

Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday – February 11, 2013
Lower Town Hall – 7:00pm

Present: Joan Carlton, Jamie Gossels, Bill Kneeland, Douglas Kohen, Mark Minassian, Jim Rao and Robert Stein

Absent: Bob Jacobson and Chuck Woodard

Opening Comments

Jim Rao opened the meeting at 7:05pm.

Budget Hearing: Sudbury Public Schools

Anne Wilson, Superintendent, and Mary Will, SPS Director of Business/Finance presented the FY14 Non-override budget for the Sudbury Public School system (SPS).

The committee members were provided with packets containing copies of the SPS slide show presentation: “Sudbury Public Schools Non-Override Budget FY14”.

Mark Minassian stated that the kindergarten enrollment is at 224, but are projecting 246. He questioned the difference. Anne Wilson responded that they are still waiting for registration forms to be returned. The kindergarten enrollment is currently at 227. They do use the census to help with their projections.

Mark Minassian questioned how they factor in the reallocation of two sections from Curtis. They have two teachers who could potentially retire and those positions will not be filled, but they would fill a position at a lower level. Anne Wilson stated that they prepare the budget using the average salary, which is a Masters-Step 6 which is approximately \$50,000.

Doug Kohen asked if it could be explained why the administrator position was removed from Curtis and then the position was reinstated. Anne Wilson responded that the reduction in the house administrator was not due to enrollment, it was strictly to work within the budget. The Curtis school has seen a large class size the last couple of years, so the house administrator was needed. Jim Rao confirmed Anne Wilson’s statement by reminding the committee that the reduction was a budget issue and done so that they could work with the non-override budget.

Doug Kohen asked what the rationale is for keeping the 50% Haynes Principal position. Anne Wilson responded that they will need help with the implementation of the teachers’ evaluations.

Doug Kohen questioned if it is possible they might eliminate some of the support staff due to the small class sizes. Anne Wilson stated that nothing is pointing in that direction right now. They will continue to look at this. She reminded the committee that a large number of support staff was cut a few years ago.

Joan Carlton questioned if there are any other potential savings besides what the GIC may provide. Anne Wilson stated that Chapter 70 funding is still unknown. They are expecting to receive less than what they currently are for Circuit Breaker.

There being no further questions for SPS, their budget hearing ended at 7:40pm.

Budget Hearing: Town of Sudbury

Maureen Valente, Town Manager, and Andrea Terkelsen, Finance Director presented the FY14 Non-override budget for the Town of Sudbury.

Maureen Valente explained that the non-override budget is pretty much the same as the level staff budget that has already been presented. The difference in the budgets will all depend on what happens with the GIC. Depending on the savings realized with the GIC, the savings would be able to offset the six new priorities for the town. She would need to prioritize the new priorities, but believes the new dispatchers would be the top.

Maureen Valente took a moment to thank the DPW for the work they did this past weekend clearing up after the storm. She stated the town did open a shelter, and one person came in. She also informed the committee that the fire and police department both carried extra personnel on-duty during the storm.

Jim Rao asked for if the town saw a 2% growth in health insurance, then the town would be able to fund the new initiatives. Maureen Valente responded yes.

Joan Carlton questioned the Bombadier in the CIPC budget. She asked if this is for the snow removal from the sidewalks and why this is being asked for. Maureen Valente explained that the town had two really old ones, and the town added a new one last year. These are used for clearing the sidewalks. The sidewalks are the last to be cleared, and takes longer for them to get because of the lack of staffing. The sidewalks near the schools are the priority.

Jim Rao questioned if they know what the Snow & Ice figures are currently. Maureen Valente stated she does not have all of the figures, and will report back. She reminded the committee that last year was very unusual in regards to the use of the Snow & Ice account. Andrea Terkelsen informed the committee of the way the snow & Ice figures are budgeted and the rational for so.

