

Tuesday, October 27, 2020
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Foxborough Town Hall
Andrew Gala, Jr. Meeting Room
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Mark Elfman, Chair
Ed O’Leary, Vice Chair
Stephanie McGowan, Clerk
Leah Gibson
Chris Mitchell

Also Present:
William Keegan Jr., Town Manager
Mike Johns, Assistant Town Manager
Christina Metcalf, Community Info. Specialist
*Attended remotely

1. 7:30pm - Citizen's Input – None

2. 7:35pm COVID-19 Informational update

We have 194 cases since the beginning, 152 people recover, 27 lost in the follow up phase, 14 positive active cases and 1 hospitalization. Including Gillette Stadium we have 16,315 tests that have been performed in Foxborough. Numbers across the state are picking up, we are not a hot community. Positive developments regarding a vaccine.

4. 8:00 Kraft Group Temporary Entertainment License – Jess Enos and Lindsey Cuniff

Jess Enos* - Drive thru holiday light display operating from November 13 – January 2. Set up to begin November 10 to will be operational until January 10, this will provide a buffer on the front end for trial run and back end for cancellations and etc. It is the same space as Jurassic Quest. We can accommodate 600 cars, interior sounds in the car, no stopping and going. This was operating pre pandemic and this aligns with what people are looking for which is a safe isolated experience outside of the house. They usually do around 60,000 vehicles over the course of an entire run, we saw 47,000 presale tickets purchase. We took pause, flew the Magic of Lights team out to make sure that we could provide the experience and handle the market demand without putting any additional stress on our neighbors. There are 600 spaces in line but also 500 spaces to queue so there are no backups. Jurassic Quest had 43,000 vehicles over 18 days. We expect over 50,000-60,000 vehicles over 51 days.

Lindsey Cuniff – We have a robust communications plan in place to communicate with buyers with ticket holders through direct email and Facebook.

CM – When can tickets be purchased?

JE – No commitment to a time, all sales starting November 2 will have to choose a day but not time.

LG - Have Police and Fire as well as approved State Police?

BK – Yes, they have all approved.

JE – We are working with all entities above to ensure there is no traffic back up. We have data for other markets that will be useful to anticipate on certain days and at certain times. We know that the first initial weeks are a bit less desirable so we want to encourage as many fans to use those presale tickets during that first couple of weeks window and we’ve got marketing concepts to get people down to the site in November before traffic picks up.

ME – Plan C is 600 cars on Thanksgiving and 500 queued what is that plan?

JE - We will spill into parking on stadium side and pull cars off the road in an expeditious manner. We do not want creep in traffic. We don’t want that to interfere with shoppers and people going. It is a priority for us to not have any sort of significant back up.

Motion to approve the Temporary Entertainment License for the Kraft Group for the Magic Lights event to be held November 10, 2020 through January 10, 2021 from 5:00pm until 11:00pm by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchel

3. 7:45pm Joint Board of Selectmen and Foxborough Housing Authority (FHA)

Greg Spier – Opened FHA meeting. Approved by majority. Would like to appoint Bethany Robertson to our board, she ran for the FHA Board back in the spring.

Bethany – I am registered architect in state of Massachusetts and have decade of experience with Habitat for Humanity. Dedication to affordable housing in community

LG – I've worked with Bethany on the Housing Production Plan and has been very active in the coalition.

Motion to approve Bethany Robertson to the Foxborough Housing Authority for a term to end May 3, 2021 by S. McGowan 2nd by C. Mitchell. Approved 5-0.

FHA Board moved to approve Bethany Robertson to their Board and approved with a majority.

3.02 Town and State Citation for John Michelmore

One of the longest serving members of any Housing Authority anywhere around. He will be sorely missed. We were fortunate to have John as attorney and he left it in a great area. We are fortunate for Maggie and Eric as well. See video Rep Barrows has been instrumental in obtaining land on Walnut Street. SV the need is out there for

Rep. Barrows – It is truly an honor to be here. John was instituted by Governor Dukakis. He was a pro and he was able to really understand. John was known as the person to answer the question. He created great housing. He finishes one project and moves on to the next, he is leaving quite a legacy behind. Reading of Citation from the House of Representatives.

ME – Reading of Citation from the Board of Selectmen.

John Michelmore – it has been an honor to serve. It's challenging and will continue to be. It is not seen, but there are challenges. We have a good start on Walnut Street (for the past 10 years). It was a privilege to work for the town and with a great staff and great members of the BOS.

