

Local Aid Proposed Cuts Discussion Meeting
Tuesday, March 4, 2003
LSRHS - 7:30 p.m.
Board of Selectmen Meeting Notes

Present:

Maureen Valente, Sudbury Town Manager	Tim Higgins, Lincoln Town Administrator
Dr. John Ritchie, LSRHS Superintendent	William Hurley, SPS Superintendent
Gary Taylor, Lincoln Selectmen	Lawrence O'Brien, Sudbury Selectmen
Kirsten Roopenian, Sudbury Selectmen	John Drobinski, Sudbury Selectmen
Susan Pope, State Representative	Pam Resor, Senator
Kerry Speidel, Sudbury Finance Director	Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary
Tracy Billig, Sudbury FinCom Co-Chair	Michael Grosberg, Sudbury FinCom Co-Chair
Martha Ragonese, Sudbury Finance Committee	Bob Jacobson, Sudbury Finance Committee
John Nikula, Sudbury Finance Committee	Sheila Stewart, Sudbury Finance Committee
Lauri Wishner, LSRHS Committee	Eric Harris, LSRHS Committee
Pat Phillips, Lincoln Finance Committee	Bill Braun, SPS Committee
Kathleen Precourt, SPS Committee	Mark Collins, Candidate LSRHS Committee
Brice Willis	Ted Fedynyshyn, Candidate LSRHS Com.
Eileen Glovsky, LSRHS Committee	Karen Krone, SPS Committee
Richard Robison, Chairman-SPS Com.	Jane Santinelli, SPS Committee
Mary Cancian, Lincoln Finance Committee	Sara Mattes, Lincoln Selectmen
Colleen Wilkins, Lincoln Finance Director	Al Schmertzler, Lincoln Finance Committee
Paul Giese, Lincoln Finance Committee	Pat Phillips, Lincoln Finance Committee

Sudbury Selectman Chairman Larry O'Brien opened the meeting at 7:35 p.m. He welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss Governor Romney's budget proposal and how it will be affecting local aid. Since both the House and Senate will present their own versions of the budget this spring, Chairman O'Brien stated there will probably be more questions than answers tonight. The purpose of this meeting is to get everyone together and hear all available information first hand.

Lincoln Selectman Gary Taylor thanked everyone for attending the meeting as well. He stated he was a bit shocked about the available information, but looks forward and is willing to work with everyone through this difficult time.

Sudbury Town Manager Maureen Valente discussed the effects of House One on the Town of Sudbury's budget. She presented the attendees with a handout comparing figures from FY03 to FY04 (House One). She reminded everyone that none of the figures are final. She does expect there to be further changes made.

Issues presented by Maureen Valente:

- House One total equals \$5.9 million, which is a cut of 15%
- FY03 less 9c cuts equals a 13% cut
- Town of Sudbury projected a 10% cut, but House One added another 5% cut
- \$314,674 was cut beyond the original projected budget
- Minutemen High School will be asking Towns for more money. She stated that there will be some money for Chapter 70 that could go to them.
- Lottery – FY 03 cut was 30%, for FY04 it will be a 40% cut. Most towns through out the

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Commonwealth took a 40% cut.

- Transportation figures – these figures are not exact. The Town is expecting more changes and will be working with Pauline Paste in the future.
- She asked if LSRHS & Minuteman High School should be treated the same. She is not sure, but is looking into it.
- She stated that they did not get definite answers from the Governor's office during their conference call. She has some confidence in regards to the figures given for House One.

Lincoln Selectman Gary Taylor asked, if everything hits the way Maureen Valente is expecting, how would the Finance Committee allocate funds to the High School.

Bob Jacobson, Sudbury Finance Committee, stated that is a question that can not be answered at this time. He also stated that we will need to start worrying about Fiscal Year 05 now. Sudbury Town Manager Maureen Valente, stated if there is no override or one fails, then the three cost centers would need to decide how to split the \$314,000 deficit and will also need to take a better look at potential FY 05 issues.

Kathy Precourt brought up the fact that the figures being printed in the warrant are now known to be different. Maureen Valente stated that this is a known issue and is a problem that can't be fixed tonight. Right now, the issue is to get everyone onto the same page.

Tim Higgins, Lincoln Town Administrator, discussed what will happen to the Town of Lincoln under House One. He has been getting different information on when, if, and how much State Aid will be cut. He presented the attendees with a handout showing the effects of the cuts on Lincoln's budget.