Robert Stein stated that in a few weeks we will be coming up on the 3-year anniversary of the town manager's and town counsel contract having been renewed. He read Article VII – Section 5 of the town's General Bylaws, which relates to the selection process of Town Counsel. (*note: a copy of the general bylaws can be found under the Town Clerk's document section on the town's website*) Robert Stein stated that the point he is making is that both contracts were done in secret. Both contracts were done in executive session a couple of days before the election. He attends most meetings, and if he misses a meeting he watches it on television. He has not seen any interview between Paul Kenny or three other candidates. He would like Maureen Valente to assure the town that the procedures will be followed this time. Maureen Valente stated that this is a good question to address to the Board of Selectmen. She responded that Town Counsel reports to the Board of Selectmen. She believes this question has come up before, and it all depends on how the section is interpreted. She responded she does not have all the answers for this question, because it is not something that she was asked to prepare for the budget. She stated she would let the Board of Selectmen know that he would like to address this issue with them.

There being no further questions for the town, their budget hearing ended at 7:50pm

Budget Hearing: Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

Scott Carpenter, Superintendent, and Michael Connelly, Business Director, presented the FY14 Non-override budget for Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (LSRHS).

The committee members were provided with packets containing copies of the LSRHS slide show presentation: "Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School FY14 No Override Budget Presentation".

Robert Stein stated this might not be a solution but might help in increasing the number of class options and reducing the class sizes. He asked what the downside might be with the teachers teaching 5 classes as opposed to 4. Scott Carpenter responded that you have to take everything into consideration. The school has a dynamic curriculum. If you start stretching the time that the teachers have to teach, we will not continue to see the evolution of the curriculum. The teachers put a lot of time into planning their curriculum. He reminded the committee that the school has done a presentation to the community in the past on this subject. Gerald Quirk, LS School Committee, reiterated what Scott Carpenter stated in that the high school has a unique curriculum.

Jim Rao stated he hears what is being said, but even though there might not be an exact 20% reduction, there would be some sort of reduction in class sizes.

Robert Stein questioned if the teachers are only working from the time they show up at the school to the time they leave. He is interpreting the comments to be that the teachers are only working while at school. Scott Carpenter responded that he is not suggesting that at all. Robert Stein stated that his suggestion is to spread the same workload over 5-classes as opposed to 4. Several town's teachers teach 5 of 8 as opposed to 4 of 7.

Mark Minassian questioned how many school systems use the 4-class system as opposed to 5-classes. Scott Carpenter responded that a handful use the 4-class system. Weston, Newton, and Concord-Carlisle currently use the 4-class system.

Doug Kohen asked if the number of classes to be taught is stated in the contract. Scott Carpenter responded yes.

Mark Minassian questioned that the school is seeing a reduction in enrollment, but the cost of SPED transportation is going up. Michael Connelly responded because it involves the type of transportation needed. Some students need nurses or other type of assistance.

Jaime Gossels questioned the range of what they might be expecting for Chapter 70 funding. Michael Connelly responded that this is something everyone is trying to answer. His opinion is that there will not be a huge increase in this funding. They are hoping that the education funding will be protected in the governor's budget.

Jim Rao questioned what is driving the increase in Special Education Instruction from FY13 to FY14. Michael Connelly responded that some of it is due to the restructuring of the staff. Scott Carpenter responded that they wanted to add FTEs to control the out-of-district costs. He would need to look into this a little further to confirm. Jim Rao asked if it is possible that FY13 might be understated. Michael Connelly responded yes.

Jim Rao asked if they could discuss the history of reapportionment. Scott Carpenter responded that the school has a history of redistributing money after two budget cycles. This is a long standing process. Michael Connelly responded that most regional school districts do not do it this way, but this has been a long standing past practice with LSRHS. The Excess & Deficiency Account is their version of Free Cash. There is currently just over \$1 million in the account, and this is the highest it has been in the past three years. Scott Carpenter stated that the balance contains some fund from the Medical Claim Trust, and some of the funds will need to be returned to the employees.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 8:35pm.