

Foxborough Advisory Committee

Wednesday, February 13th 2019

In attendance:

Susan Dring, Sean McCarthy, Bernard Dumont, Seth Ferguson, Larry Ooi, Sharon Weiskerger, Stephanie McGowan, Brian Guild

MINUTES

7:05PM - Meeting called to order by Susan Dring to approve Minutes from January 23rd with corrections.

Motion to accept: Stephanie M – 1st

Bernard D – 2nd

Vote: 7 – 0 – 0

7:07PM - Board of Health

Pauline Zajdel presented for the BOH budget. She referenced new tobacco compliance requirements as well as the change to a Community Paramedic, as proposed by the Fire Chief in his budget. This would replace the current town nurse position. The Health Dept issued 1000+ permits in 2018 with 11 sets of inspections. Complaints handled primarily deal with trash, housing and pools. Foxborough received an Innovation Award for regional inspection assessments.

Sue D – How does the department feel about it.

Paul Steeves – The Fire Chief presented information to the BOH regarding grant funds and overlapping services that made sense; the BOH is all on board now with this proposal.

Dan Sullivan presented for the ARC program, explaining the services it provides for the participating towns. Pauline Z iterated how the funding for this program has remained level @ \$9K.

Seth F – The budget declined from \$40K to \$10K; where did funding go?

Pauline Z – That was the nurse position being eliminated.

Seth F – As for the tuition/consulting services @ \$2600/3000, are these one-time or recurring charges?

Pauline Z - Foxborough got cut-out from some consulting funds matching but these go to certifications and could be a one-off.

Stephanie M – It may be a small amount but it provides a lot. I'm glad to hear the BOH side of the nurse issue and that you are on board.

Mike Johns – The Paramedic funding will be reimbursed through Medicare/Medicaid and are recurring. \$30K was cut from the BOH budget to balance.

Larry O – Because the town has an ambulance, the state gives \$82K?

Sean M – the chief will give a full breakdown of funding for the position.

7:21PM – Recreation

Sue D – This budget is only one page – the Director's salary.

Heather Harding – This department is self-funded. The Booth Playground has been dismantled due to not meeting code in its annual inspection. It will be replaced: sand will be removed and structured walkways and fiber chips will bring it up to standard.

Deb Giardino – Once the department was made aware of the 'not safe' notice, they were obligated to taking down all the structures right away. This will be the first time the department has gone to the CIP committee. This is a non-revenue generating complex (though Recreation takes care of it). We had received some donations but if we don't raise the necessary funds to replace, it will remain a sandbox. The estimate is for @ \$89K – about 50/50 for structures/surface. We are working with 'playground consultants' on a much smaller space.

Sean M – What is the timeline for this project?

D Giardino – The CIP funding begins July 1st, so we're looking at rebuilding in the Fall of 2019.

7:30PM – Historical Commission

Sue D – The department representative couldn't come tonight. They are submitting the same budget as last year. I looked at this and asked 'what's the deal with security?'.

Sean M – Can the Museum building cross over with the General Maintenance plan?

7:35PM – Council on Aging

The COA's new Director, Marc Craig, has been with the department since September. Mr. Craig outlined how his main thrust has been to re-orient the facility to cater to the 18+ population that Human Services is applicable to even though mostly Seniors request assistance. He has started by instituting a newsletter to advertise all the services available while trying to dispel the myth of people not thinking they are a senior ... yet. They helped sponsor a Veterans breakfast with the Rotary Club which saw 50+ persons attend. There are currently 36 programs scheduled. His plans for 2019 include: Ride-sharing (teaching @ using Lyft/Uber), Portuguese influences in USA leading to tours. Younger 50s are not so interested in showing up at the COA building but are willing to go on these trips (which sell out). Looking to more cross-marketing. In 2018 there were 73 total programs offered; in 2019, they've already sponsored 70. He just loves to hear the complaint that the parking lot is full.

Human Services – there are 2 Social Workers who help with application filing, filling out forms and/or just talking. They research other resources and help compile the Emergency Management database to track people with the Fire/Police Departments. In 2018, the facility had 15989 visits including 1957 hours of Social Services for 536 clients. The COA recorded 1050 volunteer hours which saved the town \$22,500

The Department is requesting 9 hours for a Co-Ordinator (16hrs @ \$22K). The Senior Center model is no longer working today so they are looking to open on the weekend. This would require a part-time Program Director.

Bernard D – Your request of \$474,508 is down from 2019 and you’re looking to add 2 positions at \$47,7865.

M Craig – The original request was \$572K which was reduced to \$474K by Town Manager.

Stephanie M – Any thought to adding another part-time person so as to not add the full-time buy-in cost?

