

**Advisory Committee Meeting**

**Town of Foxborough**

**Wednesday April 7, 2021**

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TOWN CLERK

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FOXBOROUGH, MA 02035

**In Attendance: Larry Ooi, Paul Ivanovskis, Thom Freeman, Jack Martin, Dan Peterson, Bradley Palter, John Mahoney, Dennis Keefe, and Bernard Dumont.**

**Minutes:** Taken by Tony Colangelo

**7 p.m. Larry O.**

**Larry requested approval of the minutes for April 1, 2021. A motion was made to accept the minutes, and it was seconded. Paul I., Thom F., Jack M., Dan P., Brad P. John M., and Larry O. voted yes to accept. 7-0-2. Bernard D and Dennis K abstained.**

**Larry O. – Welcome Sue Dring**

Sue Dring, a town resident addressed AdCom to provide support for Article #26

**7:07 p.m. Larry O. – Discuss and Vote -- Town Warrant Articles**

**Larry O.** presented Article #9, #10, & #11 on behalf of Brian G.

**Article #9** – Steel Workers Unit A for FY '21, \$35,000 to cover COLA. Motion to approve, seconded and approved, 9-0-0.

**Article #10** – Steel Workers Unit B for FY '21, \$39,000 to cover COLA. Motion to approve, seconded and approved 9-0-0.

**Article #11** – Police Contract for FY '21, \$70,000 to cover COLA. Motion to approve, seconded and approved 9-0-0.

**Dennis K. Article #12** – Steel Workers Unit A for FY '22. \$37,000 for COLA increase. Motion to approve, seconded and approved 9-0-0.

**Article #13** – Steel Workers Unit B for FY '22. \$41,000 for COLA increase. Motion to approve, seconded and approved, 9-0-0.

**Article #14** – Police Contract for FY '22. \$73,000 for COLA increase. Motion to approve, seconded, and approved 9-0-0.

**John M. Article # 16** – Library Contract for 1 year. \$24,000. Motion to approve, seconded and approved, 9-0-0.

**Article #15** – DPW Contract includes 2% COLA, some overtime and on-call weekends.

**Dan P. Article #5** – CIP Budget. This to provide funding as follows; \$623,656 from Chapter 90, \$235,000 from ambulance receipts, and \$632,000 from free cash. Recommended approval, seconded and approved, 9-0-0.

**Paul I.** presented article # 17 and #18 on behalf of Sharon W.

**Article #17** -- Contract with AT&T to be able to rent space on the tower behind our fire station so they can have extra capacity for their connections. Foxboro will receive \$3,000 rent per month for them to have this access. Because this tower is on town property this has to be approved at the Town Meeting for final approval. Motion to approve, seconded and approved 8-0-0.

**Article #18** – Some discussion about the Indigo Plants off of Oak St. and the ownership is being moved over to Conservation. We will be the only town that owns its own Butterfly Habitat. Motion to approve, seconded and voted yes, 9-0-0.

**Dennis K. Article #20** – Goal to become a Green Community. 288 cities and towns in the Commonwealth are already so designated. Significant grant funds can be accessed with this designation. Adopting the stretch Code at Town Meeting is one of the 5 criteria. The Town must adopt and meet the 5-criteria so that we meet the Stretch Code. Chris G. stated, in order to develop our goals, we have a 3<sup>rd</sup> party doing an audit of energy use in our Town Buildings which are our largest buildings. MAPC will do a baseline energy use from 2020 and our reduction plan will be put together with that info. Question was asked, when will we get that designation? After our plan is in place, we think this summer, we can apply for the Green Community designation and begin to receive Grants based on that. Everyone seems to be moving in this direction even if they are not applying for the Stretch Code.

Larry O. comment, we don't want the Town to spend more money just to meet the goal, do we? Bill K. answered, mine and Chris G. experience from other communities we worked in, that adopted this over 10 years ago, is that it doesn't really impact it negatively. Works really well.

Motion to approve and seconded. Vote was 6-2-1 to approve.

**Dan P. Article #26** – CIP Committee. To restructure the CIP Committee from current arrangement to a different membership and a 3-year term and a 3-term limit. There will be 5 appointed voting members not employed by the Town. 2 appointed by the Town Moderator, 1 appointed by the school committee, 1 appointed by the sewer and water commissioners and 1 by the Board of Selectmen. Currently the CIP Committee members are: Town Manager, Director of Public Works, Advisory Committee Chairman, School Superintendent, and Board of Selectman Chairman" There was questions and discussion around this. Are we taking authority away from Town Managers – do we not trust them?? The reason or need for this? What is the history? How much have we wasted over the past 5 years – what are we going to save?

Dennis K. – Initial Reaction is that this is a solution looking for a problem. Believe this dilutes the authority of the advisory committee and disables town top management to from managing the departmental requests as they see them.

