

**Sudbury Finance Committee  
Budget Strategies Task Force  
Joint Meeting Minuets  
February 10, 2016**

**ATTENDENCE**

**Finance Committee Members Present:** Susan Berry, Chair, Fred Floru, Vice Chair, Jeff Barker, Joan Carlton, Adrian Davies, Mark Minassian, Bryan Semple

**Budget Strategies Task Force (BSTF) Members Present:** Susan Berry, Chair, (FinCom), Chuck Woodard, (BoS), Fred Floru, (FinCom), Ellen Winer Joachim, (SPS SC), Anne Wilson, (SPS), Melissa Rodrigues, (Town Mgr.), Bella Wong, (LSRHS), Radha Gargeya, (LS SC), Lucie St. George, (SPS SC)

**Also Present:**

Andrew Vanni, Finance Director/Treasurer Collector, Susan Iuliano, Sudbury Board of Selectman, Mary Will, Director of Business and Finance (SPS), Peter Rowe, Director of Finance and Operations (LSRHS), Mike Fee, Facilitator

**Absent:** Jeff Atwater, Jose Garcia-Meitin

**CONVENE:**

The joint meeting of the Finance Committee and the Budget Strategies Task Force was called to order at 7:03 p.m., by Chairman, Susan Berry at, Town Hall - Lower Level, Sudbury, MA 01776

**ITEM 1: Process, Goals, and Introduction of Facilitator**

Chairman Berry stated that the Board of Selectmen (BoS), Sudbury Public School (SPS) Committee, and Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School (LSRHS) Committee have posted this meeting. She also stated that she checked with Town Counsel regarding the Public Meeting Law and comments from the respective board members. Chairman Berry noted that because this meeting has been posted all are allowed to express their opinion about the proceedings even if the committees do not have a quorum present.

Chairman Berry stated that there is an approximate \$350,000 gap between the budgeted expenditures and the expected revenue. To reach a no override budget the accumulative totals for the Town of Sudbury, SPS and LSRHS must be reduced by \$350,000. Chairman Berry stated that she has asked members of the Budget Strategies Task Force (BSTF) to convene with suggestions on closing the gap. This would include discussions from each cost center with suggestions on closing the gap.

Chairman Berry welcomed Mike Fee. Chairman Berry stated that Mike Fee would facilitate a discussion among the representatives of the BSTF on any additional reductions that might be needed to close the gap. Chairman Berry stated that the Finance Committee would ask questions to ensure the understanding of issues and priorities of each cost center. Chairman Berry also stated that the Finance Committee is charged with the task of making a recommendation for the town on a no override budget. Chairman Berry explained that the goal of this meeting is that the cost center representatives suggest and discuss a plan or plans for a no override budget, which is based on their collective wisdom about relative needs of the schools and the town.

**ITEM 2: No Override Budget Scenarios**

Mr. Rowe led the discussion on the proposed LSRHS FY17 Budget request. Mr. Rowe stated that the LSRHS was directed at a previous meeting to go back and look at two components within the LSRHS FY17 budget request. One was the inclusion of a 5% growth for regular education transportation. Mr. Rowe explained that this service was combined with SPS. Having reviewed this it constitutes a \$5600.00 reduction. Mr. Rowe stated that the second item reviewed was projected Circuit Breaker funding. He stated that based on a 73% threshold this would put LSRHS in the \$1.5M range, which is higher than originally projected. This would allow LSRH to increase its revenue projection by \$150,000. Mr. Rowe added that there is going to be an increase to LSRHS from Chapter 70 State Aid. Mr. Rowe explained that these factors would reduce Sudbury's LSRHS assessment by approximately \$133,000. A brief discussion for purposes of clarification followed.

Ms. Rodrigues led the discussion on the proposed FY17 Budget for Town Departments. Ms. Rodrigues stated that she has identified approximately \$133,000 in budget reductions. She stated that \$90,000 would be reduced from the reserve account. She explained that based on the history of this account she is comfortable with the reduction. Ms. Rodrigues went on to identify and explain additional reductions. The total amount of the reduction to the proposed FY17 budget for Town Departments is \$133,072. A brief discussion for purposes of clarification followed.

