

Finance Committee ~ Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, January 21, 2003
Fairbank Senior Center – 7:30pm

Present: Co-Chairs Michael Grosberg & Tracy Billig, Sheila Stewart, Bob Hurstak, John Nikula, Bob Jacobson, Marty Ragonas, Don Hutchinson. Also present: Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary, Maureen Valente, Town Manager, Kirsten Roopenian, Selectmen, David Wallace, Capital Improvement Committee, Mark Kablack & Sigrid Pickering, Co-Chairs of the Community Preservation Committee, and John Darcey, Sudbury Housing Authority.

Opening Remarks from Co-Chairs:

Co-Chair Michael Grosberg opened the meeting at 7:40pm. He thanked everyone for coming, and asked all members for any updates or concerns they might have.

Tracy Billig – Informed the committee that she and Michael Grosberg would be meeting with Paul Kenny, Town Counsel on Friday at 5:30pm, to discuss funding of union contracts.

Bob Jacobson – Informed the committee that if a 0% budget increase is approved, Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School has collective bargaining increases already accounted for in the budget. LSRHS used a rough estimate to come up with the amount needed to cover the increases. If this is the scenario that is approved, roughly 13 FTEs would need to be eliminated.

Marty Ragonas – Marty informed the committee that a new Superintendent has been hired. An offer was made over the weekend, and was accepted by the candidate from Michigan. She said he received rave reviews when references were contacted.

Don Hutchinson – Don informed the committee that the Real Estate Calculator designed for the Town's website, works but does not do much. He believes everyone should take a look at the calculator, and then a discussion should be held as to whether or not this should be put on the website.

Capital Improvement Projects:

This presentation was made by David Wallace, Chairman of the Capital Improvement Committee.

David Wallace informed the committee that the Capital Improvement Projects recommendations were broken up into 3 categories based on need.

- Group 1 – Highest Priority
- Group 2 – Middle Priority
- Group 3 – Lowest Priority

Group 1 consists of the following projects:

- Vehicle Exhaust Removal / Capture (Fire Department)
- Pool Wiring (Recreation Department)
- Vehicle Replacement #12 (Department of Public Works)
- Vehicle Replacement #41 (Department of Public Works)

Group 2 consists of the following projects:

- Station 3 floor
- Vehicle Replacement #29 (Department of Public Works)
- Haskell Field Improvements (Recreation Department)

Group 3 consists of the following projects:

- Vehicle Replacement / Car 4 (Department of Public Works)
- Bathroom Repairs (Town Hall)

The projects listed in each Group, is not in any type of order based on need.

The Capital Improvement Committee would like all projects listed in Group 1 funded in FY 2004, and any funding for Group 2 projects would be nice to keep considering the financial crisis.

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that all projects listed in Group 1 are accounted for in the 0% budget increase under the operating expense line. The repairs to the Pool wiring is accounted for in a 3% budget increase.

Michael Grosberg asked about the construction of more sidewalks. Dave Wallace stated it would be nice to continue with this, since the Town has been doing so for the past 2 years. Sidewalk construction was not presented or pushed by anyone this year as a Capital Improvement Project. There seemed to be more pressing items presented this year.

Marty Ragonis informed the committee that the Vehicle Exhaust/Capture is an OSHA issue, and is mandated by the State of Massachusetts. Fire Chief Michael Dunne informed the committee that this project will involve both Station #2 and Station #3. Chief Dunne informed the committee that an air quality test was completed at the stations, and the gentlemen performing the test said he could order the stations closed because of the results. Chief Dunne also informed the committee that the Union is not pushing this issue, because they realize it is expected to be funded in FY 2004

Articles with Potential Fiscal Impact:

This presentation was made by Maureen Valente, Town Manager.

Street Acceptances: this article is listed, because when contractors are finishing up with a project, the Town needs to accept the streets. The Registry has been raising fees for this process. It is good financial management to estimate the amount needed for this in the budget.

Cutting Property: Negotiations are currently taking place, and the Town is very interested in obtaining this piece of property. Because of ongoing negotiations, Maureen Valente could not go into many details on this article. She is recommending that CPA funds be used to make this purchase. There will be no impact for Fiscal Year 2004. As more details and information become available, Maureen will share it with the committee.

