

TRANSCRIPT  
TOWN FATHERS' FORUM - 92nd SESSION  
MAY 29, 1974

At 8:00 p.m., Chairman Powers called the 92nd session of the Town Fathers' Forum to order.

Chairman Powers announced that tonight's Forum would be conducted somewhat differently than in the past, as there would be a coordinated presentation on the subject of fiscal planning for Sudbury by the Executive Secretary, the Town Accountant, the Tax Collector, Treasurer, Assessors, Long Range Capital Expenditures Committee, and the Finance Committee.

The Executive Secretary distributed to those present copies of an excerpt from a paper relating to the theory of, and need for, capital budgeting in town government. Mr. Thompson stated that as the first participant of tonight's joint presentation would be Mrs. Isabelle Stone, Tax Collector.

Mrs. Stone presented to the Forum a summary of the percentage rates for property tax receipts over the past five years, which range from a low of 92.7% in 1970 to a high of 97% in 1972. In addition, Mrs. Stone announced the specific tax due dates for future years.

William E. Downing, Town Treasurer, presented to the Forum the past history of Town interest rates and expressed the difficulty in trying to forecast rates in future years. Mr. Downing presented, in chart form, the picture of the Town's outstanding debt capacity and informed the Forum of the past success in investment of Town funds, receiving recently over 11% interest in certificates of deposit.

John Wilson, Town Accountant, presented charts and graphs indicating the Town's current outstanding debt service payments and projections of costs relating to new programs, such as the Police/Fire Department headquarters building. Mr. Wilson indicated that the present Town tax rate has built into it \$4.00 for retiring debt service each year and that, based on current payments of principal and interest, the Town could absorb an \$800,000 debt service cost without increasing the tax rate in future years.

Mr. Babigian, Chairman of the Board of Assessors, reported that the present total property value for the Town is 164.5 million dollars, that in 1964 there were 2500 homes and in 1974, 3686 homes. Mr. Babigian also presented charts based on the net amount to be raised by taxation, which indicated the figure in 1965 to be 2.7 million dollars and in 1974, projected at 8.1 million dollars (based on figures furnished by the Town Accountant).

Mr. Babigian also stated that in 1965 the tax rate was \$30.00 and in 1974 was projected by the Town Accountant to be \$49.27.

WILLIAM T. RYNNE - LONG RANGE CAPITAL EXPENDITURES COMMITTEE

Mr. Rynne stated that the top priority of his committee for the coming year would be to become far more effective than in previous years. Mr. Rynne stated that his Committee would set up liaison members to work with various boards and committees regarding capital expenditures, which will allow them to become involved with these items in the planning stage.

Mr. Rynne stated that they will request updated five-year projects from all boards and committees and, in addition, some kind of schedule relating to capital expenditure items.

RICHARD E. THOMPSON - EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Mr. Thompson stated that the first stage, as presented tonight, is the beginning of the creation of a team approach to Townwide financial planning and that the second stage will be for all departments, including the schools, to present specific programs to make up a Town capital programming document.

SELECTMEN CHAIRMAN JOHN C. POWERS

Chairman Powers stated that it is the Board's hope, this year, that once individual boards and committees have drawn their lists of priorities, there will be lateral work among committees involved with capital expenditures and that these committees will then be able to arrive at a consensus.

SENATOR CHESTER ATKINS

Senator Atkins commented on Senate Bill 644, a bill to mandate salaries for building inspectors, stating that he has filed legislation which would prohibit the legislature from mandating any salaries without a vote of Town Meeting or a guarantee of wage difference.

Senator Atkins stated that there had been a continuing effort on the part of the Joint Committee on Taxation to combine various formulas (H. 1321) relating to the cherry sheet to provide, under Chapter 70, increased distributions. Senator Atkins stated that he would forward this material to the Selectmen and would appreciate their views on amendment or opposition.

In answer to a question from Selectman Toomey, Senator Atkins stated that he would support and/or file legislation relative to repeal of the law mandating the salaries of police and fire chiefs.

On the subject of the recent law relating to compulsory arbitration, Senator Atkins stated that this law is a two-year experiment, after which time, he would be happy to reassess his former position on it and perhaps introduce legislation for its repeal.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY - REPRESENTATIVE ANN GANNETT

The Executive Secretary reported that a communication dated May 28, 1974, had been received from Representative Ann Gannett, who was unable to attend tonight's forum, which contained an explanation of H.6100, which would mean a proposed substantial loss in State revenue for Sudbury. Mrs. Gannett also enclosed copies of three other bills which, she commented, in her letter, seem likely to pass -- one to defer taxes for those over 65, one to introduce business practices into schools, and the third to change Chapter 40A Zoning.

CHAIRMAN POWERS

Chairman Powers made the following announcements:

The 1974 Annual Town Meeting, which adjourned on April 30th, had exceeded authorization of expenditures over the Board's recommendations by \$439,000.

The Board had appointed Ronald Nix to the position of Permanent Police Sergeant.

There are presently two vacancies with the Police Department for the position of Patrolman.

A hearing will be held by the Board on June 10th on the subject of Article 26 - Transportation Corridors added to the Official Map.

The Board has been continuing to meet with the Permanent Building Committee relating to design changes in the proposed fire/police headquarters building.

The police negotiations are presently in fact finding.

A donation has been made to the Heritage Park Fund by the Town Hall employees.

DAVID L. TURNER - TOWN COUNSEL

Mr. Turner reported that the equalized valuation suit had been completed today, that the Master's report to the Supreme Judicial Court would be heard in approximately three weeks, and that following the report, it was hoped that the Court would enter an order to the Commonwealth for full valuation of all property in all cities and towns.

