

Advisory Committee Meeting

Town of Foxborough

Wednesday February 10, 2021

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TOWN CLERK

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FOXBOROUGH, MA 02035

In Attendance: Larry Ooi, Bernard Dumont, John Mahoney, Daniel Peterson, Brad Palter, Paul Ivanovskis, Thom Freeman, Jack Martin, Dennis Keefe, Sharon Weiskerger, Brian Guild.

Minutes: Taken by Tony Colangelo

7 p.m. Meeting called to order by Bernard D. for Larry O. who would be a few minutes late.

Bernard requested approval of the minutes for 2/3/2021; Dennis K. made a motion to accept the minutes. 9 people voted to accept the minutes and 2 abstained (Brian and Sharon).

7:05 p.m. Larry O. – Welcomed the Board of Health Agencies Director Matthew Brennan

Matthew stated he has been in this new job for 3 weeks. The current budget was done by previous director Chief Michael Kelleher who was also present for the meeting. The goal of this department is to prevent disease and protect public health of our citizens. Since 2020 the most important role has been focused on protecting from dangerous disease, ie. COVID-19. They continue to be responsible to inspect and permit local residences and businesses in town. 719 permits were issued in 2020 and that did not include Gillette Stadium. They also have the authority to track, isolate and quarantine infected individuals.

In FY 21 they have 3.5 full time employees. Total budget is \$259,096 in salary and 12,350 for expenses. Most expenses are due to educational opportunities, tuition costs, consultant services, meetings and conferences. Budget for FY '22 is not much different than FY'21, a 0.86% increase.

In addition, the Health Department, has an account #520 for Lifeworks for which they requested a level of funding of \$9,753.96. This is to support people with disabilities and autism. This is added to the Health Departments budget.

Questions: Jack M. Foxboro has moved from one leader to another. Matthew, as the new leader – what do you see? Matthew stated that Foxboro is in a great position and has great people. Things are very similar to what I am used to in other towns. I do not see or have any red flags. Jack M. comment- no red flags but do we do anything better than what we did

before? Michael K. answer: Maybe in time he may have other comments, but right now, after only 3 weeks, their needs to be a focus on getting the job done.

Eric (Board of Health) Comment: We are now we in a pandemic environment and we could use more help, more inspectors, and improved electronics.

Question: Larry O. Budget clarification – one of your inspectors is going to submit tuition reimbursement for certification - \$2,671, is that correct? M. Brennan; yes that is the tuition amount and there are no other tuition expenses in the budget.

Question: Dennis K. Regarding YTD budget sheet- It shows \$700 for department supplies and we have already spent \$5000. M. Brennan, that is mostly for improved software. M. Kelleher comment: the town received funding from the Federal Government for the Cares Act to help modernize the way we do business and provide alternative contact tracing in this pandemic environment.

Question: Brian G. Is there a difference in inspections between Weymouth and here? M. Brennan - no, we have pretty much the same contact tracing.

Question: Larry O. Budget item animal inspection is \$1,100. Is that for animal control? M. Brennan, yes. Larry, also, cost for conferences in FY21 vs FY22 are about the same. M. Brennan, yes, even though they are mostly virtual now we still have to pay the fees.

7:25 p.m. Larry O. – Welcome, Council on Aging & Human Services Director – Marc Craig, Eric Arvedon, Board of Health

Marc provided overview of 2020 for Foxborough Senior Center, both highlights and lowlights. Our average monthly check was February, the month before we closed, March 13th. We stayed closed for 4 months and then were one of the few senior centers to reopen and still be open. While we were closed we provided 2,400 rolls of toilet paper, 3,675 lbs. of fruits and vegetables, pies, and provided 4,200 wellness check-in phone calls. In 14 weeks we got 134 new Human Services Clients that needed help, ranging in age from 18-59 years. We also provided a lot of virtual programs which the Kraft Organization helped us out; such as, at home Bingo, Yoga, exercise classes.

When reopened we made a lot of changes in our building even though seniors don't like change. We had to use a lot of plastic in rooms and furniture rearranged and some removed. We also put-up tents outside and to do our programs there rather than in the building. We have also started doing some activities or presentations in the community. Our historic presentation was done on the town common. Seniors gave opinions that they prefer to do things out in the community rather than back in the building.

