

Foxborough Advisory Committee

Wednesday, May 20th, 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

7:07PM - Meeting called to order by Seth Ferguson

The first order of business is for ADCOMM to discuss and approve Departmental budgets under General Government

7:08PM - Selectmen #122

The Selectmen budget is level funded for FY2020 to FY 2021 @ \$23,400.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #122

Dennis K - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:10PM - Town Manager #235

The budget has dropped by \$3K with the savings coming from an Administrator's Secretary new employment contract. There were no additions to staffing. Compensation went up 2.66% while total dept expenditures dropped from 3% to 2.77 from 2020 to 2021.

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Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #123

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:15PM - Town Audit #125

The Audit Department is level funded for the same \$40,500 as FY2020 to FY 2021. The town is in Year #2 of a 3-year contract.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #125

Thom F - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:18PM - Finance #130

The Finance budget is unchanged for the original that was up 2.78% from FY2020. There is a split in the Assessor and Accounting budgets. A new hire did not work out and was let go. Instead of a new full-time position, 2 part-time positions were created. According to Bill K, the position was dropped all together; there is savings through no benefits from the original position.

Seth F – Are they considered ‘essential’?

Bill K – No, they are back-up to current places. We are not going forward to fill right now.

Seth F – How long did they work?

George S – About 3 months. The position has been wanted for several years; a split seems to be amenable.

Dan P – 1 full-time into 2 part-time positions? \$48K to \$24K

Bill K - \$24K into each associated account.

Jack M – I thought we said no new positions.

Bill K – This position was authorized in 2020; we’re just converting it into 2 part-time positions and eliminating the benefits cost.

Jack M – ‘about 3 months’ is not what I consider regular employment.

Bill K – The only reason they are gone is that they didn’t work out and we had to let them go.

Larry o – Are you using any part-time help – I mean consultants?

George S – No, only a few times for help with cash.

Dennis K – If not a new position, a new replacement?

George S – roughly \$16/17K for the average benefits plan, depending on single vs family.

Seth F – I consider it a replacement (not filled). Bill is on the record that this is a non-essential position going forward.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #130

Dan P - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:30PM - ADCOMM #141

The ADCOMM is level funded for the same \$2,500 as FY2020 to FY 2021.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #141

Thom F - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:35PM - Reserve #142

The Reserve budget is level funded for the same \$75,000 as FY2020 to FY 2021.

Thom F – Should the \$75K be raised due to unforeseen expenses due to pandemic circumstances.

Bill K/George S – This fund is for ‘unexpected charges’.

It was stated that the Town Meeting can be opened with a special session to address same year situations.

Thom F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #142

Bernard D - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:40PM - Legal #151

The Legal Department budget has been raised from \$174K to \$180K which is within the guidelines of the current year trends per the last year for comparison. Expenses have been trending upward lately.

Seth F – So this is not salary, but billings?

Bill K – Yes, a contract/retainer.

Thom F – A retainer or a contract? Is it only 'billable hours'?

Bill k – The town retains 3 counsels: Municipal, Labor Special/HR

Bernard D – This line appears to have been level over the last few years.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #151

Bernard D - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:49PM - GIS #156

Bill K stated that all software accounts are now under the responsibility of the GIS Department. This way, other department budgets won't fluctuate each time a new upgrade is required.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #156

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:53PM - Town Clerk #161

The Town Clerk budget rose 3.01% over FY2020 to FY2021 with a reduction of \$3000 which was moved to another account. COLAs were removed for Steelworkers employees.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #125

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

7:55PM - Elections #162

The Elections Department budget is down \$7K for FY2020.

Thom F – Are there any new costs associated with moving the Town elections due to COVID?

Bill K – Just more Absentee Balloting. The Feds may help cover changes to the Fall election.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #162

Thom F - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

8:00PM - Conservation #171

The Conservation Commission budget is up 1.77% for FY2021 due to compensation.

Thom F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #171

Dennis K - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

8:05PM - Planning #175

The planning Department budget has not changed since its original proposal.

Thom F – What is the 5.22% increase due to the \$10K increase for an engineer?

Bill K – The engineering funding is seed money for acquiring grant money. The \$10K is a bump up to \$35K for \$25K in 2020, which was a reduction. These are consultants who assist in going outside to find other sources of income for projects.

Seth F – I do not want it to impact other funds.

Dan P – Why was the budget item increased \$15K in 2018 to 2019?

Bill K – Several large projects were scheduled at the same time, which can swing costs.

Dan P – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #175

Bernard D - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

8:15PM - Zoning Board of Appeals #176

The ZBA Department is level funded for FY2020 to FY 2021.

Thom F – What is the trend for the number of appeals applied for? Is there a fee associated?

Bill K – Not sure about that; but there are more variances being sought.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #176

Dan P - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

8:18PM - Maintenance Buildings #192

The Audit Department has increased 3.5% for FY2021. It was noted that the phone portion of the budget is for the phone bills for all town departments – not cell phone contracts. All landline, internet and maintenance fees were taken out of Municipal Buildings budget for Town budget.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #192

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

8:20PM - Debt #710

Jack M – George said he would bring new Burrell School numbers.

