

**Finance Committee ~ Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, February 4, 2003
Fairbank Senior Center – 7:30pm**

Present: Co-Chairs Michael Grosberg & Tracy Billig, Bob Hurstak, Marty Ragonas, John Nikula, Sheila Stewart, Bob Jacobson, Larry Rowe. Also present: Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary, Maureen Valente, Town Manager, and Selectmen Larry O'Brien & Kirsten Roopenian

Opening remarks from the Co-Chairs:

Co-Chair Michael Grosberg opened the meeting at 7:40pm. He thanked all attendees in the audience for attending tonight's meeting. He used the first five minutes of the meeting for citizens to ask questions or state any concerns that they might have about the budget.

Questions / Concerns from attendees in the audience:

Erika Haeberer stated that she has been a citizen of Sudbury since 1956. She stated that the only facilities that the Senior Citizens use on a regular basis, are the Goodnow Library and the Pool. She stated that speaking with others members of the Pool, that the consensus is that members would not mind the Pool fees to be raised. She believes the Town needs to and should find a way for the Pool to kept opened.

Lucinda Lagasse stated she appreciate the work and decisions that the Finance Committee faces. She stated that the Town has done a good job of hiring a new Park & Rec. Director, and a new aquatic/pool director.

Berne Webb, stated the she lives in Sudbury and currently works at the Atkinson Pool. She passed around an article that appeared in the weekend edition of the newspaper, and stated that it caused a great concern for people who use the pool. The article suggested that the pool might be closing, and caused outrage amongst the members who use the pool. She stated people were so upset that they were crying. She said she hears rave reviews from citizens who use the pool on a temporary basis. She has heard people say that the pool in Sudbury is more organized, safer, and cleaner compared to pools in the surrounding communities. She stated that a petition has been placed on a bulletin board at the pool, and they already have a couple of pages of signatures for the pool to be kept opened.

A gentlemen in the audience stated that this should not be considered a numbers issue. There are citizens who have heart issues, had hip replacements, or have physical limitations that need access to the pool on a regular basis. He noticed when he was paying his Real Estate Taxes, that there were 4 SUVs that belong to the Town in the parking lot. He wants to know how many SUVs the Town actually owns, and wants to know why the Town does not sell some of them.

Bob Hurstak stated that this is an issue that is going to eventually make it to the floor during Town Meeting, and strongly suggests that the citizens attend the meeting and state their concerns there as well.

John Nikula stated that he had talk with Dennis Mannone. Dennis is adding lots of new programs. He also reminded everyone that the numbers tend to drop during the summer months. There are currently 3 out of Town swim teams that use the pool, and are looking at the possibility of charging more for the use of the pool. The high school pays \$15/hour for each lane that they use.

Item 1: Approve minutes from January 30, 2003 meeting:

There were no minutes to be approved for the January 30, 2003 meeting.

Item 2: Transfer from Salary Contingent Account:

Kerry Speidel presented this item to the Finance Committee. There are actually two different requests.

1. #03-11 Salary Adjustment Transfer

This transfer is requested to fulfill the contractual increases for the Engineer's union, effective 7/1/02 This is for Fiscal Year 2003.

2. #03-12 Salary Adjustment Transfer

This transfer is requested to cover contractual increases for the Supervisory Union effective 7/1/02. The Supervisory Union did a salary survey the past 18 months, and they just settled.

The committee was informed that there is \$20,000 available, and if these two transfers are approved \$445 would be left in the Salary Contingency Account. There are no other issues outstanding that would require a Salary Contingency Account Transfer.

VOTED: To approve the Salary Adjustment Transfers of \$11,873 for the Engineering Union, and the Salary Adjustment Transfer of \$7,682 for the Supervisory Union. Motion made by John Nikula and seconded by Bob Jacobson. On vote, motion carries 8 in favor and 0 opposed.

Item 3: Questions and Progress on FinCom Reports:

Kerry Speidel reminded everyone that they need to write the text of the report, and she will do the work for the spreadsheets. She needs the reports by Thursday, February 13th. The members may send the reports electronically or hand deliver them. If there are any questions, contact Kerry Speidel or Tracy Billig.

Item 4: Discussion on balanced budget:

Marty Ragonis informed the members of today's meeting between the cost centers and Maureen Valente.

Bob Jacobson informed the committee that Sudbury Public Schools would be meeting on February 5th and Lincoln-Sudbury High School would be meeting on February 4th to discuss the cuts again. He also stated that the next meeting was pushed up to Monday.

Michael Grosberg asked if there was a level of confidence that there will be a balanced budget by Monday. Marty Ragonese and Bob Jacobson both agreed that the schools seemed to accept the percentage cuts. It seems that the schools are waiting to see how the Finance Committee will react.

Both Marty Ragonese and Bob Jacobson thought it was a very polite and helpful meeting.

