

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
DATE 2/12/2014

Committee Members Present: Paul DeFazio, Larry Thomas, Jeff Anderson, Kevin Powers, Larry Stern, Thom Freeman, Sue Dring, Heidi Krockta, Cal Calnan, Patrick Mosesso

Members Absent: Tracey Metivier, Jeff Anderson, John Chlebek

Others Present: Ginny Coppola, Tina Belanger, Randy Scollins, Bob Cutler, Beverley Lord, Pauline Clifford, Paul Mullins, Deb Wood (ARC, So Norfolk County), Maureen Carterelli, Bill Yukna, Dick Heydecker, Debbie Spinelli, Bruce Gardner, Katie Adair, Steve Udden, Amy Berdos

Notes taken by: Kristin Meehan Papianou

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00PM by Paul DeFazio, Chairman. Started with apologies to the Board of Health for mis-cues with the agenda last time.

7:00PM – Board of Health – Thom Freeman and Larry Thomas, Liaisons. Thom discussed the impact of new businesses on the resources of the Board of Health. Pauline Clifford, Health Director presented a level funded budget. She stated that the Health Department staffing hasn't increased in over 18. They did increase their fee schedule and in 2012 they brought in almost \$145,000. Discussion of other workload items including responding to complaints, perc tests and disposal plan approvals. Pauline requested a Grade 6, \$49,000 position for an additional inspector. It's not part of the budget because they were told to level fund, but they are putting the request out.

Heidi asked why they didn't put it in the budget. Pauline said they were told to level fund. Heidi asked what percentage of services will that person be responsible for. Discussion of the timing of upcoming projects and the requirements of plan reviews prior to the construction process. Heidi asked if the budget amount is over what they bring in. Paul Mullins advised that it always has been but they are providing services to the citizens who pay the taxes. Randy advised that we don't tend to look at budgets in terms of what each department brings in because it would result in enormous inequities. Larry Thomas asked if they've thought about using contractual help. Pauline said that they've used inspectors like that in the past and used grant money to pay for it.

Larry Stern asked if there are man hour projections that address the number of inspections, how long they take and a forecast of what will be needed in the next year. Paul Mullins said that there are too many unknowns – septic systems that fail, complaints, etc.

Bob Cutler advised that he and Randy have spoken with Pauline and they'd love to see her have an additional staff member, but there isn't a single department in Town that can't make a compelling

argument for additional staff. He thinks that discussion should be held until a new Town Manager is in place. Additional discussion of workload, the option of contracting some inspections and other demands in Town.

Advisory Committee thanked the Board of Health, who handed out Emergency Preparedness booklets.

7:30PM – Kevin Powers noted a budgetary change following a meeting with some members of the Library Trustees, Acting Town Manager and Finance Director. Sunday hours are not level services but rather an expansion of services, so the Finance Director requested that the \$23000 or so that is anticipated for Sunday hours be taken from “other funds”. The Library Trustees voted 4 to 1 to make that change. For that reason, the proportionate funding for Sunday hours is no longer being requested out of Town Funds. Paul asked if the Board wants to discuss it then he’ll put it on the agenda next week. Kevin Powers advised that both he and Sue Dring feel that the Library Trustees had a thorough discussion that resulted in a majority vote, so they are in agreement that it’s the trustees’ job to make this decision. No one else felt there was a need to discuss this next week. Larry Thomas did ask Randy Scollins where that \$20000 would go. Randy said that there are a lot of moving parts, for instance our snow and ice budget.

7:35PM – School Budget, School Committee – Presenters: Bruce Gardner, Bill Yukna, Katie Adair, Debbie Spinelli, Amy Berdos, Steve Udden. Larry Thomas and Heidi Krockta are the liaisons. Larry advised that the budget increases are primarily salary contract increases. Discussion of the Wellness vs the Math specialist.

Katie Adair opened a Special Meeting for the School Department. Debbie Spinelli presented the package handed out at the start of the meeting which included the budget, budget PowerPoint, budget priorities, District Report Card and other information.

