

**Tuesday, December 7, 2021**  
**Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes**  
**Gala Room, Town Hall**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Members Present:** Leah Gibson, Chair  
Stephanie McGowan, Vice Chair  
Seth Ferguson, Clerk  
Ed O’Leary  
Mark Elfman

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

1. 7:00pm - Citizen's Input – No citizen input

2. 7:05pm National Grid - Winter Readiness & Power Outage Prevention Review from NG Rep. Ann Malley, Emergency Management and Fire Chief Mike Kelleher and DPW Director Chris Gallagher

LG – We’ve had Ann come annually along with the Fire Chief and DPW Director. We’ve had quite a few power outages in the last few weeks. We lost power on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and December 6<sup>th</sup>. We’d like to hear how you are getting ready for the winter and how you are maintaining transformers and other equipment.

AM – There are 4 substations in town, which is more than most towns. There are two newer transformers and two older ones. We have upgraded the supplies in all the substations over the past 10 years. The South Wrentham substations, the feeder we’ve been having issues on, feeds the North Street area and on the end of the feeder is where we are having issues. There are 1,988 customers on that feed. There are two reclosers on that feeder which is a device that we put on to limit the amount of customers affected when something comes in contact with the lines. They are programmed so they don’t shut off automatically. These devices are older devices that don’t communicate with our system so we have to send a truck out to go to that device and see what the cause is of the outage. The more customers that call in and let us know about a power outage, helps us narrow down where the outage is located and helps us find the issue and repair it faster.

We are in the permitting phase to upgrade the transformer on Elm Street near the DPW building.  
We have new reclosers

LG – Most people don’t call, how did National Grid keep up with the times

AM – You can text outages to NGRID and they know that you have a power outage. You can add as many accounts as you want, like an apartment complex or a relatives’ home. You text OUT from you cell phone (cell number must be on your account) and they will know that you are out and when they are back.

SF – So the only way you know if there is a power outage is if it’s reported? Is there a need to have everyone call?

AM – With the phone calls we receive our system analyzes based on when and where they are calling in from. If you are still out and we sent you a text or it’s been reported that your power should be back on, then that customer should call us. We don’t have smart meters, we do have some newer devices that will communicate that will control

SF – Your best advice is to call if there is an outage?

AM – Yes, the more people that call the better. Sometimes the person across the street but in fact it could be a different transformer. All power outage calls should go to NGRID and not Fire or Police.

ME – Where do the calls go when people call for a power outage?

MK – They come to SEMRECC and the Fire Station. We have 3 levels of priority. If there is a live wire in someone's house or motor vehicle accident with live wire, we have a special number to call to the control center gets help dispatched immediately. For level 2 and 3 priorities, it's a different process on their end and we don't know what that is on NGRID's end.

AM - We see the Priority 1's and go to those immediately.

Based on the report that we received that there were residents that have consistent outage. We looked and couldn't find the cause of the outage. They patrol the lines to see if there is a branch on the line, there's a branch on fire, an animal or car accident? We didn't see any reasons for the outages. The recloser is an older model and rusted. We are putting a brand new piece in and should be coming in at the end of the week. We have to program the recloser before installing it. This should help to stop the false outages.

LG – It feels that we have to feel the pain before things are replaced. It doesn't seem proactive but reactive for when things breakdown. Something like swimming pools we can be proactive though.

AM – We have programs to keep track of aging equipment. There are other things like adding load that we aren't aware of like adding central air conditioning. Summer comes and a transformer blows because it's not big enough to support that extra load. That's if they let us know then we can assess if we need to add another transformer.

LG – Do you have any service levels or KPIs to gauge how things are going and how we compare to other communities? How do we know that you are performing?

AM - If we don't perform or have too many outage, we don't get the rate increase we ask for. We report to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU).

MK – You report all the outages to DPU?

AM – Any outages that are more than 1 minute and/or more than one customer we have to report everything.

LG – Is Foxborough meeting the DPU standards?

AM – They aren't the poorest ones, we have a lot worse feeders.

SM – Are the outages more trees or transformers going out?

AM – The bulk are trees, out of 5 years of outages there were 9 we couldn't figure out. Some were equipment failure. We have a lot of equipment that when it fails we fix it.

LG – Let's squash the rumor that we can start our own power company. We cannot and it is not legal because state legislation doesn't allow what

MK – We have two communities that have their own public light department, which makes it difficult for NGRID.

