

**Sudbury Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2019**

ATTENDANCE

Finance Committee Members Present: Vice-Chairman, Eric Poch, Susan Berry, Ronald Brumback, Lisa Gutch, Jean Nam, Bryan Semple, Scott Smigler

ABSENT

Jeff Atwater, Christopher Carmody

PRESENT

Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector. Pat Brown, Sudbury Board of Selectmen, Ralph Tyler, Sponsor of Citizens Petition, Brad Crozier, Superintendent of Sudbury Public School, Donald Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance, SPS, Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (LSRHS), Peter Rowe, Interim Director of Finance, LSRHS

CONVENE:

Vice-Chairman Eric Poch called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The meeting convened at Flynn Building, in the Silva Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, 278 Old Sudbury Road, Sudbury, MA 01776.

ITEM 1: Public Comment

Vice-Chairman Poch opened this portion of the meeting for Public Comment. Vice-Chairman Poch recognized Maia Proujansky-Bell of 38 Goodnow Drive.

Ms. Proujansky-Bell stated that she is representing herself and no other group. She stated that she has attended many budget hearings and presentations over the years. She expressed her concern for the discourse she has heard. She stated that she believes the entire community is hurt when certain demographics are called out or blamed for costing the town greater expense. She added that the language that is used and the form of questions frame how the budget is thought of and how the needs and priorities of the Sudbury community are met. She spoke about the values that America has for its citizens and she pointed out the task of elected officials to carry out laws and mandates. She stated that the residents and taxpayers of Sudbury have affirmed Sudbury to be a welcoming community and have chosen their elected officials to lead in this effort. She added that in recent weeks and months she had attended many meetings related to the Sudbury Public Schools and she has heard how

thoughtfully and carefully the administrators and leaders are working to meet the needs of students and provide a robust and continuum of services available to all students. She expressed an appreciation for the goals of Sudbury Public Schools and stated that she believes that tonight's presentation will reflect the SPS goals. She encouraged Finance Committee members to remain mindful of the work the SPS administration is doing to meet the needs students and urges members to be mindful of discourse as the committee seeks to understand recommendations about the budget.

Vice-Chairman Poch recognized Pat Brown, Sudbury Board of Selectmen.

Pat Brown asked if the Finance Committee received the letter from Mara Huston. Vice-Chairman Poch stated that the Finance Committee has received the letter from Mara Huston.

ITEM 2: General Business

● **Approve Meeting Minutes**

There were no Meeting Minutes to approve.

● **Budget Transfers**

There were no Budget Transfers to approve.

● **Liaison Report**

Eric Poch reported that CPC is meeting and deliberating over proposals for Town Meeting's consideration this spring.

● **Review Calendar**

Susan Berry noted small corrections to the calendar.

ITEM 3: Discussion on Fairbank Special Town Meeting Article

Vice-Chairman Poch opened this item for discussion and welcomed Ralph Tyler to present this item.

Ralph Tyler began with a summary of requesting a Citizen Petition Article for Town Meeting. He spoke about conversations he had with citizens as signatures were being gathered for this article request. He stated that the committees and elected officials have taken great tentative steps with moving forward on a new community center. Mr. Tyler shared concerns from Park and Recreation Commission and the Sudbury School Committee. Mr. Tyler stated that the essence of the article is to first decide that we are going to do this. Mr. Tyler handed out financial calculations based on the Mass Dept. of Revenue Debt Service Tax Calculator.

Bryan Semple stated that his issue with the plan for a new community center is that the impact on operating costs are not known. He stated that he could not support the Citizens Petition for a new community center.

Vice-Chairman Poch stated that his concern is that there is a very limited focal point, which is \$27M in the capital and that there are constituents that need to contribute their input on this matter; Board of Selectmen, Park and Recreation, the Fairbank Working Group, the Council on Aging, Sudbury Public Schools, and the Finance Committee.

Susan Berry stated that she received an email from Mara Huston a member of the Park and Recreation Commission as well as the Parks and Recreation Commission representative to the Fairbank Working Group. Ms. Berry read aloud the email which commented on the plans of the Fairbank Working Group and conversations with the Board of Selectmen about putting the article on the May Town Meeting Warrant. The Fairbank Working Group has stated publicly that they are putting together a financial and programmatic analysis. The Park and Recreation Commission, Sudbury Public Schools, and the Council on Aging will be meeting over the next ten days to take a position on the Special Town Meeting Warrant Article. A general discussion followed.

Motion and Vote

**Bryan Semple moved, and Lisa Gutch seconded the motion to approve the Citizens Petition Article for the New Community Center as noted in Special Town Meeting Warrant Article.
The vote was 0 in favor, 7 against; motion failed.**

ITEM 4: Discuss SPS Budget Pressures

Vice-Chairman Poch opened this item for discussion. He changed the order of the agenda and invited Brad Crozier, Superintendent of Schools, and Donald Sawyer, Director of Business and Finance to present Exhibit I update on FY21 Budget Pressures.

Mr. Crozier began with a quick review of how the SPS budget is developed. He noted that to date the SPS budget has not been presented to the School Committee.

