

Aquinnah Board of Selectmen
Minutes of Meeting 2/19/2013
Aquinnah Town Hall Selectmen's Mtg Room

Members present: Spencer Booker, Chairman, Jim Newman, Beverly Wright,

Also present: Community Review Board Administrative Assistant Sibel Suman, Curtis Schroeder from the MVC, Dr. Jim Weiss, Principal Steve Nixon, Amy Tierney, Mark Friedman, Skip Manter, Tobias Vanderhoop, Roxanne Ackerman, Martha Vanderhoop, Town Accountant Margie Spitz

-The meeting began at 6:40 pm

-1st on the agenda under Old Business was a review of minutes from the 2- 05 Selectmen's meeting.

-Jim N. made a motion to accept the minutes from February 5th. Beverly seconded.

The Board voted 3 - 0 in favor. The motion passed.

-1st item under new business was a meeting with Curtis Schroeder from the MV Commission to talk about the Commission's budget increase for FY '14. He said there's a 10% increase. It is caused by an increase in legal fees for the most part. There was discussion about what the round-about cost in legal fees and what it cost the towns. He said the legal line item has to be doubled from the previous year. There was discussion about what the commission has to pay into retirement as well. Curtis said that the ongoing legal battle with Aquinnah land owner James Decoulos has also been part of the Commission's legal bill.

Jim N. said AQ's assessment is going up \$5K. Spencer asked about the court battle involving ancient ways has had on all six communities. Curtis said they are doing a COLA at 2.5%. They also have merit increases but not all employees get them; it depends on their performance evaluations.

Curtis was thanked for his presentation.

Next on the agenda was a vote to over expend the budgeted line item for snow and ice removal. Spencer reported that the current budget had a \$500 shortfall and the winter wasn't over yet.

Jim N. made a motion to over expend the FY '13 Snow & Ice Removal budget. Beverly seconded.

The Board voted 3 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

-Next on the agenda was a review of the Island Housing Trust contract for Aquinnah's affordable housing. Spencer stated that the Town's Affordable Housing Committee voted to approve the contract and got the Community Preservation Committee to recommend to the voters a warrant article, which did pass, to fund the costs associated with the start-up of the inventory maintenance program. Beverly said she had questions about the wording in the contract about who can terminate. There was discussion about who can or cannot end the contract. Board members wanted to have that clause rewritten so it was clearer and Beverly said she would like a list of AQ's current affordable housing stock. There was discussion about adding the 45 State Rd property to the contract.

By consensus, the Board voted to table the contract agreement until their next meeting.

-Next on the agenda was a meeting with the Up Island Regional School District Committee. There was a review of the high school budget 1st. Dr. Jim Weiss told the Board that the budget was recertified on February 6th to reflect the teacher contract recently approved.

-Steve Nixon said that FY '14 there are six major categories in the budget. He said ½ of the categories have either remained the same or gone down. He said that retirement, debt service and insurance accounts for 25% of the budget (4 million). Salaries are responsible for 51% of the budget and 65% of that comes from employees being at the top step in their classification grade.

-Jim N. asked how many teachers are expected to retire. Steve said 5 have put in their notices. He added that 81% of teachers hold masters degrees. Steve said younger teachers are hard to find because their starting salaries aren't

enough to be able to live here. He said the plus side is there is a lot of experience and that translates into a high rate of graduation.

-The schools operating costs will go up 4.28% and revenue has dropped an average of 100K each of the last 5 years. The total increase is 5.54% this year, which is higher than previous years. There was discussion about residential placement and that there are 10 in the program @ approximately \$50K each. Jim W. said because we're on an island, the school doesn't have an option for day school placement programs. That increases the cost substantially. There was discussion about the per pupil cost being double. Jim W. said there are increased costs because the high school is a comprehensive school. He also noted that PPC's for the high school were skewed because MVRHS is measured from 9 – 12th grade and other schools are measured from K – 12.

-Jim W. talked about the contract negotiations and the AQ residents who participated: Roxanne Ackerman and Jay These. He said as a result of the teacher agreement, AQ's high school assessment is \$194,943.46. There was discussion about the regional and statutory formulas getting closer and closer together.

-Moving onto the UIRSD budget, Jim W. said it has just been recertified as well. He said overall the budget only went up 1%. However because so many more children from Aquinnah are in the school system from the previous year, the town's assessment is up over 28%. There was discussion of how the Charter School gets its funding from both local and state funds. There was discussion about how school choice works. Jim W. said the costs are done on a percentage basis and not per pupil. He said that the UIRSD Committee voted to have the entire impact aide will go to help offset this year's high assessment.

-Next on the agenda was a reading of the letter from Tribal Chairperson C. Andrews-Maltaise stating that the Tribe has terminated the land use planning agreement between the two towns. The Board talked about how the action was akin to closing doors. Jim N. said that it was an important agreement that took a long time to hammer out back in 2007. Beverly said it's an opportunity lost to have the ability to at least get together and hear each other's point of view.

-In other Selectmen's business, Spencer read that both Stephanie Hecht and Martha Vanderhoop were interested in joining the Gay Head Lighthouse Advisory Committee. Beverly said she doesn't have a problem with the two residents joining the committee but is concerned about how the committee is going. She said the committee has not formed itself properly and lacks structure. She'd like to have the two candidates appointed for specific purposes.

-Beverly wanted to know where the town stands on the gov't declaring the lighthouse as excess property. She said there is too much time between meetings. There was discussion on the one subcommittee formed for fundraising.

-Jim N. said that after Stephanie and Martha, there should be no more appointments. He talked about a timeline that Elise (LeBovit, GHLC Chair), needs to keep the Board constantly updated on. Jim also said the properties being considered should be reviewed by counsel to clear up questions about easement. There was discussion about how the project would be procured; either publically through the town or privately through a 501 (c) 3. Jim stated if there is needed a Clerk of the Works, Adam should have that responsibility.

Beverly made a motion to approve Stephanie Hecht and Martha Vanderhoop to the Gay Head Lighthouse Advisory Committee and to not have any more appointees until the advisory committee comes back with an outline of its organizational structure. Jim Seconded.

The Board voted 3 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

The discussion about the lighthouse project having a clerk of the works was brought up again. Jim said control of the project should come out of the selectmen's office. Beverly expressed concern that if the clerking became so complicated, would Adam's other duties not get accomplished. Jim said he was confident Adam could do both and referenced the solar panel work he did while handling his Town Administrator responsibilities. There was discussion about who has clerked in the past and how they represented the Selectmen. Margie said that this project needs an administrative manager rather than the more traditional clerk of a large project who is in the trades or is an engineer. Jim said Adam needs to oversee the whole thing and could draw from the committee those with specific

expertise to handle elements of the project that he would have to delegate. Spencer said the whole project falls under the Board's review so Adam will be a part of the oversight anyway.

-Jim asked that the deed to Map 6, Lot 23 to go to Counsel for a legal easement review.

-Spencer asked if any Board Member or those in the audience had any other business to discuss. Hearing none...

Beverly made a motion to adjourn. Jim seconded.

The Board voted 3 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

The meeting ended at 8:00 pm.