



## Finance Committee

Judge Welsh Meeting Room – 4:00 p.m.

December 26, 2013

**Members Present:** Duane Steele, Raphael Richter, Stan Sikorski, Mike Canizales, Catherine Russo, and alternate Sean Patrick Harrington

**Others Present:** Tom Donegan, and Mary Jo Avellar, Town Moderator

The schedule of winter meetings, public forums, and budget meetings was the main agenda item. There was discussion regarding the town financing year round housing. The housing summit was discussed.

As explained by Mary Jo Avellar, a 2.5 tax increase is the law in Provincetown. Sean Patrick Harrington argued that that is the amount the taxes can be raised, but we can budget whatever we want. Mike Canizales countered that we are the keepers of the town's money, and it would be fiscally irresponsible to even discuss such a scenario.

At this point there discussion with Mr. Donegan contributing, but he could not be heard due to a problem with the microphone.

Discussion continued with the perception that the budgeting process is upside down. Department Heads are not told what they have to spend. They formulate their needs/wishes, and appear before the Town Manager, and then, separately, before the Board of Selectmen to get approval. They then come before the Finance Committee armed with the opinion that their budget will be approved. Mike Canizales suggested that we revamp our budget process, and members agreed. Catherine Russo suggested what she considers a radical idea to redistribute wealth. She sites the chasm between the haves and the have nots as unbreachable without some fiscal help in the town. Mike Canizales suggested that we need to keep the creative conversation regarding the 2.5 percent tax rise flowing by having two public hearings, one on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and

one on February 4<sup>th</sup>. Among other things, new revenue, debt limits, growth rate, taxes, and financing regarding year round rental housing will be on the agenda. One meeting per week on the budget will be scheduled at later dates as well as two joint meetings with the Board of Selectmen.

Mike Canizales stated that the Provincetown TV group has petitioned the Board of Selectmen to remove them and their grants from the oversight of Town Meeting and the Finance Committee. He stated that the Board of Selectmen agreed, after a vote to the contrary by Town Meeting. Duane Steele, Raphael Richter, and Catherine Russo all disagree with the Selectmen's actions. Duane Steele stated that money that comes into the town is expended under the auspices of Town Meeting. There is some discussion that this action occurred while our former Town Manager was on the Board of PTV. Catherine Russo further suggested that since we have abolished the cable advisory committee and are now granting the town no oversight on the PTV budget, we will be the only town on the cape to allow this. Catherine Russo made a motion to ask the Board of Selectmen to reconsider their action on the funding of PTV. The motion was seconded by Duane Steele. The vote was 5-1-0 with Sean Patrick Harrington being the dissenting vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m. by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted:

Maghi Geary