

## Foxborough Advisory Committee

Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> 2019

In attendance:

Susan Dring, Sean McCarthy, Bernard Dumont, Seth Ferguson, Larry Ooi, Robert Canfield, Michelle Raymond, Brent Ruter, Sharon Weiskerger, Stephanie McGowan, Brian Guild

### MINUTES

**7:05PM** - Meeting called to order by Susan Dring with request 'to be mindful that we are all volunteers with the intent of the benefit to the town'.

The Water Department panel was introduced by Roger Hill. Roger referred to CIP as a vehicle for recurring maintenance issues and that the Water Dept has needed an extra person for a long time.

Brent R – Is there a line item for the new clerk position?

C Laviolette – The top salary line is a place-holder @ \$44K.

Stephanie M – What about the \$51.4K?

C Laviolette – That is a carry over from the previous year.

Sue D – Why is the salary/wage line not allocated

C Laviolette – Not sure where that would be spent – part of the \$51K is under the Water super position and may depend on which union contracts get settled.

Stephanie M – Roger is the only non-union staff. How do we get to see how each position gets paid?

C Laviolette – Payroll info comes from MUNIS @ Finance Dept then add COLA & steps. Years ago, there were 2 Assistant Supervisors: now, 1 Asst Super and 1 Super. Bill Keegan tried not to go over adding 4 positions unless job redefinitions for duties changed. Maxed-out steps only receive COLA increases.

Bernard D – Is any budget increases offset by an increase in fees?

Roger H – The budget is always balanced.

C Laviolette – salaries up 3% + COLA. Water Techs' grades are based on license/certifications (multiple skill levels are possible). In Water, Techs having higher grade certs are now required due to the Treatment plants and DEP rules.

Seth F – If salaries have remained flat, where are the savings?

C Laviolette – There is some catch-up in pay.

Sean M – What is the 'all-in' cost of the requested position?

C Laviolette - @ \$65K with benefits (benefits value is @ 24% of salary).

Bernard D – 2018 vs 2020 actuals: \$3.1M vs 3.9M?

Roger H - Several expenses have been moved from the CIP budget requests: 1) Treatment Plant XFER, 2) Well Replacement XFER, 3) Meter Replacements XFER - amount to @ \$580K difference.

Sean M – For the items being shifted, is there a criterion, say longevity, as to how they were derived?

Roger H – These are annual asset management expenses that have been mapped out.

Sean M – How is this different than a Police car?

Roger H – The expense is spread out over time because it is too large to carry all at once.

Sean M – By moving these items out of the CIP there is less budget oversight.

Sue D – What will the water rate be going forward?

Roger H – As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, for the next 4 years it will increase 6%, then 5%, then 4%, then leveling out at 3%. There are no surprises.

Brian G – Regarding meters: last year the request was for \$40K; now the projection is for \$80K?

Roger H – Many meters are over 10 years old; this includes commercial ones that all need to be replaced.

Brent R – How long will it take for get to full meter 'capacity'?

Roger H – We're at @ 1000 now, in 5 years we hope to get to 50%. Meters slow down as they get older which also adds to water loss.

Stephanie M – Regarding monthly billing, I haven't spoken to anyone who wants this @ \$71K for this position.

C Laviolette – This is just another piece to adding efficiencies; not only for monthly billings. The department has had 3 people for nearly 25 years while experiencing 50% growth in that time. The postage has been secured @ \$.38 flat rate.

Bob Worthly - the department has 3 goals: protect public health, meet regulatory requirements and provide a public service. The new service will have evaluations to rate performance. There is fieldwork for @ 5200 meters that as an asset management task need to be located and have age/function determined. From a regulatory aspect we are aiming to: instill consumer confidence in reporting changes, meet conservation outreach requirements, improve water/sewer billing. Right now, there is only one person able to schedule/troubleshoot multiple platforms. We estimate that there is a 40% less liens due to diligence. There is a concerted effort to get control of unaccounted water ... growth in the town depends on water delivery. The DEP, after doing everything, at the end of the year, the town gets dispensation. The town needs to maximize the ability to draw water for new development – this will require increased efficiencies. There is consideration for using currier drop-box processing for @ 7000 customers instead of using the Finance Dept. This would run @ 2.5 hours/week vs 9.5/10 hours/week for the Finance Dept. Monthly cost of 7.5 hours is still lower than the office even when factoring in a processing fee of \$.10/article and @ \$3000/year not including the currier fee.

Brent R – To recount the gaps, what is the estimated water loss?

Bob W - We figure @ 41%, some could be due to erratic billing – we are required by State to be under 10%.

Brent R – Can you name towns which meet that under 10% threshold?

Bob W - Dedham is in the 20s and that's considered high.

Chris Gallagher - the department brought in a detection company and it found 36 leaks; they were brought in again and found 12 more, however, the town doesn't get credit for those findings/repairs for another year.

