



Town of Nantucket Finance Committee

January 25th, 2024 4PM – Minutes

131 PLEASANT STREET, TRAILER ROOM A AND REMOTE PARTICIPATION VIA ZOOM

Staff:	Mariya Basheva, Assistant Town Accountant
Attending Members:	Denice Kronau, Chair, Stephen Maury, Peter Schaeffer, Rob Giacchetti, Jill Vieth, Jeremy Bloomer
Absent Members:	Christopher Glowacki, Joseph Wright, Joanna Roche

Meeting Call to Order and Agenda Approval

- Denice Kronau calls the meeting to order and mentions the recording of the meeting.
- Denice Kronau changes the order of discussion to start with the withdrawal from the Good Neighbor agreement and then discuss the offshore wind power article.
- Denice Kronau asks for approval of the agenda, which is approved by Peter Schaeffer and seconded by Jeremy Bloomer.
- Denice Kronau instructs Val Oliver to present her articles within the five-minute time frame.

Val Oliver's Presentation on Articles 77 and Article 78 Withdraw Town from Good Neighbor Agreement and Offshore Wind Power

- Val Oliver discusses the Good Neighbor agreement and offshore wind power in a joint presentation due to similar content.
- Val Oliver highlights the lack of community discussion and the closed-session signing of the Good Neighbor agreement.
- Val Oliver details the obligations of Vineyard Wind and the Nantucket parties, emphasizing the significant visual impact on Nantucket.
- Val Oliver mentions the potential economic loss to Nantucket's tourism economy and the high cost of decommissioning the turbines.

Article 77 and Article 78: Discussion on Good Neighbor Agreement and Legal Implications

- Peter Schaeffer questions the town's electricity supply and the contract with Vineyard Wind.

- Val Oliver clarifies that the town does not receive direct electricity but pays higher rates through the grid.
- Jeremy Bloomer asks about the town's performance under the contract, and Val Oliver mentions discussions with the Select Board.
- Denice Kronau and Matt Fee discuss the historical context and the challenges faced during the negotiation process.

Article 77 and Article 78: Legal and Financial Considerations

- John Giorgio emphasizes the Select Board's authority to negotiate and compromise claims, and the non-binding nature of the articles.
- John Giorgio warns against the potential legal risks of breaching the contract and the town's exposure to liability.
- Stephen Maury questions the compliance of Vineyard Wind with their obligations and the payment received by the town.
- Brian Turbitt confirms that Vineyard Wind has paid the first \$4 million, and the total payment is expected to be \$13 million.

Article 77 and Article 78: Public Comment and Additional Questions

- Cliff Williams expresses concerns about the agreement's impact on the town and the lack of public involvement.
- Veronica Bonnet criticizes the lack of transparency and the town's reluctance to discuss the agreement publicly.
- Peter Schaeffer and Rob Giacchetti discuss the severability clause and the potential legal implications of breaking the agreement.
- Denice Kronau explains the committee's role in recommending motions and the possibility of reconsidering the articles in the future.

Article 77 and Article 78: Committee's Decision and Next Steps

- Motion not to adopt Article 77 (Withdraw Town From Good Neighbor Agreement):
- Peter Schaeffer made the motion, seconded by Rob Giacchetti
- **Roll call vote: Stephen Maury (nay), Jill Vieth (aye), Jeremy Bloomer(nay), Peter Schaeffer (aye), Rob Giacchetti (aye), Denice Kronau (aye) passes 4-2**
- Motion not to adopt Article 78 (Offshore Wind Power - Town Meeting Vote Required):
- Peter Schaeffer made the motion, seconded by Jill Vieth

- **Roll call vote: Jill Vieth (aye), Rob Giacchetti (aye), Stephen Maury (nay), Jeremy Bloomer (aye), Peter Schaeffer (aye), Denice Kronau (aye) passes 5-1**
- Denice Kronau advises the sponsors to rework the articles and bring them back to the committee for further discussion.
- The committee agrees to close the public comment section and proceed with the next agenda item.

Article 36: Appropriation: African Meeting House Investigation - Discussion on Police Investigation and Public Records Request

- Gail Holdgate begins her presentation on the African Meeting House investigation, highlighting the lack of accountability and the need for an independent investigation.
- Denice Kronau and Gail Holdgate discuss the investigation conducted by the Nantucket police and its transfer to the state police.
- Gail Holdgate mentions the rude treatment she received from the state police and the confusion over the young man's plea.
- Denice Kronau suggests Gail make a public records request to the Cape and Islands district attorney for more information.
- John Giorgio explains the process of making a public records request, which involves sending a letter or email to the district attorney.

Article 36: Suggestion to meet with New Police Chief and Community Concerns

- Jeremy Bloomer suggests Gail meet with the new police chief to discuss the issue and get a fresh perspective.
- Gail Holdgate expresses hesitation but agrees to meet with the new chief.
- Denice Kronau and Peter Schaeffer discuss the outcome of the investigation, noting that no one was arrested after six years.
- Denice Kronau explains the legal constraints on town funds and the need for town employees to oversee investigations.

Article 36: Financial and Legal Constraints on Investigations

- John Giorgio clarifies that town funds cannot be given to individuals for investigations.
- Gail Holdgate questions the effectiveness of the investigation and suggests hiring qualified individuals for a new investigation.
- Stephen Maury and Cliff Williams discuss a previous investigation at the airport that was overseen by town employees.

- John Giorgio emphasizes that the Select Board, not private citizens, should oversee investigations.

Article 36: Proposed Changes to Warrant Article

- Denice Kronau suggests Gail rewrite her warrant article to comply with legal requirements.
- Gail Holdgate agrees to rewrite the article and consult with the Select Board.
- John Giorgio offers to help draft a motion for the Finance Committee to appropriate funds for the investigation.
- Denice Kronau advises Gail to bring the revised article back to the Finance Committee for further discussion.
- No motions are made on the article and they move forward to

Article 92 Charter Change-Department Heads Report to Town Manager - Discussion on Town Manager's Authority and Employment Contracts

- Meghan Perry presents an article proposing that all town employees report to the town manager.
- John Giorgio explains the current MOU between the Planning Commission and the town, which allows the Planning Commission to hire employees.
- Hillary Rayport clarifies that the article aims to prevent town employees from having side contracts with state agencies.
- Peter Schaeffer and Jeremy Bloomer express concerns about the potential unintended consequences of the article.
- Motion to close public comment on Article 92 (department heads report to town manager):
- Jill made the motion, Stephen seconded
- **Roll call vote: All in favor (Jill, Rob, Stephen, Jeremy, Peter, Denice)**

Concerns About Governance and Employment Contracts

- Hillary Rayport explains the historical context of the Planning Commission's authority to hire employees.
- John Giorgio reiterates that the article would not affect the current employment agreement between the Planning Commission and the Director of Plus.

- Peter Schaeffer suggests that Megan and Hillary discuss the article with the town manager.
- Denice Kronau decides to defer Article 92 to a future meeting for further discussion and clarification.
- Motion to Adjourn made by Stephen, Seconded by Peter.
- **Roll call vote: All in favor (Jill, Stephen, Jeremy, Peter, Joe, Rob)**