

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Monday - January 10, 2011**  
**7:30pm – Flynn Building**

**Present:** Joan Carlton, Jamie Gossels, Bob Jacobson, Bill Kneeland, Marty Ragonas, Jim Rao, Robert Stein and Chuck Woodard

**Absent:** Tammie Dufault

**Opening Comments**

The meeting was opened at 7:35pm

**Item 1: Approve Meeting Minutes**

The committee was reminded that Jim Rao and Chuck Woodard had emailed their suggest changes earlier. Jim Rao informed the committee that Tammie Dufault had email some changes later in the day. He brought printed copies of Tammie's suggested edits in case the committee members did not have time to review Tammie's suggestions.

Chuck Woodard stated he had some concerns regarding the edits that Tammie Dufault is suggesting. Due to Tammie Dufault being absent from the meeting, the committee agreed to defer voting on the minutes of the December 20, 2010 meeting until a later date.

**Item 2: Public Comments**

Rick Johnson, Sudbury resident, was in attendance to question the article regarding the roof at the Noyes School. He gave a brief review of his employment qualifications to inform the committee of his knowledge on these types of projects. He stated that his comments are neutral and that he is just trying to help. He believes we need to slow down and work on getting the relevant information to get this project completed the correct way. He stated that the recommendation reports and the estimated costs do not tell much. He stated that we need more information and need to know what is causing the problem. We should know the number of leaks and where they are. He wonders if part of the roof could be spared, but this is unknown as it is not addressed in the report.

Rick Johnson questioned what would happen if the bids come in higher than what is approved at the town meeting. Bob Jacobson stated that he understands Rick reasons for questioning the project, but that bids have not been coming in higher than expected. Rick Johnson responded that he is concern about the amount of the project and is not trying to step on anyone's toes. Bob Jacobson reminded everyone that the article deals with more than just the roof. The state is setting the deadline of when the town must decide as to whether or not to approve the funds. Regardless of what happens with the article, the funds will need to be spent in the future to make the repairs.

Rick Johnson questioned what the plan for the repairs would be if the state did not come forward with the funds. Bill Braun responded that this is an area that they have been looking into for the last five years. Rick Johnson asked that if the article is approved, that they make sure a maintenance program is put into place. We need to protect our assets.

Jeff Beeler, SPS School Committee, stated that the committee had the project sprung upon them and is doing the best they can under such short notice. He stated that this is a stimulus base funding program and that 98 projects were allowed to submit proposals for funding. Bidding will only go out, if the town is willing to fund the project. He stated that every area where cuts were made in the roof that issues were found. There were two areas that could not be cut into because of the snow. The more we delay the repairs, the more damage that is being done to the building. He stated that there is no need for residents to be on the roof, as a video of the roof is on the school department's website. He stated that they are trying to keep the information as up-to-date as possible. He did agree that more funds are needed in order to maintain the buildings.

Bill Braun, SPS School Committee, stated that out of 37 cut tests, 35 showed water damage. He stated that a lot of diligent work has been put into this article.

Chuck Woodard questioned the wording of the article. Jeff Beeler informed the committee the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) dictates the language of the article. He stated that the article and ballot question had to be approved by the MSBA. Mike Melnick, Permanent Building Committee, informed the committee that the project has to be bid out by April, so they will know what is exactly needed by the May 2011 town meeting.

### **Item 3: Presentation of Article 2: Means Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption**

Ralph Tyler, article petitioner, made the presentation to the Finance Committee. The committee had previously been in receipt of the hand-out "Article 2 – A Home Rule Petition to Establish Means Tested Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemptions Limited to 0.5% to 1.0% of the Sudbury's Property Tax Levy.

Ralph Tyler stated that this article started to come about in mid-November, after the town of Hamilton passed a similar tax break for their residents. He stated that after hearing that the selectmen would be calling a Special Town Meeting, he knew they had time to come up with an article quickly. He believes the Board of Selectmen understands the reason this article should be approved now, as it will give us a chance to implement the program by FY13. He stated that he took the article from Hamilton and revised it to fit the Town of Sudbury.

Jamie Gossels questioned if the legislature has acted on Hamilton's article. Ralph Tyler responded that the legislature has approved it and that it was approved at the ballots. Hamilton had a low turn-out at the polls, due to inclement weather.

Robert Stein stated that this article would need to come up to vote every three years. He has issues with the one or two residents who might cheat the system. He believes if we are asking the amount of the applicant's income, then it is not too personal to ask for a list of their assets. He is concerned about someone having a million dollars in the bank and a home in Nantucket and then the person applies for this exemption.

Ralph Tyler stated that he understands Robert Stein's concerns but if someone slips through and receive a couple hundred dollars of their tax bill, the program will still be very profitable to the town. He believes we will get 100% compliance and that we are talking of a factious person.

### **Item 4: Deliberations – Special Town Meeting Articles**

**Article 1:** Jim Rao asked the committee for any comments or questions in relation to Article 1.

Chuck Woodard stated that it sounds like a good deal for the Town of Sudbury, but not the taxpayers of Massachusetts. He stated he would be hard pressed to find a reason to vote against this article.

Bob Jacobson stated that he has faith in the Permanent Building Committee, and that we will see some savings from the repairs.

Jim Rao stated that he understands everyone's concerns that were voiced tonight, but that we will need to spend the money on the repairs in the future anyways.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the support of Article 1 for the repair/replacement of the roof, boilers, and windows at the Noyes School not to exceed \$2.6 million. Motion made by Bob Jacobson and seconded by Bill Kneeland. On vote, motion carries 7 in support, 1 opposed (Stein), and 1 absent (Dufault).

**Article 2:** Jim Rao asked the committee members for any comments they might have on this article.

Bill Kneeland's concern is that the article being presented is significantly different than what is worded in the warrant.

Bob Jacobson stated that omitting the asset test is not a deal breaker for him. He stated that we need to focus on the people who will benefit from this article and not the couple that might try to cheat the system. He believes the FinCom should explain why the committee voted as they did on this article.

After discussing the article, the FinCom did not take a formal vote. Jim Rao will contact Ralph Tyler to explain the FinCom's position on the asset test.

### **Other Business**

The committee was informed that a joint meeting with the Town of Lincoln's Finance Committee has been scheduled for January 31, 2011.

Jim Rao informed the committee that the Budget Working Group will be starting up again, although no dates have been set as of tonight. The meetings will be open to the public. For FinCom participants, they will be Jim Rao, Chuck Woodard since he was the former FinCom chairman, and Joan Carlton since she is serving as the vice-chairman.

The FinCom agreed to meet at 6:30pm, on January 19<sup>th</sup> prior to the start of the Special Town Meeting.

**There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 10:36pm.**