

TOWN OF FOXBOROUGH

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 11th 2015

Committee Members Present: Tracey Vasile, Larry Thomas, Cal Calnan, Patrick Mosesso, Monica Fisler, Sue Dring, Heidi Krockta, John Chlebek, Thom Freeman

Absent: Javed Hussain, Kristin Papianou, Larry Stern

Others Present: Robert Cutler, Bruce Gardner, Tina Belanger, Debra Spinelli, Amy Berdos, Bill Yukna, Randy Scollins

Notes taken by: Maham Zia

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00 PM by Tracey, Chairwoman.

7:00 PM Mr. Cutler Town Clerk Budget

Expense Items

Department 161: There is an addition to another line item that is \$1200 usually. Whenever zoning bylaws change, there is an additional cost. Estimating \$1,500 rise (\$2,700 by the end).

Capital Items

Bob explained a dog licensing program that would add \$2,500. Tracey asked for an explanation of the program. Bob detailed that the program maintains dog licenses and would also contribute towards animal control depending on the citations sent out. He also added that the program is expected to come under the amount of \$2,300.

Tracey asked if this amount was a onetime spending and why this program is needed. Bob explained that there might be a small maintenance fee and that the program would make the dog licensing process much quicker and easier. Thom and Heidi further asked if the dog licensing fee goes towards Sue's pay to which Bob responded that it goes elsewhere.

Heidi asked how much the licensing fee was expected to bring in. Bob said that it would bring in \$6-7,000 with the licensing fee alone but Sue could possibly bring in more with late fees and citations.

John asked if everyone will be asked to get their dogs licensed. Bob explained that it would cost more to follow up with everyone for licensing. He also said that the cost comparison of reaching out to dog owners and the licensing fee returns were currently unknown.

Elections Budget (162)

Bob explained that the election booths have gotten have started clicking and falling because they are old and need to be replaced for safety issues. He also mentioned that Bill K and Randy suggested replacing

half at a time. Tracey asked if it is more economical to replace all 75 booths at the same time. Bob said that he didn't think so. Thom also pointed out that next year will be a huge election year and that could be a factor in the cost as well. Bob said that it's hard to say if it will be a factor.

Salary for Elections

Bob explained that the current employee, shared with the Assessor's Office, works 23 hours and the request is to make that employee full time for elections. He said that the state is asking for additional steps to existing processes and there is a greater stress on tracking processes, archiving and ethics. This in turn means more work load outside of elections and census time. Tracey asked why the current employee who works 23 hours can't do the full 35 hours and Bob clarified that she would indeed be doing the full 35 hours. Tracey further asked if the position is benefitted and Bob responded that it was already benefitted and would remain to be so. Larry T and Randy had a brief discussion about how the position in the Assessor's Office will be filled if the shared employee becomes full time for elections.

7:30 PM School Committee Budget Review

Larry T and Sue went to sit in the audience to avoid any personal conflicts.

Technology

Deb overviewed annual baselines and benchmarks and upcoming dates like Public Hearings in the budget process. She said that the budget message hasn't changed a lot because things are in a good place. One of the main budget priorities is technology infrastructure and providing programs that help teachers and students integrate new technology in the classroom. To that end, they want to hire a third full time tech integration specialist that the high school and middle school will share. Heidi asked for more details about the tech integration specialist which followed a discussion about exact duties, availability to teachers and qualifications of a tech integration specialist.

Tracey asked if this was a common position in other school districts and Bruce supplied that it is and the districts don't have them may not be as successful where it comes to utilization new technology to its potential. Thom, Tracey and Deb further discussed the flexibility and usefulness of an integration specialist at the conclusion of which Bruce reiterated the importance of a STEM education.

Next, Deb reviewed the growth in math due to additional support in elementary level math. She described that the elementary math specialist helps analyze data and also coach teachers. She also said that the middle school case load for music teachers had increased a lot and there was a need for an additional music instructor.