Bill Yukna discussed the budget and how it was put together, level services, curriculum reviews on a five year cycle, special education, expense budget (utility, fuel, transportation). He discussed payroll and the fact that they prepare the budget without being able to know what the staff is going to do (resignations, retirements). Bill explained that it’s an “all in” budget and then they deduct grants, revolving accounts and other items that offset the budgets. The budget is up 3.74% this year, primarily salaries. Last year it was a 4.4% increase. Discussion of the enrollment trend. Rural schools have been on a consistent downward trend with a population shift into the cities.

Debbie Spinelli discussed staffing shifts at each school. Discussion of the half time assistant principal at the Middle School. That was insufficient staffing so they want to “make that right” this year. Bill Yukna discussed building maintenance and the need to do more at the Middle School. More custodial staff is needed in order to maintain that building appropriately. Bruce Gardner advised that we’ve had complaints from the public about the condition of the middle school. Bill noted that it is the most used building in the district. Heidi asked for the numbers on the increases – \$31,000 for the Vice Principal and \$38,000 for the custodial. Larry Stern asked about outsourcing custodians. Bill Yukna said that he knows

of a school district that did that and they are dealing with a lower quality of cleaning services and it was difficult to manage because they weren't direct employees. He thinks that if we're on top of the staff with a good manager, then we get better results. Larry Thomas said there is something to be said for stability and knowing the people who are in the schools. Debbie Spinelli agreed and said that they are local people who are invested in doing a good job.

Debbie Spinelli discussed the High School Wellness Teacher. It's required under the MA General Laws. She discussed the review process and, if we don't comply with a standard in the law then they will enter a "finding" because we didn't require Phys Ed in all four years of High School. There was a finding during the inspection five years ago and they are coming back this fall. If we continue to have the same non-compliance, they will note an ongoing non-compliance. It's her recommendation that we comply. She said it's more than a compliance issue, though, because health and wellness is important. Paul DeFazio asked what the penalty is if we aren't in compliance the next time. Debbie said that their first move would be to request a meeting with the school committee to figure out why there hasn't been compliance. They could remove funding, which they might do in the special education realm. They don't know what funding source would be in jeopardy for Phys Ed non-compliance. They are waiting for more information on that.

Paul DeFazio talked about math as an area where we need help. Debbie said that they've been working really hard to increase opportunities in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). She's wanted to reinstitute an engineering course in the curriculum. She's found a course and done a lot of work to make it happen, but that's not reflected in the budget. She also discussed an elective "Financial Literacy" course.

Discussion of what the impact would be to student scheduled and inquiries that are coming from people in Town. Discussion about the choices that kids have to make now as well as the unknown factors from the Department of Ed. Thom asked if there are other mandates that are ahead of us that we'll be in this position. Debbie said that there is nothing out there ahead of us of this nature. Discussion of the issue of implementing the new testing structure which is a CIP issue.

Steve Udden said that wellness teachers meet more requirements than the wellness teachers of the past. There is a skill set, talent, training and education that comes with the present day wellness instructor. Sue Dring asked if we could meet the state requirement by meeting one term rather than a full semester. Debbie said that they are going to do one semester every other day rather than one term every day. There is no hour requirement, but they expect every day instruction. She said a course that is only offered for a quarter would make it very difficult to work the rest of the schedule. Paul DeFazio asked how much the Wellness position will cost. Answer was approximately \$41,000.

Debbie discussed the School to Career Specialist which was moved in house from a contractor to permit us more control. Discussion of Mr. Massey's time split between teaching and managing the department. This year our English as a second language teacher requirements went up as well.

Thom Freeman asked about the Special Education budget at 24%. Has that stayed constant or does that fluctuate? Bill Yukna said its program based and has been consistent for the last few years. Dick Heydecker asked about declining enrollment and addition of positions. The seniors want to know, with a continuing declining enrollment and a growing senior population, will we continue to see increased staffing? Should the School Committee be looking at this in a broad sense for the long term? Debbie said that, since 2007, we've never seen a correlation between the birth rate and the enrollment. It's the result of the economy. Young couples can't as easily afford to buy a home in Foxboro before they start their families. Tina Belanger also mentioned Technology as a service that is more recent but demands staffing.