Brent R – Did any themes, such as age, show up?

Bob W - There are different stories: a meter blew up underground, a gap in the middle was found ...

Brent R – I love and see the need to find lost water; outflow must be measured so still do readings. Are there any other levers we could be pulling to resolve these issues?

Roger H – There is 21 miles of asbestos-lined cement pipe that is hard to find leaks in. There is another 60 miles of cast iron piping. We have already relined 4 miles of the asbestos pipe which is less invasive than full replacement (Beach St. and Mechanic St.) We have to expand leak detection including identifying those in peoples' homes.

Sue D – From my own experience, I had a leaky toilet that I didn't notice for 3 months. How can such a small variance be noticeable.

Brian G – Why is billing required to find water?

Bob W - When we measure quarterly, we don't get an accurate view of annual usage until after the next calendar year.

Sean M – I still don't know why we have to bill monthly. Is there a way for the MUNIS utility to save data without producing bills? There is no collection of lost money for treated water, wear and tear and electricity. Why not move payroll to 'in-house'? Would there be a significant change from outsourcing?

Roger H – If we get the position there would be a year-long phase-in. There are ways to offset the expense -we may not need a clerk. However, we haven't had an increase in staff in decades. We are investigating new technologies.

Bill K – If we increase the flow of info at one end, do we have the capacity to process at the other end? Also, as a group, the elderly rarely participate in new tech.

Bernard D – Who is using the cell phone expense @ \$27K, up 17%

Chris G – The cell costs include alarms, computer systems communications, monitoring (VZ & some AT&T tablets)

Stephanie M – Why the big jump in expense?

Chris G – We're using a new plan through the DEP.

Stephanie M – How many other towns have made the same move? What about manpower to do monthly readings? Are we going to find tiny leaks if they appear like regular billing?

Sean Osbourne - We want to get the big leaks out of the system so we can fine tune on the smaller ones – remove the ‘chatter’. We don’t expect any large personnel hit but we do have to deal with too many different metering devices.

Sue D – Is this possible with current staffing?

Bob W – It takes 2 men 4/5 days in one van each month; each having the training to perform all tasks.

Brent R – Stop saying ‘monthly billing’... talk ‘tracking water’. Hit on the missing water, that you want to gain triple the data to track what is pumped into the system. Try ‘marketing’ the idea ... whether people would be annoyed.

Sean M - ...monthly ‘invoicing’. Where are the efficiencies – is the manpower overqualified for meter reading?

Bob W – We are using the ‘Duck Boat Theory’ (one driver/one reader) for highly technical equipment.

Stephanie M – Why can’t we just get the data and not bill it – I don’t get this at all?

Brian G – This provides no increased confidence in the data. When you read the meters it’s important to bill to validate the data? Not understanding?

Bill K – Does anyone who reads monthly and then bill quarterly?

Brian G – No, there’s about a dozen different reasons not to, it’s trending.

Robert C – Who’s authority is it to implement this policy?

Chris G – The Water & Sewer Commission

Robert C – Then why are we debating this?

Brian G – Because once it is up and running, it must be maintained.

Seth F – Does every town send paper to every address?

Brian G – Are we looking to change towards a paperless option?

Bill K – The Town wouldn’t need new Finance Dept staff until FY 2021.

Sean O - Unaccounted water loss will happen in front of meters while downsizing of pipe from street to house – there will be a savings from funding to repair that.

Chris G – Customers can already sign-up on-line.

### 8:40PM Sewer Department

Roger H – The budget for the Sewer Dept is flat; there is a few older areas that need updates or replacement, roughly \$25-45K.

Chris G – The DEP now requires all manhole covers be ‘flipped’ to fix any leaks found.

Roger H – the new treatment plant is 99% complete and will require steady maintenance per the MFN (Mansfield-Foxborough-Norton) district.

Chris G – MFN construction is ending so town will begin paying debt back to the State over 30 years @ 0%.

Stephanie M – What about the takeover of Summerfield?

Chris G – We will start the takeover in the new year; there should be only a nominal increase.

Roger H – It is a good system per inspections prior to takeover.

Sean M – Has there been any sale of flow from the Burrell construction project or the old Fire Station/Rockhill St. project?

Roger H – That project ran @ \$425K and we have 5 houses connected with another 3 coming on-line in the spring. The town has taken a property and a new property could connect soon.

Chris G - Sewer rates are going up 13% yearly to catch-up plus regional assessments, but going forward expect to be less with bond retirements.

### 8:50PM Street Lighting

Chris G – budget holding steady; LED thru Natl Grid – some of the tech has not been cost effective but now Wi-Fi and other expenses are coming down to reasonable levels.

Sue D asked for further explanation on the lights.

Chris G – The town had to buy lights from Natl Grid and they hadn’t entered all 1200 into commission so there is a backlog on assessing cost.