Thom F. - There were concerns in prior years that the CIP committee was not judicious enough in its handling of the CIP budget - that everything that was proposed was put through, especially when there was enough money to fund all the requests. There have been worries for a long time that there were not enough eyes from the taxpayers on the process.

Dan P. – Group that is behind this petition believes that there is a lack of transparency and that AdCom rubber stamped what was brought back to them by the CIP committee.

Brad P. – What is the specific concern?

Dan P. – Two specifics were the school buses and instruments. The thought being that if we had been more judicious and conservative in our spending in prior years then we would have the \$ for them now instead of kicking them down the road. Also, are there any alternative options that could be explored based on mileage etc.

Jack M. – What is the motivation for bringing this forward? Senses a distrust in the management of the town and disagrees with that.

Bernard – Something of this nature should be supported by data, none has been presented. Have we wasted a dollar more by using the current management? Can we quantify what we would be saving? Pandemic is further enhancing the issue.

Bill K. – Comment-- What issues are we trying to change? This is the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> plan I have submitted for the Town. It goes to the Board of Selectmen, the AdCom., the Town Meeting, and the Budget Plan. The CIP budget plan, goes from the Committee, to Town Mgr., the Board of Selectman, AdCom. and Town Meeting. Decisions are not made by 1 individual. We have checks and balances in place already and have not heard of any concerns.

Dan P. - Comment -- Lots of good points in the article and in our discussion. Maybe not a good year to present this article. Not a lot of data to back that up. Committee has been pretty conservative in the past few years. Thinks the group behind the petition want a more open and transparent process. Committees will likely nominate their own members anyways. So the makeup of the CIP committee will likely be close to what it is now. The only real change is the loss of the Town Manager off the board. Maybe better for the future. Need to consider whether or not to have the change made before there is a new town manager or allow the town manager to have input on how it is set up. It probably will eventually come. Likely around the time we hit the \$100 Million mark for a budget.

Paul I. – Thinks this change will occur eventually. Researched CIP committees online – nothing that looks like what we use, but also not many that look like the new version either. Should look at those models prior to making a change in the future.

Bill K. – Comment – I'm not opposed to change, just don't think this was a good way to do it. If you want resident's input, just add 2 to the committee and leave the rest alone? It is important to keep the people currently sitting on the CIP budget committee on there to be able to weigh in. This is the third time we have been rated as a AAA community, so we must be doing something right.

Thom F. -- Comment – I have been on ADCOMM for over 10 years, and from my experience, even before Bill Keegan became Town Mgr., we have had some inconsistencies. After Bill K. leaves, in the near future, we may need to look to change our CIP format to address these issues going forward.

John M. – Seeks clarification. How would we replace members? If you replace the DPW director, you don't have a great advocate for the roads. No article can go in front of town meeting without being voted on by new CIP committee. Response to John M. was that language is directly copied out of what we currently have written in the bylaws and it would not benefit the CIP committee to impede a proposed CIP budget.

Bill K. – Reason this works now is that the CIP Committee has to submit the plan to the selectmen, if the committee did not want to put forth a proposed budget, the Town Manager would still submit a plan to the Selectmen for approval.

Larry O. – The system will essentially be the same. Only difference is that the Town Manager is a non-voting member and is replaced by a town voter.

Dennis K. – Sees flaws but doesn't think this sweeping change is the answer.

Larry O. – Comment – Thank you all. Both sides have merits. While the current system works, it is not perfect and could be enhanced. Tonight, the Advisory Committee will have to decide to support the Article or not. Will it work, or not, or be improved?

Bill K. – Wants to reiterate that he is not opposed to changing the system for the better but does not think this is the proper solution. If he was approached earlier and a conversation needed to be had, a solution could have been found that would have benefitted all parties.

Bernard – Explained the data issue, after listening to conversations, would like to offer the following. We all see now how companies are being reorganized and shareholders on the board are dictating what is happening in company's CIP budgets. Need to let all shareholders see where the money is being spent and why. Perhaps it would be good for the town to try and see if the new process works because we can always revert to what we have had prior. If we stay status quo and don't do anything, two to three years from now citizens will come to us and ask why nothing was done.

Request motion to vote. Dan P. makes motion, Larry O. seconded. 4 members voted for approve of the article as written, and 5 members voted against. Article#26 was not approved.

#### **8:45 p.m. - Larry O. Discussion/Vote – Department Budgets**

Larry O. asked members if they were comfortable with General Fund Revenue, General Fund Expenses and Other Expenses Summary page of the budget and if anyone was interested in recommending any changes? There were none, and the Committee then started to vote on all of the department budgets.

There were 40 department budgets that were individually presented by the respective AdCom liaisons. The department total budgets were voted on separately and all were approved unanimously 9-0-0.

**9:47 p.m. Larry O. – Asked for motion to adjourn meeting. Motion received and seconded. Members approved 9-0-0,**

*Larry Ooi*