

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

January 24th, 2018

Committee Members Present: Bernard Dumont, Thom Freeman, Seth Ferguson, Jennifer Frank-Bonnet, Sue Dring, Michelle Raymond, Sean McCarthy, Sharon Weiskerger, Larry Ooi, Stephanie McGowan, Robert Canfield, Brent Ruter.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Bill Keegan, Randy Scollins, Paige Duncan, Lisa Sinkus, Virginia Coppola, Gary Whitehouse, Jane Sears Pierce, Mary Beth Bernard.

The meeting was brought to order at 7:10 PM by Bernard Dumont. Bernard addressed the Advisory Committee (ADCOM) about scheduling and how the behind the scenes the administration is adjusting budgets by carefully trimming areas. Reminded ADCOM to stay on task and limit discussion to prevue of the committee.

7:12 PM 175 Planning Department Budget Request Presentation. Town Planner Paige Duncan and Kevin Weinfeld presented on the Planning Department Budget. Paige stated that it was a level funded budget, but trimmed areas in her budget that included fuel for the shared vehicle and office furniture. Paige stated that in the near future she would like to address the Master Plan with the ADCOM. The Planning Board is currently focusing its efforts on the Downtown area and reported that a Downtown Business Association (DBA) formed late last year to renovate the center. The Planning Board is also coordinating with the DPW to improve conditions. Paige provided an update on the Orpheum Theatre, fire station/funeral home market analysis study.

Paige stated that housing is another area of focus, as she is looking to secure funding from regional housing. She reported that there are no more 40b units planned in the foreseeable future, however there is a need for senior housing which is driven by the state. Paige stated that updated subdivision regulations are incoming. Sue asked for an update on the Wall Street project in town. Kevin and Paige replied that the Master Plan identified that area as a prime candidate for housing with a focus on multifamily usage. Paige stated the recent market study identified center as a niche center, not high density, and therefore able to keep the spirit of community intact. Sue inquired how many units were planned to be introduced to the center. Paige reported that at the current time the data reflected approximately 50 planned units at the Wall Street location with the former fire station and funeral home supporting 25 units each. Kevin reminded the ADCOM that all other projects hinge on the success of previous projects, additionally the Board of Selectmen, subdivision regulations, and market also drive the flow of housing projects. Bernard

asked what the long term planning looked like for the community. Kevin explained how Planning Board tries to find the right fit for each area and wants to draw more interest in the downtown area. Thom, Paige, and Kevin had a brief discussion regarding congestion on Route 140.

Bernard inquired into the AR-EN budget line. Paige stated that the architecture-engineer budget was for emergency projects and only used if necessary for development purposes and that remaining monies return to free cash if not used. Bernard also inquired into the salary trends for the department over the past few years, noting swings between decreases and increases. Randy reported that the shifts were caused primarily from the tragic and unexpected death of previous planner, and that there were wage shifts for the position following that. Stephanie asked Randy to describe the method in which Paige's salary experiences increases as an example of determining future increases. Randy stated that is based off of the Steel Workers Bargaining Unit contract, and is standard across the members of the union.

Seth asked what the anticipated usage of architecture-engineering budget was going to be. Kevin and Paige stated they foresaw possible usage on the new subdivision regulations. Seth inquired if there was any way to reduce this line. Stephanie asked Randy how that funding amount is determined. Randy and Kevin explained that it is based off of projections and cyclical work. Bill stated that there is greater need of those services with what is planned on the horizon, setting up for planning operations for next year.

7:35 PM 171 Conservation Department Budget Request Presentation. Jane Sears Pierce reported that the budget is level funded, noting that amounts shifted to bolster weaker sections of the conservation department. Jane noted a rise in subscriptions and that grant awards boosted participation. Jane drew attention to one expense request for the Lane Property project. Reported that the Friends of Conservation were working off of a grant from Schneider Electric to create a learning center which will provide education on gardening/wetlands. Jane stated she utilized Senior Tax Work-off members as caretakers.

