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**TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**  
**January 28, 2009**

2009 MAR 10 PM 7:46

FOXBOROUGH, MA 02085

Committee Members Present: Lauren Bitar, Lorraine Brue, Jim Devellis, Michael Ftizmaurice, Thom Freeman, H Hardie, Tim Kenneally, Jeff Rudd, Jenna Strickland, Brian Walton, Gary Whitehouse. *Bob Boette*

Members Absent: John Dustin and ~~Bob Garber~~.

Others Present: Andy Gala, Town Manager and Randy Scollins, Finance Director.  
Bob Boette, Chairman and William Hocking, Jr., Conservation Commission

The meeting was brought to order at 7:30 p.m. by Lorraine Brue, Chairperson.

**7:30 –General Government** – Andy Gala and Randy Scollins were present to discuss the 2010 Budget for General Government. The total budget for the departments falling under this section of General Government is \$1,876,261.00.

**Dept. 130 Finance** – Randy Scollins led a discussion regarding a change over to quarterly tax billing. He said one problem is that there are only 2-1/2 months in the summer to get the statistics ready for certification by the Department of Revenue. He said a change would have to be made workable for the assessors and at this time would be difficult for the tax collector as well but that he has been working to try to get things done to a level where he could consider going to quarterly tax billing. He said if that could be done the interest earnings would improve substantially. In normal times the interest earnings would just about pay for the extra hours it would take to process the billing. He said this is not the year to make a "pitch" for quarterly tax collection.

A discussion was held on where the Town stands given the numbers released by the State. Andy Gala pointed out that the State figures show no cut in education, Chapter 70, funding but a mid-year cut of approximately \$181,000 in Chapter 90 funding. He said the trend seems to be that the more a town gets in State Aid, the bigger the cut.

**Dept. #171 – Conservation** – Jenna Strickland noted that Conservation is looking to increase the number of hours for the Conservation Manager. She said the current 19 hours is very low compared to other communities. She pointed out that Foxborough does not have an Open Space program at this time. She said Conservation does not have the staff to adequately monitor the lands or keep up with required record keeping.

William Hocking gave a brief review of his association and experience with the Conservation Commission over the past twenty-three years. He resigned as Chairman and has since continued to give time to Conservation in order to get things done. He would like to see conservation land open to more of the public by improving the trails, implement out-reach programs for Senior citizens and schools, and generally show the public what open space there is, and conduct programs on wild life, etc. He referred to his association with Borderland State park and the programs offered there. He said there is a demand for these types of programs and Foxborough should offer similar opportunities for the citizens. Bob Boette said this is not the first time Conservation has asked for a full time manager. Conservation is planning a meeting at the Public Safety Building on February 11, to get input from people on an open space policy. Lorraine Brue asked if any thought had been given to working cooperatively with other towns to determine what hours are being used to develop an open space program.

Jim Devellis asked whether Conservation has used the IS or GIS systems to help manage the record keeping. Bob Boette said the Conservation system is not compatible with the Foxborough system. Randy Scollins pointed out that this demonstrates a need to concentrate on a central system for the Town. He said the Town has not done a good job providing the tools for the needs of other departments. Bob Boette pointed out that the Town has many acres of land under the supervision of Conservation and that the open space is grossly under utilized. He would like to see maps of interesting sites on trails made available for the public. A brief discussion was held including thoughts on obtaining grants or charging fees to help pay for additional hours for the Conservation Manager's position. Bob Boette said he is not in favor of charging the public to pay to use the land they have all ready paid for and, in addition, charging fees is in violation of the by-laws. Andy Gala explained how Recreation uses a revolving account to pay for programs. Randy Scollins said that if the Town started to "parse out" all fees in departments it would raise a lot of inequities. He explained how that could happen. Jim Devellis asked what it would take to get grant money. Wm. Hocking pointed out that they would have to have someone to write the grant application. Bob Boette said they would have to complete the Open Space plan before they would be eligible for grant monies.

