

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday- January 12, 2009
Lower Town Hall – 7:30pm**

Present: Chairman Chuck Woodard, Todj Gozdeck, Jaime Gossels, Bob Jacobson, Bill Kneeland, Marty Ragonas, Sheila Stewart, and Debbie Zurka

Absent: Jim Rao

Opening Comments:

The meeting was opened at 7:44pm.

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Budget Hearing:

John Ritchie, Superintendent, made the presentation for LSRHS. He reminded the committee that they are all invited to visit the high school on Thursday, January 15th. He asked if any members are interested that they contact Pam Shriver to let her know.

John Ritchie stated that there are lingering misunderstandings that LS was not hurt by the failed override. The impression seems to be that the high school did not suffer any damages because of the failed override, which is not correct. The school had a one time increase in the fees which dampened the impact.

John Ritchie discussed the requirements that must be fulfilled in order for a student to graduate. A student must take 990 hours of classes, no matter what subjects are offered.

Enrollment figures are projected to be flat for FY10, followed by increases in FY11, 12, & 13. They are projecting 1,640 students for FY10.

FY10 Proposed Budget:

This budget was developed according to the Budget Guidelines, but with a 5% decrease in State Aid. It will allow the school to restore 2.5FTE for the Professional Staff and 1.20 FTE for the Educational Support Staff.

The operating budget will amount to \$21,317,898. This results in a 9.13% increase over FY09. The Pension & Insurance Line will be \$3,759,176. This results in a 2.25% increase over FY09. The Total Budget will be \$25,077,074. This results in an 8.04% increase over FY09. Debt Service (outside of tax levy) will be \$2,795,700, and results in a 4% decrease from FY09.

FY10 4.5% Fixed Growth Budget:

This budget was developed according to the budget guidelines, and resulted in a gap of \$536,500. The school would need to reduce 3.00 Professional FTE and 1.50 Support Staff FTE. The supplies, materials, and equipment lines would be reduced by 16.5%.

The operating budget will amount to \$20,491,212. This results in a 4.90% increase over FY09. The Pension & Insurance Line will be \$3,763,267. This results in a 2.36% increase over FY09. The Total Budget will be \$24,254,479. This results in a 4.5% increase over FY09.

Debt Service (outside of tax levy) will be \$2,795,700, and results in a 4% decrease from FY09.

FY10 2.1% Non-Override Budget:

This budget was developed according to the budget guidelines, and resulted in a gap of \$1.12 million. The school would need to reduce 9.00 Professional FTE and 4.30 Support Staff FTE.

The operating budget will amount to \$19,834,433. This results in a 1.54% increase over FY09. The Pension & Insurance Line will be \$3,863,016. This results in a 5.08% increase over FY09. The Total Budget will be \$23,697,449. This results in a 2.10% increase over FY09. Debt Service (outside of tax levy) will be \$2,795,700, and results in a 4% decrease from FY09.

Chuck Woodard asked if any meeting or if any conversations have taken place in regards to the BRTF Superintendency Union recommendation. John Ritchie stated that the school committee is taking all information into consideration. There is a meeting schedule for February 2nd with all parties. The school does have a legal opinion. John Ritchie also stated that needed for the opinion/ideas of the school employees be taking into consideration. They have a wealth of knowledge.

Bob Stein recommended that the employees take a pay freeze and that the retirement bonus not be offered, in order to close the gap. He also pointed out that the Minuteman HS teachers teach 5 classes as opposed to the 4 classes that the LS teachers teach. He also stated that the Minuteman teachers never received bonuses until this past year, and the amount was only \$3,000. John Ritchie responded that bonuses are not offered. Retirement Incentives are offered, and do save the school some funds. The retirement incentives are offered to three teachers, and we save on costs since the replacement teachers are hired at a lower salary.

In closing, John Ritchie, thanked the committee for their continued help & advice. In preparing the budget, the decisions were made on what they now know. This is the best budget they can propose at this time.

Sudbury Public Schools Budget Hearing:

John Brackett, Superintendent, made the presentation for SPS. SPS is entering FY10 having cut \$1 million from FY09. Last year 22 FTEs were cut. Fees were also raised for transportation, athletics, and student activities.

FY10 2.1% Non-Override Budget

The total Net Budget & Benefits will amount to \$34,556,474. This budget results in a 2.1% increase compared to FY09, and results in a deficit of \$601,661 compared to a level staff budget. Within this budget is an allowance for 2% increase for raises & step increases. The Special Education Expenses would increase by 10.97%. This budget also includes very optimistic revenue projections based on current information. This budget would result in the reduction of 7 Professional Staff FTEs and 4 Support Staff FTEs.

FY10 1% Non-Override Budget:

The total Net Budget & Benefits will amount to \$34,184,171. This budget results in a 1.0% increase compared to FY09, and results in a deficit of \$973,964 compared to a level staff budget. Within this budget is an allowance for 2% increase for raises & step increases. The Special Education Expenses would increase by 10.97%, and Transportation would increase by 3%. This budget would result in the reduction 14 Professional Staff FTEs and 5 Support Staff FTEs.

FY10 Adopted Budget:

The school committee is required to adopt a budget for the next fiscal year by December 31st. They believe it is important to adopt a budget that is based on quality, opportunity, and achievement, within a context of fiscal responsibility. The SPS administration and school committee understands the economic environment everyone is facing.

The FY10 Adopted Budget would require a 5.63% budget increase over FY09, and is \$218,370 greater than the FinCom cap.

Chuck Woodard asked if any meeting or if any conversations have taken place in regards to the BRTF Superintendency Union recommendation. John bracket stated that they will be working with John Ritchie and Judy Belliveau. They will be meeting soon, now that the budget hearings are over. Susan Illuano stated that she appreciates that work the BRTF did. Their report merits further consideration. The school committee did have a general discussion at their last meeting regarding the BRTF recommendations.

Brendon Mahoney (Harvard Dr) – thanked John Brackett for a good presentation and for the good they are doing. SPS provides more opportunities for less money than surrounding towns. He asked why if an override is needed, why is it not possible to recommend one for SPS and not LSRHS. Larry O'Brien, selectmen, stated that this question is consistently asked. Ultimately the Board of Selectmen will decide whether or not an override question will appear on the March ballot. As of yet, no decision has been made regarding an override ballot question. The philosophy of the selectmen and all of the cost centers has been that we are in this together.

In closing, Chuck Woodard stated he finds the information presented tonight as unsettling. We are in the worst economy since the 1930s. He does not think the cost centers should count on an override, because he does not believe one will pass.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 10:35pm.