5. 8:15pm Department Update – Finance

George Samia – We are 4 very distinct departments. We have accounting, treasurer, collections and assessing, all 4 are governed by statutory law. It is recap season. On November 17th we will have the hearing on the tax rate. Our budget process is a mockup of our recap sheet which is what we set our tax rate on. When doing the budget this year and came up with a figure for new growth for of \$650,000 and it was actually \$750,000.

Hanne Simonds – To clarify new growth is something that hasn't been taxed before so it's subject to additional taxes and it is all new construction or additions that hasn't been taxed in the prior year.

Marie Almodovar – We have been involved with Covid-19 reimbursement including FEMA and CARES Act we applied for \$1 million and will apply for \$500k more. We are also applying to FEMA for \$310,000. We are hoping that it gets extended beyond the end of year.

ClearGov is a cloud based budget software. Residents can see where tax dollars are going. Internally we are using this to have a real time budget and collaboration. This will allow information to be in one place and not have to have spreadsheets that won't have tiny numbers to read. You can forecast and see what different budget increases would look like. We have not closed the books yet because we have received reimbursement. For FY20 we had \$1.3 million unspent. From last year was less than half that. Once finalized reimbursements we'll be able to close the books and use the free cash to the FY21 budget.

GS – Marie's tedious work was critical in obtaining CARES act funding reimbursements.

MA – At the beginning of the summer we asked department heads "Is there anything that we need that is Covid related?" We were able to get a van for the Council on Aging that is handicap accessible and spaced out correctly.

CM – Question on the other grants we applied for, did we get them or did we just apply?

MA – The amount of money that you are eligible is based on population. June was round 1. You estimate your Covid -19 related costs. FEMA is very strict and you have to show lots of proof and show everything related to the expense. We submitted last week.

LG – Is this the same money that school talked about, the \$1.7 million?

MA – They got other grants and \$700,000 from CARES Act remainder through others.

LG - Is there a rollout plan for training for Advisory Committee and BOS?

MA – Department heads have had training and it was recorded. Will receive email as collaborator once the finishing touches are put on. Everything will be in one place including back up documents including charts and tables. When logged in that will be the most up to date version.

SM – Example of where some of the \$1.3 million that came back last year came from?

GS – Health insurance, police turned back some money. Bill Keegan asked for a spending freeze from department heads.

ME – We are not the only community that can't close their books.

GS – We are able to weather the storm better than most. Going to Treasury. Monday November 2 is Tax Due Day. Lots of challenges including short staffing and Covid and was still virtually seamless. She has been crucial to our team.

Paula Maloney – We are doing the day to day operations and getting things done. We put together the open enrollment letters for retirees, sent out water lien warnings, will send out tax bills once we are certified, and are in the process of getting credit cards accepting for Council on Aging.

CM – What is usually the collection rate?

GS – Usually around 95% for collections. We have the least control over local receipts.

LG – Should retiree benefits something that lives/should live in HR?

GS – Whether or not it's the right structure, treasurer's is where it resides. You could ask if there is a better way.

BK – We can advise on benefits, but we don't administrate them.

MA – In Concord, Finance/Admin handled retirees issues and then benefits was handled by HR. Here it is all under treasurer.

SM – Our past finance director had said that if we wanted HR to handle the benefits that we would have to sit down and restructure.

BK – We do have an HR Specialist. We've talked many times about having a benefits only person but we are talking about keeping the budget intact.

LG – Do we have the over/under for expenses and can we get that?

GS – We are only in the first quarter of this fiscal year, we have a ways to go and moves to be made. If we were starting to run out we'd know but it is early in the budget.

BK- We just got a progression report on our budgets and we don't have anything to worry about. A lot of Covid expenses have been reimbursed through grants. It less of an issue for the Town side than the School side. This doesn't worry me because if we get to a bad place, others will be in a bad place and the Federal government will be in a bad place.

GS –We are in a better position than most. Marie makes monthly reports and make notes of budget that seem to be out of hand.

LG – I will send an email with the information I would like to see a few bullets of the anecdotal check-ins.

BK – We need to be careful about the information we give out, that it's not misinterpreted. We will talk about numbers next week to ensure that you all have the big picture.

LG – I've asked the question before about numbers and was told to ask George at this meeting because we haven't seen any numbers.

BK – Tonight was more of a preparation to show you what we are going to be talking about next week and the numbers are going to be lower and our budget projections will reflect that.

LG – I would like to be able to get information before hand so we can have a meaningful discussion and be prepared with questions for the meetings.

BK – I believe that seeing it together for the first time all 3 boards to get the information at once is best. It will create questions on their end if I give it to the Board but not Advisory or School Committee.

