

Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday – January 11, 2007
Lower Town Hall – 7:30pm

PRESENT: Chair Bob Jacobson, Bill Knneland, Marty Ragonas, Sheila Stewart, Chuck Woodard, Ralph Verni, and Debbie Zurka

ABSENT: Larry Rowe

Opening Remarks:

The meeting was opened at 7:50pm. Bob Jacobson reminded everyone that the Town of Sudbury and the Capital Improvement Committee would be presenting tonight. The next hearing is scheduled for Thursday, January 18th, when SPS and LSRHS will be the presenters. Any questions on tonight's hearing may be email to Finance@town.sudbury.ma.us.

Budget Hearing: Town of Sudbury

Marty Ragonas and Debbie Zurka were introduced as the FinCom's liaisons to the town. Marty Ragonas thanked Maureen Valente and her staff for their work on the budget. Marty informed the committee that the town's FY07 budget received the Distinguished Budget Award last year, and that the FY08 budget has been submitted. Bob Jacobson informed the committee that Sudbury was one of seven towns in the state to receive this award.

Maureen Valente started her presentation by introducing some of her department heads. She introduced Fire Chief Ken Maclean, Police Chief Pete Fadgen, DPW Director Bill Place, Library Director Bill Talentino, Finance Director Andrea Terkelsen, and the Board of Selectmen

Mission of the Town:

- Protect public safety, public assets, and a special quality of life
- Advance the selectmen's goal (list available on the website and in budget books)
- Look for ways to make the future better (deal with issues as they arrive)
- Continue meeting current service demands
- Retain staff, reward good performance (some offices have just one employee)
- Comply with regulations and mandates

Mission of tonight's presentation:

- Provide data and information
- Speak of the need to support a budget that at least provides for level services for the Town Operating Departments (She will continue to make the point through out the presentation)
- Not repeat what is in the budget books.

FY08 Budget Priorities:

- Meet the goals of the Board of Selectmen
- Not lose programs in addressing long term projects
- Deal with increases in utilities, supplies, services
- Address areas where service expectations are high

- Address emergency planning and preparations capacity
- Address areas where we can't keep up desired service demands
- Address areas where we can't keep up with mandated level of services

FY08 Budget Requests (does not include benefits)

- Town Manger's Recommended Budget = 6.91% net over FY07
- Level Services Budget = 5.07% net over FY07
- FinCom's 3% Budget = 3.52% net over FY07
- Available Revenues Budget = 1.80% net over FY07

Specifics of the FY08 Recommended Budget

(9 items the Town is looking for - \$243,982 over the Level Services Budget)

1. Public Safety – add one fire fighter to work on inspectional work (mandated), but will also fill in for shift vacancies. Net cost over level services: \$15,000
2. Human Services (COA) – add 5 hours per week for the van driver position. Was in the budget a few years ago. At one point it was shared with the school department. Cost over level services: \$3,620.
3. Cultural & Recreation (Library) – use their strategic plan to address targeted areas where staffing, hours and materials have been under funded for years. Currently there are only 4 full-time employees. The hours the Goodnow library is open do not compare to the surrounding libraries. Cost over level services: \$88,760.
4. Cultural & Recreation (Park & Rec) – shift funding for Program Coordinator to match up with duties. Currently half of the salary is covered by the revolving fund, and the other half is covered under the tax levy. Would like to have the entire position funded by the tax levy. Cost over Level Services: \$20,000
5. General Government (Technology) – begin maintenance contracts on Town's mission critical switches, routers, and firewall. Cost over level services: \$5,500.
6. General Government (Technology) – create a GIS (Geographical Information System) administrator position. Town has delayed several years in creating this position, so cannot implement Master Plan for GIS. The information would be made available on the website. A presentation was made to the Board of Selectmen this summer. Cost over Level Services: \$57,000.
7. Public Works – extend grounds maintenance contract to attend to Town Buildings as well as School buildings. Cost over Level Services: \$18,570.
8. Public Works – planting of Shade Trees Program. Have been taking down diseased trees, but have not been replanting anything. Cost over Level Services: \$10,000.
9. Public Works – vehicle maintenance increase for rising costs, aged fleet. Becoming very expensive to maintain the older vehicles; costs are going up. Currently are fixing the older vehicles and they are back in the garage in a couple of months for more repairs. Cost over Level Services: \$25,000.