Issues presented by Tim Higgins:

- The Town of Lincoln has a \$350,000 override on the budget. Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 29, 2003.
- For State Owned Land, he thought Lincoln would get more money, but it didn't. He is working on getting a clarification as to how the figure was arrived at.
- Transportation figures. He hasn't had a chance to speak with Pauline Paste, but he expects there to be changes to these figures.
- Lincoln's aid is down 17.5% or \$363,521.
- The Town is short by \$100,000. He will need to discuss this with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee members.
- They are looking at the possibility of postponing Town Meeting action until the figures are more concrete. A more in-depth discussion will need to be held with the Selectmen and Finance Committee in Lincoln.

Maureen Valente asked if it is possible to get a reaction from LSRHS. Superintendent John Ritchie stated that he was shocked and confused when the information first got released. He thought a typo or clerical error had taken place. He is happy and relieved to see that the cuts are being faced as a community issue. At this time, he does not fully understand how the regional high schools are going to be affected.

The idea was presented to have Lt. Governor Healy come back to Sudbury, and hold a joint meeting with all cost centers involved. The last time that Lt. Governor Healy was here, she introduced herself as the "point person" in dealing with the Governor's budget.

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Susan Pope, State Representative, informed everyone that the Administration & Finance Department was having conference calls to try to help answer questions from the various communities. She said things will probably get more confusing when the House and Senate budgets are released. She said it is possible to try to get Lt. Governor Healy out here for another discussion, but she is not sure if she will be able to answer all the questions. Rep. Pope suggested that our concerns should be put in writing, and passed on the State Representatives, the Governor, and the press. Towns are going to need the public's support in order to try to get future changes made.

Maureen Valente stated that this was a valid point mentioned by Rep. Susan Pope. If the Towns keep quiet, it looks as if the Towns are saying we accept the cuts and it is the right thing to do.

It was suggested that around \$60 million could be cut from the state budget if the MCAS were eliminated. It was pointed out that the majority of students from LSRHS passed MCAS on the first try.

Superintendent John Ritchie asked if it was possible to know the Town's decision making process and how they plan to handle this. William Hurley, SPS Superintendent, stated that the Town of Sudbury has an early Town Meeting and will need to go with the figures that were already voted on, and then try to explain everything to the public. He stated that a second Town Meeting will most likely be needed.

Maureen Valente stated one approach is for Town Meeting to deal with the non-financial articles, and then come back at later date to deal with the budget.

Sudbury Selectman Kirsten Roopenian stated this is huge issue facing the Town that the majority of the citizens are unaware of, and since the local newspaper reporter is not in attendance at tonight's meeting, it will have to be the responsibility of all present to go out and educate the public. She stated she is getting calls and letters at home telling her she should support the Governor's cuts. It is going to be a challenge to get the public educated, she concluded.

Town Administrator Tim Higgins agreed and believes that the general public does not fully understand what is being effected by these cuts.

Senator Pam Resor informed everyone that the House and Senate have a budget hearing scheduled for Friday, March 7, 2003.

Superintendent William Hurley stated that SPS will not be doing any additional hiring. The schools will most likely have to do layoffs after the 2003/2004 school year starts depending on amount of grants/aids awarded to Sudbury.

Sara Mattes, Lincoln Selectman, stated, we need to be loud and go to the public; this is a political matter, and we need to educate the citizens as to what is going on.

Selectman Larry O'Brien stated that the legislature needs to decide if they back Governor Romney's budget. They are going to need to start worrying about getting re-elected by the community.

Superintendent William Hurley stated that he hopes finger pointing does not start to take place. He has never seen something so radical in all the years that he has been involved with education. There will be impacts to

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all schools and Towns. He stated that the solution is not going to be an easy one, but we need to continue to keep working collectively as we have been.

Eric Harris, LSRHS Committee, asked what is the likelihood that all three budgets (Governor, Senate, and House) will be materially different for Sudbury. Rep. Susan Pope stated she does not expect things to get any better when the next two budgets are released. But on the other hand, things should not get any worse. She believes the Ways & Means Committee will make greater cuts, and that scare tactics will be used. She realizes that the Towns can not sustain these cuts.

Tim Higgins stated that he is not sure if he feels this is a scare tactic. He feels that there is a potential for worse scenarios to appear.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Attest: _____
Maureen G. Valente
Town Manager-Clerk