AM – They don't come under the DPU either and they don't have the same rules and regulations.

LG – Why did we have 6 in the last month when we only had 2 storms?

AM – We believe those were because of the faulty recloser. It will take a few weeks to program and then get it up. We can transfer the load around. We were working in the area and swapped the switch and it worked fine, when we went to make the switch back it failed which is why the pole caught on fire.

LG – What can Ann do to make Mike and Chris' life a bit easier?

BK - In this day and age, that we don't have systems with sensors that can alert to power failures. I don't know how robust the repair and replacement system is but given the nature of all the storms we've had we need to change the 5 year tree trimming program to 3 years. The majority of our power outages are tree related.

AM – It goes by feeder. If we are told there are limbs on trees we go and trim them right away. We work with the town arborist to figure out if it is a town or home owner tree and figure out the best way to get it down.

BK – In my old community, I was notified that I needed a tree to be removed, was notified, signed off on it and they will be taking it down soon. I would like you to take this back to the leadership of NGRID and see what.

AM – We have the grid modernization plan and every public utility had to file. You would lay out the entire cost of everything that you want the middle of the road and the minimum that you need. The recloser it communicates to our control center. We have a Fault Location Isolation System Restoration Scheme (FLISER). It's a group of reclosers and what the FLISER does, depending on what happens, they talk to each other, isolate the fault and keep only the customers affected without power and minimizing the impact of the fault. We had a pilot program in Worcester with this. We have to file with the DPU and get this in and we are recommending that we get one of those for this area.

LG – Is there anything that NGRID can do to help you and your operations?

CG – From the DPW side we communication with Ann quite a bit. The DPW takes down anywhere from 50-100 trees in the right of way as well as getting in touch with the NGRID arborist and hazardous tree removal group. The best way for trees to get we won't take down healthy trees for the sake of taking down trees. The trees that are coming down are 80-100 foot trees in storms that we can't take down. Those aren't usually in the right of way and we can't legally take them down. We can talk to the homeowner, as can NGRID, but the property owner can also decide to do take the trees down. Most of the trees are on private property and they can be proactive in taking those trees down.

BK – Foxborough isn't the worst place for trees and with power outages.

CG – In regards to storm response, in the most recent storm, we were back up and running within 36 hours with chi was impressive for the amount of damage that came down. In support of Ann and NGRID, and compare it to the water system in town. The union loop project was a massive undertaking, I would assume that was a substantial project for NGRID to do. You start with big projects and then get smaller and smaller and catch those outages as we go forward.

MK – Emergency things got better and our liaison lives in town which is nice. I will make an effort to talk to Ann more frequently to better understand the minutia of things and how they work.

BK – The long term strategic issues that I worry about is the capacity of this system. It seems that the system isn't capable of handling that load. There was talk about federal funds and was wondering if any of those funds would be coming to NGRID.

AM – We are looking at capacity, looking at solar farms and that electricity coming and going and looking into the future with that.

MK – Are the two reclosers we have right now the same vintage? Could they fail at the same time?

AM – It could, this other recloser we don't know if it is the rust in the control box or something else. Once we get the okay to go ahead and put in these new reclosers.

SF – I've heard from some concerned citizens about the volume of outages in town. There were discussion to about 2012 and things. They are interested in continue this conversation.

LG – I'm surprised that there is nobody here tonight. I don't think we need to bring back Ann. If you can stay in better communication with us and keep us in the loop on recurring issues.

AM – If other customers, areas that there are problems. If Bill calls and lets us know, we can respond. We are working on drone testing and taking pictures of the equipment on poles that is hard to see just driving by them.

SF – I think any progress along those lines would be greatly appreciated when it's communicated.

LG – If anyone has a follow up, please contact the Town Manager's office or DPW.

AM – It's best to get signed up for the text and get signed up before the storms.

SM – I was pleasantly surprised to hear that the last couple of time he was impressed that we are headed into the right directions.

BK – It would be great to get that new transformer before Christmas so we don't have issues around the holiday.

3. 7:25pm Department Update - Town Manager's Office Town Manager Bill Keegan and staff to give update on Town Manager's Office including human resources, licensing, and communications.

