

**SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 15, 2011**

Members Present: Larry Harrington, Chairman  
James J. DeVellis, Vice Chairman  
Mark Sullivan, Clerk  
Lorraine Brue  
Lynda Walsh

Others Present: Kevin Paicos, Town Manager  
Debbra Spinelli, School Superintendent  
Paul Jackson, School Finance Director  
School Committee Members – Katie Adair, Bruce Gardner,  
Kate Kominsky, Martha Slattery, Beverly Lord  
Advisory Committee Members – John Gray, Chairman, Bob  
Garber, Larry Thomas, George Leonard, Jeff Anderson,  
Kevin Powers, Tina Belanger, Frank Keough and  
Steven Udden  
Bill Casbarra, Building Commissioner  
Michael Johns, Veterans Services Officer

The Meeting was brought to order at 7:00 p.m. by Larry Harrington, Chairman. This was a joint meeting with the School Committee, the Advisory Committee and the Board of Selectmen.

**7:00 – Citizens Input** – Michael Johns, Veterans Services Agent, presented Bob Siteman, Chairman of the Veteran's Services Advisory Committee, with a Certificate of Appreciation for organizing the November 11<sup>th</sup> Veteran's Day program. Mike said the program received many accolades as the "best ever" Veteran's Day ceremony. He recognized the outstanding initiative and the support of the other civil organizations and volunteers who helped make the program a success.

Debbie Stewart, 44 Neponset Heights Ave., asked whether the Town had received any follow-up from National Grid with respect to storm damage. Kevin Paicos said he had not heard from National Grid. He said he would be proactive on this and has initiated a DPU investigation. He does not expect this would lead to anything dramatic. He pointed out that a representative from National Grid said they could start a cutting program in two weeks, this has not happened. Larry Harrington said he had talked to Mike Webber, FCA, who is trying to get together a video, something that could tie in with getting jobs for people in the area. It was pointed out that this would identify the impact of the storm and get the Legislature to make things happen at the State level. Jim DeVellis said he had spoken to someone on the Chamber of Commerce from the Governor's Office and he asked what plans they have to do something at the State level.

The response was that not a lot would be done at the State level, if anything is to be done it would have to happen in the towns.

Julie Grant, Foxboro Jaycees, said they had been doing the holiday lights at the Town Common. She pointed out that they would do the Nativity Scene but asked for assistance in putting up the lights. They are planning to do the decorating on December 3rd. Kevin Paicos said if the Board agreed, the Town would put up the lights.

Larry Harrington noted that at the last Board meeting a discussion was held about the brush being piled up along the sidewalks and streets. He said the Board has to think about ways to find funding to clean things up. People are not taking brush to the compost. The Board is concerned from the stand point public safety. A decision has to be made on whether or not to commit the Town before the snow flies. Kevin Paicos advised the Senior citizens for whom brush removal might become a financial burden to work through the Council on Aging. The C.O.A. would verify the need for financial assistance and the Town would pick up the brush. He feels the Town cannot take the responsibility of picking up every home; the Town does not have the resources. Lorraine Brue asked if this could be opened up to those families in Foxborough who could not afford to have the branches taken away by private contractors. Kevin Paicos pointed out that those families would also have to verify their financial need. Further comments were made regarding hanging tree limbs, possible personal injury and class action suits, a suggestion was made to hire outside contractors to clear up the brush. Kevin Paicos pointed out that when the snow is plowed the brush would be pushed right back into the home owners yard. He said it comes down to people accepting civic responsibility to do the right thing and people should stop leaning on government to do everything. Lynda Walsh said the Town has to find a way to make the streets and sidewalks safe. She would like to see the Town continue to help out the citizens who need help. Lorraine Brue suggested the possibility of sharing equipment with other towns in order to get things cleaned up.

School Committee and Advisory Committee Discussions: Motion made and seconded to open the School Committee Meeting.

Vote: 5 – Unanimous.

Motion made and seconded to open the Advisory Committee Meeting.

Vote: 9 - Unanimous.

**7:05 – FY-13 Revenue/Expenses Forecast:** Randy Scollins distributed copies of the “Preliminary Revenue Estimate for FY 2013 Operating Budgets”. He reviewed the first three pages – Index, FY 2013 Budget Milestone Calendar and a “Dilbert” take on budget numbers (a bit of humor). He explained that in preparation of the budget many estimates lead into many numbers that are complex on a large number of topics. He said he attempted to focus on salient points for this presentation.

The Executive Summary FY 2012 numbers show some changes from the original budget estimates. On the Revenue side, Randy explained that Net Taxation was increased from the original budget by \$206,499 in estimated New Growth. However, this has not yet been certified as of this meeting. He pointed out that the Fixed Costs also show an increase – Charter School Assessment, the \$12K Quinn Bill and Workers Comp premiums higher. The FY 2012 Revenue estimates are a net of \$66K higher – the Fixed Costs are estimated at \$23K higher. This leaves an Estimated Net Positive Variance of \$43K.

