

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee  
Minutes of Meeting  
Monday – May 2, 2011  
LSRHS Conference Room A300 – 6:00pm**

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

**Opening Comments:**

The meeting was opened at 6:06pm. Jim Rao reviewed the articles that the committee needs to vote on prior to the start of the Annual Town Meeting.

**Votes on Annual Town Meeting Articles**

*Note: The article votes are listed in numerical order by article and not the order that the votes were actually taken.*

**Article 2: Budget Adjustments**

Maureen Valente, Town Manager, informed the committee that two adjustments will be presented. The first transfers will move \$41,985 from the benefits line to the DPW in order to cover part of the snow and ice deficit. The second adjustment is moving \$100,000 from the benefit line, with \$50,000 going to the DPW for the snow and ice deficit and \$50,000 to the Sudbury School Department to cover unforeseen expenses related to removing snow for the school roofs. She stated that the town is expecting to recover \$60,000 to \$70,000 from FEMA in reimbursements, but the funds are not expected until the next fiscal year.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of Article 2. Motion made by Chuck Woodard and seconded by Tammie Dufault. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

**Article 4: FY12 Non-Override Budget**

The committee was informed that the non-override budget amount is \$79,099,861, which does include the additional state aid funds.

Jim Rao informed the committee that the non-override budget allows the cost centers to grow accordingly: the town 2.2%, Sudbury Public Schools 2.2%, and the high school 2.45%.

The committee discussed the limiting motion that will be presented at the annual town meeting and what it represents.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of the non-override budget in the amount of \$79,099,861. Motion made by Chuck Woodard and seconded by Bill Kneeland. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

**Article 4: FY12 Override Budget**

The committee was informed that the override budget amount is finalized at \$79,652,861. This amount includes the increase of \$553,000 that was requested by the high school. The amount was proposed by the LSRHS school committee and the Board of Selectmen voted to put this forth on the ballot.

Tammie Dufault stated that she respects the committee member's opinion, but reminded everyone that a month ago the committee set forth specific conditions that needed to be met for the finance committee to support an override. Her feeling is that we will have egg on our face if we approve this override. The LS school committee did not bring any concessions forward.

Chuck Woodard echoes Tammie's remarks. LS said no to re-opening contract negotiations, and this puts us in a weak position. Robert Stein stated he agreed with Tammie, and he reminded Bob Jacobson that he stated he would only support the override if the conditions are met. He stated that LS is blaming the few families with special need students, when it is the labor costs that have caused this problem.

Jim Rao stated that it was not the intent of the school committee to blame the families of the special need students. There was a significant increase in the special education costs. The question to be answered is how we will fill the gap that LS is faced with. The better approach would be to meet the taxpayers half way, as finger pointing does not resolve the issue.

Robert Stein stated that LS knew this issue would be coming for years. It is not a surprise and they should have been planning for it.

Siobhan Hullinger, resident, stated the Bob Jacobson proposed the override based on conditions being met. She feels if the committee supports the override, then no one from the unions will get what is going on. The approval of the override will make the town more split. She reminded the committee that the unions did not make concessions, and it will undermine the finance committee's appearance if an override is supported.

Chuck Woodard stated that he and Mark Collins discussed some of the comments that Chuck made at the April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mark was upset for the way Chuck criticized the teacher's contract in public, but he does feel that the contract is more expensive than the other cost centers.

Bob Jacobson stated that he expressed his dismay with the way the override was presented. He does not believe the committee will have egg on their face if they support the override. The finance committee never gave guidance for 4.5% budget growth. The committee had recommended budgets not to exceed 4.5%, and it was the school's choice to submit the budget they did. He does not want to vote in favor of the override, but he also does not want the kids to be hurt by this decision. The decision to not support the override will have an effect on the kids in the regular education classrooms, and we must still honor the contract that is in place.

Chuck Woodard questioned if the committee could vote on a smaller override amount. Bob Jacobson stated that it one is proposed. He reminded that committee that Jim Rao can let it be known how the committee feels when he makes his presentation at the annual town meeting.

Joan Carlton stated that it is the kids and not the teachers that will be hurt if the override fails. The teachers have a contract that we are obligated to pay.

Bob Jacobson stated that it is his opinion that it does not matter what the committee says, as the LS teachers will not get the message. We need to hope that we will be able to make changes to the health benefits. He reminded the committee that more than half of the teachers are at the top step. We need to be prepared to go to arbitration, and to expect the teachers to be willing to do exactly what is stated in the contract and no more.

Robert Stein questioned if it possible for contract negotiations to be done now in order to find savings before the June 7 ballot. Bob Jacobson responded yes.

Tammie Dufault stated that the message should be that the Finance Committee is not the ones hurting the kids. There are other options available besides an override.

Bill Kneeland stated the committee was adamant that the teachers give back. He stated that the committee can stand on principal regardless of where we are right now. The high school will have to make cuts next year regardless. He stated the same resources are not offered to students compared to the time his son attended the school. He stated that the Finance Committee's message should be that we will not support an override if the cost centers contracts do not fit within a prop 2 ½ budget. He is torn right now. His assumption is that this will pass at the town meeting tonight, but is questionable at the ballot. If it fails at the ballot, then it is the kids that are the ones that are affected.