Introduction of Town Manager's Office Staff – Assistant Town Manager/HR Director Michael Johns, HR Specialist Kate Levesque, Executive Assistant and Liquor Licensing Coordinator Katie Lang, Communications and Civic Engagement Specialist Christina Metcalf.

Town Manager's Office Mission - The Mission of the Town Manager's Office is to serve as the Chief Administrative Office of the Town (along with some Executive Authority as described by the Town Manager Act) and provide strategic direction, support and oversight of all Town operating departments. The Office provides direct support to the Board of Selectmen who serves as the Town's Chief Elected and Executive Authority of the Town. The Town Manager's Office serves as the key point of contact for residents, businesses, State and Federal offices and regional partners.

FY21 Accomplishments

Goal I. Protect & Enhance the Financial Health of the Town

-Restructured the Finance Department

-Produced the second sub -3% budget, goal to achieve a third in Fiscal 2023

-Achieved a 2nd confirmation of the Town's AAA bond rating

-Had the highest budget turn backs in the Town's history

Goal 2: Protect and Enhance Communication and Engagement

-Facebook Live daily updates during pandemic to residents on how the Town was responding during the crisis

-Encouraged greater communication with all Departments to make sure that they were supporting each other during a difficult time

-Kept the Town operations functioning at a very high level during the pandemic

-Began developing the Town's first strategic communications plan

Goal 3: Protect and Enhance Business and Economic Development

- Actively remained engaged with the Business Community during the pandemic
- Enhanced relationship with Schneider Electric resulting in grant for the lighting of the Foxborough Common
- Worked with the FCBC on a new branding project resulting in new banners and way finding for the Uptown area
- Development of the Old Fire Station and the new housing units on Wall Street will further enhance the Uptown area
- Continued work with the Kraft Group on furthering the strategic development of their property with feature in Business View Magazine of the Foxborough and the Kraft Groups partnership in helping to develop the area along Route 1

#### Goal 4. Protect and Enhance Town Operations

- Constantly looking at new ways to operate and restructure various Town operations to further improve customer experience
- The official opening of the new regional 911 Center – SEMRECC. This was a regional and state cooperative effort to provide enhanced communication capability while reducing costs to the four towns of Foxborough, Mansfield, Norton and Easton
- Agreements with Wrentham, Norfolk and Franklin to perform repairs of Fire Trucks at Foxborough's Public Safety Facility. This out of the box thinking, led by the Fire Department, will help to reduce the cost of Foxborough's vehicle repairs and continue to enhance regional cooperation.

SF – For Goal 2D, I'm trying to understand how that works.

BK - We'll talk about that on the 22st and will be unveiling some reorganization plans that will help with that.

LG – We didn't have liaisons for some of these committees, but for a Town staff member to provide them support.

BK – We still have situations that we are trying to minimize the committees that don't have structure and people to report to and be supported by.

#### Looking beyond 2022

- The Board will be selecting a new Town Manager.
- Come up with and execute a plan to utilize the federal ARPA funds before the funds expire in 2024
- Come up with financing plan to address the key capital needs identified by the Capital Expenditures Committee's Five Year Plan while maintaining the Town's triple A Bond status
- Continue to develop new methods and means for training and developing staff members so that succession plans remain a key operating component of staff planning for the future. With a diminishing return of candidate pools for key staff positions it is critically important that the Town develop existing staff members with the skill sets needed to perform the leadership and management rolls that have been established for successfully operating Foxborough's local government
- Continue to maintain successful labor relations with all of the Town's staff and collective bargaining units.
- Continue to promote professional practices and staff development so that customer service levels remain high on all levels
- Continue to maintain strong business relationships with the business community so that the economic climate in the community continues to thrive
- Continue to be creative and strategic in finding new ways to do the Town's business more efficiently
- Evaluate and promote the use of environmentally sensitive practices throughout the community in all aspects of what we do
- Continue to develop and promote the key communication tools that helps to engage the community and promote volunteerism and involvement with the local government by serving on Committees, Boards, Commissions or simply attending Town Meeting

MJ – 5 areas that I lead and collaborate in are:

Operations – Workforce leadership and hiring new department heads and management training. Focus on operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Strategic planning – Succession planning and work force of the future. The length of time people remain in a job changes. We want to make sure we are adapting with changing times to make sure we are attracting people.

Assess and address critical points of failure.

