

SUDBURY SELECT BOARD
JOINT MEETING WITH SUDBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023

(Meeting can be viewed at www.sudburytv.org)

Vote to open a joint meeting with Sudbury Public School Committee to discuss School Committee Letter from January 9, 2023

Present Select Board Members: Chair Charles Russo, Vice-Chair Janie Dretler, Select Board Member Daniel Carty, Select Board Member Lisa Kouchakdjian, Select Board Member Jennifer Roberts

Present: SPS Committee Members: Chair Silvia M. Nerssessian, Vice-Chair Meredith Gerson, Member Nicole Burnard, Member Sarah Troiano

Also Present: SPS Superintendent Brad Crozier, SPS Director of Business and Human Resources Don Sawyer, Interim Town Manager Maryanne Bilodeau, and Finance Director Dennis Keohane

At 7:03 PM, SPS Chair Silvia Nerssessian called the joint meeting with the Sudbury Select Board to order. Ms. Gerson seconded the motion.

It was on motion 4-0; Nerssessian-present, Gerson-present, Burnard-present, Troiano-present

VOTED: To open the joint meeting with the Select Board

At 7:05 Chair Russo read in the words of the motion. Board Member Roberts moved in the words of the Chair. Board Member Lisa Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Dretler-present, Carty-present, Roberts-present, Kouchakdjian-present, Russo-present

VOTED: To open a joint meeting with the Sudbury Public School Committee to discuss the School Committee Letter from January 9, 2023

Ms. Nerssessian spoke of the recent letter from SPS to the Select Board regarding the override for the FY24 SPS Budget. She indicated that the School Committee spent much time analyzing short and long-term financial planning. She confirmed the proposed budget exceeded Town budget recommendation.

Ms. Nerssessian mentioned the increased budgetary need was primarily related to COVID pandemic aspects, which also included funding for student mental health.

Interim Town Manager Bilodeau confirmed that a Special Warrant Article was not a requirement when considering an override. She mentioned a possible Special Town Meeting.

Vice-Chair Dretler asked School Committee Members how they determined the FY24 Budget. Ms. Nerssessian provided related detail, and also highlighted professional development aspects.

Vice-Chair Dretler inquired about Medicaid funding covering one-time expenses. Ms. Nerssessian elaborated on the one-time expenses.

Board Member Kouchakdjian expressed concern about utilization of Circuit Breaker funds. Board Member Kouchakdjian commended Mr. Sawyer for moving away from reliance on circuit breaker. Board Member Kouchakdjian stated circuit breaker funds are not to be used towards the general operating budget. She stated utilizing circuit breaker money is a good short fix but not long-term lasting value. Board Member Kouchakdjian stated that she wanted to be sure that SPS was asking for the amount of override that provided necessary coverage.

Discussion regarding out-of-district placements took place. Mr. Crozier commented that the School Department has been consistently seeking associated grants and reimbursement funding.

Ms. Gerson expressed confidence regarding the override being requested by SPS.

Ms. Troiano stated she was also confident about the numbers presented.

Board Member Roberts acknowledged the challenges presented to SPS at this time. She inquired about Circuit Breaker guidelines. Mr. Crozier provided related details.

Board Member Roberts inquired about possible benefits of obtaining a timely decision regarding the budget in question. Ms. Nerssessian stated that timeliness was of utmost importance when planning for early voting and voter outreach.

Chair Russo opined about scheduling the election a bit earlier, and perhaps voting on the override prior to the May Town Meeting.

Vice-Chair Dretler asked Mr. Keohane about Town emergency reserve funds. Mr. Keohane responded that such emergency funding was possible.

Chair Russo stated that the Select Board supported the override request presented by SPS.

Board Member Carty indicated that it would be prudent to bring forth the override needed before the Annual Town Meeting, and related planning would be considered at the upcoming Select Board meeting. Board Member Carty extended his support of the budget override, and stressed that SPS had examined this need thoroughly.

Ms. Gerson thanked the Select Board for voting to allocate ARPA funding for Sudbury schools.

Vote to close meeting with Sudbury Public School Committee

SPS Chair Silvia Nerssessian motioned to adjourn the joint meeting with the Sudbury Select Board. Ms. Gerson seconded the motion.

It was on motion 4-0; Nerssessian-present, Gerson-present, Burnard-present, Troiano-present

VOTED: To close the joint meeting with the Select Board

Chair Russo read in the words of the motion. Board Member Kouchakdjian moved in the words of the Chair. Vice-Chair Dretler seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Roberts-aye, Kouchakdjian-aye, Dretler-aye, Carty-aye, Russo-aye

VOTED: To close meeting with Sudbury Public School Committee

There being no further business, the Select Board meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.