

**Town of Sudbury  
Finance Committee  
Minutes of Budget Hearings of Sudbury Finance Committee  
Thursday, February 6, 2014  
Flynn Building, 7:30 PM**

The Town of Sudbury's Finance Committee (FinCom) Budget Hearing, held at the Flynn Building, and was called to order at 7:33 PM by Chairman Doug Kohen. FinCom members present for this meeting were: Doug Kohen, Susan Berry, William Kneeland, Robert Stein and Andrew Sullivan, Tammie Dufault and Mark Minassian. The finance committee was later joined by Joan Carlton, Robert Jacobson.

**Item 1: General business**- Approve meeting minutes

Deferred approval until Monday, 2/10/14.

**Item 2: Presentation of FY15 Budget for Minuteman High School**

Edward Bouquillon, Ph.D., Superintendent of Minuteman High School presented the FY15 budget for Minuteman High School and the Proposed Amendments to the Minuteman Regional Vocational School District Agreement. Dr. Bouquillon introduced Kevin Mahoney, Asst. Superintendent of Finance. Information was passed out to all members regarding the FY14 Budget and a copy of the Proposed Regional Agreement.

Dr. Bouquillon stated that the proposed budget for FY15 is \$19,645,065 which is an increase in member assessments by 3.8% which is based on an operating budget increase of 5.9%. Dr. Bouquillon also covered overall enrollment and out of district tuitions. The committee asked if they could see the actual dollars spent and the estimated revenue plan, Dr. Bouquillon responded yes, but the 2013 audit is not yet completed. Chairman Kohen inquired about the increase to administrative costs (from 1.1M to 1.8M); Dr. Bouquillon responded that among other drivers were the regional agreement, the new PARCC test, the new educator evaluation system and as students increase, staffing needs increase as well. Chairman Kohen inquired when he decreased staff; Dr. Bouquillon stated in 2011, but FTE count doesn't go back that far. Chairman Kohen inquired about the headcount of staff going up 2.5; driving \$700,000 in cost. Dr. Bouquillon responded this is partially because of the collective bargaining agreement. Joan Carlton asked about the FY14 6.3M in out-of-district tuition, With an overall budget of 18M, the out-of-district are half the students but only paying 1/3 the cost. Dr. Bouquillon responded that they do not set the out-of-district tuition, it only covers basic cost and does not cover special education or facilities. Chairman Kohen asked if the number of out-of-district students can be controlled, the answer is no. He also asked if Dr. Bouquillon was able to cap the out-of-district students, would he? No. The frustrated committee generally collaborated and asked why it is in the interest of member towns to stay a member. That question was not answered. The general question was asked why would a non-member town join the district then? There was no response. A general conversation regarding fair tuition commenced. The suggestion was made to get in touch with local government representatives for support. Susan Berry asked if Dr. Bouquillon was getting pressure from other member towns regarding this, Dr. Bouquillon responded yes.

The new regional agreement allows an avenue out if all - member towns approve the member town leaving, or if the member town is overruled on a vote on taking on debt by majority vote under the new voting mechanism, transportation reimbursement would change and capital projects would be leveraged. Tammie Dufault asked if there would be an assessment to non-member towns, the answer was no. . Chairman Kohen finally asked "How do you expect us to feel?" Dr. Bouquillon answered that he expects all member towns to support Minuteman in some way... He stated that we are welcome to contact Senator Donnelly

regarding Senate Bill 228. A FinCom member asked “How come you want the biggest school possible knowing how member towns feel? Tammie Dufault addressed the committee by saying: Is it in the best long-term interest of Sudbury to stay a member? Chairman Kohen asked how does the Regional Agreement gets approved. The answer was a majority vote at the Town Meeting of all member towns. Andrew Sullivan referred back to the presentation and asked for elaboration about account 1000 (pg 5) that increased 66% over the past 4 years. Kevin Mahoney responded that they will provide that information to the Finance Committee with descriptions for FY14-15. Andrew Sullivan inquired about the 2000 series; Is it new hires or technology? The answer is that there has been a great hike in technology especially with the PARCC test coming. Chairman Kohen attempted to compare Sudbury’s Cost Centers with Minuteman’s budget; He asked - Is there an oversight process to stay within budget for Minuteman? Is there a regional Finance Committee? Dr. Bouquillon responded that there is a Finance Sub-Committee, but there are NO non-school committee members. He works with them to oversee assessment changes. Tammie Dufault requested audited financial statements for FY10,11 and 12. She would also like to see salaries over \$100,000 listed by position. Tammie Dufault requested more transparency. The questions were asked, “If the out-of-district town’s student number was capped and they wanted to send more students, could Minuteman demand them to become a member town?” Dr. Bouquillon states that they cannot do this legally and the admissions policy would need to be changed. It is suggested by Andrea Terkelsen to schedule another meeting with Minuteman to address critical issues.

