

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

APRIL 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Committee Members Present: Sue Dring, Thom Freeman, Sean McCarthy, Seth Ferguson, Brent Ruter, Rob Canfield, Heidi Krockta, Michelle Raymond, Javed Hussein, Bernard Dumont**

**Members Absent: Jessica Allen, Stephanie McGowan**

**Others Present: Bill Keegan, Mary Beth Bernard, Randy Scollins, Mark Ferencik, Roger Hill, Vicki Lowe, Christina Belanger, Lisa Sinkus, Roger Hatfield, William Baker, Virginia Coppola, Bill Yukna, Jane Sears, Paige Duncan, Michael Johns, Aaron Hyre, Debra Spinelli, Bill Casbara, Kate Connelly, Bruce McGovern,**

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

**7:11 PM The Chair said a few words stating her approval of town employees and about living within the town's means as her concerns for increases in healthcare and retirement being too much for the town to handle in the future. She suggested going through all departments separately to identify any areas where reduction could take place.**

Departments:

122 Selectmen: Motion to approve by Sue, seconded by Javed.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

123 Administration: Sue had questions about what was included in the office equipment maintenance line. Bill stated that most of the general use assets such as the copier, fax, mail machine, and shredder all come out of the Administration budget. Bill further stated that there is a new contract for these items in new town hall, with Randy stating they will be industrial grade for efficiency. Bill stated that this budget is currently down \$2000 from previous years. Randy stated that these items are mission critical and need to be maintained. Brent asked for clarification of the line entitled "Meetings, Conferences and Dues", to which Bill responded were within the contract for the town manager to maintain his credentials.

Sue suggested reducing the budget by \$7000. Heidi inquired where the \$7000 would be reduced from. Bernard, asking in regards to procedure, inquired who would decide how the reductions are handled, to which Bill and Randy responded that it was the town manager's responsibility. Thom asked if there would be tracking on this. Randy responded yes.

Sue made a motion to reduce the Administration Budget by \$7000, seconded by Javed.

**Vote: 2/7/1**

Heidi made a motion to approve as written, seconded by Brent.

**Vote: 8/1/1**

125 Audit Finance Records: Sue made a motion to approve, seconded by Rob.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

130 Finance: Javed stated his concerns in regards to the large increases in this department's salary line. Randy stated that they were adding one FTE and additional hours for the Assessors Department and for Information Technology. Sean had questions regarding the Business Systems Analyst position. Randy stated that it was formerly the Financial Analyst position re-categorized, with Mary Beth clarifying that the administration decided to reclassify it to get an IT person to assist the town hall departments. Sue made an analogy of personnel increases equating to adding to an existing balance on a high interest credit card. Javed inquired if operations would be impacted without the position. Randy stated his concerns that the position would mitigate issues created by the "sleeping giant" of technology, in order to prevent inefficiencies or impact to business operations.

Heidi stated her concerns that personnel costs are expensive and, with all of the technology currently deployed by the town, she inquired if the technology would eliminate some of the personnel needs. Heidi further inquired what the IT spend equated to.

Aaron Hyre stated that an all-encompassing number was not practical as much of the technology in use by the town would not capture an IT function specifically. Many technological assets serve multiple functions such as licenses and software applications. For example, Aaron explained that the auto dispatch platform performs a public safety function, while MUNIS software is a core component to municipal operations. Aaron stated that the money spent on technology doesn't reflect IT spending alone. Sean asked Chief Hatfield about the functions of the in house IT technician role. Chief Hatfield explained that the position would help with managing the data, assets, and keeps the town from being liable. Chief Hatfield explained how well maintained technology allowed him to use a laptop to access the records of a house on fire such as blue prints and other details from the builders to review the structure and increase the safety of all individuals involved in an incident. Sean agreed stating the software does provide a

return on investment. Aaron stated the benefit of technology is providing more for less by allowing staff to be redeployed to other areas of need.

Roger Hill explained the difficulties the DPW and Water had six years ago without the technology they have today, and the people to maintain it. Roger claimed that properly maintained technological assets can save thousands of dollars in preventing lost water.

Aaron stated that technology is embedded into every facet of professional operations, and it is no longer optional to have. Aaron stated that the new hire is to increase the level of service to water/fire/sewer/water. Bill stated that the town formerly had a police Lieutenant managing the Police Department's IT needs instead of position's police work. Bill further explained that the reality of the situation is that once the software is turned on and there is an issue with it, there needs to be someone to service it.