M Craig – I find that full-time employees buy into the job mentally better than a part-time worker.

Sean M then asked if he could provide the ‘all-in’ costs.

Brian G asked Mr. Craig to highlight the rebate program for promoting the trips.

M Craig – The COA gets 10% back on the paid trips for sponsoring them. For instance: the Iceland trip cost \$113K and the COA received a ‘commission check’ for \$13K. Going forward, the department can have a revolving fund for programs where fees are rolled back in.

Sean M voiced how impressed he was with the direction that this is going in and added ‘free has no value’.

Sharon W – Do you anticipate more, how do you get more involved?

M Craig – We have started publishing a 12-page glossy schedule (paid by adverts), added more Reporter articles and encouraged word of mouth. We’re working to ‘re-brand’ the ‘Senior’ Center as it seems to be a struggle to overcome the ego that older people don’t think of themselves as ‘Senior’.

8:00PM – Library

Manny Leite – We have requested for a new young-adult Librarian. Other towns have met this need and now that the Boyden has the space and after asking for 10 years, it’s time to add this position to our staff.

Tom McGee – We are keeping tight rein on our budget yet with passing class of students we miss opportunities to serve that population.

M Leite – 2018 saw 61,234 visitors; 845 meeting room users, 13,156 computer users and 5302 Reference questions. Foxborough has great support of its Library services. The Boyden has increased: children’s programs, artwork, circulation (+10%), streaming services/SAILS, and a constant room use.

The Young-Adult Librarian position would be geared towards Teens – not young children. We currently do not have young adult attractions or materials. Tom McGee added that overall programs have increased over the last year.

Bernard D – How much do we see of traffic from other towns?

M Leite – Sunday hours are important. So too, we were able to accommodate Wrentham patrons while their building was closed.

Larry O – Are there any new retirements? Would new employees give salary relief to pay for the new position?

T McGee – the difference towards the new position would be @ \$20K

M Johns – We typically see a \$10K savings as older workers leave. However, budget forecasts don't support this position for the next 2 years.

Sue D – If you could get a part-time person, that would be great.

M Leite – Part-timers are typically gone at the first chance for a full-time opportunity, so they don't work out.

Stephanie iterated that throughout this process, the ADCOMM has been zeroing in on 'all-in' costs.

M Johns – This position would be @ \$75K; the Library budget does not factor in benefits.

Stephanie M – This budget is increasing 6.9% in total.

T McGee – That figure is distorted in part by the 12.9% increase dedicated to the Department Co-Ordinator due to a contract not signed yet for 2019

M Johns – The average contractual increase across all departments is 3.8-4.1%. The negotiation of new 3-year contracts will not distort figures for next year.

M Leite – 2 employees did not get Steps for 2 years which adds to the distortion.

Bernard D – What is this item for 'electronic media'?

M Leite – The increase is due to adding a new database for the Children's section.

8:25PM – Veterans Agent

Mike Johns stepped in to explain the department has a new Agent: Ally Rodriguez (Army). The new Director will see a cut of @ \$10K in salary. Mr. Johns further indicated that he will be able to 'shadow' her as she becomes acclimated to the job. The biggest need is for Ch. 115 benefits for young Vets who are disabled or in need of work.

Seth F – Has volume declined?

M Johns – WW2 and Korean War Vets have been dying off. We've seen an increase in needs for Vietnam Vets who are retiring, are on fixed incomes and as they reach 60-70 are seeing a rise in health care needs and costs. The young soldiers coming home now have complex issues. Each generation bubble moves through the system and finds its needs increasing a decade or two later.

Brian G – The request 'actuals' are blank in the book.

M Johns – Medical expenses are typically rolled into the benefits line. Last year, transportation costs were up but not so far this year as the Department received a donation from the American Legion.

Bernard D – Military benefits for 2019 @ \$132K / 2020 @ \$182K?

M Johns – This has the most fluctuation in the budget since we can't predict ahead. Elderly Vets were predicted but young, single parents returning with kids spiked the budget expectations. There is no ask in the budget for supplies (the new TH accounts for that)

Brian G – How long does it take to get the 75% reimbursements from the state.

M Johns – Approximately 9 months. The town has received \$500K+ over the last 3 years. Through disability applications, more Vets are back to work and off the benefits.

Larry O – Are these State or Federal benefits?

M Johns – State; they include Money for housing, food, clothing, medical co-pays and insurance premiums. Recipients must qualify as financially in need.

Larry O – Do you assist in EBT and other benefits?

M Johns – Mass Health and other State assistance programs are worked on through a partnership with the COA. On a State basis, if you qualify for EBT, you don't qualify for the Veterans' benefits.