Jane reported due to an irrigation issue there was an expense request to upkeep the garden by further suppling the site with water and replacing the dead and damaged plants that suffered from the lack of water. Stephanie asked if this was going to be a line item every year. Bill stated that there will be an operational cost for an outside contractor. Sue asked if DPW/trees and parks could add that to their duties. Bill stated that there is too much work for them already. Sue and Bill had a discussion on the possibility of Tough Mudder coming to Foxborough and the impact to the community space. Jennifer asked Jane what her departments future needs will be with that site. Jane stated that the department will look for feedback and gage appropriately. Jennifer asked if the trails need maintenance. Jane responded that most naturally take care of themselves. Discussion followed on how service projects from eagle scouts improved conditions, Conservation Commission (CONCOM) work with NNRC, and the Open Space Usage Plan.

8:00 PM Seth requested to go on record about the concept of a contingency budget.

Specifically he inquired if there was a way to run leaner on budgets and remove the artificial padding, or creating an emergency fund to draw from that departments could have access to. Bernard inquired into a new reserve fund. Seth made the suggestion of shifting unused monies to the Conservation budget for the Lane Property. Stephanie asked if there was a process to transfer funds in the manner Seth was describing. Randy stated that there were two mechanisms in place but the transfer described would not fit either, leaving it to be done at town meeting incurring the risk of possible illegal deficits. Seth, Randy, Bill, and Stephanie discussed budgeting methodologies and philosophies.

8:08 PM 192 Municipal Buildings Budget Request Presentation. Tony and Bill Yukna presented on the state of the Municipal Buildings and Maintenance Budget. Tony explained that the Town Hall was undergoing a shakedown to see what will be needed, and data is being collected for improvement. Tony and Bill explained that the majority of buildings have gone to contract services for janitorial services, and internal maintenance personnel to handle general upkeep of machinery and assets helps drive costs down. Bill explained how the salary line is broken down: town pays for one assistant and helps with the maintenance director, however, Tony's main salary is on the school side, with the town paying approximately for 25% of the whole maintenance budget. Michelle inquired if the change in the salary line was from the previous custodian retiring. Bill Yukna responded in the affirmative correct. Bernard and Bill discussed electricity costs and the impact of the solar fields, including energy credits. Seth inquired if any remaining funds will be returned to the free cash fund, and if so could it could be shifted. Tony assessed that the department will use up its budgets. Thom asked if there was any way of measuring savings. Bill stated that there was no way to compare values. Discussion followed on planning strategies.

8:35 PM 122-195 General Government Budget Request Presentation. Bill Keegan and Mary Beth Bernard presented on General Government Budget Requests, explaining day to day operations including; licensing for alcohol, event permitting, and communications. Bill explained they were the primary point of contact for state and federal agencies, labor relations, and communications between all departments and external sites. Mary Beth detailed how the office also serves as the Human Resources Department and explained the common duties the staff are involved in.

Mary Beth showed the ADCOM some HR metrics and explained the recruitment process, with review processes forthcoming. Bernard noticed that 29 positions within the town were opened in the data presented and asked if these were from attrition or newly created. Bill stated the majority of them came from attrition. Thom asked if the number represented came from jobs made available from the school and town, to which Mary Beth explained they were from the town side. Mary Beth presented on the new application tracking system and how it increased efficiency in onboarding individuals, mentioning an increase in savings from not having to run an advertisement in the paper as they could post job openings online with this software. Mary

Beth stated the department was very busy working on policy development and training, with over 15 new policies and training offerings this year and none of them requiring the town to pay for a trainer. Bill stated that the Administrative Office (ADMIN) also handles risk management and property management as well.