Reductions in ELA & Math

Heidi asked about the reduction in the ELA and Math departments. Debbie explained that the reductions were line with enrollments and caseloads. Some of the classes fell off because students were doing well and enrolling in higher level courses or because test prep classes did not need as many sections. Tracey further asked how class sizes would be affected by section reduction. According to Debbie the expected impact will be plus two if none at all. Heidi asked if there will be attrition or if someone will have to move. Debbie said that she was unsure but this reduction was purely about caseloads matching classes

and staff. The discussion concluded with Tracey asking to be provided overviews of the departments being reduced which Debbie agreed to supply. In terms of attrition, Bruce added that Amy and Bill manage retirement and the movement of people really well. Bill Y said that they keep a close eye on who is up for what move.

Transportation

Tracey asked for an explanation of school transportation. Debbie explained that transportation is always a volatile number, dependent on the number of homeless families moving in or out of Foxborough as they are guaranteed transportation to Foxborough if they choose to continue schooling there. Tracey asked about the scope of homelessness in Foxborough. Bill Y responded that even with just one family, the cost adds up since there is no choice if they opt to attend school here or in their previous district. He also added that if tracked right though, 50% is returned later. Tracey asked if our transportation costs are lower because we own our buses. Overall hard and soft dollar transportation costs are less because Foxboro owns its businesses.

Thom asked what the difference is between temporary and permanent in the mandate. Debbie said that this was determined by another department and not in their control. John asked if this transportation involves crossing state lines. Debbie said that she has had a case of it before and it is likely because it is a federal law. John finally asked if a town employee transports outside of town. Bill Y said that a different service was used for this.

Full Day Kindergarten

Bruce said that they wanted to offer this but it's too big a hit right now. Monica asked what the maximum number of kids per class is. Debbie said that they were comfortable with up to 23, with teacher's assistants present. Debbie said that there is no market for half day KG, as it exists currently and the challenge is to provide it as we are required by law to provide no-cost kindergarten. Bill Y added that 85% of the state provides this service. Bruce, Tracey and Debbie further discussed that it was just a matter of time before this issue would have to be resolved. Tina said that other districts made a tough decision to add this service from the beginning whereas we added Spanish to first grade.

Retirements

Bill Y said that the budget assumed that people are going to retire and a certain amount of salaries need to be made up in new hires. He said that he keeps track of where people are in their careers and it has worked in the past. Debbie said that if this is ever in jeopardy, they would have to manage it more closely. Bill Y said that grants and revolving accounts are also present but can't be relied on since their approval is not know till after the budgeting period. Tracey said that as long as this could be planned for, it's ok.

Thom asked if the snow storms stuff add costs. Bill Y said no since teacher salary and transport is based on x amount of days. The only place that may see an increase is building maintenance.

Heidi asked if the music increase would mean more benefits too. Deb said that there would be no increase in benefits.

Heidi asked why the increase in the principals' salary is low. Debbie explained that teachers had more lane changes in their career as they added years of experience or more qualifications. John asked what the measure for lanes is. Debbie said that our average salaries are exactly average despite the great staff. Heidi asked if there is a cap to the salary increase. Debbie said that there is.

Hanover Lodge

Bill Y said that the Lodge is a 40B and it produces 19 kids. He added that most families there are very transient so we don't get a lot of students. He said even triple the student load from that housing was manageable.

John asked if we know how many kids enrolled and how many are eligible but are being home schooled or attend private schools. Bill Y said that we have to track the private schools because all kids in Foxboro have to get an education. Debbie added that most of those numbers are staying the same. Bruce said that we want to push the envelope so that kids stay in our system though to which Debbie said that we have fewer and fewer kids going to the Charter school. Thom asked how the charter school affects us and whether that is that in the town or school budget. Randy said that it fell on the town bottom line.

Heidi asked what the difference between material and supplies is. Bill Y responded that supplies are like paper etc while material is academic databases and information. Tracey added that copiers are changing so much and so quickly that in three years you won't want the same ones. Bill Y said that this has also brought down the use of printers because the copiers are on network now.

Bill Y said that we were able to supplement the cost needed with revolving accounts.. The sped budget moves up and down all the year and we just want to be sure that we have the capability or cushioning to manage that. Randy added that there really isn't a contingency in town to handle it and it is very prudent. Bill Y went on that we are able to spend less to cover all the things that other places are spending just on transportation for sped bus. He said that sped transportation is a good deal for us and we haven't outsourced because the cost goes up after the initial year.