Labor relations – We are in the process of negotiations with all our unions to remain competitive but not over pay. Handling conflict resolution, grievances, and mediations.

Human Resources – Policy development recruitment culture, and workforce retention.

Risk management and insurance – Legal and insurance claims, litigation (no outstanding litigation currently) identify and managing our risk, negotiating and paying for health, life, property, casualty, workers compensation and injured on duty policies.

LG – Do we have a broker?

BK – Yes. It was striking to me that we paid a significant amount of legal claims and now we don't. Our labor and town counsel costs have been minimized. That is a testament to our town and the structure we have put in place.

Kate Levesque – I have 6 years of HR experience in the private sector. I've been doing a lot of recruitment, and coordination the interviews and screening of candidates. I ensure that we have all the new hire paperwork is complete once we make a new hire. I update job descriptions before posting as well. I handle FMLA leave and payroll changes. I'll be conducting exit interviews. It's been challenging to be part-time.

Katie Lang – My main responsibilities fall into 3 buckets. Supporting the Town Manager's office with scheduling, phone calls, correspondence, and calendar management. I am the main point of contact for any facilities issues in the town along with being the primary contact for our cleaning company. I have currently taken over contract integration and will be keeping those up to date moving forward. Bucket 2 is licensing and permitting, all alcohol, commercial parking, and entertainment to name a few. We have 219 for calendar year 2022 along with extras. We just launched an online portal, People GIS, which is brand new and took a tremendous amount of work to input the information to make the process easier for the applicants, and limit the physical paperwork. I'm the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission contact for monthly and annual reporting. As well as the licenses, I handle all the town property and use of public way applications and am the primary point of contact. The 3 bucket is that I handle all the insurance including the fleet of town owned vehicles, town owned property and special property coverage and am constantly in contact with MIIA. We have over 200 vehicles and pieces of equipment. The role requires a lot of flexibility as there is always something coming up in our office that we didn't plan for so we're always trying to help as need

Christina Metcalf – A lot of my responsibilities will be discussed when we go over the communications plan but I'll give you an idea of what I oversee. The Town website, including the main page and all of the subpages, I train new staff on their page, including the new Procurement webpage that we just recently added. I manage all the Town of Foxborough social media accounts, so posting, interacting and creating content for meetings, events, information, alerts. For civic engagement part is listening to the community, figuring out what information they need, what we can communicate better, how we can communicate better and looking at all the channels and ways that we can do that. We have started doing more surveys, a Special Town Meeting survey and the Trash Survey (available now). Keeping the surveys short to increase participation but also gaining really insightful information. Another responsibility is the annual town report. It's more than just the report that list the salaries, but the content that is submitted includes the grants we get, all the projects that are completed, all the things that we do that make the town great and all the work that each and every single employee does. Every time I read all the different things it amazes me what all of our departments accomplish in a year. I also support this Board. During Covid I was responsible for working with Foxboro Cable Access in organizing all the Zoom meetings for all the boards and committees. Mike Webber and Paul Beck have been fantastic in making all that happen. I also was responsible for training everyone on the new internal communications system, Rainbow, and being the point of contact for the Rainbow representative and tech support. There will more detail as to what I will be doing not only in our office but also throughout the entire town during the communications plan presentation.

LG – You can't forget official town photographer as well. Sometimes on your own time, and that is much appreciated.

BK – There is no shortage of things to do and the challenge is keeping them all in the right direction. We use our weekly staff meetings to keep up to date on everything. We are team, I wouldn't trade any of my staff for anyone. I think they are all great, great pole and they do great work and work really hard.

#### 4. 7:45pm Assistant Town Manager's Update

4.1 HR Update - Chair Training- Our HR Counsel suggested that we have a statement for the beginning of our meetings on civil behavior and public input at meetings. I took the Schools opening meeting statement and modified that and waiting to get that back from counsel. We will then take that and use it as a model and template for all boards and committee.

Part of why we met with the Personnel Board to come up with draft policies of federal mandates from OSHA with mask, vaccines, etc. We weren't ready to roll them out because that OSHA mandate is being held up in the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals. We wanted to be prepared and have guidance from our labor and HR counsel ahead of time in case it is passed.

LG – We had a training on the mandate and employers and we are contractors to some employees. Is the mandate applicable to local community?