Minuteman School Committee Representative Mr. Dave Manjarez spoke about his findings. He believes that Minuteman does not have to accept tuition students. Dr. Bouquillon states that this is false and Minuteman by law is forced to accept these students. Tuition students are not paying for any of the capital costs at Minuteman. Mr. Manjarez continues that there is disparity between member and non-member towns in the conversation about right-sizing the new school. The school committee continues to walk down the road of an 800 student school while only member towns will pay those capital costs. Mr. Manjarez continues that there is an under-utilization of tuition. He is frustrated that the school committee must vote on new budgets without having actual numbers from previous year’s budgets to work from. He believes that there is an over-assessment to member towns. He encourages the FinCom to look at the FY12 audit where 4.3M tuition revenue in fact uses 5.6M, he asks, “Where is the other 1.7M?” He also states there is 1.1M in dedicated accounts that are not going away.

### **Item 3: Presentation of FY14 Budget for Community Preservation Committee**

Chris Morley and Jody Kablack from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) presented their FY15 budget to the Finance Committee. Key items from their proposed budget are as follows.

Rail Trail - \$150,000 for design - There was much discussion on whether this should be a MASS DOT approved rail trail or just a greenway.

Melone Redevelopment Study - \$150,000 to complete a Master Plan for the development of rental housing which counts towards the Town’s 10% affordable housing goal.

Musketahquid Village - \$200,000 to replace the ceramic tub enclosures in 62 units at Musketahquid Village.

Sudbury Housing Trust 10% Allocation - \$100,000 to the Sudbury Housing Trust

Town Wide Walkways - \$50,000

Sudbury Historical Commission Historic Projects - \$162,500

#### **Item 4: Presentation of ESCO project by the Energy Committee**

Jim Kelly, Bill Braun, Hal Myers and Steve Weisman presented a handout with the ESCO FY15 budget of \$1,120,551 for infrastructure renewal projects that will provide efficiency upgrades. These upgrades would occur at both SPS and town buildings. The main idea is that the energy improvements would pay for these upgrades assuming a 15 year payback from energy savings. Chuck Woodward alerts Finance Committee members that the project guarantee is for units of energy savings, which are still subject to fluctuations in price per unit. Tammie Dufault asked if this is a warrant article. Jim Kelly answered yes a warrant article is being considered.

#### **Item 5: Capital Funding Committee Recommendations**

Chuck Woodward explained that there is a Strategic Financial Planning Committee for Capital Funding, The Board of Selectman went through goal setting and appointed a committee. Tammie Dufault stated that she is concerned with the message to the taxpayers regarding free cash.

The new police station has an estimated 7.9M cost (inclusive of the amount already voted for at FY14 Town Meeting) that will be presented for vote at town meeting. Chairman Kohen asked about advocacy for the new building, response was that there have been meetings and tours offered, but people don't come. There is also a virtual tour and there have been 8 public meetings.

#### **Item 6: Other Articles**

None.

#### **Item 7: Public Comments**

Scott Nassa of the Sudbury School Committee came tonight to explain his vote on the SPS budget. The vote was 4:1. He voted against the budget because of many reasons; some included the loss of 5 teachers for 1:1 technology, classroom sizes are too big; he thought the guidelines for SPS must be old; he asked himself, do the guidelines fit now? He could not vote yes.

#### **Item 8: Adjournment**

Bill Kneeland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Minassian seconded it. Vote 9-0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10pm by Chairman Kohen.