

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
DATE 12/18/2013

**Committee Members Present:** Lawrence Thomas, Kevin Powers, Larry Stern, Tracey Metivier, Susan Dring, Heidi Krockta, Thom Freeman, Chris Calnan (Cal), Patrick Mosesso

**Members Absent:** Jeffrey Anderson, Paul DeFazio

**Others Present:** Ginny Coppola, Frank Spillane, Lorraine Brue

Notes taken by: Kristin Meehan Papianou

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00PM by Tracey Metivier, Vice-Chairman. Tracey advised that Paul DeFazio should be back by the end of January. She noted that Michael Haney has resigned from Ad Comm. New members introduced themselves: Chris Calnan and Patrick Mosesso. Tonight Randy is going to go over the Town Finance plan and budgets as an introduction for new members and refresher for the Ad Comm.

The next meeting will be January 8 and throughout January we will be meeting in the McGinty room, but there will be no meeting on January 22. Randy Scollins handed out the budget books.

**7:07PM Motion** to accept the minutes from the 10/9/13 meeting as written brought by Larry Thomas. Seconded by Sue Dring.

VOTE: 7-0-2 (Cal and Patrick abstaining)

**7:08PM Motion** to accept the minutes from the 11/25/13 meeting by Heidi Krockta. Seconded by Larry Thomas.

VOTE: 8-0-1 (Patrick abstaining)

**7:10PM** Larry Stern asked to speak to the Ad Comm process. He noted that Ad Comm has, in the past, sometimes gotten too into the individual budget details. He is proposing that if the budgets are within a certain percent of last year, then the liaisons can go through the budgets in detail with the Department Heads and then present to the Ad Comm without having the full Ad Comm go through every line.

Randy Scollins said that when he was on the Ad Comm the liaisons were expected to meet with the department heads in advance and then open up the discussion before the Ad Comm when the Department Head comes in to present. The liaison can then let the Ad Comm know what, if any, parts of the budget s/he thinks merits additional discussion. Randy discussed some of the smaller departments that come in to present on budgets that are driven by contract and probably need less discussion.

Tracey asked if anyone is opposed to this approach. Larry Thomas suggested that the Department Heads be given the option to present to the Ad Comm because he thinks there are some department heads who want to do a full presentation.

Larry Stern asked if Randy will let the Department Heads know that we're going to try to take a slightly different approach this year. Randy agreed that he would do that and send the draft to Larry Stern and Tracey. Discussion that the very large budgets will probably still be subject to more detailed discussion at Ad Comm meetings.

Tracey said that we've got three contracts this year and Larry Thomas asked if we will stick to the position that we need to have the contracts at least two weeks in advance of Town Meeting. If they don't get it in that time, then the Ad Comm won't consider / vote the contract. Tracey agreed with that approach.

Larry Stern asked when the budget framework will be discussed. Randy said that the guidelines were discussed with the Acting Town Manager and the guideline is level service. He discussed the initial requests and that there are additional refinements to come. Discussion of 2 ½ and the levy limit as well as OPEB.

Kevin Powers asked if all capital requests, regardless of amount, need to pass through CIP before they can pass to annual budget. Randy discussed Capital Improvement and Capital Outlay. Capital Improvement is any item in excess of \$25K with a useful life of 5 years or more. Capital Outlay is considered part of the operating budget and is less than \$25K and a useful life of less than 5 years.

**7:30PM** Randy referred to the Executive Summary page of the budget book in the general overview section which reflects where we stand right now with the raw budget requests. Discussion of the pension assessment and the variation between the forecast and the assessment. Randy will go into more detail on that when we get into pension discussion.

Discussion of the Summary by Department page which demonstrates changes from last year to this year. Randy also highlighted the page entitled "Initial Non-School Budget Requests of Note" and suggested that this is a good starting point for the discussions between the liaisons and the Department Heads.

**7:45PM** Randy handed out a document titled: Municipal Finance Orientation. Randy explained that the votes that are taken at Town Meeting are legally binding votes, so the departments are not to exceed the amount those votes have appropriated. They can only be exceeded by Reserve Fund Transfer (Ad Comm vote), the year-end transfer process (concurring vote by Ad Comm required) or appropriation at Special Town Meeting. Randy then discussed the first six pages of the handout which demonstrates the variances. Budgets may be exceeded for Public Safety concern (like snow and ice removal) but that amount must be replaced in the next budget and that amount is planned for.

Discussion of Enterprise Accounts which carry prior year money carried forward. These include Landfill, Water, and Sewer.

Randy discussed the Reserve Fund 20 year history sheet and acknowledged that this year has been unusual in that most of the Reserve Fund is already spent down due to some unusual circumstances. The Reserve Fund is a contingency and has come down from as high as \$175,000 over the years to \$75,000 now.

Randy then moved the discussion to Free Cash which is revenue in excess of budget estimates. It wasn't appropriated and it can't be spent. Any unspent budget amounts also flows into free cash. Department of Revenue recommends that a Free Cash balance be maintained. Our Free Cash averages about \$3.9M. Across the state last year there were five municipalities that had negative balances (including Taunton). Discussion of the last 11 years of Free Cash including Randy's recommendation for 2014. Discussion of Core and Capital Stabilization funds.

Discussion of Meals Tax funds. The Meals tax money started to come in during 2012 in quarterly payments. In 2012 we appropriated \$375,000 between OPEB and road stabilization. That amount has grown as our confidence in the availability of this money has grown. Larry Thomas shared with the new members that the meals tax failed to gain support at Town Meeting twice. It didn't pass until it was clarified that it was only to be used for a capital spend.

**8:15PM** Discussion of the payment in lieu of taxes arrangement with the stadium. Randy provided 11 years of history which demonstrates the financial impact of events to the town (ticket sales). Discussion of whether we're still looking at possibly losing the soccer games. Randy said that they are looking for a new home for the team and it will probably happen in 2015 or 2016.

Discussion of the Police and Fire payroll summary pages which breaks down regularly earnings, over time earnings, grants, details and workers compensation costs.

Randy provided three years of surrounding community comparisons for residential single family homes, tax rates and the split between residential and commercial. Randy noted that the average value of a single family home in our town stacks up favorably. Our tax bills are also reasonable compared to others.

**8:30PM** Tracey advised that the next meeting is 1/8/14 and Animal Control is on the agenda. The 1/15/14 meeting is DPW. Tracey reminded the liaisons to ask the Department Heads about any warrants that are foreseeable.

**8:35PM** Motion to Adjourn made by Larry Thomas. Seconded by Heidi Krockta.  
Vote: 8-0-0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: January 8, 2014

Vote: 8-0-0

ON FILE

Signature of Chairperson

ON FILE

Signature of Secretary