

Foxborough Advisory Committee Virtual Meeting

Wednesday February 23, 2022

In Attendance: Dan Peterson, Sharon Weiskerger, Jack Martin, John Mahoney, Dennis Keefe, Marlowe Farrar, Raffaella Zizza-Feinstein, and Eric DeLisle. Bill K., Town Manager also present.

Minutes: Taken by Tony Colangelo

7 p.m. Dan P. – Today’s Meeting will be Public Safety focused.

Agenda Item #1. SEMREECC – Southeastern MA Regional Emergency Center – 911 District

Rob Verdone, Executive Director.

- Last year we did over 100,000 calls regarding Police/Fire/EMS and over 58,000 animal calls. Projected assessment was \$580,00 is now \$300,000 in FY’23, goal to be \$0. Grants can only be used for providing 911 centers. We are one of the largest centers in MA.
- **Dennis** – Do we have average response times and has closing of Norwood Hospital affected that? **Rob** - yes, we track that similar to Police and Fire Departments track response times. Closing of Norwood has made travel time a concern of ours.
- **Jack** - does it change response times if we add additional communities in our system? **Rob** - if it changes our response time it won’t be added.
- **Bill K.** - it has been an 8-year effort to get to this point – and Rob has done a great job. Very successful and less expensive than what was done prior by the town. Great Operation, well presented, thank you.

7:25 p.m. Agenda Item #2. Police Department - Michael Grace, Police Chief

- In Foxboro, the FPD partners with our schools, libraries, animal controls, and Patriot’s Place. We have a great partnership with our town. Our department will be accredited and certified, and only 98 of 319 cities and towns are accredited and 19 are certified.
- Budget Plan. We need a 3rd Lieutenant that can be responsible for taking care of Gillette Stadium and Patriot’s Place. Our budget is 89% salaries (11% of this is for overtime), 8% expenses and 3% capital for cruisers and cars. Overall budget increase is 2.28%.
- Presentation on staffing as it relates to the stadium and homeland security concerns. Relayed issues that result in OT with costs forwarded to the tax payers. Independent studies on staffing and operations have shown we shown we have too much workload on our department. Our staffing system is not designed to have a stadium
- In 1999, we had 30 police officers and 9,700 calls for service. In 2022, we had 26,500 calls for service, and our staffing is 39 police officers. In addition, for our town, we cover 2 full school districts and 9 hotels and motels for which we had 350 accidents reported.

- For future staffing we need a lieutenant for event planning at Patriot's Place and Gillette Stadium. 2 additional patrol officers to prevent forced overtime. A district sergeant to oversee and monitor all major cases. These positions are not in this year's budget.
- **Marlowe for Bill K.** - with this independent study for staffing needs for the police dept., is it within our strategic plan, have the Board of Directors discussed? **Bill K. comments,** - It is a big problem and it all comes out to available dollars. Need to look at how departments can help self-supplement by looking at various ways to raise funds. After listening to Chief Grace, a thought is, why are we not charging Gillette for these costs? We should look at the stadium because that is supposed to be a zero impact on the town.
- **Dennis** - Chief Grace, any positive impact on hiring full time positions since civil service is gone? **Chief Grace,** - we able to hire a full-time employee right away. Also, we can get references quickly compared to before.
- **Raffaella for Bill K.** – in the budget process does every dept. Have to follow the 2.5% budget increase? Can't we have one dept. come in at 2% and another by 3%? **Bill K.** – stated, we do ask the depts. to try and do this. Some come in with less and others may come in a little more. The increase cost of fuel is going to add budget pressure too.
- **John M** - Chief; do you track officers per call and how does that compare to other communities? **Chief Grace** – yes, national stat regarding population. But we unusual because of Gillette stadium. Also, some surrounding towns have no hotels, we have nine.
- **Jack, question;** - regarding distracted driving issues – are electronic signs and billboards contributing to this? **Chief Grace stated;** we are focused on controlling driving cars at the same time as technology/cell phones, but don't really know about electronic signs effect. **Bill K. – Comment** I have several concerns regarding the NFL & Gillette Stadium. We are not getting the proper revenue compared to the growth at Gillette over the last 20 years, we only got a fraction of what they made. We are not getting the proper amount of revenue to support our organization and our community.

