

Foxborough Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 23rd 2019

In attendance:

Susan Dring, Sean McCarthy, Bernard Dumont, Seth Ferguson, Larry Ooi, Jennifer Frank-Bonnet, Michelle Raymond, Brent Ruter, Larry Stern, Sharon Weiskerger, Stephanie McGowan

MINUTES

7:05PM - Meeting called to order by Susan Dring

Minutes from November 28th presented for acceptance. Minutes accepted with updates ⁹~~8~~-0-2

7:15PM – Town Mgr Bill Keegan distributed ‘budget books’ to the ADCOMM members and began his outline presentation of the FY2020 town budget. Bill K indicated that there is an insurance case that is being resolved on a bill submitted in 2016 before settlement in 2017 for \$50K. (false imprisonment case) The town has a ‘deductible’ of \$7500, but there were multiple charges which came to the final total. The town will pay out of Free Cash but is looking for alternatives. Continuing, the \$1M contribution to Stabilization last year will not be renewed per estimates showing it is not viable. As of today, the budget process is on normal schedule. Future meetings: 1/30 – School; 2/6 – DPW; 2-13 – Culture & Rec; 2/20 – Insurance/Clerk; 2/27 – Public Safety.

Power Plant – New staffing

The FY2020 revised budget is \$73.1M and is funded as such:

70% - Property tax; 11% - State Aid; 15% - other local revenues; 4% - Transfers; 1% - Free Cash

Increase of \$450K @ Water Enterprise:

\$44K – Billing Clerk

\$130K - increase in building maintenance + expected new water treatment

\$170K – increase tank asset management

\$18K (19,800) – postage for added billing.

The Sewer Enterprise funding will increase \$153.5K (10.2%) of which @\$130K is for debt service.

Bill K continued by adding that Charter school assessments tend to wipe out any State education aid.

Larry S – What is the benefit of removing CIP items (meters) to the regular budget.

Bill K – Implementing those items right now provides the Water Dept with better reporting to DEP of usage figures to avoid penalties and fines.

Sean M – asked if the new meters were part of the 5-year plan (Bill K did not have an answer)

Bill K continued by naming the following highlights:

Main Costs = \$17.5M (+3.6%) School Costs = \$36.1M (+3.2%) Fixed Costs = \$14.5M (+6.9)

There is \$313K pending for Union Contract negotiations and \$900K transfer to OPEB.

Current budget allocations: School – 50%; Debt - 4%; General Govt - 5%; Employee Benefits – 20% of \$73.7M requested.

5 New positions requested = @ \$368K OT = @ \$197.4K Stormwater = @ \$75K

\$73.7M - \$630K = \$73.1M Increase of \$2.7M over previous year

Seth F – So, this can be considered a decrease of an increase?

Larry O – The DPW is trying to implement Monthly Billing, what happens if that proposal goes forward?

Bill K – That will add 1 person at the DPW and 1 person to the Finance Dept, which will be borne by the Water/Sewer Enterprise. There is a total of \$592.4K in cuts:

\$224K in new position requests \$75K in OT reductions \$146K in Capital outlay \$45K in Stormwater

\$20K in VACA buybacks \$10K in Vets Benefits \$30K Health Services \$10K in Emergency Consulting

Seth F – What are Dept heads looking at to target for cuts? What needed to be done to balance out?

Bernard D – We used to be given the Budget in (red)....

Bill K – Now we're giving you a balanced budget to begin with. Randy said that the next 2 years will be tight and thus required a different approach.

Sean M – Re: Water – What if they just send monthly reports but don't collect until quarterly?

Brent R – Roger (Hill) did say that this will result in better usage tracking.

Stephanie M – I know of no one who wants 12 months of billing; even Lisa (Sinkus) was worried.

Sue D – Let's discuss this when Roger is here.

Bill K – As of now, I still have to budget for it. Level services w/o adding personnel (except those funded by other sources). This budget maintains OPEB funding on track and provided leeway for unsettled union contracts. 3 new police officers paired with the Regional Dispatch move will save \$200K.

Sharon W – Please explain the VNA nursing plan.

Bill K – The Regional Care Nurse, per Pauline Z, is not great care. Chief Kelleher has proposed a new program that could expand care.

Stephanie M – How does this work for the town?

Bill K – It will require a roll-out, but that follow-up care nursing will be better available.

8:10PM – Sue D invited Liaisons to share their meetings logs.

