

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday, January 15, 2004
Fairbanks Senior Center - 7:30pm**

Present: Co-Chairs Tracy Billig & Bob Jacobson, Bill Kneeland, John Nikula, Marty Ragonas, Larry Rowe, Shauna Simmonds, and Sheila Stewart. Also present: Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary, Larry O'Brien, Selectmen, and SPS School Committee member Bill Braun.

Opening Remark from Co-Chairs:

The meeting was opened at 7:40pm.

Item 1: Approval of Minutes:

Bob Jacobson asked the committee to review the minutes from the January 8, 2004 meeting and to state any questions or remarks that they might have. Bob Jacobson requested that the word "break" be added to a sentence on page 2 of the minutes.

VOTED: On motion, to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2004 meeting with the understanding that the correction would be made. Motion made by Tracy Billig and seconded by John Nikula. On motion, vote carries 6 in favor (Billig, Jacobson, Kneeland, Nikula, Ragonas, Simmonds), 0 opposed, and 2 absent (Rowe, Stewart).

Item 2: Review and Approval of Final Report on Teacher's Contract:

Bob Jacobson introduced Claire Daly to the committee. She is a volunteer who worked with Shauna Simmonds on the Teachers' Contract Analysis project. He thanked Claire and Shauna both for all their time, effort, and energy that they put into this project.

Bob informed the committee that he would read through a redline copy, and that members should stop him with any suggestions or questions that they have.

Bob Jacobson asked the committee if they felt that that this report should be issued by just the Finance Committee or include SPS and LSRHS in the title of the report. He personally had no opinion either way. John Nikula brought up the fact that in previous meetings the committee said the Finance Committee would be issuing the report. It was agreed that the title of the report will read: "Sudbury Finance Committee Teachers' Contract Review".

Marty Ragonas suggested that the first line of the first paragraph in the introduction be changed to read: "The Sudbury Finance Committee has authorized a review of the SPS and LSRHS teachers' contract...."

Bob Jacobson reminded the committee that this project was initiated to determine whether or not teachers in Sudbury were paid competitively. The report shows that we need to take into consideration the working environment, health benefits, and salaries when looking at the schools.

Marty Ragonas believes the report will help the Finance Committee to respond to questions that they were not able to take positions on last year. It is going to help knowing where the teachers stand in regard to salaries.

John Nikula asked if Bill Braun would inform the committee how he felt about this report. Braun stated he thought that the wording in the report was fine. His only concern was that he felt that the condition of the working environment should not be brought into the report. The fact that employees remain or leave the school system because of the working environment is very low on the list as to why employees might leave.

Larry Rowe disagreed with Braun. Rowe believes this needs to be in the report to stop any future comments/debates. At least it will show that the FinCom looked into this matter. Rowe thought that the people who negotiate the contracts should be congratulated. He believes they did a good job of keeping the salaries within range of the other school districts and that good benefits are being offered to the teachers in Sudbury.

Marty Ragonas thanked Shauna and Claire for their work on this project. She believes that the FinCom has brought itself to a new level. She believes the committee should not stray away from projects like this because of extra work / time that it involves. She believes this has been a very useful and informative project.

Bob Jacobson informed her that the committee might possibly look into the Police and Fire Departments, or maybe one of the other larger departments for next year. This project is also a good indicator how effective people are at negotiating. Kerry Speidel informed the committee that if they decide to review the Fire or Police Departments' contract, that they should contact Assistant Town Manager Wayne Walker, as he may have some useful data.

Item 3: Other Items:

Sudbury Housing Authority:

Kerry Speidel asked the Committee if they would like the Sudbury Housing Authority to attend a meeting to discuss their Articles. She informed the Committee that any petitioner with an article that has a financial impact, have been invited to attend the February 2, 2004 Finance Committee meeting. The Housing Authority is willing to attend the meeting if they are needed to answer any questions if needed.

Selectmen Larry O'Brien informed the committee that these Articles were withdrawn last year. There is financial impact this year, since money was available from the CPA last year.

Bob Jacobson asked if the committee was in favor of these articles last year. Kerry Speidel informed him that the committee did approve these Articles last year. He asked the committee if they want to have a meeting to discuss these articles or to take a position. It was agreed that a position was not needed since there is no financial impact.

Finance Committee Reports

Speidel informed the committee that they might want to start thinking about the FinCom reports that are due by February 13, 2004. They can either use the same format as last year, or they can change it they choose to do so if they need more time. It is possible to put all the narratives together and then put all the spreadsheets at the end of the report.

Larry Rowe stated he would like to keep the report the way that it looks now. It looks a lot better with the spreadsheet next to the corresponding narratives. It looks a lot better.

Tracy Billig stated the report would be divided up like last year, where each liaison took their particular section.

Review of Meeting Schedule & Locations:

Jan. 22 – Thursday	Town Hall
Jan. 26 – Monday	Town Hall
Jan. 29 – Thursday	Town Hall
Feb. 02 – Monday	Fairbank Sr. Center
Feb. 05 – Thursday	Fairbank Sr. Center
Feb. 09 – Monday	Fairbank Sr. Center

Final votes must be taking by February 9, 2004 for a non-override budget. FinCom reports are due by February 13, 2004.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 8:45pm.