Bill K – The Debt Service Principal has dropped \$97K and Interest charges have reduced \$48K. Insurance has decreased by \$146K. The new total is \$3,713,923.36

Seth F – We would like to vote this as one debt service?

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #710

Bernard D - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Seth F – Can we vote on the County items?

George S – No, that figure come from the Cherry Sheets and the State has not passed those out yet.

8:25PM - SE Regional School #390

The SE Regional School District budget has risen \$200K. Bill K stated that the town is waiting for a renewed estimate – still waiting on a State estimate and funding requirements. The town is obligated to pay what the School says. It may still end up lower in the end.

Thom F – How did the vocational students finish the school year?

Bill K / Doc Elfman – They completed their curriculum virtually.

Thom F – Could those students from Foxborough come back to FHS should the curriculum or access change for the students in the fall.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept budget for Dept #390

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

8:30PM - Pensions #911

The Pension budget is increased by 7% for FY2021 (its usually a 10% rise). The next round will be in 2022; the assessment is not expected to change. The town reached out to the Director who doesn't think COVID will affect pension rates – there should be no significant revisions.

8:32PM - Unemployment #914

The Unemployment budget is level funded for FY2020 to FY 2021.

8:34PM - Insurance #915

The Insurance budget is level funded for FY2020 to FY 2021.

8:35PM - Risk Management #945

The Risk Management budget has increased by \$15K due to an unexpected rise in property insurance this year.

There is no OPEB contribution for FY2021, so Department #913 has no line item. The \$100K contribution to the Stabilization Fund has its own Warrant Article.

Seth F - there's little room for any additional squeeze.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept the budgets for Dept #911, #914, #915 and #945 as one vote for the total amount of \$15,122,059.00

Dennis K - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

8:40PM - Warrant Articles Discussions

Seth led the ADCOMM in discussion how to vote on the Warrant Articles. Articles 1,2&3 are rather boilerplate and will be taken together. Article #5 is the CIP budget and has already been voted on by ADCOMM. Article 4 stands at \$75,479,904.06, which includes the Stabilization funding.

Bernard D – What is the total value of Article #4?

\$83,953,924.12, including Water and Sewer.

Jack M – We should vote as a Committee on each component Article.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #6

Thom F - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Bernard D – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #4

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Warrant Article #7 - for funding unpaid bills. Larry O referred to the last adjustment produced by National Grid, for which the Town is obligated to pay, to which Bill K concurred.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #7

Larry O - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Warrant Article #8 - involves the Revolving Funds accounts, of which there are now 6. George explained that these funds allow the departments to pay out of pocket without having to come to Town Meeting to get approval every time they want to expense an activity. The State does allow for the town to set spending caps, beyond which Administration approval may be required.

Paul I - Where the \$60K to \$120K increase in the Council on Aging account came from.

Bill K - The activities and trips have been so successful, the COA was bumping up against its preset limit.

Paul I – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #8

Dan P - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Seth F – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #1

Dennis K - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Seth F – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #2

Dan P - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Thom F – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #3

Seth F - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Warrant Article #10 - would authorize the Town to swap land parcels. Jack M spoke to Paige Duncan to inquire as to who might oppose such a deal. The town took the land on Centennial Street for unpaid taxes. There were issues prior, but it is now a vacant lot. The deeds have passed through land court. There is a requirement that the presumptive developer would remove the house and pave/line the new parking lot, which will fulfill a need downtown with these additional 16 spaces. The town's point of view is that it is a win-win. There is no use for the land on Centennial Street. Foxborough Housing could have a duplex built as that fits within zoning. The Warrant would need to correct Centennial 'Drive' to Street.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #10

Dennis K - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Warrant Article #11 - updates 3 sections in the Chapter 78 regarding Animals in the Town Codes. These changes update 'dogs' to 'animals', set fines and extend licensing deadlines.

Sharon W – This Article is very straightforward; there is nothing here not to vote on. it contains much of what the ADCOMM voted on last year. The major item is opening the Code to 'animals' instead of just 'dogs'.

Jack M – Mr. Lawton spoke against the Article last year and it did not pass.

Dennis K – Wasn't it the issue of delegating authority in hearings?

Sharon W – That issue is not in this Article. It was taken out.

Bill K – Some on ADCOMM were upset of the bypassing the BOS to go straight to the Town manager.

Jack M – Wasn't there objection to the broadening to 'animal'.

Bill K – Bob Cutler sought to table the Article; I'm not sure if Mr. Lawton's concerns were taken into consideration.

Seth F – I didn't want to hold it up; if this change is without administration involvement, it seems to be OK.

Jack M - I would advise that we understand if the objections have been addressed.

Bill K – I will have the Animal Control Officer check with Mr. Lawton about any continuing objections and get back to this committee.

Seth F – made the motion to Accept Warrant Article #11

Thom F - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

9:30PM - Adjournment

Seth F – made the motion for Adjournment

Dan P - 2nd

Vote: 10 – 0 – 0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: 20 May 2020

Vote:

Signature of Chairperson

Signature of Vice Chairperson