

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 8th, 2017

Committee Members Present: Sue Dring, Thom Freeman, Sean McCarthy, Stephanie McGowan, Seth Ferguson, Heidi Krockta, Bernard Dumont, Jessica Allen, Rob Canfield

Members Absent: Javed Hussein, Brent Ruter

Others Present: Randy Scollins, Bill Keegan, Mary Beth Bernard

The meeting was brought to order at 7:10 by Susan Dring.

7:11 PM Randy presented on the remaining General Government budgets. Randy expressed disappointment that the budget for the Foxborough Charter School fell short of conservative estimations. Discussion opened regarding concerns for the charter school and its impact to town finances. Topics included the disparity in charter school student versus public school student costs to the town, the lack of recourse by the town to opt out of the charter school due to legislation, and lack of state aid to assist in financial impacts to the town.

Thom inquired if there was any benefit from having the charter school in town. Randy responded there was no benefit to the town. Furthermore the charter school's financial schema placed the taxpayer in an inequitable position.

Jessica asked what the impact on the town would be if none of its students attended the charter school. Randy stated that in the way of associated costs per student the town would no longer have to contribute, however the Foxborough Charter School could expand its campus and take more parcels off of the tax rolls, thereby diminishing the taxable property pool.

Seth suggested, in lieu of favorable legislation, incentivizing the community to enroll its students in local public schools through positive engagement strategies.

Before seguing into the next item on the agenda, Thom asked if there have been any studies conducted regarding the effects of the MBTA's pilot commuter program, and more specifically if it impacted or was impacted by the charter school? Randy stated that program was made up by an incremental assessment, highlighting very specific amounts, hardcoded by legislation.

Bernard voiced concern in the inability to self-determine as a community whether or not a policy fits as a result of State legislation. Furthermore he suggested that there was a need to better educate the voters on issues such as towns being unable to opt in or out of a program in order to change those laws. Randy suggested a ballot question would be a good idea to raise the issue.

Bill reminded the Advisory Committee that all boards and committee meetings are open, some are televised, in the hope to inform the voters how they are impacted by things such as the charter school.

7:57 PM Debt Services Presentation. Randy presented on debt services, starting with the four types of debt which include the General fund, Sewer, Water, and Title 5. At the conclusion of the presentation Sean asked if there was signage for the Title 5 programs offered by the town. Randy stated that the pumping services alert the local Board Of Health to advertise the Title 5 services. Thom asked if there was a mechanism for townfolk to invest in municipal bonds. Randy responded in the negative, as they are for institutional buyers at this time. Bernard asked if the amounts of the bonds and related debt service were located within the individual department budgets, to which Randy replied yes.

Randy stated that each year he provides a full budget to the ADCOM, except for contract articles which are voted on and will be reflected later.

Randy briefed the ADCOM on the important changes that recently took hold in state and federal sectors: Unfunded pensions and OPEB liabilities numbers did not need to be on balance sheets, and now they have to be per new regulations. Randy reported that Foxborough has positive assets through its management. He also stated that an overwhelming number of government agencies, municipal to state, are underwater.

The discussion shifted to the town's perception that its government was over spending, and the misconceptions of Free Cash and where that is applied. Sean stated that the average taxpayer needs to see things simplified to help with the perception regarding the government. Stephanie was concerned about the income to tax ratio. Bernard asked if the debt services budget would increase in FY2018, to which Randy stated that the town would be servicing the debt it currently has.

8:39 PM Committee opened to discussion. Heidi asked about staffing requests and which were approved.

Randy stated that positions were granted to a few departments: one full time IT technician to assist public safety, one full time for the DPW, one full time for Veterans, one full time for the Assessors office, one hour increase for the COA, and one full time and one part time for Water.

Mary Beth stated that negotiations will soon begin with bargaining units for insurance plan types. While the town, going forward, has made changes to pay scales and steps, Bill stated his interest in keeping the town competitive with others to maintain and attract qualified professionals.

Seth inquired if the MBTA commuter connection was the town's best opportunity to grow the tax base, to which Bill responded yes. Sean followed up by asking if that was the only way to grow the tax base. Bill replied that the administration is working on sewer and zoning portions in an effort to open more viability for the town. Furthermore the Economic Development Committee was formed to analyze where economic growth is possible. Additionally the school system has the capacity for more families should the town expand in population.

Bill stated that if the MBTA program is approved there is a projected 13 to 14 million in rev every year, with incidental impacts to Public Safety and Board Of Health.

9:19 PM Randy presented on Pensions. Sue asked if the pension transfers to a spouse in the event of death, to which Randy replied yes. Bill stated that the town uses actuaries to analyze the pension to make sure the pension fits. Bernard asked if Foxborough was similar to other towns, Randy stated that Foxborough is compliant, but does not have any control over the legislation regarding the schedules.

9:25 PM Randy presented on Health and Life. Heidi stated that the new fire fighter systems efficiencies aren't being seen. Randy responded that the employees are able to provide a higher level of services without increasing headcount. Mary Beth stated that fire departments across the Commonwealth are trending towards fire fighters having a background in Para Medicine so that they can do community medicine.

9:58 PM Sue asked when a list of articles would be ready for town meeting. Bill responded that the week from the following Tuesday (2/14). Bernard asked if Article 4 would include personnel and existing costs for the personnel. Randy responded yes.

Before closing, Stephanie asked about the letter from ADCOM to the BOS, letter was written by Sean (not voted on). He brought copies in to review. The letter was a request for information regarding the MBTA/train pilot program.

Stephanie asked what are responsibility to this is? Sean stated there were votes within the ADCOM on this in Nov 16 regarding the train and formation of a subcommittee to review the MBTA program and its impact to the town.

Bill stated that the MBTA will not go where it is not welcome.

Next meeting to be held in March 8 in the McGinty Room.

10:15 PM Adjourned. Heidi made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Stephanie .

Vote: 9/0/0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: 3-1-17

Vote: 8-0-3

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Susan D.", written above a horizontal line.

Signature of Chairperson

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M. T.", written above a horizontal line.

Signature of Secretary