MJ – We don't know yet how it applies. If it gets through the court then it will apply, that isn't definitive yet. We are preparing for if we do have to implement this but it has not been yet. We aren't mandating it but we would be mandated to do it.

LG – Do we have a cheat sheet?

MJ – We have the policies written and letters for the unions from our HR counsel. We are prepared and standing by. We are at over 90% vaccinate rate for all town employees.

LG – You understand the testing part, if they aren't vaccinated?

MJ – Yes, that is the second part of the policy is the testing.

SF – Are you tracking the booster?

MJ – We haven't tracked that. We know who has been vaccinated and others self-reported. If the mandate comes through we will be looking at the vaccination card.

LG – That should be discussed with labor counsel on how they attest that they are vaccinated.

SM – As far as you know people are masking up as needed?

MJ – Yes, as far as I know.

#### 5. 7:55pm Town Manager's Update

5.1 Trash & Recycling Working Group Update – we met with the sub-committee and finalized a survey that is out now.

5.2 FY23 Budget Process Status Update – budget submissions are supposed to be done by the end of this week.

-ARPA update – Congressman Auchincloss spoke with Secretary Yellin about our concerns about the regulations as written and that we aren't the only ones with this issue. The final ruling should be out later this month. We have a session with MAPC next week as well as that.

-Lt. Governor Polito will be visiting SEMRECC at 2pm on Thursday.

-Spoke with Rep Barrows about the Civil Service and it was being filed yesterday and hopefully we'll get action on that soon.

#### 6. 8:05pm - Selectmen's Update

6.1 New Business - Peace Pole – Lori Rudd mention that there was a Peace Pole was installed out in front of Town Hall.

6.2 Old Business - CIP & Audit Committee – follow up from Christina on the meeting that we appointed.

Town Manager's Breakfast will be next Wednesday at the Foxborough Country Club from 9:00-11:00am

ME – The Common looks great.

LG – Now that we have all this electrical we should look to put items in the budget for holiday lights.

#### 7. Action Items

7.1 Citizen Crust - Extended Hours Request for 12/31/21 for food and alcohol service until 2:00am

**Motion to approve the extended hours request for Better Food Foxborough LLC d/b/a Citizen Crust on December 31, 2021 to January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 until 2:00am to include food service and alcohol service to end at 12:30am by S. Ferguson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Elfman.**

Discussion: LG – We've never extended alcohol until 2:00am. We should amend the request that they can be open until 2:00am but alcohol service has to end at 12:30am.

**Approved 5-0.**

7.2 Recreation Dept. - Acceptance of donation of \$2,918.95 for Foxborough Common Picnic tables from Partners in Patriotism

**Motion to accept a donation for the Foxborough Recreation Department of \$2,918.95 for Foxborough Common Picnic tables from Partners in Patriotism by S. Ferguson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Elfman. Approved 5-0.**

Discussion: LG – Maybe we could add tables from PIP for a photo op/ribbon cutting as well

7.3 BOS - Approval of BOS Minutes from 11/23/21 meeting

**Motion to approve the November 23, 2021 Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes by S. Ferguson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Elfman. Approved 5-0.**

7.4 BOS - Appointment of Capital Improvement Planning Committee

**Motion to appoint Town Manager William Keegan, Superintendent Amy Berdos, Board of Selectmen member Stephanie McGowan, Advisory Committee Chair Paul Ivanovskis and Water and Sewer Commission designee Chris Gallagher, DPW Director, to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee for a term to end June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 by S. Ferguson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Elfman.**

**Approved 5-0.**



7.5 BOS - Accepting surrender of the Wine and Malt Licenses from New England Authentic Eats LLC d/b/a Papa Gino's at 8 Commercial Street and 211 North Street in Foxborough effective 12/31/21

**Motion to accept the surrender of the Wine and Malt Licenses from New England Authentic Eats LLC d/b/a Papa Gino's at 8 Commercial Street and 211 North Street in Foxborough effective December 31st, 2021 by S. Ferguson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Elfman.**

Discussion: SM – Are they both closed?

LG – They are not serving Beer and Wine any longer.

KL - All our liquor licenses are renewed. Babou G's and Charles River Garage are closing but neither have liquor licenses.

**Approved 5-0.**

8. Adjourn - 8:57

**Motion to adjourn by S. Ferguson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. Elfman. Approved 5-0.**

DRAFT