ME – This is the preliminary starting of the budget process. That is day 1 of the budget process.

BK – This meeting is a projection of where we plan to be for the budget.

LG – I'm looking for information on what the meeting looks like because I don't know what the purpose of it is.

ME – It's the same meeting that we had last year with Finance that showed projections and budgets for the upcoming fiscal year. We did it with people from the community last year but because of Covid we cannot use that same model this year. We are having this tri-board meeting in the beginning of the process.

CM – There is always read ahead information before any meeting that I've had and I would like to see something before the meeting so I can formulate questions.

LG – Could we get the timeline and as much information as possible before the meeting. I remember picking up binders with information.

BK – That is the actual budget book and those aren't distributed until January. The budget summit is when we get all 3 boards together and talk about the revenues and expectations. This put everyone together to start the budget discussion and help develop the budget goals. We can then have a conversation about what the goals are going to be for the fiscal year. We are working on that presentation this week for next week's meeting.

CM – We usually will get a handout if we were here. For the other boards being on Zoom we won't receive that.

BK – We can get that information out to you on Monday morning.

6: 8:35pm Assistant Town Manager's Update

- 4 positions that we are recruiting for currently

- Our Building Commissioner has been here for 4 months and was the right hire and right person but the commute became too much for him. We are losing a good fit for this position. This is a tough recruitment because there aren't a lot of people out there with the certification and qualifications of Certified Building Official that we require. We want someone how can handle the sophistication and complexity of the Town. We've had 7 applications and will continue to review on a rolling basis.

EO – Could Bill Casbarra come back and help?

BK – No, he is fully retired. What he has agreed to do is help with recruitment and references. The Finance Director, Town Manager, Director of Health, Assessor, Building Commissioner and Treasurer/collector positions all have very stringent state requirements for the positions. The Certified Building Official (CBO) requirement was using the international building officials requirements and it wasn't until the past 18 months ago that the state of has a CBO that they require. We could just hire a building inspector and give them 18 months to fulfill the obligation of getting their CBO requirements. We are reluctant because we could put ourselves in a position that someone might not pass the tests to become a CBO.

LG – Do municipalities share or get creative with positions?

BK – We are looking into things that we need to do and potentially other positions as well.

CM – Can we sub-contract?

BK – There aren't companies that do that and we really need to have a person qualified and who knows our venues.

MJ - We are looking for a top tier manager as well someone that can manage staff and contractors.

- To address before, I am not a benefits administrator, I have a Specialist to assist and I also work with Paula. I look to create efficiencies and looking at operations. My part is putting the right people in the right jobs to provide public services. I work with department heads when there are retirements and openings to be able to look at positions and looking that we are getting the most for our money and

- Senior Youth Services Librarian final stages of interviews.

- Tree and Park looking to fill two positions. We have promoted to within from Tree and Parks to DPW. This was something they desired to do and wanted to do something new that doesn't have a financial impact on the Town. Mechanic DPW. To get a mechanic to go from private to public sector is difficult.

- Pauline Zajdel from Health will be retiring as of January 1st and will be reworking and overlooking that job description

BK – Will be working with the Eric Arvedon about this position.

7. 8:45pm Town Manager's Update

- Bob Cutler received a Covid Grant for elections in the amount of \$7,806.

- Small Business Grants now available as well as Microenterprise business grants

- Foxborough Cultural Council grant applications will be accepted until November 16th.

- Early voting until Friday. On Wednesday and Thursday 8:30am-4pm, Friday, 8:30am-12:30pm. Election Day voting on Tuesday, November 3rd at the Ahern School will be from 6:00am-8:00pm. Please drop Absentee and Vote by Mail Ballots by 8:00pm in secure drop box at Town Hall.

- Thank you to Fox Veterans for the World War II Memorial dedication.

- November 17th at 11:00am for the SEMRECC ribbon cutting.

8. 8:55pm - Selectmen's Update – No update

9. Action Items

Motion to approve a donation of \$50.00 from Marie and Dave Crimmins in memory of Pam Webber to the Serenading Seniors, a \$100.00 anonymous donation for the Lockbox program and a \$360.00 donation from Friends of Foxborough Seniors for August and September Tai Chi, totaling \$510.00 by S. McGowan, 2nd by C. Mitchell. Approved 5-0.

9.02 BOS - Approval of June 30, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes

Discussion LG – 2nd page We do deleted

Motion to approve the June 30th 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes by S. McGowan, 2nd by C. Mitchell. Approved 5-0.

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by S. McGowan, 2nd by C. Mitchell. Approved 5-0.