Bill and Mary Beth reported that they have worked to me bargaining language consistent amongst seven different agreements. Mary Beth stated that ADMIN has developed a strategy for the language and newly added positions based on tenants reflecting sustainability and flexibility that are equitable to the workforce and job market. Mary Beth explained that ADMIN reviews whether or not a position is needed before filling it after someone leaves. Bernard asked how the equity of positions are managed. Bill stated that ADMIN reflects a centralized philosophy as all new hires are approved by him after an interview with him.

Bill stated that ADMIN has three main requests; the first being increase in the Human Resources Specialist position from 15 hours to 24 hours with benefits, the second being funding to purchase HR software modules to save paper and perform necessary performance evaluations, and the last being an increase in event planning to deliver high quality events. Thom inquired into the upgrade and license costs. Mary Beth reported that upgrades to the software are built into the cost of it upfront. In reality the software represents two separate modules but are bundled together for a savings as it will cost more to purchase each one individually later. Bill and Mary Beth stated that the increase in the HR Specialist hours are to help manage this software and policy development central to employee operations. Bill and Mary Beth discussed previous HR methods with Seth asking if the software or specialist increase is necessary if the efficiencies overlap. Mary Beth stated that the software is primarily used to simplify paperwork, while the position increase is meant to help process all of the information captured in the software.

Bill and Mary Beth explained that built into the SWU contract are mandatory personnel reviews used to determine eligibility for step increases and employee development, which falls upon the direct supervisor and then to ADMIN. Stephanie asked what the largest number of employees a Department Head had to review was, to which Mary Beth stated a few departments had around thirty plus at the high end. Stephanie questioned the need for spending money for software and increases if it is part of the Department Head's official duties to review their employees given their salaries. Bill responded that it is hard to hire specialized personnel in the current market without pay increases as an incentive, and would rather promote from within which would also serve as a savings.

9:15 PM 161&162 Town Clerk Department Budget Request Presentation. Bob Cutler presented on the state of the Town Clerk's budgets. Bob requested two minor increases for office supplies and association membership dues. Bernard asked why there were two separate budgets instead of being combined into one. Bob responded that the elections budget is more volatile depending on the candidates and voter turnout. Bob reported that his department is looking at back to back voting/elections in September and November. Bob stated that early voting will be available for the primary in September, with the costs based on the previous early voting period for the presidential election in regards to overtime pay, beginning in the last week of August. Bob asserted that, despite its original intention, early voting did not increase voter registration or the total number of voters by a considerable margin. He further explained that while early voting was going on no other work got done because of the voter processing. Larry inquired if the town was reimbursed for the early voting duties. Bob reported that auditors deemed it to be an unfunded mandate. Larry asked if early voting could be shortened to 2-3 days. Bob responded that the minimum amount of time is mandated, however the maximum is more open ended. Bernard asked if there were any capital outlay budget requests. Bob stated that he intends to purchase new poll pads, however he is waiting until they are certified. Bernard and Thom inquired into savings within the census/records management budget through electronic storage and other methods. Bob reported that the census has to be printed and sent out by law, and that the street listing is printed for convenience, which will eventually morph to electronic only.

9:33 PM 710-760 Debt Service Report and Presentation. Randy briefed the ADCOM on the state of the finance department explaining each office and its duties by department. He presented data on all incoming monies and revenues, financial policies and procedures and the duties of the Tax Collectors (Revenue), Accounting and Assessors offices. Randy imparted the following main takeaways for each office; Revenue handles all of the money flowing through town from all taxes and manages payroll/employee benefits such as insurance and retirement. The Accounting Office serves as the check and balance for all financial requests, reporting, and enforcing adherence to proper fiscal stewardship. Finally, the Assessors Office evaluates all of the property in town, thereby generating the tax bills for the following year, and represents the town in all appellate tax board hearings as well as managing abatements for real estate/personal property/motor vehicle excise and applying real estate tax exemptions.

