

IN SUDBURY SELECT BOARD

TUESDAY DECEMBER 2, 2025

7:00 PM, REMOTE MEETING

(Meeting can be viewed at [www.sudburytv.org](http://www.sudburytv.org))

Present: Chair Lisa Kouchakdjian, Vice-Chair Janie Dretler, Select Board Member Dan Carty, Select Board Member Charles Russo, Select Board Member Radha Gargeya, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Victor Garofalo, Town Manager Andrew Sheehan

Chair Kouchakdjian called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Roll call: Dretler-present, Russo-present, Carty-present, Gargeya-present, Kouchakdjian-present

**Opening Remarks by Chair**

- Thanked Town Manager Sheehan and Staff for conducting yesterday's Special Town Meeting
- Thanked the community for participating at Special Town Meeting last night
- Announced Holiday Village is scheduled for Saturday, 12/6/25 at the Fairbank Community Center from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM; Select Board table at the Holiday Village, she and Board Member Gargeya will be in attendance (2 members at a time), gift-wrapping donations will go to the Sudbury Food Pantry

**Reports from Town Manager**

- Thanked all who attended last night's Special Town Meeting, and thanked SudburyTV, Staff and LSRHS partners for their help
- Announced Town Special Election on Tuesday 12/16/25 for approval of two elementary school roof replacement projects, debt exclusion votes
- Atkinson Pool opened yesterday and on schedule for the December opening; LS had the swim tryouts yesterday; he thanked the pool project team for their work

**Reports from Select Board**

Vice-Chair Dretler

- Thanked all (Staff, volunteers, and residents) for a great Special Town Meeting last evening, with good attendance considering the Monday after Thanksgiving scheduling of Town Meeting
- Hosmer House Holiday Open House on Saturday (12/6) and Sunday (12/14)
- Sudbury Fire Department conducting Toys for Tots; toys can be dropped off at Fire Department Headquarters on Hudson Road and the Rte. 20 Fire Station until December 12th

Board Member Carty

- Announced Select Board Office Hours on December 17<sup>th</sup>, with Board Member Gargeya and himself at 7:00 PM via Zoom

Board Member Gargeya

- Hoped all had great Thanksgiving holiday
- Successful Special Town Meeting yesterday – example of responsible way to fund the new roof projects at Nixon and Haynes elementary school
- Acknowledged large deficit at one of the Town cost centers; he recommended consideration of the issues and how to address them

Board Member Russo

- Hoped all had a great holiday
- Congratulated Staff for a successful Special Town Meeting last night
- Reminded all of the Holiday Village events on 12/6 and Special Town Election on 12/16

**Public Comment**

Resident Manish Sharma, 77 Colonial Road, commented that at the Special Town Meeting last night Town Manager Sheehan let his emotions show with comments made by resident Jean Nam, he noted that the Facilities Director presented non-compliant design regarding the proposed 2025 timeline regarding the two new elementary school roof replacements seemed inaccurate; he also mentioned related MSBA funding distribution was not presented. He stressed that good cost accounting plan is necessary.

Mr. Sharma recognized and thanked hospital CEO Christine Schuster and doctors employed at the Emerson Hospital Emergency Room where his mother-in-law was helped before her passing 14 days ago.

Resident Ralph Tyler, 1 Deacon Lane, thanked all for a great Town Meeting last evening; he stated that the proposed new roofs for the two Sudbury elementary schools were necessary and thanked Finance Director Victor Garofalo for his financial expertise and leadership in the Town.

**1. Annual Tax Classification hearing - In accordance with General Laws Ch. 40, sec. 56, as amended, to determine the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2026 tax rate. In attendance will be the Board of Assessors (Liam J. Vesley, Chair; Trevor A. Haydon, Joshua M. Fox, Esq.), Cynthia Gerry, Director of Assessing, and presenting will be Harald Scheid and Alex Cervone, Principal Regional Assessors.**

Present: Sudbury Board of Assessors (Trevor A. Haydon, Joshua M. Fox, Esq.), Cynthia Gerry, Director of Assessing, and Harald Scheid and Alex Cervone, Principal Regional Assessors

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned to open the Annual Tax Classification hearing - In accordance with General Laws Ch. 40, sec. 56, as amended, to determine the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2026 tax rate. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

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

VOTED: To open the Annual Tax Classification hearing - In accordance with General Laws Ch. 40, sec. 56, as amended, to determine the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2026 tax rate.

Mr. Fox motioned to open the meeting of the Board of Assessors. Mr. Haden seconded the motion.

It was on motion 2-0; Fox-present, Haden-present

VOTED: To open the meeting of the Board of Assessors.

Mr. Fox stated that the Department of Revenue had certified tax values, and an additional certification hearing was not required.

Mr. Fox proceeded to review Sudbury residential tax exemptions, explaining that only twenty (20) MA communities have such senior means exemption.

Mr. Fox presented the Small Commercial Exemption, applicable to ten (10) employees or less with an assessed property value of less than \$1 million dollars.

