

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**January 19, 2006**  
**Lower Town Hall – 7:30pm**

**Present:** Co-Chairs Bob Jacobson & Marty Ragonas, Tracy Billig, Bill Kneeland, Larry Rowe, Ralph Verni, and Debbie Zurka. Also present: Suzanne Petersen, Finance Director, and Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary.

**Item 1: Opening Remarks:**

The meeting was opened at 7:40pm.

**Item 2: Town of Sudbury – Budget Hearing**

Town Manager, Maureen Valente, was introduced to the committee as the presenter for the Town of Sudbury budget request. Maureen Valente asked the committee to stop her to ask questions or for clarification as she goes. She introduced the Department Heads and Selectmen who were in attendance at the meeting. She stated that the original budget book, containing 168 pages, will give them a better understanding of what the Town does, and the amount of revenue the Town works with.

She reminded the committee that she is here tonight strictly as an advocate for the Town's portion of the budget, and will not be discussing the other cost centers. Her discussion tonight will concentrate on the 3 biggest areas that effect the Town's budget: the Department of Public Works, Police Department, and Fire Department.

The Finance Committee asked for a 3.5% net over FY06, and the Town Manager's Recommended Budget is a 5.9% over FY06. The Level Staff Budget is a 4.6% over FY06. The budget's that the departments requested is 6.73% over FY06.

Her goals for tonight are: to give data and information, help you determine that FY07 is the year to seriously address the Town budget needs, and support her recommended budget in full.

Maureen Valente informed the committee that only two unions are settled, Highway & Engineering, so she used a 1.5% increase in the salary lines for all of the other departments. This figure was just used as a starting point, until the negotiations begin.

Marty Ragonas asked if five was the typical number of steps in the different contracts. Maureen Valente responded that the Supervisory union has six, the Fire Department has five, and non-union employees have seven. She reminded the committee that the salary schedules appear in the back of the Town Warrants.

Maureen Valente discussed the goals of the FY07 budget for the Police Department:

- Protect current staffing levels
- Add one patrol officer position to work on traffic
- Continue to 75% of open shifts
- Retain same level of vehicles & equipment
- Encourage prevention of problems, but be prepared for ones that occur

To accomplish their goals, the Police Department will need \$185,000 (gross) over FY06.

- \$62,000 for gasoline, which is new in their budget. The gasoline line consisted of one amount that was shown in the Department of Public Works budget in the past.
- \$30,000 offset by the grant
- \$50,000 for one more patrol office
- \$40,000 for salary adjustments. This will cover the step increases & a 1.5% cost of living adjustment.
- \$3,000 for maintenance contracts.

Maureen Valente discussed the ratio of patrol officers to the population figures. The Town of Sudbury's population is up 25%, but there are fewer staff members in the Police Department. In 1985 there were 30 patrol officers, and now there are 28.

Maureen Valente discussed the goals of the FY07 budget for the Fire Department:

- Protect current staffing levels. Have the same staffing level as in 1978.
- Set overtime budget sufficient to keep all 3 stations open all year long if no major long-term illness or injury to employee
- Meet the increased costs of supplies, materials, and services.
- Better reflect actual costs.

To accomplish their goals, the Fire Department will need \$75,000 (gross) over FY06.

- \$15,000 for billing service contract. This is not a new cost, but a new way of showing it. The Chiefs went out regionally and put out a bid to get a better rate.
- \$18,700 for gasoline. This figure was moved from the DPW gasoline budget line.
- \$8,500 for heating utilities
- \$29,000 for salary adjustments
- \$4,000 for general increases
- Remember: \$20,000 additional offsets in ambulance fees  
 $\$75,000 - \$20,000 = \$55,000$  gross over FY06

Ralph Verni asked if it is known what the overtime time figures for the Police & Fire Department in FY06 are. Maureen Valente stated that the appropriation would be listed in the budget books and in the Warrants. Sue Petersen stated the appropriation for the Police Department was \$197,583 and \$350,399 for the Fire Department.

Tracy Billig asked if it was known how the Town of Sudbury's Police and Fire Department salaries compare to other Towns. Maureen Valente stated they have compared the total compensation (salary & benefits) to similar towns, and Sudbury was average. We were not the highest or lowest paid town, but seemed to be in the middle.