Question: Larry O. Where are we with a potential new senior center? Marc C; Town approved for a study to be done, we got a \$40,000 grant to pay for a study for a possible new

Senior/Intergenerational Community Center. A company was hired to provide a design but the company has been closed and is now ready to reopen. We sent a survey out to the community and 700 people responded to what they would like to see. We are waiting to see what the study we asked for says.

Question: Dan P. Do we get any grant fund to help fund the drivers? Marc C.; Yes, the Formula Grant they use is \$8 per senior.

Question: Thom F. For these new projects when does the money come from, grants or donations? Marc C.; A few communities have been able to get Community Development Block Grants, which could be good from a construction standpoint but can also provide concerns for departments. Private donations are very helpful.

Question: Brain G. Do we get our vaccine injections from Gillette Stadium? Marc C.; We went together with our Fire Department to the state level to get approval to get them sent directly to us. Other senior centers are not doing this. We are providing the vaccine at the senior center and we are also going to their home to provide it if we need to. Also, we do help our members register at Gillette when needed. Foxboro seems to be doing better than most towns.

Question: Brad P. Can we get them the second shot? Marc C; we can't guarantee that we can get it but we can help them schedule with Gillette for the 2nd dose.

Larry O. Thank you, Marc and please send your presentation to me for future reference.

7:50 p.m. Larry O. – Welcome, Historical Commission Chairman Mark Ferencik

We maintain historical assets for the town, which includes the Town Museum, Memorial Hall, cemetery preservation. We do not have a very large budget. We have been closed since last February and missed the last Founders Day and Memorial Day which are our largest visitors day.

Question: Jack M. 2 years ago you were approved to re-do grave markers, any update on that. Mark F.; Yes we have 6 cemeteries with a total of 462 grave sites. We received a \$25,000 grant to restore grave markers and last year we restored 42 grave sites. We still have 118 grave sites that are in bad condition and need to be restored. We want to look at getting that in our CIP for the future.

Question: Thom F. Do you have anything else on your list for budget for the next year or 2. Mark F.; We want to redo some in Memorial Hall especially it's HVAC system which is 21 years old. That may be more of a CIP item because of the expense. We don't have anything else at the moment.

Question: Dennis K. Most of your expenses seem to be in the equipment category not supplies? Mark F.; Under circumstances this year supplies are not are highest needs. Most of

are expenses have gone to produce digital data base videos of the Foxboro Reporter. Advantage Preservation does that for us.

8:00 p.m. Bernard D. – Welcome, Library Director Manny Leite, Collin Earnst and Kevin Penders, Trustees of Boyden Library

Larry O. Will recuse himself from this discussion because of family involvement with the friends of Boyden Library.

Manny L. stated that Boyden Library reopened in late July and is one of the only ones still open to be used. They have set a capacity of visitors, use shields, hand sanitizers and have kept everything safe. This year's budget will be negative 3.08% mostly due to salary decreases. An employee there for over 31 years retired and replaced by new employee at much lower salary. Total operating expenses for coming year will be down 6.25% mostly due to salaries and benefits. A few operating expenses will go a little. These include custodial services and supplies, cleaning services and supplies because of the pandemic. We will also see increases in office supplies especially copiers' We will not ask for a new position this year but probably will for next year in order to provide youth services for teens, etc.

Question: Thom F. We seem to be ahead of the curve from others regarding this new position for young adults – teens. Manny & Collin E; Other communities will be searching for one too. Young Adults position is an unmet need.

Question: Jack M. As the library has evolved over years - a shift to electronic capabilities what are the plans for that in the future. Manny L; We have seen a surge in this when we closed the door. The Library has purchased streaming services that we can provide. We have seen a huge increase in Foxboro of these streaming services and e-books being borrowed.

Question: Dennis K. Your budget for Network Information is \$42,000 and through end of January you have already spent \$38,000. Will you have enough? Manny L.; Yes we will have enough.