Debbie and Bill discussed the updated budget in tonight's packet which is more recent than the last version Ad Com had. Debbie then moved to the per pupil expenditure handout. We're at just about exactly average in the state. That's a point of pride because we feel we get a really solid education for the average of what is being spent in the state. Debbie also discussed the four year graduation rates. She said this is a very important data point for the Department of Education. We're well above the state average at 98%.

Debbie then talked about SAT scores in area school districts. We rank second only to Sharon. There is a correlation between how much each resident is spending and academic achievement. Our SAT scores keep going up. Discussion of AP courses and the number of students who are taking them. The number of students is increasing and we are seeing an increase in our performance. 100% of kids who take the Biology AP course score a 3 or higher.

9:00PM Heidi Krockta and Kevin Powers left the meeting. Larry Thomas thanked the School Committee for their work. Paul DeFazio recognized that the Committee brought everything that the Ad Comm was asking for last year and this was a great presentation. Discussion of Common Core and where we are in that process. Debbie advised that we've already transitioned to Common Core, which is a state and Federal requirement. Common Core was mirrored after MA states which were already operating at a higher level.

School committee closed their meeting.

9:15PM Bob Cutler and Randy Scollins – General Government, Debt Services, Pension and Insurance

Larry Thomas asked about the municipal lease piece (\$250,000). Randy advised that the Board approved putting out a RFP for leased office space. The process should be completed by May Town Meeting. So this is a placeholder amount for 2015. It's an estimate to cover lease and related costs. Larry Thomas asked if this is a decision to abandon Town Hall in the center of Town. Randy said there is no decision, they want to see what is out there. We won't know what the most viable option is until we get the RFP out there and get the information back. Discussion of DPW plans. Discussion of what will happen with the Town Hall building if we lease. Also discussed the Fire Department building, the post office and the sewer issues. Randy advised that the Post Office did meet with the Board and they aren't moving in a

time frame that is feasible for us. Discussion of the master plan and the desire to keep Town Hall there. Bob Cutler said that they've made every attempt to keep it there. Larry Thomas said the issue was really that it was too large, not the location. Additional discussion of the Post Office option.

Paul DeFazio asked if there's anything for the CIP. Randy said, not yet. Larry Thomas asked about the Board of Selectmen giving the ok to spend the meals tax money to spend on the roads. Randy advised that it will be recommended in the CIP process.

Randy said that there has also been a change in the Norfolk County Pension because the assessment came in. There was a \$297,000 increase to that budget from what he had estimated. In total, Randy advised that we're \$162,000 "to the good" with a few moving parts remaining including snow and ice. We're also still waiting for our health insurance rates to be set. He thinks his estimate for premium increase will be sufficient and he's hoping for something less than the 7% he's estimated. Discussion of OPEB liability and the seven year plan to be funded.

Bob Cutler advised that we should have a copy of the warrant by next week. Paul asked if there would be something in there about the liquor licenses. Bob thought there would be.

Paul advised that next week will be the Planning Board and Conservation. He will also reach out to Kevin Penders in case he wants to come in to talk about the Library changes. Larry Stern said he felt a little uncomfortable with the DPW review because the liaison had been unavailable. Paul said he'd ask him to come back. Larry Thomas asked what happened with the Council on Aging staffing. Bob Cutler said that she did come in with a 10 hour request and she's one of the few who was permitted to do so. Then, after the fact, she came back for the additional 9 hours.

Paul DeFazio asked if we have a date for the new Town Manager yet. Bob advised that they are working on a contract.

Paul DeFazio asked Ad Comm whether they got a chance to look at the minutes from January 15 and January 29. Were there any issues?

Motion to accept the minutes from January 15 as written by Paul DeFazio, seconded by Larry Thomas.
VOTE: 8-0-0

Motion to accept the minutes from January 29 as written by Paul DeFazio, seconded by Larry Thomas.
VOTE: 8-0-0

9:55PM Motion to Adjourn brought by Thom Freeman. Seconded by Larry Thomas.
Vote: 8-0-0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.
Date of Meeting:

Vote:

Signature of Chairperson

Signature of Secretary