Debbie Zurka asked what the number of patrol officers per shift is. Chief Peter Fadgen stated there is one officer assigned to each of the three sectors, and one supervisor. The supervisor will work both in the station and out in the field, depending on where he is needed.

Maureen Valente discussed the goals of the FY07 budget for the DPW:

- Protect current staffing levels
- Keep up with rising cost contract, and materials
- Pay existing lease purchase agreements
- Keep up with costs of gasoline and diesel fuel
- Keep up with costs of road work accounts
- Add one mechanic position
- Address public grounds – schools & Town of Sudbury

To complete their goals the following amounts will be needed by the different divisions within the Department of Public Works:

- Streets & Roads - \$153,000 net
- Trees & Cemetery - \$18,323
- Parks & Grounds - \$35,267

Maureen Valente pointed out the fact that in 1981 there were 28 highway employees, and due to budget cuts there were only 20 highway employees in 2005.

Maureen Valente quickly went over some of the figures for the other departments within the Town:

- General Government - \$80,000 over FY06
- Culture & Recreation - \$ 33,000 over FY06
- Human Services - \$20,900 over FY06
- Unclassified/Transfers - \$118,000 over FY06  
(\$10,000 Reserve Fund - \$108,000 Salary Adjustments)

She pointed out the fact that the Town employees have received an increase of 6% total over the past three years. She stated that the other Cost Centers have given their employees more each year, and it is time to do right for the Town employees. She stated that there should not be two classes of municipal employees.

Maureen Valente went over some of the budget initiatives and what the cost implications would be. Public Safety would restore the Assistant Building Inspector too full-time, for a cost of \$18,000. She reminded the committee that a couple of years ago, when times were tough Jack Hepting agreed to go part-time, so that Jim Kelly would not need to be laid off. Jack Hepting will be retiring this year after 20 years of service to the Town. Public Safety would add one Patrol Officer for a cost of \$50,000, and they would respond to traffic issues. The Public Works Department would add an assistant mechanic position, for a cost of \$39,171. The Board of Selectmen & the Master Plan would add a part-time planner for a net cost of \$18,000. The cost would be \$24,000, but the Planning Department already has \$6,000 in a salary line for a summer intern who has not been hired.

Jody Kablack, Town Planner, was introduced to the committee to discuss the part-time planner position. She stated this is an exciting opportunity for the planning board. Her

office has difficulty working on the Master Plan, because of the current staffing levels. She has only been able to complete the smaller projects on the Master Plan.

Marty Ragones asked what some of the projects on the Master Plan that have not been completed because of the staffing issues. Jody Kablack stated the waste water disposal issue on Route 20, economic development (want to make Rt. 20 more attractive to business, and there are Federal & State Grants available to do so but need the manpower to get the paperwork completed), affordable housing, transportation and traffic (the town has grown 25% in the last 8 years).

Bob Jacobson stated that Jody Kablack mentioned some major issues, and wanted to know if she believed \$18,000 would really help resolve these issues. Jody Kablack stated that it would help make an indent, and the issues show why the position should actually be made full-time and not part-time.

For the Town side of the budget only, the utilities FY07 proposed budget amount is \$356,380. This contains an increase of \$100,580 over the FY06 budget. The utility budget contains 3 main sources: natural gas, electricity, and heating oil. The library and fire department buildings are included in this budget.

Tracy Billig asked what the figures would be for the Town's proposed budget, as opposed to the 3.5% FinCom requested budget. Maureen Valente stated the figures would be the same in both. These costs need to be funded.

Maureen Valente provided the committee with a letter from her and the senior management team for the C.A.R.E program (Cost Avoidance and Revenue Enhancement). This program reflects the efforts by the Town Government. She thanked the committee for the opportunity to present her budget, and offered to answer any questions the committee had now or at a later date.

Marty Ragones thanked Maureen Valente for the C.A.R.E. program letter. She thought it might answer a lot of questions the committee might have. She believes the letter contains more information than they could have thought of requesting.

**There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:10pm**

