

**Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Town of Foxborough**

**Wednesday October 6, 2021**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Members in Attendance: Sharon Weiskerger, Paul Ivanovskis, Jack Martin, Dan Peterson, Dennis Keefe, Marlowe Farrar, Raffaella Zizza-Feinstein, Salina Chowdhury**

**Members Absent: John Mahoney**

**Other Present: William Keegan, Michael Johns, Chief Michael Grace**

Meeting called to order at 7:03 P.M. by Chairman Ivanovskis.

**1. Discussion of Article 14 – Civil Service Legislative Petition**

Chief Grace discussed the process and benefits of taking the Town of Foxborough Police Department out of Civil Service. Civil Service has been in existence in Massachusetts since 1931. Civil Service is based on the merit system that protects hiring from patronage and political interference. Civil Service only has a probationary period when an individual is hired, and not when promoted. Civil service doesn't always rule on the process but rather the content due to policies and procedures that are implemented. For example, someone can have preference to be hired back even after being fired if they are in Civil Service.

The benefits of moving from Civil Service include, Foxborough PD to set minimum eligible guidelines for hiring, such as higher education levels. The Town of Foxborough can determine the hiring preferences they want to acknowledge that will benefit the Town. The Town can incorporate the community and department specific criteria into their promotional exams. The Foxborough Police Department would have the opportunity of a larger candidate pool to choose from which can diversify their workforce. The Police Department can recruit candidates from colleges to take their entrance exam and have the flexibility to hire lateral transfers from many more departments in Massachusetts.

The process of moving out of Civil Service is to talk to the Union, impact bargain (impact a change that will not go into future negotiations), assemble hiring and promotion policies, build and maintain trust, and inform everyone what they can gain and what they could lose. Chief Grace will attend Town Meeting where residents vote at the meeting on this change and next it moves to legislation, since current members will retain civil service rights. The existing Civil Service list will be maintained until it has expired.

A new system will be in place before we move forward. Chief Grace will have to build an exam for the Town of Foxborough and make it pass or fail versus numbered base. Create a screening team that will help screen preliminary Police Officers, create a new physical fitness exam, and follow the policy that is built. Promotions can be created how the Town of Foxborough prefers and decide what the passing score will be on exams, can make the decision on college degree requirements (2 years min and have a reasonable amount of time to meet this goal if need be).

There is currently limited education incentive for Police Officers hired after 2009 in the Town of Foxborough since the Quinn Bill was eliminated in 2009. The Town of Foxborough needs an educational incentive to keep Police Officers from going to other departments that have these incentives in place. Bill K mentioned that having the education incentive is important because we are less competitive without it.

Dan P stated that points for being a vet, having a degree, or having 25 years or more of service would still be reflected in hiring procedures. Dan talked to Sean Buckley and he agrees that the Town of Foxborough should go ahead with this change. The equivalent of the Quinn Bill is essential on getting people back onto the Foxborough Police Department.

## **2. Discussion of Article 11 – Fund Qualified OPEB Trust**

Bill Keegan provided a chart for fiscal year 2020, 2021, and 2022. Fiscal Year 2020 payments have been made on a quarterly basis. Fiscal year 2021 ended on June 30, 2021 - payment was delayed until we fully understood the impact of Covid and local receipts. Due to COVID, many events, hotel occupancy and eating out were impacted, therefore we were off about \$400,000. The meals tax flows into free cash that normally approaches \$900,000 or more. The first payment for FY21 would have been October 21, 2021. A Lump sum payment of \$1,064,069 for FY 21 will be made after the Town Meeting in November. No decision has been made for FY22 – watching to see if collections go up overall. Investments have grown and we are in better shape than last year, so we should be able to catch up by early next year. The plan would be to make another lump sum payment for FY 22 in either the spring or fall of 2022 to get caught up.

If it doesn't pass the fund will continue on, significantly funded in the right direction, and will stay in free cash. If we continue to pay on schedule then the liability costs decrease. Foxborough continues to be ahead of almost all other communities in the Commonwealth for paying down the OPEB liability

## **3. Discussion of Article 12– Southeast Regional School District**

Bill Keegan stated that since the dollar amount of \$38,954 is minimal compared to the overall Town budget, we use funds from Free Cash to pay this amount, and we leave ARPA money for larger expenses.

**4. Discussion of Article 17 – CIP Committee By-Law Clean Up**

Bill Keegan discussed the need to clean up the bylaw to reflect the practice followed for many years. Current bylaw states that a member of the Board of Water/Sewer Commissioners sit on the CIP Committee. This amendment requests that the by-law add the words "or their designee" after the words "one member of the Board of Water/Sewer Commissioners". This will allow for the DPW Director, who has been sitting on the CIP Committee for the past several years, to represent the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners.

**5. Discussion of prior meeting minutes**

We will approve at the next meeting as they are being edited currently.

**8:35 P.M. Paul I asked for motion to adjourn the meeting.** A motion was received and seconded. All members present approved/ 8-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Kasey Marks, Administrative Clerk to the Advisory Committee