Jim Rao reminded the committee that they should not care about the egg-on-the-face image. There is no right or wrong answer for this matter. Everyone needs to vote based on what they feel is the right thing to do.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of the override budget in the amount of \$79,652,861. Motion made by Bill Kneeland and seconded by Jamie Gossels. On vote, motion carries 5 in support (Carlton, Gossels, Jacobson, Kneeland, Rao) and 4 opposed (Dufault, Ragonis, Stein, Woodard).

The committee had a quick discussion about the possibility of recommending a smaller override amount. The majority of the committee agreed that they would be able to support a smaller amount.

#### **Article 5: FY12 Capital Budget**

The committee was informed that the Capital Budget now a \$100,000 override amount, which brings the total budget up to \$638,947. The \$100,000 will be used for the two bombardier plows, and any unforeseen expenses with the purchase of these two pieces of equipment.

The committee discussed possible ways that the two bombardiers could be purchased/leased without permanently increasing the tax levy.

Robert Stein stated that he was confused about the way these were presented and he cannot support this because of the permanent increase. Bill Kneeland reminded the committee that there are a lot of capital needs that are not being met, because of the lack of funds.

Maureen Valente stated that the funds are expected to stay in the capital budget, and that we need to permanently increase the capital budget. She reminded the committee about the first meeting when she informed them that the town is \$145,000 short of getting to a level-service budget.

Bob Jacobson explained how the \$100,000 can stay in the capital budget, and reminded everyone that as a committee they will not need to support the budget if a party recommends moving the \$100,000 to a different part of the budget. Maureen Valente reiterated that the intention is to leave the funds in the capital budget; otherwise we are getting to the point where the capital budget will not be able to afford purchasing another vehicle.

Siobhan Hullinger, resident, provided the committee members with a three page hand-out. She does not believe this project has been fully vetted nor clearly presented to the taxpayers. She stated all override discussions have revolved around the schools. She reviewed the minutes/meetings as to when the shared facility director position and the overrides were discussed. She vented frustration about not being able to obtain some of the minutes from the website. Jim Rao reminded her that it takes time for the minutes to be prepared and approved. She stated that the April 26 minutes stated that \$92,000 to \$93,000 was

asked for, but now this override is up to \$100,000. There is no description as to if the town is looking at buying new or used equipment, and for how many years the equipment will be financed for.

Jim Rao thanked everyone for their comments, but needed to stop the discussion due to the time. He reminded everyone that this issue came up about the time the warrant was printed and that the residents will have a say on the matter at the Annual Town Meeting.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of Article 5. Motion made by Chuck Woodard and seconded by Joan Carlton. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

Jamie Gossels recommended that it be announced at the Annual Town Meeting that the intention is to have the override funds will continue to be used to fund only the capital budget in the future.

### **Article 9: Unpaid Bills**

The committee was informed that there are no unpaid bills to be reported.

### **Article 11: Real Estate Exemption**

The committee was informed these are the usual real estate exemptions that the Assessors present every year.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of Article 11. Motion made by Jamie Gossels and seconded by Tammie Dufault. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

### **Article 20: Sewer System Design & Permitting**

Jody Kablack, Director of Planning & Community Development, informed the committee that they will be asking for the full amount not to exceed \$1,000,000. This full amount includes the approximate amount of \$20,000 that will be need for the bond issuance. Jody Kablack informed the committee that a 5-year bond would result in an additional \$35 for residential taxpayers and \$140 for commercial taxpayers.

Andrea Terkelsen, Finance Director, informed the committee that the bond has to be issued on its own. The 5-year period is based on the type of work that is expected to be completed in phase 1.

Tammie Dufault questioned the timeline for the completion of the project. Jody Kablack stated it is expected to take 18-months. She stated that all funding sources have been and will continue to be looked at. Since the project involves Route 20, we might be eligible for some enhancement funds from the state.

Bill Kneeland questioned if the Sudbury Water District has been approached to contribute funds. Jody Kablack stated that they do support the project. At this time there has been no willingness on their part to provide funding.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of Article 20. Motion made by Marty Ragonese and seconded by Tammie Dufault. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

### **Article 21: Amend Zoning Bylaw – wireless services overlay district**

The committee was reminded that they had delayed this vote, as Tammie Dufault had concerns in regards to towers being built in the cemeteries. In reviewing the revised article wording, it was noted that the article will now include the wording “exclusive of school buildings and properties, and cemeteries”.

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of Article 27. Motion made by Tammie Dufault and seconded by Jamie Gossels. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

**Article 23: Amend Zoning Bylaw –Retail use in industrial & limited industrial districts**

The committee agreed to take no position on this article.

**Article 26: Sale of Land – Hudson Rd & Pinewood Ave**

**Voted:** Motion to recommend the approval of Article 26. Motion made by Tammie Dufault and seconded by Joan Carlton. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

**Article 27: Exchange of land off Peter’s Way with Abutter**

**VOTED:** Motion to recommend the approval of Article 27. Motion made by Tammie Dufault and seconded by Joan Carlton. On vote, motion carries 9 in support and 0 opposed.

**Article 39: State of the Town Public Meeting**

As this is not an article relating to money, the committee agreed to take no position on this item.

**There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 7:17pm in order to attend the Annual Town Meeting.**