

Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday – August 28, 2006
7:30pm – Flynn Building (Silva Conference Room)

PRESENT: Bob Jacobson – Chair, Bill Kneeland, Marty Ragones, Sheila Stewart, and Ralph Verni. Also present: Finance Director, Andrea Terkelsen, and Recording Secretary, Robin Porcella

ABSENT: Tracy Billig, Larry Rowe, Chuck Woodard, and Debbie Zurka

Opening Remarks

The meeting was opened at 7:30pm

Item 1: Approve Minutes

The minutes from the June 19th meeting were not included in the packets. These minutes will be added to the Sept. 18th agenda.

Item 2: Finalize basic standard questions/information requests by FinCom Liaisons

Ralph Verni handed out a list of possible questions for the upcoming budget hearings.

Bob Jacobson asked the committee when they thought they would like to receive the information back from the cost centers. Bob stated he would like to receive some of the information before the budget hearings start. Marty Ragones stated she would like these questions to be answered at the liaison meetings. She believes it is too late to receive this information once the budget process starts. Ralph Verni suggested putting a time frame into the letter to the cost centers. Bob Jacobson stated that he wants to revise the budget letter to the cost centers to work these different points in.

Ralph Verni stated that he is expecting to receive a package back, and not just a narrative description. He wants to see the cost centers include this information in their budget presentations.

Bob Jacobson stated he did not want to just receive a narrative back from the cost centers, because this would not be able to answer all the questions he might have. He would like to schedule each cost center for a 45-minute presentation at a future meeting. He believes this might cause an extra long meeting, but thinks it is worth it since all of the committees questions/concerns will be addressed. Marty recommended having all of the liaisons and members of the cost centers come to the meeting and sit in the audience in case any FinCom members have questions.

Maureen Valente, Town Manager, suggested giving some directives as to what the committee is looking for, so that all of the cost centers are providing the same level of

information. She stated she would be happy to present everything that is listed on the sheet of possible questions.

Ralph Verni believes the committee needs to give the cost centers at least a month to answer these questions. Bob Jacobson stated he plans on revising the guideline memo and will try to get it out before the end of the month. He plans on sending the questions to the three main cost centers: the Town, K-8 school system, and LS High School.

Item 3: Discussion of Budget Guidelines Memo to Cost Centers:

Bob Jacobson's concern is getting a handle on the revenue, the estimates are so conservative. He believes the # presented on the sensitivity analysis has been a disaster in the past years. He was wondering if a number should even be put out there.

Maureen Valente informed the committee that the school takes a different approach to budget process. They start by voting on a budget that best fits their needs first. A way needs to be determined to figure what a non-override budget would come in at, so that way all of the cost centers are using the same figures.

Marty Ragones asked what the timeframe that the cash/revenue figures would be known so that some different scenarios could be prepared. Maureen Valente hopes to know in late November. Free Cash has to be certified before it can be determined.

Mark Collins informed the committee the Pauline Paste is still helping out at LS. He thought it would be helpful to have the cost centers come in with different budget scenarios. Maureen Valente states that this does not work well for the Town. It causes a lot of anxiety since it usually means that positions will have to be cut.

Item 4: Liaison Meeting Updates:

Bob Jacobson reminded the committee that they are going to want to start thinking about setting up liaison meetings. He recommends setting one up at the end of September and a couple in October. He stated he will email Chuck Woodard and Larry Rowe to ask them to get stuff going with the K-8 system.

Item 5: Schedule a tour of the police station for October:

Bob Jacobson has stated that a tour of the police station is being arranged with Peter Fadgen, Chief of Police. It is possible that an article will be added to Town Meeting to replace the current police station.

The tour is scheduled for October 23. The committee will meet at the police station at 7pm, and tour the station for about an hour. After the tour, the committee will reconvene in the Lower Town Hall at 8:15pm.

Maureen Valente stated she would like to include the Capital Improving Committee on this tour. She stated that she and Andrea Terkelsen would be available to give a 15-minute presentation at the Town Hall to show how the Town's debt will be affected.

Ralph Verni asked if a location has been chosen for the new station. Maureen Valente stated that the new building would be near the fire station on Hudson Road. The new station would be separate from the fire department, but a central office for both the Fire & Police Dispatchers would be created.

Item 6: New Business:

Maureen Valente stated the Town will be recognizing all of the volunteers with a brief reception to be held during Sudbury Day. The reception will take place from 11:30am to noon on September 16th. An email will be forwarded to all of the committee chairs with the information.

Marty Ragones asked how many members of the Finance Committee will be part of the working budget group. Bob would like to bring 3 to 4 members, since this is a transitional year. The newer members on the committee should be included this year in order to learn the process.

Dates for future meetings: September 18th at 7:30pm, and October 23rd at 7:00pm

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