

**Finance Committee ~ Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday, September 24, 2003
Fairbank Senior Center – 7:30pm**

Present: Co-Chair Robert Jacobson, Co-Chair Tracy Billig, Martha Ragonas, William Kneeland, John Nikula, and Sheila Stewart. Also present was Kerry Speidel, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector.

Opening Remarks:

The meeting was opened at 7:39 p.m.

Item 1: Approve Minutes:

Co-Chair Jacobson called for action on the minutes of the August 26, 2003 meeting. Several corrections were offered, as follows.

1. change the word “forward” to “introductory” in the first sentence of the discussion under Item 2.
2. change the last sentence of the fourth paragraph of the discussion under Item 2 to read,
“She does not want to work everyone into a panic, but she believes the pessimistic figures could be realistic.”

VOTED: Motion to approve the minutes of August 26, 2003 as amended, made by Kneeland and seconded by Ragonas. On vote, motion carries 6 in favor, 0 opposed.

Item 2: Finalize letter of instruction and spreadsheets to cost centers.

Jacobson asked the Committee to review to the draft of the Budget Instruction Letter. Co-Chair Jacobson suggested that the December 10, 2003 due date be changed to December 12, 2003.

Ragonas questioned whether the Committee expected each of the cost centers to attend the October Finance Committee meeting in accordance with Milestone 2. Jacobson responded that he would prefer to see a written budget variance report first. Cost center representatives could be asked to come to a future meeting if needed to answer questions on the written report.

Ragonas suggested that the words “relativity of” be removed from the second sentence in the second to last paragraph of the letter.

Nikula suggested that the PTERC also receive a copy of this letter.

Jacobson asked the Committee to review the attached spreadsheets. Jacobson went through the sections of the spreadsheet, and in the end stating that in the best case, the projected deficit would be \$961,293, and that in the worst case, the projected deficit would be \$3,706,089. He further stated that union negotiations were on-going and that the outcome of last year’s LS union negotiations may affect relations between the cost centers.

Kneeland stated that he liked the framework as presented. Jacobson advised the Committee that the Town of Wayland is having a Special Town Meeting to present an \$850,000 override question

to the voters.

The Committee agreed that the Budget Instruction Letter was ready to be distributed.

Item 3: Update and discussion of the school contract analysis project.

Ragones stated that she met with Claire Daley and Bill Braun to review the project. A first draft will be available for the Committee to review at the October meeting. She stated that each town included in the survey must be contacted individually to review the information provided.

Jacobson cautioned that the report is a Finance Committee report and that the Finance Committee will have the final say regarding the content of the report.

Item 4: Update from John Nikula on PTERC and hearing.

Nikula stated that he attended the legislative committee hearing on Article 54. He stated that there were 54 speakers providing testimony, and that the committee preferred to receive copies of the written testimony.

He stated that one committee member made a point of the number of eligible Sudbury residents not taking advantage of tax relief programs currently available. Other committee members stated that they would like to see income limits and expressed concern about creating another class of residential property.

Nikula further stated that the committee discussed other property tax exemptions (MGL Ch. 59, Section 5) and the Winchester transfer tax proposal. Nikula stated that the consensus of the committee was that they were not interested in anything without income guidelines.

Item 5: Update from liaisons:

Stewart stated that the deadline for CPA applications is October 15, 2003.

Stewart stated that there would be an LS sub-committee meeting on September 30, 2003 and wanted to know if the Finance Committee was interested in putting anything on the agenda. Nikula responded that he would like an update on the fields.

Jacobson advised the Committee that LS would be hosting a Chapter 70 workshop on October 9, 2003. He also advised that there will be an EdCo meeting on October 2, 2003 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at the Lincoln School Complex. The guest speaker will be Michael Witmer, President of the MA Taxpayers Association. The topic of discussion will be an overview of FY2005.

Jacobson also reported that the high school construction is coming along on schedule, and will be ready to open in September.

Jacobson advised the Committee that the LS School Committee decided to permanently finance \$14 million of the construction project for a 10 year period. The decision was made in order to accommodate the Town of Lincoln's budget issues.

Jacobson advised the Committee that the next meeting would either be on October 22 or 23.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.