JANE GILLESPIE - PLANNING BOARD

Mrs. Gillespie reported that the Planning Board was, this year, scheduling the first and third Mondays of each month for planning

sessions and that subdivision and site plan work would be considered on the second and fourth Mondays.

Mrs. Gillespie stated that the Planning Board had recently reviewed the Board of Health regulations and the Sudbury Housing Authority proposal and would work, over the summer months, on subdivision roads and wish to present data in this connection at next month's Forum.

EBEN B. STEVENS - PLANNING BOARD

Mr. Stevens reported that a group enrolled in adult education at Radcliffe Institute used Sudbury in their land use course and have come up with eighteen maps showing Sudbury from an ecological/environmental standpoint. Mr. Stevens reported that the study will be described in detail by the students on May 30th at 8:00 p.m. at the lower Town Hall.

RONALD BLECHER - FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mr. Blecher reported that the Finance Committee was continuing with five of last year's members: Karl Clough, Ronald Blecher, John Hennessy, William Linko, and Carolyn Edwards and that Patricia Warshaver, Lawrence Gogolin, and Lawrence Bussey had recently been appointed, with the ninth appointment still pending.

ROBERT NOYES - ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Mr. Noyes reported that the Engineering Department had been continuing with preparation of the new tax maps which should be ready this summer. Mr. Noyes reported that the Department had been working on street acceptances in connection with Town Meeting, on walkway layouts, and on drainage easements and surveys for several departments.

FRANCIS E. WHITE - BUILDING INSPECTOR

Mr. White reported that there had been twenty-five new home starts this year, which is the same figure to this date in 1973. Mr. White also reported that a portion of the ceiling in the lower Town Hall had recently been repaired and that the overhead utility service in Sudbury Centre would soon be switched to underground.

ALBERT ST. GERMAIN - FIRE CHIEF

Fire Chief St. Germain reported that in the one-month period when restricted outdoor burning was allowed, he had had 300 calls for permits and that there had been fewer spring brush fires because of the wet conditions than last year. He also reported that the underground fire alarm system should be completed next week and that a new law, effective January 1, 1975, will provide that every new dwelling unit be equipped with fire and heat detectors.

ARTHUR BABIGIAN - BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Mr. Babigian stated that he wished to restate that the projected 1974 tax rate of \$49.27 mentioned earlier in the evening was an estimate only, not a fact.

SALLY VON BENKEN - COMMITTEE ON TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. Von Benken reported that the Committee on Town Administration would hold its meetings on second and fourth Wednesdays at the Loring Parsonage, that they have been working on the mechanics of Town Meeting, and would like to join with the Long Range Capital Expenditures Committee in its efforts for Townwide priorities.

OLGA REED - CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mrs. Reed reported that the Conservation Commission's applications for Bureau of Outdoor funding for the Davis and Hulbert land are now being processed and that they and the Park and Recreation Commission are working on plans in this regard.

Mrs. Reed expressed the Board's appreciation to Mrs. Langmuir for her past service as Commission chairman.

JAMES H. MALONSON, JR. - EARTH REMOVAL BOARD

Mr. Malonson reported that there were presently only two outstanding commercial earth removal operations (Cavicchio and Vassilotti) and that the Earth Removal Board will confer with the Committee on Town Administration with a view towards abolishment of the Earth Removal Board as a body by revision to the Town Bylaw, suggesting that it be placed in the hands of another Board. Mr. Malonson stated that they plan to have an article included in the warrant for the 1975 Annual Town Meeting to this effect.

PASQUALE T. PISCITELLI - PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Mr. Piscitelli reported on the work done to Feeley Park to this date and reported that the Haskell land is being engineered for the construction of a soccer and baseball field.

THOMAS JEWELL - GOODNOW LIBRARY

Mr. Jewell reported that the Goodnow Library Trustees have not yet reorganized for the coming year.

COLONEL PAUL J. LEAHY - COUNCIL ON AGING

Colonel Leahy reported that the Council on Aging's Drop-In Center has been much more successful than anticipated and that there have been between thirty and forty people each week. Colonel Leahy stated that programs are scheduled for alternate Fridays.

RICHARD DAVISON - LINCOLN/SUDBURY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Davison reported that construction on the playing field project would begin on Monday and that the Committee had interviewed several excellent candidates for Clerk of the Works.

DR. WILLIAM COOPER - BOARD OF HEALTH

Dr. Cooper reported that William Cossart had been elected as the new Board chairman and that the Board would soon meet with Wayland relative to that Town's plans for the septage facility.

JOHN V. SULLIVAN - BOARD OF HEALTH

Mr. Sullivan reported that he had been doing some field work on the land to be used for the Housing for the Elderly project.

FRANK SHERMAN - MODERATOR

Mr. Sherman stated that the 1974 Annual Town Meeting had been grueling and suggested that this might be helped by adoption of periodic Town Meetings. Mr. Sherman added that he would wish to speak with those also interested in this possibility.

Mr. Sherman expressed his regrets concerning the loss of Finance Committee members Frank LeBart, Roger Bender, and John Drum and announced the appointments he has made to this date.

Mr. Sherman mentioned that the Sudbury Power and Light Committee seemed to be inactive at this time and suggested that it be considered for change. The Board responded that this Committee reports routinely on all utility petitions.

DOUGLAS MIRANDA - SUDBURY HOUSING AUTHORITY

Mr. Miranda reported that the Sudbury Housing Authority have been moving ahead with housing for the elderly plans and that they will reschedule their postponed hearing on a change of access to the development for next week or the one following.

CHAIRMAN POWERS

Chairman Powers read the public statement issued on May 24th by the Board relative to an audit of the Highway accounts.

Chairman Powers adjourned the Forum at 9:30 p.m.