

## **Foxborough Advisory Committee**

**Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

In attendance:

Bernard Dumont, Seth Ferguson, Thom Freeman, Jr., Jack Martin, Larry Ooi, Dennis Keefe, Paul Ivanovskis, Dan Peterson, Brian Guild, Sharon Weiskerger

### **MINUTES**

**7:02PM - Meeting called to order by Seth Ferguson**

**7:03PM - Warrant Article #11**

Animal Control Officer Kaycee Bailey was in attendance to address any concerns with this Warrant Article. The purpose of this 3-part Article is to bring town fines up to match those imposed by the State; to change the references of 'dog' to 'animal' nuisance; extend licensing by 2 additional months (from January 31<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>). Seth Ferguson mentioned how last year at Town Meeting, the town voted on an Article which defined 'kennels' while also taking out 10-foot leashes. Dangerousness hearings are being discussed by the BOS.

Dennis K – Have there been complaints issued \*\*\*\*

Kaycee B – The process seems to be working OK during the recent situation.

Thom F – Have there been any delays in rabies certification for licensing due to the pandemic?

Kaycee B – No, there are other avenues available to get rabies shots.

**7:14PM - Warrant Article #9**

Chris Gallagher appeared before the ADCOMM to break down the 4 items specified in the \$9.4M Warrant Article. Since the project is > \$1M, it is required to be pulled out of the CIP and given its own Warrant Article.

- 1) Abandoned Water Tank** – The Water Department is planning to replace the Hill Street Water Tank with a new 3 Million Gallon tank. The cost of the project is \$4.5M, which is less than what it would cost to rebuild the old tank.
- 2) New Water Main on West Street** – This project aims to replace the Main from South Street to the town line with Wrentham. Currently there is a 6" main that tends to break twice a year. The cost for this project is \$2.5M. The portion that will replace the West Street dam will be put off for a year due to delay in State funding. Construction is expected to start in the fall.
- 3) Route 1 Water Tank** – The 'Barracuda Tank' at Patriot Place provides potable water to Route 1. It is now 20 years old and has had no repairs. The project will cost \$2M and will be a full rehab with a 15-year maintenance contract and another full rehab after that period
- 4) Pumping Station** – The Pumping Station Road facility will be upgraded/modernized for offices and cars. The \$400K project will expand office space and modify for dry and cold conditions.

Seth reminded the committee of the considerations it made in early March; 1) the cost of borrowing money is very cheap right now, and 2) the costs of repairing over the next year may garner some discounts if we get the work now. There may be other cost savings later as well.

Jack M – I think we need to change the Warrant Article #9 where it states ‘Mill Street’ to ‘edge of town’. Also, are there any security concerns of putting all water tanks on the same property?

Chris G – We have no major concerns – our staff are on the site daily.

Jack M – Is the removal of the Main Street tank in the proposal?

Chris G – No, but it could be \$0 as a removal in exchange for the steel scrap.

Chris Gallagher stated that when they looked through the CIP, they checked to see that they fit in the rate structure – they did not want to raise the conservative budget more than the 10% reduction. They were also conscientious that the proposal met the requirement of lasting past the 20-year bonding. For the project.

Dan P – Do you have any photos of the Barracuda tank?

Chris G – We will get a full report, with pictures, of the tank’s condition.

George Samia – Regarding the cost of money – there are reports stating that this is the lowest rate for borrowing since the 1800s. The Fed has reduced rates further – but the town got it right on timing.

Jack M – In regard to the proposed dam replacement – is it a current hazard? How do you justify the delay?

Chris G – The department has been doing inspections every 6 months since the Conservation Commission got the State Inspection Report in 2008/9. We are still awaiting the funding for the repair. 12 more months means 2 more inspections. The downstream effects are mostly wooded areas, not many personal properties. The town is still meeting its safety requirements.

Dennis K – At Town Meeting, it could be asked what the cost of not doing these projects for a year would be versus the low cost of borrowing now.

#### **7:47PM - Public Safety - #210**

Seth made it a point to keep in mind the critical impact during the discussions about the pandemic. The conversations went back and forth about departmental overtime. Chief Grace indicated that he is budgeting for 1584 hours/yr. for officers. With that, overtime coverage is needed for sick time and vacation. To this point during the pandemic conditions, there has been only 3 sick days in 2 months. The force cannot cover OT every day, though a new hire would cost salary and benefits. Chief Grace said it is very hard to make any OT projections now. The budget target was to stay below 3.5%, the FY2021 proposal came in up 2.67%

Paul I – Has it been hard to get training?

Brian G – That was an amazing analysis of OT, \$23K less than expected.

Chief Grace – I can work with that when some money comes back; the State has pushed back some mandated training.

Thom F – Are there any expected new mandates to come out of failings during the pandemic response?

Chief Grace – we are recording every expense and response for potential reimbursement from FEMA.

Dan P – Might we see a bump up next year if new protocols are introduced?

Chief Grace – We are not looking for bodies; the State can't run the Academy. I could not hire an officer if I wanted to.

Dan P – What is the School Officer doing?