Randy then presented on his duties before drawing attention to his division's need for an IT Business Analyst, and Office Support Specialist position. He explained that with all of the technology/applications used by each office in the division is becoming a draw on the general IT department. Additionally the paperwork generated from assets such as virtual payables, and other clerical/logistical duties, is driving the need for an office support specialist. Thom asked if IT was controlling the budgeting for software requests. Randy explained that some software is department dependent based on specialized need. Sean asked Randy why the office support position was 20 hours and not 19 hours. Randy explained that he wanted to offer benefits as an incentive because he didn't want to have an issue with attrition. Sean remarked he would rather

see the position go to 40 hours given the perception of a 20 hour benefitted position would be received negatively by members of the community. Seth inquired how many part time employees were on staff. Mary Beth responded that there was less than a dozen. Seth asked why the office support specialist for the Finance Division and the Human Resources Department were not combined. Mary Beth and Randy stated they needed specialized backgrounds in their candidates for the position with applicable skillsets. Randy needs someone with an accounting focus, while Mary Beth needs someone more geared to HR. They both remarked it would be difficult to combine the position and see success with it.

Seth stated that there was a jump from approximately \$900,000 to \$1,600,000, in the Finance Division Budget, a 49% increase. A brief discussion was held on growth and sustaining versus deferred maintenance theory. Randy advocated for the office assistant position before closing the budget request highlighting the growing tasks. Thom referred to previous discussions held about after the new Town Hall being an excuse to fill it with more people, and stressed obtaining information on gained efficiencies. Rob asked why, as a practice, a position isn't started at 40 hours right away. Randy stated that the town needs to see if the person fits the position and be trained properly, then allow the position to grow based on the need. Sean questioned why benefits were available at 20 hours. Michelle stated that these were good controls. Stephanie remarked that the town's employee salaries are too high people are paid too much and shouldn't offer performance along with COLA increases. Bill stated that during the last contract negotiation the administration removed many unsustainable issues regarding increases, and that the compensation strategy is lower than most other towns. Further discussion followed on salaries.

Bernard stated that due to the time items on the agenda were tabled for the next meeting in order to prepare for the School Budget.

10:39 PM ADCOM Liaison to Schools Budget Briefing. Brent briefed on state of Schools budget, citing a 2.64% increase for the next fiscal year, also stating that this is the lowest increase since FY'11. He explained that there are some fluctuations based on their adherence to state mandates, citing ELL (English Language Learners) costs as an example. Michelle furthered the point by stating that it is mandated by the state that each child has to be evaluated regularly in that process, and that these special needs situations normally appear in the midst of a year. Bernard asked for information regarding the increase and the area affected in the budget. Brent reported that an increase in salary occurred due to the loss of a grant which was based on population statistics reflected by census data. Thom inquired if there was a net gain in staffing. Brent stated that the staffing added up to 1.7 FTEs. Michelle stated that the increase in salaries is in the compensation agreements. Michelle stated that 25% of the budget was within special education, which will grow. Thom remarked that there needs to be a way to measure efficiency. Sean inquired if the entry level steps were increased in pay after the discussion held last year. Brent reported that they are the same, but reminded the ADCOM that top step pay was lower than most other communities. Sue asked if the School Budget will reflect actuals from the previous years. Brent stated that Bill Yukna was working on gathering the data as it is not the way the normal way they report it to the state. Brent remarked that everything looked fine, to which Bernard concurred.

10:55 PM Bernard motioned to adjourn, seconded by Jennifer.

Vote: 12/0/0

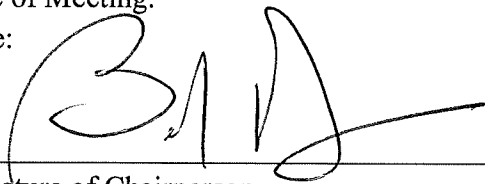
Next meeting to be held and located at the Andrew Gala Jr. Meeting Room on January 31st 2017, at 7:00 PM.

Minutes Taken by Matthew Mackenzie

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting:

Vote:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. M. D.', written over a horizontal line.

Signature of Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Susan D.', written over a horizontal line.

Signature of Vice Chairperson