Marty Ragonese asked if the Town could only pick three of the items mentioned above, what they would be. Maureen Valente stated the Council on Aging van drivers hours, since it is important to a large group of citizens in Town. Need to remember we do not have bus/train service in Sudbury. The maintenance contracts for technology would also be important, since we need to maintain the computer systems already in place. Would like to get some funding for the library, but also feels the GIS position is very important. She would need some time to think about what three she would pick if she needed to do so.

Marty Ragonese asked that since it has been a mild winter so far, what happens if there are funds are left in the Snow & Ice account. Maureen Valente stated that any unused funds would go to Free Cash and be available for use in two years.

Ralph Verni asked if compared to last year has the Town been using less in utilities (heating/oil). Maureen Valente stated it is still too early to tell, since we do not have enough of the bills to compare. Hopes the amounts will be less than last year, since there is a new boiler in place.

Bob Jacobson stated that the DPW budget is 9% higher than last year. He asked for a brief explanation. Maureen Valente stated that the gas prices have gone up, and reminded the committee that they needed to look at the reserve fund transfers that were approved last year. Bill Place informed the committee that they approved approximately \$111,000 in reserve fund transfers for his department last year.

Bob Jacobson stated that between the police and fire department there are 7 dispatchers. If a combined office was created he would like to know if there would be any savings. Chief Pete Fadgen stated that there would not be a savings, because you would still need to have two dispatchers on at all times. The goal of have a combined area is so that emergency calls are not being transferred between the two departments. Currently there are 4 police dispatchers and 3 fire dispatchers.

Budget Hearing: Capital Improvement Committee

Kirsten Roopenian made the presentation on behalf of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC). She started by introducing the members of the committee who were present in the audience. Her goal for tonight's presentation was to give a quick review of the committee's missions, and the items selected to be presented for FY08.

The committee members are appointed by the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen. By law (MGL CH.41) the committee must make an annual review of the municipality's capital items. The committee is responsible to make recommendations in a budget or annual report to the Finance Committee.

The mission of the CIPC is to study proposed projects involving major tangible assets/projects that have a useful life of at least 5 years, and a single year cost of \$10,000 or a multi-year cost of \$100,000 or more.

The recommendation by the CIPC for FY08 comes to a total of \$789,148

- \$269,148 for various Town Departments
 - \$70,000 for Building Projects
 - \$30,000 for pressing building repairs
 - Flynn Building exterior painting
 - Fairbank Center roof repair
 - Town Hall parking lot lighting
 - Town Hall roof repair
 - \$146,100 for Department of Public Works
 - \$77,100 in new leases to replace 2 dump trucks and 1 heavy-duty truck
 - \$46,000 for purchase to replace a additional heavy duty pickup truck
 - \$23,000 for purchase to replace 1 Hustler mower
 - \$38,548 for Technology
 - \$14,550 for wide-format scanner/printer (Engineering Dept)

- \$11,500 for scanner/printer (Town Clerk's office)
 - \$12,498 for 2nd lease payment for new tax software
 - \$14,500 for Atkinson Pool (to replace starting platforms)
- \$450,000 for fire engine and equipment truck
 - \$405,000 for Fire Truck replacement
 - \$45,000 for heavy duty truck for small equipment transportation
- \$70,000 for Town Center traffic/safety improvements
 - to be used for survey and preliminary engineering design

Summary:

- Recommended total of \$789,148
- Recommend approval for all but one item as part of the Town's operating budget for Capital Projects \$384,148
- Recommends the Fire Engine (\$405,000) as a capital exclusion for FY08
- Works with FinCom to prevent capital assets from deteriorating to unsafe or inefficient levels

CIPC concerns:

- Deferring necessary projects for Town budget, costing more in later years
- Leads to peaking of Capital Requirements
- Critical to develop a long-term approach in funding future capital

Bob Jacobson thanked Kirsten Roopenian and the CIPC, and told them the committee would take this under advisement.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:30pm.