

**Town of Sudbury
Finance Committee
Minutes of Sudbury Finance Committee
FY15 BUDGET HEARING
Monday, February 10, 2014, 7:00 PM
Lower Town Hall**

The Town of Sudbury's Finance Committee's Budget Hearing, held at Lower Town Hall was called to order at 7:06 PM.

Present for this meeting from the Sudbury Finance Committee were: Chairman Doug Kohen, Bill Kneeland, Joan Carlton, Susan Berry, Robert Stein, Mark Minassian, Andrew Sullivan and Bob Jacobson. Tammie Dufault joined the group at 7:35.

Item 1: General business

- Approve meeting minutes

Move to Thursday 2/13/14.

- Transfers and other business

Move to Thursday 2/13/14.

**Item 2: Presentation of the FY14 No Override and Level Service
Budgets for Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School**

Bella Wong, Interim Superintendent along with School Committee Chairman Radha Gargeya presented the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Proposed FY15 level service budget.

The committee members were provided with packets containing copies of the LS slide show presentation: "Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Proposed FY15 Budget Presentation" and LSRHS Budget Summary.

The LS School Committee has not voted on this budget yet, the public hearing is 2/11/14.

Level 1 has met all targets for MCAS. Level 2 did not meet their targeted level of improvement. Robert Stein asked who sets the levels? The answer was the Department of Education.

Robert Stein asked about class sizes. Why is 25 a magic upper number? The only documented research for that class size is for K-3, no research for upper elementary. Is the high school putting as many physical chairs in as possible so students can take the classes they want? Bella Wong answered that the seats would be too close and may be a fire hazard. The larger class sizes also preclude break-out groups. She explained that classes today cannot be only teacher directed instruction.

Robert Stein inquired about the athletic fees that are collected, is it greater than the cost? Bella Wong answered No, it subsidizes the program. Bob Jacobson asked if the net number is \$432,000? Bella Wong explained that these are expenses after fees are collected. Robert Stein also asked if there was money in a revolving account? No. Bella Wong reminded the committee that many activities provided for students don't even have stipends.

Chairman Kohen brought up concern for investing in teacher training now.

Ellen Joachim, Sudbury school committee, noted that Language based learning disorders got grants to bring some students back into the district.

The conversation turned to safety and how the school handles the safety of the facility, students, staff and grounds. LS is asking for a 3rd Campus Aide to enhance safety. Bella Wong explained that the aids have a relationship with students and knows the facility quite well. Students will go to places on campus where they cannot easily be found and the Campus Aide restricts those opportunities. A committee member asked - Can this position be paid for by a government grant? Bella Wong answered that this is a small price to deter or prevent crime.

A member commented that investing in programs to bring students back to the district would save money and have significant cost savings in the future. He asked how many Lincoln/Sudbury students have been brought back on average during the last 5 years. Chairman Kohen commented that he thought that we can improve services within the current FTE's. Robert Stein suggested training teachers to be more qualified with students. Bella Wong suggested reallocating FTE's. Tammie Dufault asked if collaboration is continuing with SPS. Superintendent Wong stated she started on 7/1/13 and has been carrying forth the work that has already been done. Transitions have been very smooth.

The amount of projected students is 1626. A committee member asked - does that number include out-of-district students? What about staff's children? Bella Wong replied that in 2013 there were 60 out-of-district students, she will check that number.

Robert Stein asked what happens when you find out that a current student lives outside of the district? Bella Wong answered that the school uses the police, utility records for proof of residency and drive-bys. In extreme cases there is the use of private eyes, but residency can usually be proven without those services.

A committee member asked - what is the plan for MCAS and the sub-aggregate groups that are not meeting targets? Bella Wong answered that they are in process of 2 major goals. Tammie Dufault asked if there are any FTE alignments to address this issue.

The town and SPS is proposing ESCO to create offset financing for some infrastructure upgrade projects. The superintendent has not collaborated with NStar as of yet. Robert Stein asked where are you getting your numbers from? There are grants with NStar. NStar offers significant incentives and can make significant cost changes. Tammie Dufault will check with Jim Kelly.

Item 3: Finance Committee Budget Deliberations

Chairman Kohen stated that circuit breaker funds can only be used towards tuition. We are using current year funds to offset next year's operating budget. Tammie Dufault mentioned fluctuation and \$250,000 could be a single tuition or 2 tuitions They are trying to be transparent and labeling it as a carry forward. What about teachers retiring? They have anticipated cost savings.

Apportionment: . Radha Gargeya stated they want to use the fund to contribute to OPEB, slowly build up a Stabilization Fund and increase free cash to 5%. LS is taking their direction from the Sudbury FinCom. These improvements will improve their bond rate.

Mark Minassian asked if the budget was voted on unanimously. There is a public hearing 2/11/14.

Tammie Dufault would like to see more visibility on topics in the budget, she does see improvement from past years, but is asking the FinCom to look deeper.

Joan Carlton asked if the projects that are part of the ESCO project have been considered by the Capital Funding Committee?

Tammie Dufault inquired about the rolling stock and how much maintenance happens on these vehicles? Has there been an increase in repairs or are we just replacing them?

Minuteman Representatives: Any follow-up? No, and we will probably not be getting any.

FinCom requested maintenance and repair records for last 3 years by vehicle. They would like to know how much we are spending on each truck. Andrew Sullivan also wanted to know the year, mileage and machine hours of each vehicle.

FinCom also requested the trend of Free Cash over the last few years.

Item 4: Public Comments

None,

Item 5: Adjournment

Bill Kneeland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tammie Dufault seconded it. Vote 9-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25pm by Chairman Kohen.

.