Tracey asked about the CIP requests. Bill Y said that \$638,000 is the number; Tracey asked about the big items. Bill Y responded that it is the usual biggies: replace computers, integrated camera system for all buildings. Tracey asked how much cameras would cost specifically. Bill Y said they would be \$78,000 and why integrated cameras are a better deal. Thom asked if these would work with school IDs to which Bill Y confirmed they would. Next, Bill Y covered the funding needed for tiles in Igo's Media Center and explained the history.

Field Lighting

Tracey pointed out that the AdCom had asked if this would come up later at a previous meeting. Deb responded that it has been 2 years and they had promised not to come back for funding before that which they have not. . Debbie further added that it was a good time to go for lighting right now since Dr. Berns was able to secure a discounted rate. Tracey asked for the cost. \$165,000 is expected for one of the best systems. Bill Y said that Dr. Burns got a discount on this amazing system but there is quite an installation cost that has been donated if we go with this.

Debbie said that the turf needs to be replaced eventually and that it was always part of the plan to generate revenue from this field. Tracey asked if the field would be rentable after lighting which Bill Y affirmed. Tracey asked what kind of money can be made from the rentals. Debbie said that it would be more than no revenue at all as it currently stood. Bill Y said that the field would also start to repay itself. Randy added that the \$638,000 would fit into CIP.

Tracey asked how other towns do this. Debbie explained that other schools built the entire complex when they built the high school. Bruce said that they could put this in their own budget request instead of the CIP. Tracey asked if the plan involved lighting down the line. Debbie said that they didn't have the years but they had the order in which things needed to be done.

Patrick asked if the primary purpose is to put together campus or rental. Debbie said both. Patrick asked if the whole request could be put out as a whole package in that case. Bill Y responded that it might not hit the taxpayers if done in smaller steps. He said that the alternate would be to borrow. Patrick asked how much could be offset by income and Bill Y said that there is not enough for a considerable offset.

Tracey pressed how much can be done without borrowing right now. Randy said that it could be done now if it wasn't for priorities and other political issues like the Burrell. Tracey told Debbie that she had addressed all the issues and now she had answers for the people. John asked what the supply and demand was like in field rental and if this would have adverse affects on other. Debbie said that that wasn't an issue as the demand is high and there aren't enough fields. John asked for a more formal study. Tracey agreed that it would be helpful to supply stats when people ask questions. There was a general discussion about the liability that not completing the field could present.

9:50 PM Section 4, Comparable Districts

Amy overviewed our scores with comparable districts. She highlighted that there was major growth in math, 81.5 percent compared to the 40-50% typical growth. Tracey asked if English is concerning compared to other districts like us. Amy said that the growth there is average.

Heidi asked how many kids are in that Sped program. Bill Y said that there are 421 roughly including 21 out of district too. John asked if the 24% on the sped pie chart includes instruction. Debbie said it does. Bill Y further added that they try to keep the kids in the district unless their needs exceeded what Foxboro could offer. Tracey thanked the School Committee members, adding that this was a very interesting and informative meeting. Debbie thanked the Adcom as well and said that she felt positive about the discussion.

10:15PM Randy asked for authorization to declare an emergency so they could spend over the snow & ice budget amount.-

Tracey motioned to authorize the use of emergency funds and John seconded.

Vote: 7/0/0 (Note: All voting here and below by the following members as the others had left: John, Heidi, Thom, Tracey, Larry T, Patrick, and Sue)

10:17PM Review and Accept Previous Adcom Minutes

Meeting Minutes January 14th

Larry T motioned to accept the minutes and John seconded.

Vote: 7/0/0

Meeting Minutes January 7th

Larry T motioned to accept the minutes and Thom seconded.

Vote: 7/0/0

Adjourn 10:20 PM

Larry T motioned to adjourn and John seconded.

Vote: 7/0/0

Minutes approved by Vote of the Advisory Committee.

Date of Meeting: March 4, 2015

Vote: 8-0-2

Tracey Vasile

Advisory Committee Chairman