

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Thursday – January 18, 2007**  
**Lower Town Hall – 7:30pm**

**PRESENT:** Chair Bob Jacobson, Bill Kneeland, Marty Ragones, Larry Rowe, Sheila Stewart (arrive 7:40pm), Ralph Verni, Chuck Woodard, and Debbie Zurka (arrive 7:40pm)

**Reserve Fund Transfers:**

**#07-08 Reserve Fund Transfer** is for \$10,000 and is being requested by the Department of Public Works. The funds are to be transferred to the Highway Vehicle Maintenance line, and will be used to cover unexpected expenditures. This line is now a deficit.

**#07-09 Reserve Fund Transfer** is for \$2,700 and is being requested by the Board of Appeals. The funds are to be transferred to the Appeals Clerical Line, and will be used to cover the cost of extra work hours between July 1 thru December 31, 2006.

**VOTED:** On motion, to approve reserve fund transfers #07-08 and #07-09 as presented. Motion made by Bill Kneeland and seconded by Ralph Verni. On vote, motion carries 6 in support, 0 opposed, and 2 absent (Stewart, Zurka).

**Budget Hearing: Sudbury Public Schools**

Chuck Woodard and Larry Rowe were introduced as the FinCom liaisons to the SPS system.

Superintendent John Brackett thanked the committee for the opportunity for tonight's presentation. He informed the audience members that the detailed information regarding the school's budget is available on the Town's website.

***Budget Goals for FY08:***

- Maintain class size guidelines, especially in the early grades
- Recruit & Retain excellent teachers
- Enable the Continuous Improvement of Student Learning and Achievement
- Enable opportunities to ensure success of emerging learners and challenge the academically talented
- Anticipate unknown expenditures that occur during the year
- Hold fees constant

***FY08 Budget Drivers*** (similar to previous years, nothing new)

- State & Municipal Funding – The structural deficit that Sudbury is facing will put severe constraints where the schools go
- Enrollment Growth
- Class Size and Staffing Levels
- Special Education (mandated)
- Commitment to on-going improvement
  - FDK (full day kindergarten)
  - Academically Talented

- Whole Child Needs
- Technology
- Wild Cards – Utilities, Kindergarten enrollment
- SPACE – continues to be a problem, but will not be dealt with much in the FY08 budget

*Highlights of Level Staff Budget:*

- Staff at FY07 level
- Negotiated raises and steps
- Expenses at Fy07 levels, except.....
  - school supply budgets increased by 5%
  - text books to complete MS Math initiative
  - Curriculum Resources
  - Utilities
  - Special Education Expenses
  - Transportation contract

*Highlights of Level Service Budget:*

- Level Staff Budget, plus
- Classroom teachers to meet guidelines
  - 1.5 % increase in FTE vs 1.6% increase in enrollment
  - 1.5 FTE at elementary school
  - 3.0 FTE at middle school
- \$171,000 for technology & Instruction expenses

Bob Jacobson stated that SPS is showing a 68.36% increase in the Curriculum Instruction, Technology line over last year. He asked if John Brackett could give some detail on this increase. Dr. Brackett stated that most of the increase is due to the changes looking to be made to technology services/equipment. The equipment is getting old, and needs to be updated. They are looking to provide technology and instruction that will be beneficial to the students. The goal is also to maintain one computer lab within each school.

Chuck Woodard asked if the schools would continue to ask for additional funds for the technology or if this would be a one time request. John Brackett stated that this would be ongoing. They need to start addressing the technology issue

*Highlights of Adopted Budget:*

- Level Service Budget, plus
- 1 school psychologist ( # of students needing service is growing)
- 1 Assistant Elementary Principal
- *NOTE:* Essential needs were significantly limited by recognition of Sudbury's structural deficit

*Budget Scenario Comparisons (figures exclude benefit & pension)*

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Deficit vs 1.8%</b>
Adopted Budget	8.29%	\$1,647,000
Level Service	7.77%	\$1,515,000
Level Staff	5.94%	\$1,051,000

*Looking for Economies* (presented by Mary Will)

- Utility Upgrades (have been working on for the past 2 to 3 years)
  - Energy Management System upgrades
  - Variable Speed Drivers
  - Lighting (received rebate from NStar)
  - Upgrade HVAC to electronic controls
- Staffing adjustments to meet need
- Special Ed programs modified to and located where most effective (changing in house programs to meet the needs of the students, eliminating programs when not needed)
- Cooperative purchasing (working with TACT to obtain supplies)
- Grants & Gifts