Brent R – School Department

The department has a super administration which provided much more information to liaisons than in previous years. Budgets are broken down by building, especially amounts to run Burrell. They utilize 'holistic pricing' for arts and music across all schools. They passed out budget addendums accounting for outside funding and grants. They did not discuss CIP funding. Their staffing analysis is 85% salaries amounting to 41% of the Town budget. The board asked for heads-up questions so that they could be prepared with researched answers.

Bernard D – asked about Foxborough enrolment; how many Foxborough kids go to other schools.

Sean M - asked if the town recaptures Charter students? Does the ALL Day K translate into more elementary students? Has the Charter School grown due to its expansion, but what about Foxborough #s (+/-)

Sue D – Does the town give money to home school kids?

Brent R – The last appendix in our Ed binder has home school and other non-FPS rates.

Sean M – This class size in K (29/class) is this due to Assistants?

Brent R – Part of the staffing #s = ed. assistants. The Board says 'Yes, we run high BUT with fewer SPED instructors. Ed Assistants have contracted rates, but are much lower than teacher salaries.

Sue D – Where are the increases?

Brent R – Budget sits at \$36.118M; + \$1.1M (3.22%) This increase appears in 4 'chunks':

+54% - Regular education instruction – salary/contracts – COLA increase

+23% - SPED COLA increase

+14% - SPED placement

+9% - All Day K

The 1st two are due to this being a contract negotiation year and account for 77% of the requested increase. For the SPED placement, these are fixed costs on a moving target. This includes the high cost of out of district facilities. The rates are set outside of town control.

Sue D – Is the increase due to more kids or tuition?

Brent R – Both

Michelle R – Is there in-town work to help place these kids; can that help reduce shipping them to other locations?
The town is responsible up to age 22.

Larry O – 1 student has a cost of \$320K

Bernard D – Why isn't the town doing more to collect on solar credits in schools?

Sean M – It's expensive in structure and stability on site.

Brent R – Overall, there is an increase of .7 staff [Teen Special Ed Team Chair who coordinates IEP stuff] and .2 staff for music due to more students staying in programs longer. The overall Education budget represents 49% of town budget [41% attributed to teachers' salaries]. Long view, \$3.22M more than last years increase. Yet, last year the ask was much lower than the town side because they knew this year's contract negotiations would require more. The last big contract year was FY16 +3.9%.

Sue D – Did we ask about contracts?

Brent R – There are 6 open contracts to be negotiated, including 2 that are self-funded through fees, meaning that they will not impact the budget this year or next; these are food service and after-care. They think they pay fairly per 30 comparable towns (Foxborough is near the middle).

Michelle R – 63% of teachers in the system are at the top STEP.

Seth F – I found \$: \$40K on copiers; 8M pages printed. We're living in a digital age, we should be putting out the message to reduce printing.

Larry O – Since 2017: 37 homes and 36 condos have been built resulting in only 12 new students.

Seth F – What is trending? What are the average class size trends?

Sean M – We need to look at the Operating Budget.

Larry S – We can't get bogged down on small copiers; we need to see a bigger picture. How do we reduce cost per pupil? What is the metric to compare districts?

Brent R – Bring questions to the meeting. There is no clear-cut metric to measure. The biggest impact on student success is parental participation; then social/economic stati.

Michelle R – Also, we need to ask what Foxborough is offering in classes and services compared to other towns.

Larry O – Successful school systems translate into positive real estate values.

Brent R – Think circular, not linear.

Sean M – Medway comes very close to Foxborough metrics.

Larry S – Mass DEP has specific cohorts with respect to growth.

9:05PM - Sue D started open discussion by stating that we want to ask Finance Department @ Prop 2.5: why is average increase 3.7%? Where does new growth and split rates factor in?

Sean M – We aren't recapturing 'savings' (solar field, dispatch) the savings are already spent.

Stephanie M – Trending: residential always goes up while others go down.

Sean M – Check the DOR website for Foxborough Tax rates. It rounds-off the %, but we've been increasing faster than our town's peers. We used to be lower values, but now we're scraping up against the highest levels. We're valuing much closer to the market rate.

9:30PM

Larry O – saw an opening and shot his hand up to motion for Adjournment

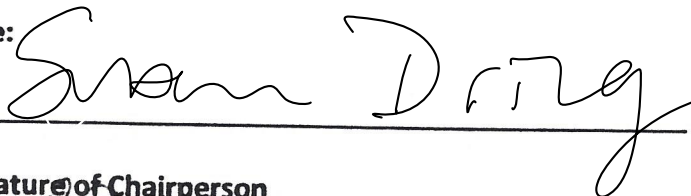
Larry S - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0


Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting:

Vote:



Signature of Chairperson



Signature of Vice Chairperson