Sean stated concerns of the cost structure increasing in subsequent years. Randy responded all of these items are within the plan and balanced budget. Javed inquired if at the macro level if more technology lessens the need for more people, asking Roger if there were cuts made in his department after the technology went online. Roger stated he was able to redeploy his people to other areas of need, allowing for productivity increases. Randy stated that the IT increases has kept personnel increase requests down in the Finance Department, citing that IT support can represent cost avoidance as well. Aaron we are hiring people that are multi-skilled and analytical, rather than specialists, to get more value. Aaron claimed that through smarter employment methods the IT department is more well-rounded and able to respond to more issues effectively. Bernard asked if the purposed budget was balanced. Randy responded yes. Sean had concerns about long term growth of the IT budget. Bill stated the town will match versus the growth level of the community. Aaron stated that the IT department had assumed the duties of providing voice services for the community. Rob, respectfully, asked to refocus the conversation back to task.

Sue was concerned about personnel increases being detrimental to the town overtime. Bill claimed that health care will always be in flux because of politics at the state and federal levels. Randy we can break into OPEB when it is necessary, citing that in 2038 the OPEB will be fully funded.

Sue made a motion to reduce the budget by \$71,000. The motion fell to the floor.

Sue made a motion to reduce the budget by \$21,000. The motion fell to the floor.

Brent made a motion to approve the salaries of the department, seconded by Thom.

**Vote: 8/2/0**

Sue made a motion to approve the expenses of the department, seconded by Brent.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

**7:50 PM Seth suggested quickly surveying each department and holding those that members have inquiries or suggestions on, and voting on the ones that aren't held. The Chair agreed.**

The following departments were not held for debate: 122 Selectmen, 142 Reserve Fund, 151 Legal, 161 Town Clerk, 171 Conservation Commission, 176 Appeals Board, 195 Town Buildings (Sewer), 230 Central Dispatch and Services, 235 Joint Public Safety Building, 241 Inspection, 292 Animal Control, 390 Southeastern Regional Charter School, 410 Public Works, 423 Snow and Ice, 430 Solid Waste (Landfill), 450 Water Enterprise, 460 Sewer Enterprise, 510 Board of Health, 520 Health Agencies, 610 Library, 630 Recreation, 691 Historical Commission, 710 Debt Principal, 751 Debt Interest, 911 Pensions/Retirement, 913 Workers Compensation, 914 Unemployment Compensation, 915 Group Health/Life Insurance, 945 General Insurance.

Sue made a motion to approve all departments not held, seconded by Michelle.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

156 GIS: Heidi inquired why GIS was its own department. It was later explained it was broken out to list the expenses for the software and other maintenance needs.

162 Election and Registration: Thom had questions about the \$20,000 dollar salary increase. Randy stated the increase was to cover the additional duties of the election assistant, who was originally part time, to handle records management based on new state requirements. Mary Beth stated the town needed one clearinghouse person to cover public records requests. Thom asked if this is ongoing duty, and if there was training needed. Mary Beth responded yes, but most training was provided free to municipalities. Randy added that the Election Poll workers need to be paid the new minimum wage as per the new laws in place.

Thom made a motion to approve, seconded by Brent.

**Vote 10/0/0**

175 Planning Board: Sue was concerned about engineering costs, citing it being under spent. Kevin Weinfeld stated that the amount not used is returned to free cash, and that it is level funded. Brent stated he is ok with flexibility within the budget, along with Heidi. Thom how much money came back from other budgets into free cash. Randy stated \$433,000 returned to free cash. Paige stated that the Planning Board handles the money very responsibly, and frugally. Thom asked if that amount returning to free cash penalized the town with the state or rating agencies. Randy stated that it does not and that it recharges free cash which sustains the current operating model. Bernard asked procedurally what would happen if the department budgeted \$12,000 and needed additional funds, what would be the process. Randy stated the department would have to appropriate funds at town meeting. Sue inquired about \$1500 that was on ~~its own~~ <sup>telephone budget</sup> line, which was discovered to be for the water cooler refills in the break room. Bill stated that was no longer needed as the new town hall had superior water filtration for its employees. Sue recommended cutting that.

Heidi made a motion to approve a \$1500 reduced budget, seconded by Sue.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

192 Municipal Buildings: Sue had questions on expenses for the new town hall. Randy stated that with the new building the town was going to move into contractual services. Sue asked what the capital increase of \$1450 was for. Randy explained in years past the town approved a \$5000 Glycol tank for one of its buildings, however it was not feasible to purchase until recently at a price of \$6500, thereby needing \$1450 to supplement the original \$5000. Randy stated it was a onetime expense item.