**Dept. # 175 – Planning Board** - Lorraine Brue noted the Planning Board is requesting additional hours for the secretary. Randy explained that this staff person is paid by two different departments and this request reflects a change in allocation of hours. He said the Committee would be getting adjustment sheets in the near future. He would be updating all the budgets after meeting with the schools.

**Dept #151 – Legal** – Andy Gala said he had negotiated a contract with the new Town Council that included a retainer fee and additional monthly billing for services not covered under the retainer. He said that had amounted to about \$13,000 per month due to the number of cases before the Town. Labor Counsel budget was also discussed. A brief discussion was held on outsourcing the ambulance services.

A general discussion was held with inquiries from the Committee regarding the salary line for the Finance Dept. Andy explained that a staff member had retired with vacation pay and sick leave and that brought that number up. He also said they are "struggling" with an unexpected retirement. Also discussed were the costs and what the new web site would look like and what services would be available on line.

**Dept. #700 – Debt Service** - \$2,367,648 – Randy Scollins reported that the debt service budget has decreased by \$96,645 due to three components set forth in the summary page of the budget notebooks. It is anticipated that a debt exclusion will be sought at the May Town Meeting for the High School roof with a ballpark cost of \$8–12 million. A discussion followed regarding a potential debt exclusion for a library renovation project before the end of the calendar year.

A discussion regarding school bus funding ensued. Andy Gala informed that buses are typically part of the Capital Improvement Plan. Randy Scollins informed that the Town owns 28 busses and must replace 2 to 3 each year at a cost of approximately \$65,000 to \$80,000.

**Dept. #900 – Insurance** - \$8,497,744

**Dept. #911 – Pensions** - \$1,990,556 – Andy Gala and Randy Scollins reported that due to the unfavorable market, the projected 5% increase in the Pension Assessment will actually be 12%.

**Dept. #913 – Workers Compensation** - \$190,000.

**Dept. #914 – Unemployment Compensation** - \$100,000 - Jim Devellis inquired why the budget for this item made a big jump from 2008. Andy Gala responded that this item is self-funded as "insurance" for the Town. In some years money gets returned, but that is unlikely for the 2009 budget. A problematic part of this item is that reserve police officers from other towns can make claims against Foxborough if they were paid by the Town for any highway details. Andy Gala has asked State Rep. Barrows to address this inequity.

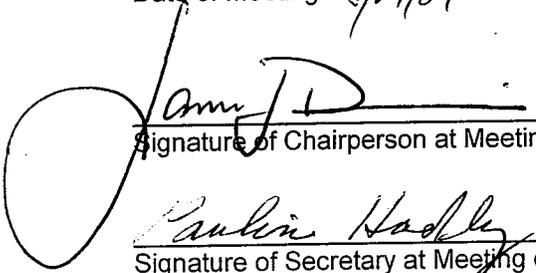
**Dept. #915 – Health & Life Insurance** - \$5,785,234 – The estimate for this item is up 7.6% based on anticipated increases in claims and subscribers. The increase in subscribers is partly due to retirees still being entitled to insurance. Thus, a new hire to replace a retiree is not a wash, but adds an extra person to the rolls. Andy Gala reported that the Town has little flexibility due to state imposed rules. For example, the co-pay is only \$5, which is not market competitive.

**Dept. #945 – General Insurance** - \$431,954 – This budget covers insurance for 133 vehicles and 42 buildings/properties, with the Witch Pond well site the newest addition to the list.

A brief discussion on the overall budget picture followed. Lorraine Brue reminded Committee members to forward questions for Water & Sewer to Bob Garber.

Motion to adjourn by Jim DeVellis. Seconded by Jeff Rudd.  
**Vote: 10-0-0**

Minutes Approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.  
Date of Meeting: 3/04/09 Vote: 9-0-0

  
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Signature of Chairperson at Meeting of Vote

  
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Signature of Secretary at Meeting of January 28, 2009