Question: Larry O. Noticed that your cleaning supplies are going up in this environment, do you buy your own cleaning supplies. Manny L.; yes we do. Larry O.- I guess my question is if other departments in town combine their buying power for these cleaning supplies – could we get better pricing. I guess it's a question should we have one central buyer?

Sharon W. – Comment: Paul I. and I had a good meeting with Manny. He was very informative and they are going in a good direction.

Larry O. I also want to thank Kevin P and Collin E for joining us in this meeting.

8:25 p.m. Larry O. – Welcome Veterans Director Ally Rodriguez

We have not been doing very much because of the pandemic situation. Budget wise we are doing well. We will not be looking for a budget increase for next year. Our salary budget will decrease a bit our department assistant left and we have replaced with a new assistant.

Jack M. - Comment; We had a great conversation and she seems to be doing a very effective job.

Question: Dan P. Have we seen an increase of veterans coming to ask for more than before?

Ally R. – Yes we are seeing an increase coming to request help, but only 2 have been accepted. The others had too high of an income or too much savings in their accounts. Also, we had a veteran come in and donate 3 containers, each with 100 gallons of oil to provide for veterans in need. Foxborough is a great town.

Dennis K. – Comment; Really enjoyed meeting with you and really enjoy what you are doing for our veterans

Michael Johns, Assistant Town Manager – Comment; Ally is doing terrific job and we are very proud of her.

Larry O. – Ally, thank you very much for coming.

8:30 p.m. Larry O. – Welcome Recreation Director Deb Giardino

Renee Tocci assistant Director and Heather Harding, Board of Recreation also joined the meeting.

Deb G. stated that the Recreation Dept. has been impacted in a very negative way by Covid. They have decreased their staff by 1.5 FTE's. Their salaries are paid by Revolving Funds and that has taken a big hit because of less activity. We could not offer our traditional programs such as summer camp which was our biggest income producer. We are rebuilding and now working on spring programs, children programs and will start on adult programs, but they are all being done outside, not inside as usual, because schools are not open. We will try to run full summer programs and try to figure out alternative financing for these programs.

Question: Dan P. Renee are you splitting time in the Town Office? Renee: Yes I work 20 hrs. a week in Town Accounting Dept. and 20 hrs. in Recreation Dept.

Michael J. – Comment: Last spring we discussed Recreation Dept. staffing and decreasing Revolving Funds. We also talked about the need for a half time position in our accounting dept. and Renee had good skills in this area.

Larry O. - Thank you all for coming in.

Larry O. – Would like to continue our meeting with some house-keeping discussions.

Next week the town will close it's Warrant Articles for the Annual Meeting. We will have about 18 articles to review and our goal is to review about 6 articles in each of our next 3-4 meeting.

Next Tuesday at the Board of Selectmen Meeting they will be present the Warrant Articles.

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At our meeting next week we will have 7 different department heads.

Question: Dan P. – Recreation Dept. had to lay off a person. Anybody hear of any other departments laying people off?

Michael Jones; - We remain a consistent and predictable organization. Hire people from within and from the bottom of the salary range when we can. We do not want to lay people off and we try to keep budgeting stable. Now we expect people to keep a succession binder so everyone knows what they are doing.

Jack M. – Comment: Last year department managers were asking for new hires. Instead of layoffs we did not entertain additional hires to take care of decrease needs.

Dan P. – Comment: The 1st layoff I have heard of is the recreation department.

Brad P. – Question: Departmental budgets have not been talked about much in the past few week's presentation. Also, not questioned much.

Dan P. – Comment: A lot of them are union contracts and non-negotiable.

Brad P. – Town Manager allows a 2 ½% budget increase. Based on what?

Michael J. – Comment: Guidance comes from Board of Selectmen - after options have been presented to them – they take a vote.

Bernard D. – Comment: Over 80% of budget probably not touchable.

9:23 p.m. Larry O. – Asked for motion to adjourn. Brad P made motion to adjourn the meeting. Larry O., Bernard D., Sharon W., Jack M., Dennis K., Dan P., Brian G., Thom F., John M., and Brad P. all stated aye they were in favor and it was voted to approve 10-0-0. Paul Ivanovskis left the meeting shortly before the house keeping discussion and did not vote.

Larry Ooi