*Class Size Comparisons*

	FY06	FY07	FY08 Level Staff	FY08 Level Service
FTE Classroom Teachers	143	144	143.5	148.5
# Teaching Sections	156	157	154	159
Sections over guidelines	3.8%	8.9%	21.0%	1.3%
Sections at/under guidelines	96.2%	91.1%	79.0%	98.7%

Ralph Verni asked if John Brackett could comment more on the guidelines, and if there is any specific information on the surrounding communities. John Brackett stated he believes the guidelines were set in the late 1980s or early 1990s, and they were set after a lengthy assessment of where the classes were. He does not have any specifics on the local communities.

The following figures are based on the current class size guidelines:

Kindergarten	=	20
Grades 1 & 2	=	22
Grades 3 thru 8	=	24

**The committee took a two minute break.**

**Budget Hearing: Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School**

Bill Kneeland and Ralph Verni were introduced as the FinCom's liaisons to LSRHS. Bill Keeland informed the committee that he and Ralph have attended several meetings since this past fall. He thanked John Ritchie and Judy Belliveau for all of the help and information they have provided the committee.

Principal/Superintendent John Ritchie stated that his presentation would be much shorter than the one provided by SPS. He stated that the LSRHS budget is about 90% similar to the SPS budget. The two school systems are facing the same dilemmas.

*Budget Guidelines:*

- Make classroom teaching & learning the first priority
- Maintain reasonable class size in core academic areas (costs are associated – have lost an administrator)
- Distinguish between what is essential to learn by completion of high school and what is desirable to experience (school system adheres to this all the time)

- Continue to develop initiatives that will provide optimal educational experiences for our most reluctant learners, support efforts to assess student performance, and make educationally sound decisions based on these assessments (easy to help the top students, but need to help the less motivated. Don't ask for more money, they reallocate resources because it is the right thing to do).
- Maintain athletic and extra-curricular activities (has to be considered part of the education experience. Athletic fee is \$165 per sport and \$35 per activity)

*Budget Categories:*

- Operating Budget \$20,073,830
- Pensions & Insurance \$3,513,561
- Debt Service \$3,179,259

*FY08 Operating Budget*

	<b>FY08 Operating</b>	<b>\$ Increase over FY07</b>	<b>% Increase over FY07</b>
<b>Level Service</b>	\$19,693,236	\$1,225,024	6.63%
<b>Level Class Size</b>	\$19,906,166	\$1,437,954	7.79%
<b>Budget Request</b>	\$20,073,830	\$1,605,618	8.69%

*FY08 Budget Drivers:*

- Enrollment, class sizes, and staffing (next year looking at 20 additional students)
- Contractual obligations
  - Cost-of-living and step increases
  - Reinstate Curriculum Development – requires additional \$40,000
- Special Education
  - In-District population increasing
  - Out-of-District tuition costs (26 students projected for FY08 – 6 placements cost over \$100,000)
  - circuit breaker reimbursement
  - transportation
- Pensions & Insurance
  - Middlesex Retirement for non-teachers and administration (72 employees contribute)
  - Assessment increased \$37,004 over FY07
  - Insurances are collaboratively purchases, and are self-insured. The new rates should be set in the two weeks)
- Debt Service

Ralph Verni asked if the teachers' contract has anything stating the number of students per class. John Ritchie stated that there is a general clause stating the student to teacher ratio, but there is no limit for the number of students per class.

Chuck Woodard asked if there is anything that can be done to reduce the benefit costs. Judy Belliveau stated it would need to be negotiated with each community. She stated this was done about 3 to 4 years ago. Chuck Woodard asked how the co-pays compare to the surrounding towns. Judy Belliveau stated that the co-pays are very similar to what the surrounding towns are paying. She stated that there are different rates for the prescriptions.

*Circuit Breaker Reimbursement History:*

- FY05 \$571,684
- FY06 \$593,887
- FY07 \$488,900 (actual figure, but \$550,000 had been estimated)
- FY08 \$805,416 (estimated)

Bob Jacobson reminded everyone of the upcoming budget hearings. Minuteman and CPC will present on Monday, January 22. There will be a joint meeting with the Lincoln FinCom and a discussion on the proposed new police station on Thursday, January 25.

**There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:50pm**