The Executive Summary FY 2013 numbers show a budget deficit of \$723K. Randy Scollins reviewed these numbers. He pointed out that the FY-13 Revenue is estimated to increase \$1.6MM over FY-12, with \$906K available for operating budgets and the fixed costs are also estimated to increase \$1.2MM of which \$616K with no dedicated funding. Larry Harrington asked Randy to explain how the Snow & Ice impacts the next year's revenue. Randy explained that there is little change in the Snow & Ice budget; he explained that it is the only budget item where the Town can exceed the budgeted amount. When that happens, the dollar amount is taken automatically from the operating budget of the following year. Other issues discussed included the Kraft contract with UMass for football games, concerns about Soccer games being moved out and the event-based PILOT program. Larry Harrington said he would like to know how much free cash is generated every year; to be able to see where all extra revenue comes out as free cash. Randy Scollins said the free cash had just been certified at \$3.6M for this year. \$1,450,000 is roll over from prior year. He said the reserve funds are being used judiciously. He recommends using \$1,650,000; with Capital Expenditures at \$550,000 that brings free cash to approximately \$2M. Kevin Paicos pointed out that free cash has been declining each year. If the Town uses cash from Stadium events, it's going to impact free cash and care has to be taken about committing non-cyclical revenue to cyclical costs. Randy Scollins said he would like to get the Town to step down to \$1,650,000 annually for free cash. Larry Harrington pointed out that the revenue does not support wage increases. Kevin Paicos noted that looking to FY13 he is expecting to realize a large potential savings in the changes in the employee health insurance program, installation of solar panels savings in FT14 and an aggressive cost control program are some of the ways the Town is looking at to save money. He said he is looking for guidance from policy boards.

Debbie Spinelli said she appreciated all the information from Randy, Kevin Paicos and the BOS. She said the School Department would follow the standard process as it has in the past. She is comfortable where they are right now in the process.

John Gray commented on the \$450,000 deficit and asked what message had been sent to the Department heads in preparing their budgets. Does the Town expect to close the gap or will the Town be left with a deficit.

Kevin Paicos pointed out that there would be no increase in budget requests except for increases in energy costs; COLA adjustments for major labor contracts, specifically DPW and Library. Debbie Spinelli reminded the Board of the terms of School contracts – zero increases including all programming units; the 2<sup>nd</sup> year would be taking 1% and 1% split; others are entering into negotiations this year.

Further discussion included comments regarding regionalization where possible, looking more closely at the revolving accounts and the use of terminology such as “level budget” or “level services” as they have different meanings. Kevin Paicos gave a brief summary of how the budget is prepared. He said the question is to “reduce taxes but at what cost”. If a “business as usual budget” is put together, the citizens are clearly looking at an increase of some type. He pointed out that a level service budget to be presented to the public has to be with the possibility of not providing things that the Town does not need to provide. Kevin said that lacking any instruction from the BOS regarding replication of services again this year, he would assume that services are what the citizens want and he would make a recommendation to alter the things in the budget that can be altered. Kevin suggested to figure out how much can be spent and build a budget that is adequate to what the needs are and if no reductions can be made, then consider increasing taxation. He pointed out that the Town has to do a better job instead of taxing to the limit and if there is a way then the taxpayer could get a break. Mark Sullivan asked Debbie Spinelli if the School Department is aware of any retirement and if so, do they expect to replace the vacancies with new people. Debbie said it is too early to consider retirements. The Department does intend to replace people, the process is starting. The process does leave some “wiggle” room but costs go up or down and there’s no indication at this time about what that would be. Bruce Gardner said he heard that the Town wants a certain kind of budget. There will be more dialog and they would put forth a budget that reflects accountability and making sure the budget would be what is expected.

Motion made and seconded to close the School Committee meeting.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion made and seconded to close the Advisory Committee meeting.

Vote: 9-0-0

**8:15 – Regional Veterans’ Services Officer** – Michael Johns, Veterans’ Service Agent, explained that there had been discussions in the past about sharing the Veterans’ Services. It was determined that Foxborough wanted a full time agent. He came before the Board with a proposal to share these services and that this proposal has the support of the veterans.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding how this could be accomplished, the other towns that would be involved, how the Agency would be staffed, who would be full time and what the responsibilities for each agent would be and

whether this would improve Veteran's services. Michael Johns said he had researched this at the State level and feels that having a regional agency would provide better services for the veterans, there would be someone in the office at all times and at the same time allow a full time agent the opportunity to do more outreach work. He said there is a lot of behind the scene work to be done; an example is preparing for Veteran's Day services. The towns being considered are Easton, Norton, Mansfield and Foxborough. Michael pointed out that Foxborough has a twelve member Veterans' Services Advisory Committee. He said the district would be renewed every year and suggested that the Town move forward with this. He believes a Veterans' Services District would provide equal or better services to the veterans and their families. Further discussion was held regarding salaries, staffing and how this would impact the budget.