Stephanie M – Did the town get money back from Natl Grid?

Chris G – The town has stopped paying Natl Grid until the billing gets sorted out.

**8:55PM Highways & Parks**

Roger H - There are no big changes for this year. There are unfunded mandates for measuring and cleaning catch basins. 46 years ago, the town had 3 mechanics for 16 pieces of equipment – now there is 160 pieces and still 3 mechanics; we will soon have to find a bus mechanic.

Bill K – There is an absolute need in the next year and we will work with school and fire departments.

Chris G – We have one mechanic who spends 95% of his time on buses (the town has only 2 spare busses).

Bill K – In 2 years we may lose our fire truck mechanics (one on July 1<sup>st</sup>); we may have to outsource.

Chris G – Apparatus certificates are required for this position.

Bernard D – What will level funding of Chapter 90 funds do to budgeting?

Chris G – We are planning on \$640K + Meals Tax revenue'

Roger h – We are in good shape for roads but we can't keep level funding or else roads will deteriorate.

Bernard D – Is this affecting all towns?

Roger H – Projected for FY2020 is re-paving Central Street from the Mansfield line to Elm St.

Sharon W – What about illegal dumping? Can we put anything in place to catch offenders?

**9:10PM Snow & Ice**

Roger H - This account is allowed to overspend, but it is at the top of the following year's budget expenses. It's been a good year so far. We would like to build a brine system building for road treatment. Mechanics will tell you that they can tell what town your car is from by the rot due to salt treatments.

Chris G – We use magnesium chloride as soon as snow starts.

Sue D – How does salt affect stormwater?

Chris G – We file a DEP report – they don't want to see sand usage.

Roger H – Salt doesn't work as well on back roads because it needs friction/grinding into pavement – busy roads see better effects.

**9:20PM Landfill**

This is the annual maintenance budget for the landfill on Payson Road, no changes. Hazardous waste collection occurs each year at dumpster on Elm Street garage with an increase to the regular expense for tires.

Sue D – What happens to HAZMAT?

Chris G – That removal is outsourced for a flat fee including the paint and mercury shed all at the same time.

Sean M – Is there any new OSHA training/compliance issues?

Roger H – The DPW building is scheduled for a pre-review with DLS inspector; we make potential loss of life a priority. The garage will need extensive work in the near future to be compliant. The same for the fueling station needing upgrades.

**9:30PM** – Sue D directed the ADCOMM to review the following week's agenda. First Board of Health.

Michelle R – The BOH is adding new Food-Go-Pro software for @ \$4800 renewable annually. This program allows for better efficient inspections and reduces licenses from 2 to 1. The inspector can process everything on site with pictures. Revenues from fees and penalties historically: FY2016 = \$150K; FY2017 = \$152K; FY2018 = \$154K; FY2019 = \$119K (thus far).

Sean M – Eventually these fees/violation penalties come from the consumer/taxpayer. The health agency budget is up @ 15K but holding for contracts. Consulting services have increased. Town had been part of the anti-tobacco coalition but that is no longer funded.

Michelle R - The BOH is requesting funding for tuition reimbursement to go towards sanitation certifications. The Fire Chief will explain further the details of the Community Paramedic which will offset the removal of the community nurse expense. There has been an increase in fees due to an increase of events happening at Gillette Stadium.

Larry O – Who is the Animal Inspector?

Michelle R – That position is now shared with the Police budget for Animal Control.

**Veterans Dept** - there is little change here: ordinary benefits have decreased but that can change at any time as veterans can walk in.

**Council on Aging** - the new director is very interesting and extremely enthusiastic – he loves the job. His aim is to focus and expand social services by getting lots of grants (he got 3 vans for Randolph). He wants to attract those seniors who don't believe that they are 'old'. He hopes to save and stretch services. Since September, when he started, he has created 15 new programs and lowered their cost, implemented more self-sustaining funding, more trips which have all sold out. He wants to remind citizens that anyone over 18 can use the social services.

**Recreation Dept** - The only salary on the budget is Deb G. The department runs on a revolving account. They are applying for \$80K through CIP for funds to replace the Boothe Playground (which has been removed as unsafe). The salary is on the budget in total now, while 2 employees are paid out of the revolving account.

**Historical Commission** – This department is all volunteer. They are looking towards cleaning town-owned cemeteries. They also are budgeting for added security for the museum building.

**Library** – SAILS fees are increasing. There are 2 retirements resulting in \$40K for vacation payback. There is one incorrect salary in the current budget draft which will be fixed.

10:25PM

Robert C – quickly motioned for Adjournment

Brent R - 2nd

Vote: 11  0  0

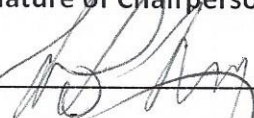
Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: 6 February 2019

Vote:

  
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Signature of Chairperson

  
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Signature of Vice Chairperson