Dr. Wilson led the discussion on the proposed FY17 Budget for SPS. Dr. Wilson stated that SPS has a deficit of approximately \$325,000. Dr. Wilson stated that Ms. Will has had conversations with Marianne Bilodeau, and with information from the GIC, SPS was able to reduce its benefit line item by \$55,000. Dr. Wilson stated that the technology new equipment line item would be reduced by approximately \$30,000. Mr. Minassian noted that with the proposed reductions SPS would still have a deficit that

would result in the reduction of 4 or 5 FTEs. Dr. Wilson stated that there are two main drivers to the proposed FY17 budget, out-of-district tuition and enrollment. A brief discussion for purposes of clarification followed.

Mr. Fee pointed out that the cost centers have made adjustments and have identified substantial savings. Mr. Fee asked the cost centers to share their concerns and questions.

Ms. St. George, SPS School Committee expressed concerns on the impact the reductions would have on the SPS budget. Ms. St. George stated that SPS is losing staff and will not be able to accept donations from the PTO's for technology because SPS will not have the infrastructure to support it.

Ms. Wong expressed concerns on the impact the reductions would have on the LSRHS budget. Ms. Wong stated that reductions to LSRHS's base would be a concern for FY18.

A discussion then followed on the SPS \$325,000 deficit, as well as state aid revenue. Ms. Rodrigues explained how Chapter 70 funding is disbursed within the town of Sudbury. A lengthy discussion ensued on sharing Information Technology services among the cost centers. Mr. Davies asked Dr. Wilson how the reductions in FTE's would affect the service level for students. Mr. Davies also asked Dr. Wilson if she would consider proposing an override to bridge the cost gap for Town Meeting consideration. Dr. Wilson replied that an override is not her decision. She described two scenarios for reducing the deficit. She explained that she would consider removing a section of the third grade class at the Loring School. This would create larger third grade classrooms at Loring than other third grade classrooms across the district. She also explained that 14 sections of kindergarten classrooms have been allocated. If enrollments were lower than anticipated, sections of kindergarten classrooms would be reduced, which would help reduce the deficit. Dr. Wilson stated that beyond these two scenarios, additional reductions would impact student learning in a very negative way.

Mr. Gargeya, LS School Committee stated that LSRHS works hard at finding efficiencies and cost savings. Mr. Gargeya explained the process that has resulted in reductions to utility cost. He added that a successful teacher contract has been negotiated that reduces the district's portion of the health care contribution. He also added that through successful negotiations the debt is less. Mr. Gargeya noted that in finding efficiencies and cost savings those saving should be redeployed to enhance educational opportunities for students.

Chairman Berry noted that through this discussion savings had been identified to reduce the \$350,000 deficit. She also noted that SPS continues to face a loss of FTE's. Chairman Berry asked the cost centers how would it impact their budgets if they were to share the cost SPS faces.

Ms. Rodrigues explained that if she makes any more reductions to town departments she would be forced to eliminate services. The town budget could not be reduced any further.

Ms. Wong stated that she would not be able to reduce the LSRHS budget any further. A general discussion followed.

Ms. Winer Joachim, SPS School Committee explained that what is really needed to enhance teaching and learning to better serve the students are not in the SPS FY17 Budget request.

**ITEM 3: Public Comments**

John Baranowsky, resident on Belcher Drive shared suggestions and comments on the Finance Committee's no override guideline.

**ITEM 4: Adjournment**

**Motion and Vote:**

**Joan Carlton moved and Bryan Semple seconded the motion that the February 10, 2016 Finance Committee meeting adjourn at 8:10 p.m.**

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.**

**Next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is Thursday, February 11, 7:30 in the Flynn Building.**

*Respectfully Submitted: Cheryl Gosmon, Recording Secretary*