge software and the installation and training services for it. Gary further said that it will take a year to complete installation and it is difficult but once it's in place, the whole thing makes life simpler for all departments and saves the Town a considerable amount of money each year.

R. Vetrick said the important thing that came out of the 2 day conference was a recognition on the part of the community that the schools needed complete reorganization with the emphasis on reorganizing the administration and staff. Most wanted the teachers to have more input into the changes that needed to be made. There certainly is not 100% support for "business as usual." Ruth said the conference would have been totally different if the state had come out with only \$2M support and not the \$4M that was planned on prior to the conference. Dr. Vetrick feels that, in the future, the state is going to mandate regionalization. It is already suggesting regionalization of administrative staff.

Gary communicated to Supt. Waugh that the FinCom is behind her and the mantra is clear – we want the best education we can afford for the children of Provincetown.

### **Discuss subcommittee assignments for the upcoming Budget season.**

Gary suggested that maybe we can do a better job as we look at different committees by having

subcommittees specialize in departments. We all have areas of interest so maybe we can divide up the areas of responsibility. We will not interfere with the departments at all and will have no involvement with their policies – just their budgets. Basically there are 6 areas of interest. We'll discuss subcommittees in the future.

### **Financial Model**

Gary also wants the group to study basic financial models that the different towns work under. We should investigate other towns' financial models and what the options are for Provincetown?

R. Vetrick said we did a prop 2½ override – when can we rescind that? The BoS will have to do it. Gary asked the group to look at our warrant and take a look at other warrants that are out there. The goal is to be sure we communicate all the key information voters need to make the best decisions at Town Meeting.

### **Entertain any other business which may legally come before the Committee**

The request for funding from our reserve fund requires a motion. The reserve fund has \$35K in it.

**Motion: Take \$5,000 from the 2007 reserve budget for the Abrahamson proposal.**

**Motion: Tom Thurston Seconded: Ed Gage Vote: 8-0-0.**

Virginia Ross asked about having the Assistant Town Manager take over KAB's position when he leaves. Gary will e-mail Cheryl Andrews and ask her about the Search Committee for Town Manager and when it will be convened. Tom Thurston wondered what we would pay the new Town Manager? Do we discuss this before we reach that point? What will the total package be? Gary will e-mail Cheryl and ask her about the compensation package.

### **Adjournment:**

**Motion to adjourn at 3:10 p.m.**

**Motion: Tom Thurston Seconded: Robert Vetrick Vote: unanimous**

Respectfully submitted,

*Evelyn Gaudiano*

Evelyn Rogers Gaudiano

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 2005  
Gary Delius, Chair