

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, February 9, 2004
Fairbanks Senior Center - 7:30pm**

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

Opening remarks from Co-Chairs:

The meeting was opened at 7:45pm.

Item 1: Approve minutes:

There were no minutes to be approved.

Item 2: Continue Budget Deliberations:

Final Vote on FY 05 No-Override Budget:

Bob Jacobson stated that at Thursday's deliberation, the discussion was not to leave any funds on the table. There was another meeting between the cost centers this morning, and Scenario E is what they agreed upon.

Maureen Valente reminded the committee when the Town Departments budget was voted, a bottom line figure is what was voted on, as she would need to move some funds around to account for the settlement of union contracts.

Bill Kneeland asked what would happen if we were wrong on the expected reductions in Chapter 70 funds. What if the cuts are greater than expected? Maureen Valente informed the committee that if this happens, after town meeting the school's budget could be cut or we could appropriate funds from the Stabilization fund at a Special Town Meeting. There is approximately \$1.2 million in the Stabilization Fund.

Motion made by Larry Rowe and seconded by Marty Ragones to recommend Scenario E. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 2: Special Act - Senior Tax Relief

Larry Rowe stated that the maximum benefit to be offered is \$2,000, and wanted to know if this would remain the same in the future or would it be increased. Maureen Valente informed him that it would be raised as valuations go up.

Larry Rowe stated he still would like to see the benefit offered to all Sudbury citizens, and not just those over the age of 65. Mark Collins stated it was a continuous debate amongst the PTERC members as to what age group to offer the benefit to. Giving the benefit to those 65 and over was a compromise, because there was a small minority of PTERC members who wanted to give the benefit to those under the age of 65 also.

Susan Iuliano (PTERC member) stated that this article was a good place to start. There were discussions in regards to what age groups to help, but no formal vote was taken.

Mark Collins agreed that there are younger people within the Town who need help, but felt they had an easier time helping & protecting themselves. It is a little easier for them to move or find new jobs.

Bob Jacobson stated that in his opinion there are potential flaws with this article, but it is a good starting point.

Mark Collins stated that after the age of 65 Sudbury citizens are tending to move out of the Town, but it can not be proven rising tax bills are the reason.

Motion to recommend approval of Article 2. On motion, vote fails: 3 in support (Kneeland, Ragonas, Jacobson), 5 opposed (Billig, Grosberg, Rowe, Simmonds, Stewart), and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 3: Adopt New or Proposed Legislation for Senior Citizen Property Tax Relief

This article was proposed by Ralph Tyler. Currently, the Board of Selectmen do not support this article.

Motion made by Marty Ragonas and seconded by Larry Rowe not to support Article 3. On motion, vote carries 8 opposed, 0 in favor, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 5: Expand Solid Waste Disposal Enterprise Fund

Motion to "Report at Town Meeting". On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula)

Article 9: FY04 Budget Adjustments

Motion to "Report at Town Meeting". On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula)

Article 10: Unpaid Bills

Motion to "Report at Town Meeting". On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula)

Article 11: Stabilization Fund

Motion to "Report at Town Meeting". On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula)

Article 13: Flynn Building Elevator

Motion to "Report at Town Meeting". On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula)

Article 14: New Police Station - Feasibility Study

The Town is asking for \$25,000.

Motion made by Marty Ragonas and seconded by Larry Rowe to support Article 14. On Motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Articles 23 & 24: Community Preservation Fund

Consists of last year's projects that were approved.

Motion made by Larry Rowe and seconded by Tracy Billig to support Article 14. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 25: CPA – Cutting Open Space & Recreation Proposal

Larry Rowe asked if the CPA surcharge was eliminated, would it need to be extended to pay for this project. Kerry Speidel informed him, that it would. Tracy Billig asked if the commercial properties have to pay the CPA surcharge. Kerry Speidel informed her that they do not.

Tracy Billig asked that if the Town did not have the CPA fund, would the Town go through a debt exemption to purchase this property. Kirsten Roopenian stated the past practice before the CPA fund was ever approved, the Town would try to purchase open space to prevent development. In her personal opinion, she believes the Board of Selectmen would have attempted to purchase the property even if the Town did not have the CPA. Since the Town has the CPA available, this is making the purchase a little bit easier since there will be some matching funds.

The bond is for a 20-year period. Debt service for year one of the issuance would be \$531,850, while for year 20 it will be \$279,221.

Bob Jacobson asked for a break down in costs between the price of the property and the construction of the recreation field. Mark Kablack stated that the development rights and ownership fees cost would be roughly \$4.7 million. The cost of the recreation field and parking lot would cost roughly \$600,000.

Bob Jacobson asked the members for their opinions on this article:

Michael Grosberg: stated he has debated about what would be the proper way to vote on this article. He will support this article because he believes the purchase will enhance the Town.

Sheila Stewart: stated she believes the Town is getting a good deal on this property, and the citizens have stated in the past that they would like to maintain open space and recreation land within the Town.

Shauna Simmonds: She agrees with Sheila.

Larry Rowe: stated he agrees with the purchase if it is part of the master plan. It is good that there are matching funds to pay for the land.

Bill Kneeland: is in support of this article. The purchase falls within the scheme of the master plan, and the price is right. His one concern is about committing to a 20-year bond.

Marty Ragonas: Is in favor of this article. She feels it will be nice to drive by the area and not see 30 large houses.

Tracy Billig: She is not sold either way on the article.

Bob Jacobson: his concern is as to how much weight should be given to protect open space. He feels the price is to high to pay off the building of 21 homes.

Mark Kablack reminded the committee that there is no guarantee that matching funds will always be available.

Larry O'Brien informed the committee that the Cutting Family has been in the Town of Sudbury since the 1600s. Other property owners are watching to see how this transaction is handled. This will be the first major transaction for the CPA.

Motion made by Larry Rowe and seconded by Marty Ragonas to support Article 25. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 27: CPA – Revolutionary War Cemetery

Motion made by Michael Grosberg and seconded by Tracy Billig to support Article 27. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 28: CPA – Town Walkways

Michael Grosberg asked if there were other reoccurring maintenance costs. Bob Jacobson said there probably would, but the money for the repairs would come out of the Town's operating budget. Mark Kablack informed the FinCom that the CPA committee does not expect to pay for repairs and maintenance.

Motion made by Marty Ragones and seconded by Sheila Stewart to support Article 28. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 29: Chapter 90 Highway Funding

Sometimes the Town receives money from the State, and it comes in after the end of the fiscal year.

Motion made by Bill Kneeland and seconded by Marty Ragones to support Article 29. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Articles 30 thru 41: Revolving Funds

Need annual appropriations.

Motion made by Tracy Billig and seconded by Marty Ragones to support Articles 30 thru 41. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Article 42: Rental Property Revolving Fund

Motion made by Marty Ragones and seconded by Tracy Billig to support Article 42. On motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

Articles 43 & 44: Real Estate Exemptions for Seniors - Bd. of Assessors

Motion made by Larry Rowe and seconded by Marty Ragones to support Articles 43 & 44. On Motion, vote carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Nikula).

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 10:10pm.