Sue made a motion to approve, seconded by Rob.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

210 Police: Sue had concerns on the uniform cleaning budgets increases. Chief William Baker stated the uniform cleaning is contractual. Sue asked why there was a high increase in the recent year. Bill Keegan stated that there were 4 existing positions that were unfilled, which meant uniform cleaning cost less in previous years. In the last year the positions were staffed, leading to the budget increase. Sue inquired about the increase in the tuition line. Chief Baker stated that it was again contractual, and the department stepped up its efforts to educate its personnel.

Bernard made a motion to approve, seconded by Rob.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

220 Fire: Sue stated she wanted to reduce the budget by 10%.

Bernard made a motion to approve the budget as is, seconded by Brent.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

300 Foxborough Public Schools: Sue had concerns about receiving actuals going forward and concerns about the schools buying a lot of paper and ink. Superintendent Spinelli stated paper usage is down. Sue stated that without the actuals it is difficult to perceive that. Sue stated her desire to see student printing reigned in. Debora stated that the parents needs to see completed work projects. Bill Yukna stated there is good carryover of paper from previous years, which cuts down on cost. Sue restated her suggestion to use less paper and encourage less student printing. Bruce Gardner stated the schools were not interested in using less paper at that time. Bernard inquired how Foxborough compared to other towns like Mansfield and Sharon on spending for schools. Bruce Gardner stated the SCOM uses a methodology referred to as Per Pupil Spending. Bill Yukna reported the town is in a very tight range, stating Foxborough is less expensive than those towns.

Seth presented the ADCOM and guests a comparison between numerous communities, and stated that Foxborough school spending is 8% to 10% higher than the others. Bill Yukna responded that the reality of the schedule is that the steps are more leveled, to attract early professional teachers, to treat them fairly, so as to have a good retention rate. Debora reported the schools have one teacher at the doctorate level, further explaining that Foxborough's spending is lowest at top step, higher at lower steps. Seth saw it as a strategic move but wanted to call it out on the sake of transparency. Bill Yukna we have very professional staff we have retained. Bruce stated that it translates to a savings in hiring. Seth stated one measure of success is retention and per pupil spending. Bruce stated the town keeps negotiations fair with labor groups to prevent disruption.

Javed stated he approved of the strategy, and asked if the town should expect its students to do better than communities such Sharon and Dover. Debra stated that there are other factors in play, such as socio-economic ones, that complicate that kind of comparison. The community aims to get the best out of it students that the town can provide with its services. Debra stated that there are multiple measures of success, but ultimately they are subjective and it is what is most important to an individual. The Superintendent stated the schools try to create well rounded individuals as a primary goal. Brent stated that seniors graduating now know more than they did 10 years ago, and for every percentage of growth in higher education benefits society.

Thom stated that people tend to gravitate towards student achievement as a measure of success, however he was interested to know what were the metrics involved in evaluations for teachers, if there was a state evaluation system. Additionally, Seth inquired how success translated to step increases. Debra stated that there are over 100 teachers and the evaluation process is rigorous, as such it is hard to quantify the percentage of teachers that fall into categories of success, however she felt that they should be average to the state measure. Bill Yukna stated that reporting to state is standard but the evaluation process is different from other communities. Thom asked if this was akin to grade inflation.

Debra asserted that the cost put forward to the ADCOM is what it takes to run a good school system. Bruce Gardner reported that the leadership team is best it has been in the past 8 years and that they foster good practices within to make it a better system. Sean stated he was seeking a better understanding of the strategy, as there is a concern that eventually it could be unsustainable. Bruce, not speaking on behalf of the SCOM, asserted the plan is sustainable in the current model.

Heidi made a motion to approve the budget as is, seconded by Bernard.

**Vote: 9/0/1**

433 Solid Waste Collection: Sue raised a concern about the expenses being budgeted more than spent. Randy stated that it is a variable expense, while Roger stated that MS4 will impact this in following years.

Sue made a motion to approve the budget as is, seconded by Brent.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

541 Council on Aging/Human Services: Sue raised a concern about personnel increases becoming unsustainable. Thom inquired if 22 hours were covered from a grant. Vicki Lowe stated that 22 hours goes through a grant to the driver position, the positions being added were non benefitted, and the 1 hour increase to the 35 would not impact benefits as the position is already benefitted. Sean asked if there was any way for the COA and Veterans Services could share manpower requests. Michael Johns asserted that State and Federal reporting requirements would make that difficult, while Vicki stated that the skill sets in an individual would be different for each department. Bill Keegan stated that eventually the town is seeking to create a Human Services Department that would provide crossover for these sections.

Sue made a motion to reduce the budget by \$20,000. The motion fell to the floor.

Bernard made a motion to approve the budget as is, seconded by Thom.