Mr. Fox addressed the third proposed exemption; the Open Space Exemption which is not favored in MA. Board Members agreed to eliminate this exemption from next year's classification package as it requires legislative action.

Resident Brian Currier, 17 South Meadow Drive, opined about the assessment increase of his property and asked that the assessment be reviewed. Mr. Fox responded that Mr. Currier could submit a tax abatement application, noting that each abatement application is considered. Ms. Gerry recommended that Mr. Currier submit the abatement application next month (January- within 30 days after receiving the Town tax bill). Mr. Currier agreed to submit the abatement application.

Resident Ralph Tyler, 1 Deacon Lane, spoke of added senior residential exemption for those Sudbury residents living on fixed incomes, in consideration of increased land/property valuation in Town.

Mr. Scheid explained aspects of the tax rate increasing by 2.7% when compared to last year's rate; with the residential valuations increasing by an average of 4.2%. He mentioned possible adjustment of the commercial tax rate.

Board Member Carty inquired about different classes of properties: multi-families, condos, single-family residences and overlay account and new growth aspects. Mr. Garofalo addressed overlay calculations/balances and plans to reduce the annual overlay reserve.

Board Member Russo inquired about shift factor increase and other topics. Board Member Gargeya asked about shift diagrams presented and criteria used in determining the shift. Mr. Scheid responded that the shift factor of 1.46 would help balance residential and commercial properties.

Vice-Chair Dretler noted that if an individual owned a home and a business in Town they are taxed on two separate properties. Mr. Fox confirmed that property owners are taxed on individual properties. Ms. Gerry noted the possibility of gathering small business ownership data for future reference.

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned to close the evidentiary portion of the Annual Tax Classification hearing. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

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

VOTED: To close the evidentiary portion of the Annual Tax Classification hearing.

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned [To] adopt a Residential Exemption for Fiscal Year 2026 for eligible residential properties, which will shift the tax burden within the Residential Class. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

It was on motion: 0-5; Dretler-no, Carty-no, Gargeya-no, Russo-no, Kouchakdjian-no

VOTED: To not adopt a Residential Exemption for Fiscal Year 2026 for eligible residential properties, which will shift the tax burden within the Residential Class.

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned [To] adopt the Small Commercial Exemption for Fiscal Year 2026 for eligible commercial properties, which will shift the tax burden within the Commercial & Industrial Classes. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

It was on motion: 0-5; Dretler-no, Carty-no, Gargeya-no, Russo-no, Kouchakdjian-no

VOTED: To not adopt the Small Commercial Exemption for Fiscal Year 2026 for eligible commercial properties, which will shift the tax burden within the Commercial & Industrial Classes.

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned [To] adopt in accordance with M.G.L., Ch. 40, Sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2026 tax rate, and sets the Residential Factor at 0.9640, (or other selected Factor) with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.46. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

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

VOTED: To adopt in accordance with M.G.L., Ch. 40, Sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2026 tax rate, and sets the Residential Factor at 0.9640, (or other selected Factor) with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.46.

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned to Vote in accordance with Chapter 169 of the Acts of 2012, the total FY2026 cap on the exemptions granted by the Means Tested Senior Tax Exemption shall be .5% (half of one percent) of the residential property tax levy. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

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

VOTED: To Vote in accordance with Chapter 169 of the Acts of 2012, the total FY2026 cap on the exemptions granted by the Means Tested Senior Tax Exemption shall be .5% (half of one percent) of the residential property tax levy.

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned to close the Annual Tax Classification hearing - In accordance with General Laws Ch. 40, sec. 56, as amended. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

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

VOTED: To close the Annual Tax Classification hearing - In accordance with General Laws Ch. 40, sec. 56, as amended.

**2. Open Annual Town Meeting warrant and announce Annual Town Meeting will commence Monday, May 4, 2026, at 7:00 PM at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Auditorium. Town Meeting articles are due at the Select Board/Town Manager's office by 12:00 Noon Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.**

Town Manager Sheehan recommended conducting Annual Town Meeting on Monday, of May 4, 2026, at the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Auditorium, at 7:00 PM and opening the Annual Town Meeting Warrant due by noon on Friday, January 30, 2026, at the Select Board/Town Manager's office.

Town Manager Sheehan confirmed that a related calendar would be distributed.

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned to open Annual Town Meeting warrant and conduct Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 4, 2026, at 7:00 PM at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Auditorium, with Town Meeting articles due at the Select Board/Town Manager's office by 12:00 Noon, Friday, January 30, 2026. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

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

VOTED: To open Annual Town Meeting warrant and conduct Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 4, 2026 at 7:00 PM at Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Auditorium, with Town Meeting articles due at the Select Board/Town Manager's office by 12:00 Noon, Friday, January 30, 2026.

**3. Review and discuss Financial Management Review prepared at the Town's request by the Division of Local Services (DLS)**

Town Manager Sheehan presented the "Town of Sudbury Financial Management Review – October 2025 – DLS." Town Manager Sheehan confirmed that he and staff reached out to DLS requesting Financial Review for the Town of Sudbury; he added that the last Financial Management Review prepared by DLS was presented in 2020.

