

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FRIDAY, JANUARY 3, 1992

Present: Chairman David A. Wallace, John C. Drobinski and Judith A. Cope.

The statutory requirements as to notice having been complied with, the special meeting was called to order by Chairman David A. Wallace at the Loring Parsonage, 288 Old Sudbury Road, at 8:00 a.m.

FY93 Budget Discussion

Present: Roy Sanford, Finance Committee Chairman, and Terri Ackerman, Budget and Personnel Officer.

Executive Secretary Richard E. Thompson expressed to those present his concern about the severe impact of projected budget cuts on town departments and warned against town departments absorbing cuts at the expense of funding the schools. He further warned against counting upon using the healthy Free Cash figure being estimated by the Town Accountant, as this figure may be premature and subject to change.

Finance Committee Chairman Roy Sanford reported that, at his request, Budget and Personnel Officer Terri Ackerman had produced data from the 31 budgets currently on file which projects coming in \$20,000 under the Levy Limit IF all department budgets are level funded, all estimated receipts are at FY92 level, and no funds are used from Free Cash, Stabilization Fund or Abatement Surplus. He further stated the Minuteman School Assessment will be approximately \$20,000 more than last year.

Mr. Sanford also reported that he had learned the Personnel Board was not in favor of some departments receiving increases and others having increases reduced; in other words, all departments (union and non-union) should be treated the same. However, the Personnel Board had indicated it may be supportive of other measures, such as a furlough. Executive Secretary Thompson agreed that there would be less stress now and in the future if the basic salary structure is maintained.

With regard to other revenue sources, Executive Secretary Thompson stated that at some point the Board would need to address taking a position on using available funds, and that, if some funds are used, the Town departments should receive a proportionate share.

Mr. Sanford reported from the Finance Committee's meeting with the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (L-S) there was a concern by L-S about infrastructure failure, loss of positions and reduction in bus transportation. A level service request would mean an approximate \$600,000 increase. L-S has agreed on decreasing salary for key staff persons and would not restore these salaries if more funding materializes.

Mr. Sanford further mentioned that the Minuteman budget has increased 1.7%; it has negotiated 0% salary increase and is recommending same for staff; and may reject deferral of teacher salaries for next year.

Selectman Judith A. Cope stated she wished a salary freeze or reduction could be initiated in order to keep level services.

Selectman John C. Drobinski noted that businesses do freeze salaries and favored pursuing action concerning the FY93 salary increases. He expressed his opinion that there is public sentiment that the Town should allocate more to the schools, that there is a groundswell not to cut education, and did he not recommend trying to level fund all budgets at town meeting.

There followed a discussion on the status of discussions/communication with the various town and school unions concerning FY93 salaries.

Selectman Cope recommended a letter be sent to all Town unions calling for renegotiation of salaries, asking for across-the-board cuts and explaining the request is being made in an attempt to provide services level with FY92.

Executive Secretary Thompson and Chairman Wallace viewed this approach negatively and felt it inappropriate due to the Selectmen's position in the collective bargaining process. Executive Secretary referenced his letter already sent to the five town unions broaching the subject, dated December 6, 1991.

Instead, Finance Committee Chairman Roy Sanford suggested sending a letter to each department stating the severity of the situation and seeking a solution other than cutting personnel.

Chairman Wallace agreed a letter could be sent but worded carefully, prefacing it by stating that level funding is going to be necessary.

Executive Secretary Thompson set forth further ideas for wording of such a letter: State the impact of level funding based on budgets submitted to the Finance Committee - state that the Selectmen strongly desire to maintain town services and personnel if possible - express concern about reductions in maintenance, equipment and loss of personnel and services - and stress the Board's hope to try to work toward a solution to retain personnel and services as much as possible. It was agreed that Mr. Thompson would draft a communication for the Selectmen's review on January 6.

It was expressed generally that, given the economic realities of the area, there was little chance an override would pass and this should not be counted on.

Mr. Sanford reported on input received from the Board of Assessors on Local Estimated Receipts, Abatement Surplus, and a New Construction figure of \$200,000.

Mr. Sanford inquired about seeking savings by combining the Planning and Conservation Departments relative to personnel. Mr. Thompson replied that there was no support for this at present but perhaps there would be in the future. Ms. Ackerman stated she would look into the savings aspect, which might not be very great. Mr. Thompson stated that this year a combined Finance Department was being proposed which would ultimately produce savings, and that another reorganization that would realize greater savings would be combining Highway, Engineering and Park and Recreation in a Public Works Department, which was slated for the near future.

The Board discussed in general the Executive Secretary's memorandum of December 31, 1991, setting forth his recommendations for positions on individual budgets under the Selectmen's jurisdiction, but took no positions. Selectman Cope indicated she did not support the Highway Surveyor's letter of

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December 27, 1991, recommending use of five part-time summer students for cemetery maintenance, to be paid from funds transferred from Cemetery Sale of Lots or Investment Income accounts.

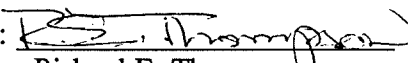
The Board was in receipt of and approved an amended Unclassified Budget for re-submission to the Finance Committee (increasing Retirement and Worker's Compensation). Ms. Ackerman was asked if any future reductions might occur in Unclassified line items which could ease budgetary constraints; she replied that the opposite was more likely to occur, particularly with possible increases needed in the Health Insurance account.

Mr. Sanford brought up the Finance Committee's concern over the Selectmen's reduction of the Budget and Personnel Officer's line item under its level fund budget. This issue was discussed at length, with Mr. Sanford expressing his fear that the Finance Committee would not receive the information and assistance it required. Mr. Thompson agreed that the present arrangement was ideal, but the Selectmen's Office staff could not suffer any reduction further than the loss of the Telephone Operator, and stated that the slack could be picked up by less attention to Personnel Board matters, if necessary, and utilization of Accounting Department and Selectmen's Office other personnel. Mr. Thompson further brought up the fact that the Budget and Personnel Officer's salary might be absorbed within the proposed new Finance Department. It was agreed that this subject would be addressed again when the details of the reorganization had been determined. Mr. Sanford stated he would like to see the salary reinstated if any funds become available.

Concerning the Executive Secretary's letter of December 23, 1991, to the Finance Committee Chairman regarding town-owned vehicles and use of current IRS rates to compute mileage allowance, the Selectmen agreed. Ms. Janet Silva, Administrative Assistant to the Board, reported that Town Counsel had opined verbally that a separate article was unnecessary and the IRS mileage provision could be included in the budget wrap-up vote.

Mr. Sanford stated that the Finance Committee is planning a cable-televised "Budget Connection" session, with Chairman Wallace, Executive Secretary Richard E. Thompson, Lincoln-Sudbury Superintendent Matthew King, Superintendent of Schools Henry DeRusha, and himself on the panel. This would take place immediately after receipt of warrants, approximately March 18 or 19.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Attest: 
Richard E. Thompson
Executive Secretary-Clerk