John Nikula brought up the fact that the Minutemen Technology teacher would no longer be attending the Curtis School. John was wondering if a science teacher would be needed to fill this void and if the new salary has been negotiated. Maureen Valente stated that this is part of SPS budget, and there is no exact outcome as of yet. Bill Hurley has been speaking with Minuteman High School.

Bob Hurstak stated that over the past 10 years, the cost centers have not had proportionate cuts. Public Safety and the Highway Departments are losing employees that do not seem to be getting replaced. He is still against proportionate cuts.

Marty Ragonese agrees with the distribution. If different distributions are offered, she would like specific facts as to what will be done with the money. She believes some standards need to be set. She would like to see the committee vote on specifics not just numbers.

Tracy Billig agreed with the figures, she wants to make sure that the different cost centers agree with them.

Sheila Stewart agrees with the percentages, but not the numbers. She wanted to know if the Sudbury Foundation had been approached as a resource to help with the pool. We need to be concerned about what happens to the swim teams and camps. She believes the Enterprise Fund should be dissolved. Swimming has always been offered to the citizens, and valuable programs are offered thru the pool. The Pool was presented as a facility that can serve the entire Town, and should not have to stand alone at Town meeting. She said the pool stands alone because it is an enterprise fund. She stated the following reasons as being reasons not to fund the pool: must continue to heat and treat, cost to drain, damage in high water table, and may not meet code in restart. She is also concerned about unemployment compensation if jobs are lost. As a possible solution, the enterprise fund should be dissolved and the pool should be made a part of the Recreation Department and developed valued as an essential part of any recreation program. In 1987 the Pool was presented as a facility that would serve all ages in the community. The other facility in Town that can serve everyone is the library.

Maureen Valente responded by saying that the Pool should of always been setup as an enterprise fund. The pool should also be making "retained earnings". So far, the costs have raised higher than the revenues coming in. She stated that the Park & Rec. Commission raised fees in the past, and membership dropped. She has given Dennis Mannone an 18-month time period to try to turn things around. She does not blame the Park & Rec. Commission, or past and present director's for the financial state of the pool. She stated that if the \$91,000 was left in the budget, than either Police or Fire personnel would have to be laid off.

John Nikula asked what would happen if the enterprise fund is defeated at Town Meeting. Maureen Valente stated that this has never happened in the past, and would assume that it means the citizens do not want the pool.

John Nikula stated he was not happy with the percentage allocations. He does not agree with Marty since the schools work on a bottom line budget, and they do not need to report on the how the money is used.

Item 5: Approve 1/2 of warrant articles:

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that they need to take a position on the articles involving money, and can take positions on any other articles that they wish.

Article 2: FY03 Budget Adjustments

Moved by: Larry Rowe Seconded by: John Nikula
Voted: Report at Town Meeting, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 3: Unpaid Bills

The unpaid bill is for Taylor Oil, and the issue has been resolved. The Town agreed to pay the difference between the Federal Tax and State Tax. The amount being paid equals \$1,934.56.

Moved by John Nikula Seconded by: Bob Hurstak
Voted: Approved, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Articles 4 – 7: To be discussed at the Thursday, Feb. 6, 2003 meeting

Article 8: Ambulance Purchase

This purchase is to be made thru the collection of fees.

Moved by John Nikula Seconded by Larry Rowe
Voted: Approved, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 9: Stabilization Fund

There is not an exact amount yet.

Moved by Larry Rowe Seconded by Bob Hurstak
Voted: Report at Town Meeting, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 10: Street Acceptances

This is for the fees used to record new streets once they are accepted by the Town.

This is not part of the budget.

Moved by John Nikula Seconded by Larry Rowe
Voted: Approved, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 11: Chapter 90 Highway Funding

This article needs authorization annually, and the Town receives a grant each year. Do not know the amount yet. This authorization allows the spending of what money is received.

Moved by Larry Rowe Seconded by Bob Hurstak
Voted: Approved, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Articles 12 – 23: Revolving Funds

Moved by Bob Hurstak Seconded by John Nikula
Voted: Approved, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 24: Real Estate Exemption

This article needs authorization annually. This double the amounts of the exemptions that the State recommends. The exemptions are offered to senior citizens, the blind, and veterans.

Moved by Bob Hurstak Seconded by John Nikula
Voted: Approved, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 25: Frost Farm Utility Easements

This is to grant easements for utilities.

Moved by Larry Rowe Seconded by Bob Jacobson
Voted: Take no position, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 26: Sprint Cell Tower Utility Easements

Moved by John Nikula Seconded by Larry Rowe
Voted: Take no position, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Articles 27 – 28: Easements

Moved by John Nikula Seconded by Larry Rowe
Voted: Take no position, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 29: Storm Water Drainage Improvements

Postponed

Article 30: Purchase Street Lighting

Moved by Bob Hurstak Seconded by Bob Jacobson
Voted: Report at Town Meeting, votes 8 in favor and 0 opposed

Article 31 - 32: Community Preservation Committee

Kerry Speidel to provide more information before voting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:25pm