**Vote: 8/1/1**

543 Veteran Services: There was no discussion on this office as the question of resource sharing was asked and answered in department 541 Council on Aging section.

Rob made a motion to approve the budget as is, seconded by Javed.

**Vote: 8/1/1**

**9:25 PM: Town Council presented information on Article 24, or the Marijuana General Bylaw Prohibition Language.** Town Council Kate Connelly worked with the town planner in regards to recreational or retail marijuana stating the town can either have a moratorium on the subject, a prohibition bylaw, or a restriction to certain districts with a certain number allowable. The legislation at the state level is very ambiguous, with approximately 40 bills currently pending to revise the law passed in the Commonwealth. Kate stated that the language used in the article is acceptable and the timing is correct in regards to ballot during the Town Election and then a vote at Town Meeting a week later. Kate stated there is no need for moratorium as no one can apply for a license until August 2018. Town Council further explained that the warrant article has to have that language to authorize the BOS to have a ballot question later and that the article is based on a model that has been successfully accepted by the state from other towns. Sue asked if there is a possibility that this could arrive at the ballot again. Kate replied that it could. Javed asked what the procedure was if a prohibition passed, or in other words what it would take to repeal it? Kate replied that it would follow the same procedure as anything else unless there was language stipulating otherwise. Council stated that if it fails there would still have to do general bylaws or zoning bylaws Thom inquired if there different processes for obtaining a town license and a state license. Council replied that both licenses are applied for at the same time.

Michelle made a motion to accept the article as written, seconded by Bernard.

**Vote: 9/0/1**

**9:34 PM The ADCOM began voting on the remaining articles on the Town Warrant.**

**9:35 PM Vote on Article 19, also known as the Stormwater Bylaw.**

Heidi made a motion to accept the article as written, seconded by Thom.

**Vote: 9/0/1**

**9:36 PM: Seth inquired as to how a revote would work as he was interested in re-voting on Article 24.** The Chair explained the procedure.

Seth made a motion to revote on Article 24, seconded by Sue.

**Vote: 10/0/0**



Seth made a motion to accept Article 24 as written, seconded by Michelle.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

**9:37 PM: Vote on Article 6, or Non-Union Wages.**

Javed made a motion to accept the article as written, seconded by Bernard.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

**9:38 PM: Vote on Article 23, or Accept Lincoln Hill Way as a Public Way.** Sue inquired if the article was in a finished state, to which Bill Keegan replied that it was indeed finished.

Javed made a motion to accept the article as written, seconded by Bernard.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

**9:39 PM: Vote on Article 15, or Fund Capital Stabilization.**

Rob made a motion to accept the article as written, seconded by Brent.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

**9:40 PM: Vote on Article 18, or Amend Sewer Service Area Map.**

Brent made a motion to accept the article as written, seconded by Rob.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

**9:43 PM: Vote on Article 5, or CIP Budget.** Sue Dring went on record that she objected that the sewer project is going the CIP budget. She asserted that the size and the scope of project should be put in front of the town as a warrant. Bernard also went on record to agree that the project should be separate. Sean went on record to agree with Sue and Bernard, however he felt at the current time it could affect the entirety of down town redevelopment. Bill stated that if the committee wants to change the process the town could accommodate that request. Sue stated her concern that as of March 22, 2017 the item in question was on the warrant as an article and then it was removed. She inquired why it had been taken off. Michelle stated it sounded like a contingency plan to which Bill stated that it was indeed a backup plan if the CIP process failed to accept the request. It was later stated that this was to avoid costly borrowing. Michelle inquired what the process was to change the policy regarding what makes it on to the CIP. Thom, to Michelle's point, inquired who the arbiter of the CIP process was. Bill stated that the town manager and CIP committee held prevue over the CIP process.

Sean stated he was concerned that the moving pieces already in play in regards to the sewer work would be more costly if the process was suddenly halted due to failed funding through the warrant. Sue stated that was not an acceptable reason to be on the CIP budget. Sean inquired if this was setting a precedent. Bill stated that it was not, however the town was more than willing to discuss setting one if needed. Sue asserted that the copier costs were too high. Debra stated the school services both sides of the town, or in short one major printer that works for everybody in regards to projects such as the Town Report.

**9:55 PM: The Chair thanked the committee for its hard work.**

**Next meeting to be held June 21st, located in the McGinty Room.**

**10:00 PM Adjourned.** Seth motioned to adjourn by, seconded by Brent.

**Vote: 10/0/0**

**Minutes Taken by Matthew Mackenzie**

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: 4/12/17

Vote:

  
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Signature of Chairperson

  
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Signature of Vice Chairperson