

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, February 2, 2004
Fairbanks Senior Center – 7:30pm**

Present: Co-Chairs Tracy Billig & Bob Jacobson, Michael Grosberg, Bill Kneeland, John Nikula, Marty Ragonas, Larry Rowe, Shauna Simmonds, and Sheila Stewart. Also present: Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, and Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary.

Opening Remarks:

Bob Jacobson informed the committee that he has sent everyone an email regarding the budget. This email does not represent his exact feelings on the matter; he was looking for a way to rationale the budget shortfall. He also informed the committee that they will be receiving a copy of the debt schedule for FY06 shortly. It is expected that the debt service will be increasing for next fiscal year.

Item 1: Revenue Update:

Finance Director Kerry Speidel informed the committee that the Governor's Budget was released on Jan. 28th. State Aid stayed almost the same as it was in FY04. The Governor's Budget is the best bet for Sudbury, but the State Legislature will most likely make changes to it. State Aid is projected to decrease by 10%.

The committee was provided with a handout reflecting the Projected Surplus. The projected surplus was approximately \$428,000 as January 2004. This is due to an increase in the Free Cash Projections, an increase in Abatement Surplus, and a reduction in loss of State Aid from 20% to 10%.

There is a reduction in the Minuteman Regional assessment from \$350,000 to \$312,189. The \$312,189 figure is the highest prediction for the assessment, while \$280,308 could be the lowest assessment figure. If \$312,189 ends up being the actual assessment figure, than \$37,811 would be the additional revenue amount.

The Capital Committee will be sending out a memorandum asking for additional funding. They are increasing their request to \$169,000 from \$150,000. The additional funds would be for repairs to the Town buildings. Capital Committee member Bob Hurstak did mention this possibility at the Jan. 22nd budget hearing.

Free Cash should be certified within the next 3 weeks.

Item 2: Other Articles:

Flynn Building Elevator – Town Manager Maureen Valente stated that there are current funds available for this project. Three to four years ago, the Town appropriated money for this project in another article. The Flynn building is not handicap accessible. There is a plan that was designed to keep the entire elevator inside the Flynn Building, thus reducing costs. An additional appropriation of \$15,000 to \$20,000 is needed in order to complete the project. She believes she will be able to come back to the committee before Town Meeting with an exact figure that is needed to complete this project. Bob Jacobson informed her that the committee would most likely “Report at Town Meeting”, until an exact figure is known.

New Police Station Feasibility – Maureen Valente stated the one of the problems with the station is that while walking down the hallway to the Police Chief's office, you are in the same hallway that the officers

have to use to bring the criminals to the holding cells. Also, the Police Station is not handicap accessible. There are also electrical issues. There was recently a fire in the Records Room. It is also difficult to find parts to repair the doors and window, since they are a type that are no longer made. A feasibility study is needed now, so that something could possibly be done in FY07. She is asking for \$25,000. She stated she would like the FinCom to take a position on this article.

Rental Property Revolving Fund – The Town has three rental houses consisting of: Haynes Meadow, Carding Mill, and Frost Farm. They are rented on 3 year written leases. Currently the rent collected goes into the general fund. Maureen Valente would like to establish a revolving fund, in order to use the money when there are major repairs that need to be done to the properties. The tenants take care of a lot of the general maintenance to the properties, but when appliances or roofs need to be replaced, it is the Town's responsibility.

Hop Brook Pond Legal Expenses – Frank Lyons, President of the Hop Brook Association, made the presentation to the FinCom. The Marlborough Easterly Waste Water Treatment Plant discharges into the Hop Brook water shed. The current permit for the plant is over 10 years old, and there are serious issues with pollutants and nutrients in the watershed. If it is not taken care of, the ponds will eventually turn into swamps. This has never shown up the budgets before, because the association has always taken care of the costs. They just do not have the ability to continue to pay legal costs. The Town of Marlborough has appropriated roughly \$250,000 to fight the permit in court. In December 2003 there was a new permit issued, but there are still some issues with it. He can not go into the issues with the new permit since it is an ongoing litigation.

Representative Susan Pope is currently a member of the association. Senator Pam Resor will not take a strong position on this matter. Congressman Marty Meehen has supported the association in the past. Larry Rowe asked what the Bd. of Selectmen view is on this matter. Maureen Valente stated that the Selectmen are still discussing this topic, and have not taken a position as of yet. Mike Grosberg asked what the Selectmen's position has been in the past. Kirsten Roopenian said that the board has had a positive working relationship with the association in the past. Maureen Valente stated that the Town does not want to be in a position where it is going to go to court against a neighboring town. The FinCom was informed that the association has saved the Town over \$100,000 by covering the costs themselves. Larry Rowe asked if the legal expenses could be covered with money from the CPA. Maureen Valente informed him the money from the CPA can not be used to cover litigation expenses.

Carding Mill Dredging – This article is in regards to the pond located towards the back of the Wayside Inn. It is on a parcel that is approximately 40 acres, and the Town does own a part of the land. Lawyers who live in the area of the pond have stated that there was an implied responsibility that the Town would maintain the condition of the water. Last summer the odor was horrendous due tot the fact there were a bunch of dead fish floating in the pond. In the past, the Hop Brook Association has completed harvesting projects on the pond. It is by the recommendation of the DPW Director, Bill Place, that the pond be dredged. The pond has a public access, and has been used in the past for fishing and canoeing. The dredging of the pond would be good for at least 40 to 50 years.

Real Estate Exemption – Bob Jacobson informed the committee that PTERC Committee member Ralph Taylor was not able to attend tonight's meeting. He asks that the FinCom support any adoption of new or any proposed legislation for Senior Citizens Property Tax Relief.

Town Assessor, Maureen Hafner, asked the committee to support changing the requirement for the 41C (Senior Exemptions). The current age requirement is 70, and the Board of Assessors would like to reduce

it to 65. The current asset limits are \$28,000 (single), and \$30,000 (married). The Assessors would like to increase the amounts to \$40,000 (single) and \$55,000 (married). The exact impact of this article can not be determined, due to the fact that is impossible to determine the number of citizens who will apply for the exemption. She informed the committee that the Assessor's Office does send out pamphlets with the Senior Newsletters to inform the seniors of the different exemptions available. She also comes down to the Senior Center to have meetings to discuss the exemption with the seniors. Funding for these exemptions come out of the overlay.

FY04 Budget Adjustments: Nothing proposed yet. Report at Town Meeting

Unpaid Bills: Report at Town Meeting.

Expand Solid Waste Disposal Enterprise: The consultant will be meeting with the Bd. of Selectmen on March 2. This topic was talked about in depth at the Town's budget hearing.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:47pm.