

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JANUARY 25th, 2017

Committee Members Present: Sue Dring, Thom Freeman, Sean McCarthy, Stephanie McGowan, Seth Ferguson, Heidi Krockta, Bernard Dumont, Brent Ruter.

Members Absent: Jessica Allen, Marcia Galvin, Osie Poku, Javed Hussein, Rob Canfield.

Others Present: Randy Scollins, Mary Beth, Bill Keegan, Lisa Sinkus, Jane Sears Pierce, Paige Duncan

The meeting was brought to order at 7:05 by Susan Dring.

7:06 PM Paige Duncan presented on the Planning Department budget. Paige stated the only significant change to the Planning Department budget was an increase for Gas (Fuel) for department vehicle. The unfunded Storm Water mandate is a federal law and the town will need to amend the bylaws to keep town in compliance. Paige stated that this mandate will be covered by this year's budget. Seth asked about inspection accounts and if the entire thirty five thousand dollars was being spent. Paige stated that she does not spend to limit and keeps it need based. Seth stated that the part of the budget in question was trending upward, Randy stated that it was originally fifty five thousand and was trimmed to thirty five thousand. Stephanie asked if this could be an area for reduction, Bill Keegan responded in the affirmative and that there are areas in every budget where reductions can occur. Randy stated that erring on the side of flexibility is prudent on maintaining a healthy reserve.

7:20 PM Jane Sears Pierce presented on the Conservation Department budget. Jane reported that her department's budget was a level budget with the only change being special conservation clothing as requested by contract for the Conservation Commissioners. Thom asked if there were any mandates or updates to state or federal law that could impact expenses or cause additional spending. Jane stated that the Storm Water mandate was a big one but was otherwise unaware of any new updates. Jane stated that her department was focused on education and outreach by updating the town conservation website, using GIS, and providing trail maps online for the public. Brent asked how far along she was in the process. Jane stated they were a good way through but it will always need updates. Bill Keegan stated the draft version was impressive.

Thom asked if there were any land donations in the foreseeable future. Jane stated that there were two in process. Sean asked if there were controls to mitigate land donations. Bill Keegan and Jane stated that there are controls in place and that the land itself has to be viable for town usage if not conservation. Thom inquired if citizens had a process to reclaim the land. Bill Keegan stated that there was and it would involve the land going to auction.

7:40 PM Tony Mouselli and Bill Yukna presented on the Maintenance Department budget.

Tony described the services the Maintenance Department (MD) provides to the town and the flexibility it provides. From light installation, to HVAC, to janitorial and day to day upkeep of town properties the MD is involved in maintaining many assets of the town which make up 638,000 square feet of space¹. Increases in their budget included an increase in janitorial supplies for the new town hall and a personnel increase. Tony's philosophy for repairs is to fix a problem in its entirety and not to band aid the problem which will only cost more in the long run. Applications such as School Dude provide the team with analytics to address critical and reoccurring issues to provide better services to the town.

Bernard asked Tony what his methodology was to handling school and municipal requests. Tony responded that it was on a priority need basis. In other words if a school building is without heat, for the wellbeing of the students and staff, that maintenance ticket would take priority over other requests, but generally if it is not an emergency it by first come first serve via School Dude entered requests. Sean cautioned against contractors, as the town can subcontract out some work, marking up materials. Tony stated that he buys the materials and has the subcontractors perform the labor.

Thom inquired if there was a cost of services analysis for the new town hall, and if not was there a plan to show the taxpayers of Foxborough an analysis of the money they were saving from their investment. Randy responded that the town logs utilities at building level and Bill Yukna stated that the new town hall will be piloting an all electric heating/cooling system which should be more efficient. Sean inquired about janitorial supply increase if the same number of employees will inhabit the new building. Bill Yukna responded that the scope and size of the new building requires more materials. Heidi asked were the rest of the MD budget was located as the breakdown presented was unclear. Bill Yukna responded that it was on the school system budget.

Stephanie asked, before the MD was formed, where all of the positions that made up the MD were located. Randy responded that they were located "all over the place", meaning they were located in school, fire department, and at an individual building level. Thom asked if the demolition of the old town hall was in the original contract. Bill Keegan responded that it was, however the dates were pushed out due to construction hold ups. The time line stands as follows: Construction complete by end of June 2017, Demolition complete by end of October 2017.

¹ Not including new town hall*

8:35 PM Aaron Hyre presented on the Information Technology Department budget. The Information Technology Department (IT) seeks to promote twenty first century governance of technology. The department maintains technology in all departments of the municipality and schools. Currently the school system supports the majority of the positions within IT, and with the growing need of a technical professional within the public safety sector to monitor and maintain their technology, IT requested an increase in its personnel to include an individual to meet those needs full time. Bill Keegan stated that many systems are becoming automated and that the town should embrace the changes. Bernard stated that automation does not necessarily mean savings, to which he inquired where they would come from. Mary Beth stated that automation will allow the same manpower to be diverted to other projects and services that would otherwise fall behind. Sean cautioned about proprietary software bloating the budget. Aaron responded that the IT department actively manages to avoid “fad applications and technology”, meaning assets that are superfluous to the town mission but are attractive because they are either new or trending. Thom suggested education for town employees to handle basic troubleshooting, and for a way for the town to see the savings from the technological increases.

9:15 PM Randy presented on the Board of Selectman’s budget, to which there was no increase.

9:16 PM Randy presented on the Administration budget. Seth stated there was a lot of growth from 2015 to 2016, and from 2016 to 2017, and was concerned about the majority of it being unspent mid-year. Mary Beth stated that the budget included a change by dropping secretary services, or the minute taking for the BOS meetings, which have been rolled into the Community Information Specialist position. Additionally all of the Human Resources duties have been rolled into the Administration budget as well.

9:20 PM Committee entered a general discussion on financial philosophies regarding the town. Topics included flexibility financially for the administration versus a clearer view of budgeting, the dangers of revolving accounts, and how to grow the revenue the town is bringing in. The current financial philosophy is to build a healthy reserve while simultaneously measuring risk by increasing department budgets to anticipate unforeseen needs such as unfunded mandates from state or federal laws or directives. The excess funds not used during the year would then drop into the free cash reserve. A few members of the committee believed that this was a transparency issue, and as they were accountable to the voters it was important to be clear.

Procedurally speaking all budgets would be voted upon, and as a member of the committee pointed out the transparency is located in the flex. Due to new laws in Massachusetts revolving accounts are dangerous as they encourage reckless spending, and placing funds into those accounts can be a risk. Without the town growing in a population sense the only way the town can increase its revenue is through Economic Development and taking a proactive view financially.

9:55 PM Sue requested a list of the town employees' salaries for the last five years, including personnel pensions etc. for the next meeting.

Next meeting to be held in February 1 in the McGinty Room.

10:05 PM Adjourned. Heidi made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Brent.

Vote: 9/0/0

Notes taken by Matthew Mackenzie

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: 3-1-17

Vote: 8-0-3

Susan Dring

Signature of Chairperson

M. J. ...

Signature of Secretary