Motion by Mark Sullivan to enter into a regional Veterans' Service Agency as outlined by Michael Johns, Veterans' Service Agent. Seconded by Jim DeVellis. **Vote: 5-0-0**

**8:30 – Goals and Objectives** – Kevin Paicos gave an update on the Human Resources candidate. He explained that the candidate selected, Marie Gomes, declined the offer made by Foxborough. He said there was no other qualified candidate who would be interested. He explained that Foxborough is unique in that there is some confusion between the Personnel By-Law and the authority of the Town Manager. He said this would have to be delayed until the May Town Meeting to make a by-law change. He does not want to wait; he said the Town needs that person now. Kevin said he would like to offer a temporary extension to Tim Cummings to take on the responsibilities of that position. Larry Harrington pointed out that there is money in the budget for a Human Relations Director. He asked Kevin to keep the Board updated on the funding. Kevin said he has elevated Tim Cummings to more hours; he said he cannot wait three or four months on this and he wanted to make sure the Board is aware that he is doing that before doing it.

Larry Harrington explained that there have been discussions about the Town Manager's job review being based on goals and objectives and there is a discrepancy between what is written and what is expected. He spoke about the process and the long list of goals and objectives, leadership and whether these are in alignment with what is happening in the community. He pointed out that the list of goals and objectives does not give needed guidance toward what the Board is looking for as to job evaluation. Kevin Paicos said he has been working right along on many of the listed goals and objectives; some are cyclical and some are going to change. He pointed out that he has tried to reflect comments made by the Board during his evaluation. He wants to know what the standard is for evaluation. He said it was hard to construct a goal from some of the comments but he tried to capture some of the things so that he would know what the Board wants. Larry Harrington suggested that two Board members work with Kevin to come up with something that would align with what is to be expected.

Jim DeVellis suggested that BOS and the Town Manager work together on Goals and Objectives to be prioritized and accomplished within one year. He pointed out that unless the pending things are discussed, it does not mean a lot. Further discussion was held concerning the contract and making sure the Board is in compliance with that. Lorraine Brue expressed concern about the COLA benefit. She believes that the Town is contractually obligated to pay that. Jim DeVellis and Lynda Walsh will work with Kevin on Goals and Objectives.

**ACTION:**

Larry Harrington suggested that the Board ask Kevin Paicos to draft a letter to National Grid reminding them that they promised to do certain things and have not yet followed through on the list of things from Hurricane Irene. The letter should invite the Vice President to come back to the Board for discussion at another meeting.

**Minutes:** The Minutes of the Board of Selectmen meetings of October 4<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> were reviewed.

Motion by Lynda Walsh to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of October 4, 2011 as amended. Seconded by Lorraine Brue. **Vote: 5-0-0**

Motion by Lynda Walsh to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of October 25, 2011 as amended. Seconded by Jim DeVellis. **Vote: 5-0-0**

**Resignation:** Received from Betsy Buckland notice of her resignation after serving six years as a member of the Foxborough Cultural Council, effective October 25, 2011.

Motion by Lynda Walsh to accept with gratitude the resignation from the Foxborough Cultural Council as submitted by Betsy Buckland. Seconded by Lorraine Brue. **Vote: 5-0-0**

**Walpole Board of Selectmen – Joint Meeting** – Received from Eric Kraus, Chairman of the Walpole Board of Selectmen a letter requesting a joint meeting between the Walpole BOS and Foxborough BOS to be held at the Boyden School on December 13, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting is to discuss the possibility of a large scale construction project, wind turbines and extended commuter rail service to the Stadium and how that would impact both the Town of Walpole and the Town of Foxborough. A brief discussion was held. Mark Sullivan suggested writing a letter to recognize these issues and that the Board appreciates their concern but does not feel the need to meet at this time especially since there is nothing on the December STM Warrant.

Motion by Lynda Walsh to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussion and release of Executive Session minutes and to exit Executive Session for the sole purpose of adjournment. Seconded by Lorraine Brue.

<b>Vote: 5-0-0</b>	Larry Harrington, Chairman	Yes
	Jim DeVellis, Vice Chairman	Yes
	Mark Sullivan, Clerk	Yes
	Lorraine Brue	Yes
	Lynda Walsh	Yes

Motion by Jim DeVellis to adjourn. Seconded by Mark Sullivan.

**Vote: 5-0-0** Meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

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Mark Sullivan Clerk