

Foxborough Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 3rd 2019

In attendance:

Sean McCarthy, Bernard Dumont, Seth Ferguson, Larry Ooi, Sharon Weiskerger, Jennifer Frank-Bonnet, Stephanie M, Sue Dring

MINUTES

7:05PM - Meeting called to order by Sue Dring.

7:10PM – Regional Dispatch

Michael Johns explained the town's strategy in moving from its own public safety dispatch staff to a modern regional dispatch office covering 4 towns. Foxborough will be retaining its own crew through July 1st and Mr. Johns admitted it was hard to keep staff on the job when the job was going away. Additional costs for FY2019 were \$19K whereas \$22.5K for FY2020 – this included incentives to keep the local office staffed through the end of June 2019. People were leaving – they wanted \$10K and got \$2500.

Sue D – Are any of these staffers going to the Regional Dispatch?

M Johns – Not many have applied for those positions.

Stephanie M – How many staff did we have?

M Johns – 9

Steph M – What was the goal of combining 4 towns under one roof?

M Johns – The new regional positions were open to anyone, the most qualified. No personnel were 'reserved'.

Mr. Johns proceeded to explain that the Police contract would not be ready for the Spring Town Meeting. As for the Fire contract: the town's strategy was to insert language to eliminate paying both stipends and education; thusly, tuition reimbursement was taken out.

Sean M – Stipends are not that much. Which did we give up, education before or after?

M Johns – The town got Steps increased to 2.5 years and capped at 3 Steps (unless promoted). We negotiated from 9 Steps. 5yrs [2+2], 10yrs [2+2], 15yrs [1+2].

Sean M – MaryBeth was giving money to reduce Steps, now the town is adding more Steps? Did the collective bargaining get the Steps before or after ratification?

M Johns – It's a 3-year contract @ [2%] and lowers liability.

Stephanie M – I just want to confirm: the schedule for raises is: 2 / 2 / 2 / 2 / 4 / 2 / 2 / 2 / 2 / 4 [years 1 – 10]

Seth F – What is the top pay rate?

M Johns - \$69K. The bottom-line costs FY2019 (dispatch included) = \$531,670. FY2020 = \$153,889.

Stephanie M – So, when people get to the top Step, they only get the COLA going forward? The Chief and the Captains are not in collective bargaining, they're on the bargaining team; how are department heads getting the same rate?

M Johns – The Chief had personal negotiations.

Larry O – There is an open position for a Deputy Fire Chief, what is the amount budgeted? Is the town hoping to hire in at a lower rate?

M Johns – Yes.

Mr. Johns then moved on to explaining the strategy behind Library contract bargaining. The town was insistent on adding evaluations to the personnel reviews. They had been in use prior, the town wanted to bring them back as a developmental tool using job-customized questions. This will result in having leverage to retain the best talent. There are currently 13 employees covered with most being older and topped out on Steps. Contract settlements for FY2019 = \$29K; for FY2020 = \$47K. The town paid a one-time 'bonus' of \$500 each to gain the evaluation language.

Jennifer F-B – It cost \$500 to be on board with evaluations?

M Johns – it was the last item to close the contract.

Stephanie M – What is the evaluation tool?

M Johns – It is an online tool for self-evaluation which goes to HR and the Supervisor. This can be used by the Supervisor in determining whether to write up when grading performance. A Supervisor's comments can lead to other opportunities, though merit-based evaluations don't usually work in government jobs.

Sue D – Where do you come up with 4%?

M Johns – There used to be 6% Steps and they were automatically generated. The 2% schedule is easier to budget plan for.

Sue D – The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that the private sector is seeing only 2.3% increases.

Bernard D – The department gets a budget amount. All the changes meet the total. Government gives that power away in negotiation. We need more discussion about govt Steps, how this is done in other towns, and the Personnel Wage Board.

Seth F – Is the Chief's salary discretionary or contractual?

M Johns – It is discretionary, but with BOS approval and evaluation.

Sue D – So, how does that contract jive with the private sector?

Sue D - We need to see the contracts before we can vote on them.

M Johns - I will get you the contracts after the BOS votes on them on Tuesday.

8:30PM – Open Discussion and Voting on Warrant Articles

Sue Dring - started by recalling Article 26 to state that its purpose is to define 'smoke shops' and zoning.

