

Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday – December 21, 2009
Flynn Building – 7:30pm

PRESENT: Chairman Chuck Woodard, Joan Carlton, Jamie Gossels, Bill Kneeland, Marty Ragonas, Jim Rao, Robert Stein, and Sheila Stewart

ABSENT: Bob Jacobson

Opening Comments

The meeting was opened at 7:33pm.

Item 1: Approve Meeting Minutes

The committee was asked to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2009 meeting. The committee was informed that the Chuck Woodard and Bob Jacobson had submitted their suggested corrections via email.

VOTED: Motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2009 meeting with the understanding that the suggested changes will be made. Motion made by Bill Kneeland and seconded by Robert Stein. On note, motion carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Jacobson).

Item 2: Transfers and Other Business

Transfers: There were no transfers for the committee to take action on.

Other Business: Chuck Woodard stated which members would participate in the budget working group this year. The members will be Chuck Woodard, Jim Rao, Marty Ragonas. Joan Carlton and Robert Stein will share the fourth position with each participating in every other meeting. Chuck Woodard reminded the committee that he will send out an email summarizing what was discussed at the working group meetings within a couple of days of the meeting.

Item 3: Selectmen O'Brien to discuss BRTF and other cost & revenue initiatives

Selectmen Larry O'Brien reminded the audience that all budget and BRTF documents can be found on the Town's website. Videos of the different committees' meetings can be found on the website. All info can be found in the Budget Update box. Additional information will be added as the budget process continues.

School Administration Consolidation: A meeting was held on December 3rd with full attendance. There was a delay in holding the meeting due to the various continuances of the ATM, vacation schedules, and other factors. The committee was informed that the governor is pushing regionalization. A working group has been formed which refers to themselves as "G4", including the superintendents from SPS, LSRHS, Wayland, and Lincoln participated in the meeting. The superintendents are looking at areas where they think they can find efficiencies, such as human resources, payroll, and transportation. They have assigned people in their respective school districts to report findings back to the superintendents. Selectmen O'Brien believes that people are taking this more seriously than he thought they would.

CORE: John Brackett, Scott Carpenter, and Maureen Valente are now creating CORE 2 & 3. They are looking to find a way to create efficiencies between the three cost centers. John Brackett and Maureen Valente are looking into the possibility of creating a Facility Manager position. Maureen Valente stated that the position would be a 50/50 split between SPS and the town. They goal is to add LSRHS at a later date. There could also be a potential savings in energy purchases. More information will be presented at the ATM.

Chuck Woodard questioned why LS would not be involved in this now. Maureen Valente stated that Scott Carpenter requested a year in order to get settled in his position. The Town of Lincoln might also have to be involved, because of the regionalized school.

Larry O'Brien stated that the goal will be to have a school administration consolidation article ready for the 2011 ATM. A decision was made to give the G4 group 6 months to get going and achieve some success.

The next step is to look into the possibility of creating a unified Lincoln & Sudbury K-12 school system. There are still many questions that revolve around the Hanscom students. There are still a lot of variables that need to be looked at.

Sheila Stewart asked if they would continue to meet with the superintendents. Larry O'Brien stated that they are hoping to meet at the end of June.

Chuck Woodard asked that considering the number of people involved and the potential savings are there really incentives for people to change. Larry O'Brien stated that there is because of the ongoing pressure. There is a lack of state funds and we need to find ways to raise our own revenues. He discussed how the town has combined the SPS & town payroll positions.

Marty Ragonis stated that when the BRTF report first came out, the Town of Lincoln was very resistant. She asked if people are really working hard to make this consolidation happen, if the FinCom could get a progress report in March. Larry O'Brien stated yes, and that they could probably get John Brackett and Scott Carpenter to attend to provide their opinion. Chuck Woodard stated they could also invite members of the G4 to attend a future meeting.

Robert Stein questioned Selectmen Larry O'Brien about not keeping his promise to have a consolidation warrant article ready for this year's annual town meeting and about the group not meeting for 6 months. Selectmen Larry O'Brien stated that he is correct. An article will not be presented because of what they have learned and the situation has changed. He stated that although there was a lag between meeting dates, the chances are that there would not be an article presented at this year's ATM.

Robert Stein stated that supposedly an article to consider the consolidation will be proposed at the ATM and he asked if Selectmen O'Brien would support it. Selectmen O'Brien stated he would consider it, but he needs to receive the article before deciding.

Item 5: Discussion on Budget Hearings timetable

Chuck Woodard presented a final draft of the budget hearing schedule for the committees review. He stated that this needs to be finalized before the school's winter vacation. He stated when the working group would be meeting in January.

Todj Gozdeck, resident, questioned the discussion in regards to the working group meetings being opened or closed to the public. Chuck Woodard stated that no recent discussions have taken place in regards to making these meetings open to the public.

Selectmen Larry O'Brien stated that the committee might want to let the cost centers know what their time constraints will be for their presentations. The amount of time allotted to each cost center will determine what can be presented. He also recommended changing the start time of the meetings from 7:30pm to 7pm. Chuck Woodard stated that he was thinking of allowing 30 to 45 minutes for each presentation followed by 15 minutes for questions from the FinCom and audience members.

Item 6: Consideration of changes to FinCom pages in the warrant

Chuck Woodard stated that he would like to add a one page budget overview. He wants to slim down some of the information being provided. He would like to slim down the town side and add more to the school pages.

Instead of showing managers who make over \$80,000, the committee wants to show any employee who makes over \$100,000. This amount includes OT and stipends. Maureen Valente asked that, if this is the committee's decision, they give enough time so that the information can be formatted properly for the warrant. Jim Rao stated that they will need to provide a time frame as to when the money was earned. Maureen Valente recommended that they report this on a fiscal year basis.

Marty Ragonas asked if Chuck Woodard had a chance to look at the school section. Chuck Woodard stated that LS needs to provide the 10 year enrollment figures that SPS provides. He would also like to see a debt service schedule for the high school similar to what the town provides.

Brian Semple, resident, questioned the school's budgets. He stated that you can't really tell how the funds are being spent. He stated that he has put an article in the Town Crier. You cannot tell if the English Department at LSRHS is overstaffed or if the Metco program pays for itself. Chuck Woodard asked if he would like to prepare a spreadsheet containing information that he would like to see by Monday. Brian Semple agreed and stated that he is not picking on LSRHS and that they also need to look at SPS.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:42pm.