Stephanie M – So is it easier to go through the Veterans Agent than through the State programs?

M Johns – The benefits are not just money but support to re-connect with wrap-around services.

8:40PM – Liaison Reports

Central Maintenance - The Central Maintenance budget is located under the School Department and we went over their budget line-by-line. In the 'big picture' only Carl's budget is in the school system (with Stipends/OT for staff).

Seth F – Do we see opportunities on this page for cuts/savings?

Bernard D – They do a very good job but overwhelmed by electricity and telephone expenses. The budget is tight with little chance to adjust. This is where we need to see the solar audit.

Larry O – Heating oil enjoyed a benefit as the price declined.

Sue D – What about custodians?

M Johns – The new Town Hall has an outside vendor for those services – not part of General Maintenance budget.

Debt Service - Bernard D reported that under the Debt Service budget, the town owes on \$22M as of June 2019 with \$4.2M in interest bringing the total to \$26.2M. This will not include the Burrell School debt until FY2021.

Sean M – Can we find the ratio of total owed per Revenue taken in? 2021 will see Foxborough at \$40M+

Larry O – What is the town’s capacity to borrow?

OPEB - Bernard D said the regarding the OPEB responsibility: from the Norfolk County prospectus, the liability is \$1.5B with Foxborough’s share @ \$34.6M which is fluctuating due to changes in enrollment and when workers enter/leave; also, actuarials show people living longer into retirement years.

Sue D – There is \$4M in now that is being paid out.

Stephanie M – Remember how Randy suggested there may be a way to borrow the money at low interest from the state to pay off the OPEB liability?

Bernard D suggested comparing the liabilities from 2032 as originally predicted versus 2040 which is now the extended deadline.

Sue D – For comparison: Norfolk is 63% invested while Dedham is at 80%.

Sean M – The town should keep to the plan of utilizing the meals tax to fund the annual OPEB contribution.

Sue D - How much of the benefit obligation growth comes from new hires?

Sharon W – These partial budget numbers are deceptive.

Sue D - **** all costs were on the page, now with Centralized Maintenance there’s no knowledge of how expenditures are calculated. Are we all in agreement that expenses are inconsistent and unclear?

Stephanie M – Part of HRs duty is to negotiate contracts and none are on time – everything is retroactive.

Sean M – The vote for contracts is in June, only School budgets are on the high end.

Administration - Sharon W questioned the 133% increases in the Town Mgr Admin budget.

Sue D – We have to stop adding to the problem.

Sean M – The perception is that money is there, don’t worry about it.

Stephanie M – The process takes requests then backs into a budget.

Sue D – They figure how much they can raise then they spend it.

Sharon W – There’s a give-and-take in bonuses, only there’s never any take away.

Stephanie M – We pay \$200K for a Town Mgr; not many towns have an Asst Town Mgr. Can’t we just hire a HR Director? Mike Johns hasn’t the experience to do the Town Mgr job.

Sharon W – can we organize a meeting with the Board of Selectmen?

Sue D – At the end of the day, what is voted on at Town Meeting is the budget number we decide.

Workers Compensation - history is good, the town is self-insured and has good rates. The FD/PD are insured separately. Unemployment Compensation is likewise self-funded with no effects here.

Insurance – is running at a \$7.4M rate. What does an employee cost? How can we reduce beyond not hiring more full-time workers?

Sean M – The budget will stay the same, there is no expectation to hire any more down the road. The financial savings of replacing Randy will work into this year and we need to look for it in June. I asked Bill Keegan if it is part of the recharge and he said 'no'. There is a line item for contracts, like the schools. The 25-hour HR position will stay the same for FY2020 (most likely not taking the insurance). The CIP requests are due on 2/22. The Water Department is not doing their own payroll. – if and when they do get a clerk, then the Finance Dept will have to hire likewise. The Town Hall and Water are not talking about efficiencies. There is no request for a new police cruiser to go along with their request for new officers. It will likely go on the CIP for next year; it's not a recurring expense.

*** - Let the offer be for 6 cruiser and no officers.

Planning & Conservation - Sue D stated that as for the Planning Board budget, it is much the same though they are cutting \$10K. The Conservation Commission has little change as well.

Stephanie M – The Water Dept wants a laborer meanwhile, people are talking more about the proposition of monthly billing.

Brian G – If I'm not seeing an increased level of service there should be no more discussion on monthly billing.

10:20PM

Larry O – made the motion for Adjournment

Sharon W - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: 13 February 2019

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Signature of Chairperson

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing as a series of connected loops and strokes, positioned above a solid black horizontal line.

Signature of Vice Chairperson