

# Foxborough Advisory Committee Virtual Meeting

Wednesday February 9, 2022

**In Attendance:** Paul Ivanovskis, Jack Martin, John Mahoney, Dennis Keefe, Salina Chowdhury, Raffaella Zizza-Feinstein, Marlowe Farrar, John Mahoney, Eric DeLisle and Mike Brown. Also present; Bill Keegan, Town Manager & Mike Johns, Assistant Town Manager.

**Minutes:** Taken by Tony Colangelo

**7 p.m. Paul I. – 1. Health Services; Please welcome Matthew Brennan, Director of Public Health.** Matthew stated that the Health Department Operational Budget is now compressed into one budget and this year the budget will be \$283,819. A decrease of (1.5%).

1. We received a \$5,000 grant from the Hockomock YMCA. 2. We created a Covid-19 Dashboard for the town to show testing and vaccination rates. 3. We were awarded a \$200,000 grant for Health Excellence from the MA Department of Public Health which pays for additional inspectors shared by the towns of Foxborough, Easton, Mansfield, Norton, Plainville & Sharon. These are housing and food inspectors. **Dennis asked;** What is our positivity rate for the Covid virus? **Matthew;** responded, as of today our 14-day case count has been cut in half – and we think it will continue to go down. **Paul asked:** tell us what ARC is for? **Matthew;** responded, it is a program that helps support people with disabilities. **Raffaella;** asked what APHVCV stands for? **Matthew, answered;** Academic Public Health Volunteer Course Volunteers.

## **2. Human Services – Mark Craig, Director of Human Services**

I would like to introduce **Ally Rodriquez, Director of Veterans Services,** and **Renee Tocci, Recreation Divisions Director.** These 2 service divisions have recently been moved to become part of the Human Services Department which makes it all a more unified approach. We have provided vaccines and many programs to engage seniors. We have not had any COVID transmissions at the senior center. We have provided GEM monthly services.

**Ally R. -** We have great Veteran Services in Foxborough. We are able to provide MA Annuity for 100% Disabled Veterans. No other state does that. We have a lot of patriotic ceremonies and many other services and relief programs. We distributed \$195,752.58 for veterans Chapter -115 relief program in 2021. Since this is a state mandate, Foxborough will receive 75% of this from the MA Department of Veteran Services.

**Renee T. –** In the Foxborough Recreation Division, we have many programs for kids and their families. We have a new playground at the Booth.

**Mark C.** - Discussed the budget. FY'22 Alternative Funding comes mostly from Grants & Donations. This is in addition to our revolving funds, rather than our general funds. The Human Services General Budget was reviewed by line item. Salaries were down (2.21%) - \$15,258 and other expenses were up by 2.36% - \$37,500.

**Ally R.** – Highlighted budget expenses for special events. Memorial Day on the Common – cost of 5,000 flags for Common and graves every year.

**Renee T.** - Highlighted the Christmas Tree Lighting as one of the largest budget items. The Town Common lighting is \$25,000.

**Mark C.** – Comment; the Common is becoming an extremely active place. New restaurants and lots of activity. Overall, our town budget will go up 2.36% - \$962,762. We have a lot of goals for FY'23 for all 3 areas. Open for questions.

**Bill K. Comments** – I want to express special thanks to all 3 department managers for this combined new structure. They complement each other very well and work well together.

Regarding the Common Lighting. We have been looking at this as something needed for a number of years – but we needed to upgrade the lighting first, but were not able to fund for it on our budget side. We did get a grant to help us fund for this, and all our lighting is now LED lighting.

**Dennis asked,** - Mark, are you going to organize any trips for the senior center? **Mark answered;** yes, we will be doing once a month trips starting in March. We also have one large trip in June. For the larger trips we have started to go out to bid for them. Maybe another week-long trip in November and another one in the spring. We would like to look at international but we still need to be comfortable with them being safe. **Raffaella asked;** Renee, will the town pool re-open this year? **Renee stated;** it is our top priority and it is a huge asset to our summer programs for the town. **Bill K., commented; Raffaella,** we will probably need funding to fix the pool and being able to swim there because it has been a number of years since being open and it needs some upgrading especially maintaining a proper water temperature. **Mike J.-** Regarding Raffaella's question; we plan to have it open and I will be meeting with the Personnel Board to discuss wages. We are several years behind in wages, especially life guards – so we have to be able to staff if we plan to open the pool. **Paul asked;** Mark, can you talk about the community needs assessments that was highlighted in one of your slides. **Mark C.** stated, yes – one of the grants from MGH is a Mental Health Preparedness Grant. It is similar to what the Board of Health does for Community Health Assessments – what do people need?? We need data for that. **Marlowe;** a thank you to all the presenters for all the strong and great presentations!

**Paul;** Yes, a thank you to Mark, Ally, and Renee.

**Paul; - 3. - Library Presentation – Collin Earnst, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Kevin Penders, Vice Chairman, & Kathy Bell-Harney, Serving as Interim Director.**

Our budget is similar to last years budget except for one major change – The Young Adult Library. We have an outstanding library for children, but when they become teens, we don't have anything and we don't see them again until they have their own children. This Young Adult Library will serve teens well. The library was constructed with a dedicated space for young adults but was never used for that because we didn't have a librarian with that specialized skill. We made a number of trade-offs in this year's budget to bring in one of these specialists, part-time. Kevin will have more comments and info on the budget.

**Kevin P.** - Everyone on the board (6 members) felt this was a priority to add this position to our budget. Our budget is still at the 2.5% increase request from the town hall. Salaries will be up 25.3855 - \$46,794. Expenses down (6.25%) - \$15,000. Meetings and conferences down (50%) - \$2500. Overall budget up by 2.54% - \$29,294.

There was quite a bit of discussion between committee members, library and town officials about this part-time position. Various recommendations on hiring a good candidate, being able to keep them. This position will need quite a bit of attention but everyone agreed it is something that is needed.

**Paul I;** – Thank you all for your Library presentations.

**Paul I;** Asked for comments or questions on the last minutes. Motion to approve. **John M.** – made a motion to approve. **Raffaella** – seconded motion to approve. All voted yes to approve except, Sharon W. & Marlowe F. – abstained, because they were not present.

**Paul;** - General Discussion.

**Kevin P.** - 1 last reminder – regarding the library budget, the Board of Library Trustees has 3 masters to serve; 1. Budget. 2.The Building. 3. The Town. MA Board of Library Commissioners requires us to grow our budget at least 2.5% every year on a statute basis and if we do not and if we do not we run the risk of being decertified by the state which comes with a host of penalties.

**Bill K. – Comments. Town Warrant.** 8 articles may have to be reviewed again and we have an additional 16 articles submitted. We are working with the state to find out if we have to review the zoning articles again and resubmit. We have 3 articles we by petition; 1. Sewer Easement. 2. We are looking to improve sidewalks we have. 3. Residential Zoning Changes. We are also looking at the new MBTA community guidelines. The requirement is for multi-family density of 15-units per acre. We now have an 8-units per acre over recently done over on Rt.140 development. We may not be eligible for certain grant opportunities if we don't meet the requirements. Timeline to accomplish this is only a few years. Other towns around us are also expressing concern.

**9:25 p.m. Paul I.** – Asked if there were any questions. Otherwise, a motion to adjourn. Eric made a motion to adjourn and Mick seconded the motion. All present voted yes to adjourn.