Seth F - brought up the purpose for Article 14, reiterating that 'disability' be changed to 'accessible' and that fines be raised from \$200 to \$300. Larry O and Sean M would like to have more clarity in the wording and actual dollar amounts.

M Johns did not provide a reason for why Articles 12 & 13 were not done; he stated that they are stuck with what is printed and that the dollar amounts will have to be presented as motions at Town Meeting.

Sean M – mentioned that it is critical that the numbers match in the write-ups that will be published.

Bernard D – stated that his big issue is that \$50K is left from \$400K in Free Cash after \$100K goes to recharge and the rest earmarked for contractual increases.

Sean M – suggested that it could be for unpaid bills or legal fees – Article 12 should show a fixed amount. He is still waiting for the dollar amount for Article 13.

Seth F – We don't want to vote on a blank slate. It may be \$50K now, but then at Town meeting it becomes \$80K. We didn't approve that.

M Johns – suggested a phone conference with Bill K to settle this impasse.

Stephanie M – Stated she had spoken to Chris at the Water Dept and still has no dollar amount (the figure is still to be determined).

Stephanie M made the motion to accept **Article #9 (Revolving Funds)**

Sharon W - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

Bernard D – spoke to Article 12 saying the figure should be \$52,056.31 Add FY2020 contractual settlements of \$248K and \$100K going to CIP. As Mr. Johns iterated, he and Bill K are willing to clear up.

Bernard D made the motion to accept **Article #12 (Unpaid Bills)**

Stephanie M - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

Larry O presented discussion on Article 13 which covers the authorization for the total amount for the Burrell School project which was in error at the Special Town Meeting last fall. The difference is \$64K and passing this Article will save the funding approved from the State. It is merely a clerical correction.

Larry O made the motion to accept **Article #13 (Burrell Borrowing Authorization)**

Jennifer F-B - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

Stephanie M made the motion to accept **Article #23 (Water System Improvements)** as written:

Jennifer F-B - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

Stephanie M made the motion to accept **Article #18 (Miscellaneous Zoning)** as written:

Seth F - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

9:20PM – Operational Budget

Sue D began by stating "I'll tell you now, some of these items I want to Hold. We have to look at the big picture. I would like to keep the new positions at zero. I will hold those departments with new positions. Shout out if you want to hold any other departments". Sue then suggested going through the departmental line items and vote to approve all that were not 'Held'.

List of Held items here *****

Finance, Admin, Clerk, Health Insurance, Capital Outlay, Police, etc.

Sue D made the motion to accept Operational budget items not 'Held'.

Seth F - 2nd

Vote: 7 – 0 – 0

M Johns – The town is not doing 2% + 2% for non-union employees, except where covered by the PWB.

Sean M – What is the expected recharge for next year?

M Johns – The usual \$1M. Also, PWB contracts ARE 2% + 2%

Adcom discussed 4% salary increases year over year being too high. Questions were asked of Mike Johns of which positions were union and which were non-union. Stephanie and Sue mentioned that they requested a breakdown of the "salary and wage" line but were never given one. The Committee talked about what could be done about the 4% raises year over year, given that it was still unclear which positions were in a union, and given the Committee did not have an accurate accounting of salaries. Consensus was to let management know they would be responsible for raises and "steps" in contracts that Adcom thought was excessive.

Stephanie M – We can reduce the Finance department budget by \$48K. Lower by \$44K for the new position and eliminate the raise for the Director, who is no longer here.

Sean M – We must be aware of the dollar amounts we are going after; this committee can't come off as petty.

Larry O – Little amounts don't make a big impact.

Stephanie M made the motion to accept an adjusted Finance Department budget of \$1,032,006

Sean M - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

10:00PM – M Johns stated that he needed to leave for personal reasons, unless there was pressing need for him to remain. The committee stated that it didn't require his further attendance.

Committee talked about Stabilization Fund being underfunded, with only \$100,00 being added to the fund with \$79 million dollars being spent. Savings for a rainy day should be more of a priority. The savings from the Health Insurance which was only added to the budget the previous day should be saved and not spent.

Sue D made the motion to not put back the Capital Outlay amount of \$139,220

Sharon W - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

Sue D – Whatever savings we get goes to Free Cash; we can send that to the Stabilization Fund if the BOS re-writes the Article for the updated dollar amount. With regards to the ADMIN budget, we can cut salaries 2 ways: The Town Manager can cut to a ½% raise, which is peanuts, but makes a point.