Town Manager Sheehan detailed that DLS presented operational improvements and broader financial management recommendations; such as Charter review, comprehensive bylaw review, review of policies and policy-related topic areas. Town Manager Sheehan confirmed several operational recommendations had already been implemented.

Board Members acknowledged it was time to review the Town's charter and related bylaws. Chair Kouchakdjian opined that the Board might consider direction from the Collins Institute to help guide the community.

Board Member Carty recommended that the Select Board Policy Subcommittee establish a timeline for review of various sections of the DLS report. Board Member Russo suggested addressing specific points/policies, rather than performing a complete review.

Chair Kouchakdjian stated that the Board would review specific aspects at future meetings and related discussion would be on-going.

Vice-Chair Dretler commented that related policy recommendations involve the full Board. Chair Kouchakdjian recommended continued discussion regarding the topic with both Town Manager Sheehan and Finance Director Victor Garofalo.

#### **4. Continue Discussion of Financial Condition of the Town**

Town Manager Sheehan confirmed that since the Financial Condition of the Town was discussed at the November 18<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting, SPS has revealed a \$1.6 million budget deficit.

Vice-Chair Dretler expressed her surprise regarding the untimely disclosure and noted that there should have been more transparency with the SPS School Committee and the Town. Mr. Garofalo indicated the Finance Committee is aware of the deficit, but has not had the opportunity to discuss the matter with SPS Administration.

Board Member Russo asked about the potential SPS deficit. Town Manager Sheehan detailed that three new elementary school positions needed funding, out-of-district SPED costs (outplacement tuition costs) and pending teacher contract negotiations. He noted that Town administration/staff should be present at such negotiation sessions. Mr. Garofalo noted that at other Towns he was involved with, Town administration was always part of the school negotiation process.

Board Member Gargeya commented that cooperation and information sharing between SPS and Town administration is essential; he was happy to hear that Town Manager Sheehan and Mr. Garofalo would be meeting with SPS this week.

Board Member Carty commented that the Board needed additional information from SPS before further communications could be considered.

Vice-Chair Dretler agreed that such communications must be shared with the SPS Committee and the Town.

Chair Kouchakdjian noted that related communication is very much lacking, adding that all cost centers must work together.

Town Manager Sheehan stated he would be reporting to the Board regarding the upcoming meeting with SPS.

#### **5. Discussion and Review of December 1, 2025 Special Town Meeting**

Town Manager Sheehan mentioned that the solar canopy installation Warrant Articles would be reviewed and likely included in the May Annual Town Meeting Warrant. He also mentioned revised proposal for the Citizens' Petition Article regarding improved walkways could be earmarked for free cash or other funding.

Vice-Chair Dretler suggested that added sidewalk access to new rail trails would provide greater connectivity to schools, open spaces and businesses.

Board Member Russo mentioned that last night's Special Town Meeting was more efficient in presentation.

Board Member Carty mentioned presenting a picture of the voting clicker at the Annual Town Meeting in May, might be helpful for the public.

Chair Kouchakdjian stressed that accurate information at Town Meeting is vital and she supported comments made by Town Manager Sheehan at last night's Town Meeting. Chair Kouchakdjian agreed that the Town Meeting was concise and efficient.

#### **6. Discussion of potential 2026 Annual Town Meeting articles**

In preparation of Board consideration of a proposed transportation Warrant Article, Board Member Carty suggested the Board think about MWRTA Catch Connect services being provided to Sudbury residents, and that he would provide additional information on that program at the next Select Board meeting.

Board Member Russo reminded all that the Energy and Sustainability Committee would be providing additional information regarding the proposed solar canopy projects in Town.

#### **7. Upcoming agenda items**

- Discussion regarding Town Policies to be included as an upcoming agenda item
- Combined Facilities Working Group update

#### **8. Review and approve meeting minutes**

Minutes were not presented.

#### **9. Vote to close Open Session and go into Executive Session:**

**• pursuant to General Laws chapter 30A, §21(a)(2), to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and/or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, namely the Town Manager, (Purpose 2); and**

**• pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to review and approve executive session meeting minutes "to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements" (Purpose 7); and not return to Open Session.**

Vice-Chair Dretler motioned to close Open Session and go into Executive Session:

• pursuant to General Laws chapter 30A, §21(a)(2), to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and/or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, namely the Town Manager, (Purpose 2); and

• pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to review and approve executive session meeting minutes "to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements" (Purpose 7); and not return to Open Session. Board Member Carty seconded the motion.

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

VOTED: To close Open Session and go into Executive Session:

- pursuant to General Laws chapter 30A, §21(a)(2), to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and/or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, namely the Town Manager, (Purpose 2); and
- pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, § 21(a)(7) to review and approve executive session meeting minutes “to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements” (Purpose 7); and not return to Open Session.

There being no further business, the Select Board meeting was adjourned at 10:33 PM.