Storm Water Drainage: The money for this project is listed under the Engineering Department's budget. This project is state mandated, and overseen by the Environmental Protection Agency. The Town needs to apply for a permit by March 2003. Maureen Valente, commended William Place, DPW Director, and his employees for the preparation work they have completed for this project. No outside contractors had to be brought in to complete this task.

Purchase Street Lighting: Maureen Valente stated that this would be a good investment for the Town. The Town would purchase the light fixtures from NSTAR, continue to purchase electricity from NSTAR, and would contract with an outside source for maintenance. Maureen Valente would need borrowing authorization. NSTAR service is very poor right now. The Town can wait months for repair service.

FY03 Budget Adjustments: The Town is waiting to see what State cuts the Governor might make. Estimating that suburban towns like Sudbury, are going to take a big hit.

Choices facing the Town: There are currently 3 choices that the Town can make with the facing budget cuts:

- 1.) Are we receiving revenues in excess of estimates? Yes, Chapter 61 property revenues (Rollback Taxes)
- 2.) Stabilization Fund - Over \$1 million is available. This is a good situation for usage. The last time this account was touched, was in the early nineties.
- 3.) Up to town - may need to have more lay-offs.

A budget adjustment may be necessary. Additional information will be provided to the committee if one is needed.

Ambulance Purchase:

This article was presented by Fire Chief Michael Dunne.

Chief Dunne informed the committee that this article was in the FY 2003 budget, but was pulled in order to save a position.

The Transmission went in the older ambulance at the end of last year. A new ambulance costs \$140,000. It can be bid after a town meeting vote. The cost of the ambulance is paid 100% by the Ambulance Reserve for Appropriation account. If the order is placed in April, the department could receive the new ambulance by July.

Transfer of Land for Sale:

This article was presented by John Darcey, Co-Chair of the Sudbury Housing Authority.

-CPA will put money forward for this project.

-Usually projects like this are done on donated land.

-Jo-Ann Howe went through all Town owned land, and chose the ones that would best fit the needs of this project.

-The Sudbury Housing Authority is asking the Town to transfer the land to the Selectmen who would then sell the land to the Housing Authority for \$1.00.

-Currently the housing Authority is waiting to hear from the Park/Rec. Commission, Sudbury Public Schools, and Lincoln-Sudbury High School on the transfer of this land.

-10% of CPA funds must go to fund affordable housing projects.

Tracy Billig asked how the Housing Authority would decide to rent to. John Darcey stated that they would use Federal and State guidelines. Sudbury currently manages 21 properties like this.

CPC Annual Budget:

This presentation was made by Mark Kablack and Sigrid Pickering, Co-Chairs of the Community Preservation Committee.

The CPA was passed last year. This added a 3% surcharge on tax bills. The revenues raised are matched by the State, by increased fees at the Registry of Deeds.

There are 3 projects listed for the Town Meeting approval:

- Dickson land purchase
- Hosmer House renovations
- Sudbury Housing Authority

In Fiscal Year 2004, \$90,000 would be available for each project.

The committee was informed that the 3% surcharge is valid for 5 years. After 5 years, voters can lower or eliminate the tax.

Mark Kablack stated that the Finance Committee does not need to take a position on this article. He and the Community Preservation Committee are hoping to obtain all committees views, and would hope the Finance Committee would make a favorable recommendation on this article.

Unpaid Bills:

Finance Director Kerry Speidel presented this article to the committee.

There is currently one unpaid bill from Fiscal Year 2002. It is a bill for fuel purchased by the Department of Public Works. The company that the Town bought the fuel from was audited by the State, and it was determined that the mandated state excise tax was not charge. The amount of the tax that should have been charged is \$2,600. It was also determined that the Town paid \$1,500 for a federal tax that municipalities are exempted from paying.

Currently, this matter is being negotiated through Town Counsel. An exact amount that will have to be paid, is not known. This article needs to be approved at Town Meeting.

Chapter 90 Funding:

Kerry Speidel presented this article.

This is to give authorization to spend what we receive in for reimbursement. The exact amount will be given later.

Revolving Funds:

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that these type of revolving funds need annual authorization. The exact amount will be given later.

Real Estate Exemptions:

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that this is voted on annually. Since 1997 the Town has doubled the amount that the State allows.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.