Stephanie M – The salary line can be reduced by \$20K for the Asst Town Manager/HR position.

Sean M – I thought of \$20k myself. The amount of growth in payroll is very concerning. Bill Keegan admitted that he had overpaid positions; he has not followed his protocols for hiring.

Adcom discussed how new hires are brought in at equal or greater pay than those who are retiring. New hires with less experience should be brought in at less money as is often done in the private sector to keep spending in check. Discussion continued how private sector jobs are getting a 2% raise, with some members saying they don't even receive a 2% raise, while Town employees are receiving a 4% raise. Other local communities like Sharon, Norfolk or Plainville are not giving their employees 4% raises.

Sue D - Administration budget has increased the most, with a 58% increase in salaries.

Stephanie M made the motion to reduce the Administration budget by \$26,500.

Sue D - 2nd

Vote: 7 - 1 - 0

Sue D made the motion to leave the Town Clerk budget as is.

Bernard D - 2nd

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

Sue D – As for the Police budget, I'd like to remove the 3 new officers.

Stephanie M – So, the 3 cruisers are OK?

Sharon W – We need more than 3 cruisers out with the wide area and Stadium.

Sue D – You lose the message of reducing staffing if you allow those 3.

Larry o – The extra men means another cruiser at least

Sean M – As I discussed with Chief Baker, 2 years ago when moving the dog officer into the police station and asked about who will man the station when dispatch was gone, Bill Keegan said "We will figure it out" . Chief Baker today pointed out #1) there is an average of 2 people in cells per day. #2) the new dispatch office is not trained to handle local business lines.

Sue D – But we already have 3 more than we did 5 years ago ... and we're still paying out 17 hours a day in OT.

Seth F – I'd like to bring the OT increase down to zero.

Sean M – We can't not fund OT, it's mandated. The BOS lowered it by \$18K

Bernard D – The town's budget has some 'sacred cows'. Efficiency has to come from somewhere. ADCOMM has to present a consistent message – nothing partisan.

Seth F – I have asked for OT data with no response. The actual OT budget is for \$1.5M, this item is beyond that.

Sue D – We only need 16 people to run 21 shifts.

Sue D made the motion to cut the 3 new police officers budget item.

Stephanie M - 2nd

Vote: 2 – 6 – 0

Seth F made the motion to eliminate the additional police OT line item for \$50,238

Sue D - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

ThomF had to leave @ 10:30 due to call from home. Minutes continued by committee.

A long conversation began about the new position in the Fire Department. Many felt the new EMS position was a good idea. Sue D was concerned with pension and health care.

Sue D - We can't keep adding new positions. There is a vacant Deputy Chief position. We have only had two Deputies for a couple of years. We can have one Deputy and this new EMS management position.

Sean M. Fire chief agreed to start the replacement Dept Fire Chief at lowest salary and agreed to a \$12K reduction in the salary line. The Fire Dept demonstrated shortage of management compared to other towns.

Board debated the amount and do we need a second Deputy Chief.

Sue D - we can lower the salary amount. The Fire Chief should decide if he needs a Deputy or an EMS.

Sue D made the motion to reduce the Fire Salaries by \$116,468.

Stephanie M - 2nd

Vote: 3-2-3

Committee discussed the new position in the water department. Members felt that taxpayers did not want to go to monthly billing.

Sue D - The Water Dept. needs this information. I am all about clean water. We approved \$11 million in water improvements.

Members felt this information could be acquired without generating monthly water bills.

Stephanie M made a motion to reduce the Water Enterprise Salaries by \$44,500.

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 7-1-0.

Discussion on Health Insurance. 3 positions were eliminated - one in Finance, one in Water and one in Fire. This would be a reduction in Health Insurance of \$48,000.

Stephanie made a motion to lower the Health Insurance budget by \$48,000

Bernard D - 2nd

Vote : 6-1-1.

11:30PM

Seth F – made the motion for Adjournment

Jennifer F - 2nd

Vote: 8 – 0 – 0

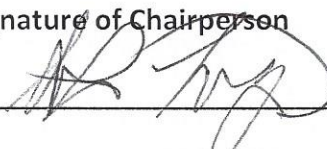
Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: 3 April 2019

Vote:



Signature of Chairperson



Signature of Vice Chairperson