7:55 p.m. – Agenda Item #3, Fire & Rescue Department and Public Safety Building Budget Review – Chief, Mike Kelleher

- COVID update: one of our focal points was vaccine distribution. Our ambulance run volume really went up after 2020 due to impact of Norwood Hospital closing. Gillette was really busy with construction projects and events. With the Town Managers goal, we focused on new business models, grants, gifts, new ideas, etc., to increase ambulance revenue. We continue on-going testing and vaccines at public & private healthcare sites. We also started to repair fire apparatus for other towns after we trained a worker for that. Working on the process of becoming accredited and hopefully will happen in the next 6-8 months by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International. Would be the 1st municipal department in MA. There are only 292 accredited agencies in the world.
- Staffing: in our current deployment model, we have 8-firefighters assigned to a shift – they work in 4 working groups – 24 hrs./day – 7 days/wk. Avg about 11 runs per day. We back fill with firefighters when someone is on leave. Sometimes it does affect operations.
- **Marlowe** - so you have 8 people as a team – what is the national standard? **Chief Kelleher** – the national standard calls for a fire apparatus to be staffed with 4 people. Respond to

any building fire in 8 mins. 12-18 min. per firefighter. We don't come close to meeting that with our staffing. We have the smallest population and 2nd highest run volume, lowest in staffing and we only have 1 station. Others have 3 – 4 stations.

- **Dennis** – Norwood was one of the busiest ERs and no longer there and Sturdy can't handle that volume. How much have you expanded what paramedics can do in the field and minutes in response time can save lives? **Chief Kelleher** – yes, Mansfield and Sharon have come in to help when your units are tied up; the distance to travel now affects all wait times and depending on what hospital they must go to take care of what's going on.
- **Jack**, about mutual aid with ambulances. A couple of years ago Mansfield wasn't balanced, but they added staff and fixed that. Are they about equal now? And 2nd question – you had a second-hand ambulance because the one you ordered wasn't ready yet? **Chief Kelleher** - we ordered 2 ambulances last July and we don't know when we will get them. Our staffing is what concerns me for emergency calls.
- **Chief Kelleher** - the budget has been a pretty lean year – 1.8% increase. \$40,000 of that was for the mechanic to do apparatus work. A \$10,000 addition for the Junteenth holiday and the rest was for some contracted items and some overtime lines.
- **Dan P.** – Please describe the Fire Stabilization Warrant article for members here for the 1st time. **Chief Kelleher** - Basically, using revenue coming in to fix equipment to maintain vehicles, rebuild & repairs, mostly revenue from Gillette. Overlay account will be used for would be used for parts, repairs, etc. **Bill K** - Accountants stated that it wasn't consistent with the rules of accounting so that's why we had to set up a new account.
- **Marlowe, for Bill K.** – regarding all comments for staffing needs, will it be looked at and planned for some upcoming year rather than looking at year to year? Look at the larger picture. **Bill K**; We have done that in the past and over the last 5 years we have added so it makes sense financially & strategically. The past couple of years, has been different.

8:40 p.m. - Agenda Item #4 Town Clerk/Elections Budget Review - Bob Cutler

- **Bob C.** - Our budget year to year has been more or less flat from year to year. Up 2.1% this year. The election budget in 2022 requires additional funding due to changes in election laws. Added \$5,000 for postage and overtime due to early voting in person and by mail for this fall. Salaries at the 2% level. Administrative expenses include 1 office equipment up by \$500 based on software needed and maintenance plans.
- **Jack** - have we seen any increase in turnout? **Bob** - not turnout due to by-mail voting, no.

8:55 p.m. – Agenda Item #5 – Voting on Prior Meeting Minutes, Dan P.

- Next item we have on the agenda is approval of meeting minutes for 2/2/22. Motion by Raffaella, second by Dennis. Unanimous approval.
- Finally, we have the meeting minutes for 2/9/22. Motion by Raffaella, second by Dennis. Motion passes 7-0-1 (Sharon abstaining).

9.00 p.m. - Meeting adjourned