Chief Grace – Many Chiefs, Resource Officers are on patrol at the same hours.

Seth F – We appreciate the efficient presentation you put together; working with George on the spreadsheets made your note clear. Thank you for your service.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #210

Dennis K - 2nd

**Vote: 10 – 0 – 0**

#### **8:08PM - Fire Department - #220**

Chief Kelleher presented the Fire Dept budget to ADCOMM and made himself available to questions.

Brian G – What COVID-related issues have affected services?

Chief K – This situation is certainly on everyone's mind; the department implemented precautions early on and, as yet, no one has been affected yet. 911 calls have decreased for accidents ... not for car fires though. More of the emergency calls are serious ones. The staff is very engaged. The department is going to come in on budget. We never needed the industrial fogger for disinfectant; we are taking advantage of every FEMA/MEMA opportunity. The Public Health Nurse has been a great enhancement for access to knowledge, advisories, and State contacts.

Thom F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #220

Seth F - 2nd

**Vote: 10 – 0 – 0**

Thom F – How has Central Dispatch worked during this crisis?

Chief K – Robert Verdonne treated the early reports of COVID with a 9/11 type of pandemic response. He made our facility the 1<sup>st</sup> in the area to implement screening tools for infectious disease.

Chief G – Police had no idea what they were walking into; we established new protocols for prescreening and informing responders to be prepared when coming on to a scene. Improved communication at SEMREC – we had a 2.5 week lead on other communities. The new state-of-the-art building will come in on time and will be the crown jewel of 911 call centers.

**8:21PM - SEMREC - #230**

The SEMREC budget for FY 2021 originally was scheduled to be \$500K, was reduced to \$400K, and has now been reduced again to \$310K.

Thom F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #230

Larry O - 2nd

**Vote: 10 – 0 – 0**

**8:25PM - Public Safety Building - #235**

The budget has dropped from FY2020 @ \$110,640 to FY2021 @ \$79,375 due to duct work performed.

Dan P – Weren't there reports of cracks in the foundation?

Chief G – That item was pulled out of the CIP

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #235

Bernard D - 2nd

**Vote: 10 – 0 – 0**

**8:30PM - Inspections - #241**

The Inspections Department FY2021 budget shows a decrease of 2.58% from FY2020

Larry O – Since the Department is looking for a new Commissioner, will you be adjusting the salary line?

George S – Not now; it could come in lower depending on the candidate. We will not be eliminating the line because we DO need a Chief Inspector.

Seth F – I assume the rate will be commensurate with the level of experience?

George S – There are a lot of younger guys, it's hard to get the desired experience in the candidates. The town has already pulled in much of its inspections.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #241

Dennis K - 2nd

**Vote: 10 – 0 – 0**

**8:40PM - Committee Business**

Seth proceeded to discuss topics for next week. The Revenue budget: local receipts trends from George Samia. The FY2021 CIP budget amount of \$10.75M will need to be discussed as it appears too aggressive.

George S – I disagree. You are looking at components of a bigger picture. There is a multitude of items – the State is deferring less dollars than actual receipts for Free Cash (the unreserved fund balance is Free Cash). The town won't know what the real numbers are until the fall.

Seth F – Expect to have a conversation on lowering the CIP.

George S- The town will back-fill when actuality shows up. Foxborough will be in a position to maneuver.

By request, a letter from former ADCOMM Chair, Sue Dring, was read into the record.

Bill Keegan – Step increases will still be extended. Raises are not guaranteed after contract expiration. Nothing more than what is promised in the contract – no COLA until negotiated.

Dennis K – Do you have to accommodate steps?

Bill K – Yes, and the budget is still only up 1.9%

Paul I – I don't think this is something the ADCOMM can do; should be the BOS.

Dan P – Chris Gallagher stated that the rate increase was already voted on, which included the bonding.

Jack M – The School Committee is not being held accountable.

Seth F – It was addressed by the ADCOMM last week, without revisiting.

Jack M – We have not addressed looking back at school. Non-school departments have been lowered due to COVID by working with the Town Mgr.

Seth F – I disagree.

Thom F – The town expects our diligence. Extraordinary times require extraordinary means.

Sharon W – I feel we have been diligent.

Bill K – Jack, try to look at the whole picture. The cuts I recommended were sustainable. We still don't know going forward. Any more action may still need further adjustment in the fall.

Seth F – If all committees have been reviewed, I think we're done.

Bill K – More changes will occur after June due to the State's Aid to Cities and Towns.

Paul I – So there WILL BE a fall Town Meeting?

Bill K – Everyone is saying that numbers will change as the State comes back online. Cherry Sheets are expected to drop. If it is below current estimate, all towns are screwed.

Brian G – Has the quorum changed for Town Meeting?

Bill K – We already have it at a 100 minimum.

### **9:20PM - Adjournment**

Seth F – made the motion for Adjournment

Brian G - 2nd

**Vote: 10 – 0 – 0**

**Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.**

**Date of Meeting: 6 May 2020**

**Vote:**

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**Signature of Chairperson**

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**Signature of Vice Chairperson**