Don Sawyer handed out copies of Exhibit 1. He stated that the SPS enrollment as of October 1, 2019, is 2,675 students, PreK-8. Mr. Crozier responded to Lisa Gutch's question on anticipation of out-of-district students. He explained the process of placement for a child with special needs either in-district or out-of-

district, which starts with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The discussion turned to a conversation on the Circuit Breaker carryover. Mr. Sawyer will provide the Finance Committee with detail of expenses. Mr. Sawyer responded to questions about the revolving fund for athletics, lunch, and facility rentals and stated that the SPS School Committee will review the fees, which have not changed in three years. Mr. Sawyer explained how the facility fund is budgeted and how expenses are charged to the account. Mr. Crozier responded to questions on Student Activity Accounts and anticipated increased enrollment due to the Meadow Walk Development. He noted that the development did not trigger the need for additional classroom sections. Mr. Crozier responded to questions on FTEs and noted that 10 FTEs were budgeted, and additional FTEs were added as needed. The discussion turned to a conversation on capital improvement plans and steps and lanes. Mr. Crozier stated that he is confident that SPS will be able to fit within the Town Managers' guidance.

ITEM 5: Discuss LS budget pressures

Vice-Chairman Poch opened this item for discussion and welcomed Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (LSRHS), and Peter Rowe, Interim Director of Finance, and invited them to present Exhibit I update on FY21 Budget Pressures.

Ms. Wong and Mr. Rowe handed out hard copies of the presentation. Ms. Wong began with enrollment. She stated that as of October 1, 2019, the enrollment is 1512 students and that she is anticipating a drop in enrollment within the next two years. Mr. Rowe provided detailed information on enrollment trends. Mr. Rowe noted that the LS budget will be presented to the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District School Committee on Wednesday, December 10, 2019. The conversation continued with a review of Chapter 70 and a new program focusing on academic success. Regional transportation reimbursement was reviewed as well. Mr. Rowe noted that because of an increase in the regional transportation in FY18/19 LS was able to put in a revolving fund that is being used to support the FY20 transportation budget. Transportation reimbursement is level-funded in the FY21 budget. Mr. Rowe stated that the key funding LS receives is the assessments from both Lincoln and Sudbury. He stated that LSRHS has received a guidance number from the Sudbury Town Manager of \$26,712,280 for FY21 at a 3.0% growth over the FY20 Assessment. He stated that the total revenue projected for FY21 is \$33,893,138, and the level service request is \$34,380,095, which leaves a projected funding gap of \$486,957. Ms. Wong reviewed projected FY21 expenditures and explained budgeted increases to health insurance. Pension assessment, LS Academy, and Circuit

Breaker were discussed as well. A general discussion followed. Mr. Rowe reviewed level services costs and FTE increases for FY21 as well as steps and lanes. Ms. Wong provided a review of grants. A brief discussion followed on capital items.

ITEM 6: Discuss Town Budget Pressures

Vice-Chairman Poch opened this item for discussion and invited Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector to present Exhibit I update on FY21 Budget Pressures.

Dennis Keohane stated that there are no unexpected budget pressures for FY20 and FY21. Mr. Keohane also stated that there are no new initiatives in FY20 and FY21. Mr. Keohane provided an update on the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants program. He stated this grant is used to fund a portion of 4 additional firefighters and was received in FY20 and is a three-year grant and will end in FY22. He stated that OPEB is an increase of \$70K and will continue to be an annual increase. He stated for steps and lanes, 59% of the employees are at their top step. Mr. Keohane provided an update on Mitigation funds. He noted that the town has received all the funds and to date have expended just over \$1.5 million, with \$300K remaining in the fund balance. Two primary projects that have not been spent are the field \$250K and Town Technology funds. Mr. Keohane provided a breakdown of costs associated with Sewataro, Broadacre Farm, and Quarry North. The conversation veered to a discussion on debt and capital. A general discussion followed.

The Committee took a moment to comment on their observations of the Cost Centers Budget Pressures discussion.

Bryan Semple commented on the following topics, increase in FTEs for SPS, the costs of out-of-district tuition for LS, which should be going down because of LS Academy, the success of LS Academy, shared costs between Lincoln and Sudbury, the LS funding gap of \$486,957 and the LS Health Plan. Mr. Semple commented on understanding capital costs for Sewataro.

Scott Smigler commented that it is his observation that Sudbury's tax bill is in an accelerated tax environment.

Jean Nam commented that she would have liked to see more details on the budget pressures.

ITEM 7: Public Comment

Vice-Chairman Poch opened this portion of the meeting for Public Comment. Vice-Chairman Poch recognized Patricia Brown, Sudbury Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Brown stated that at the October 8 Board of Selectmen Meeting the Fire Station was discussed as part of the Board of Selectmen's goals. She stated that this priority item will go before Town Meeting in May for design and construction appropriation.

Ms. Brown referred to January 2, 2020, Special Town Meeting Citizens Petition Article. She stated that the petition with 200 signatures calling for the January 2 Special Town Meeting was turned into the Town Clerk's Office on November 14, 2019. She stated that per M.G.L Chapter 39 section 10 this gives the Board of Selectmen 45 days to hold a Special Town Meeting. She stated that the warrant must be opened for ten days and the warrant must be in the hands of the voters for two weeks. She added that at the advice of Town Counsel and with careful and thoughtful consideration the Sudbury Board of Selectmen chose to not schedule for either December 27 or 28, but to hold the Special Town Meeting on January 2, 2020.

ITEM 8: Possible Future Agenda Topics

- Calendar review
- Liaison reports
- Review calendar

ITEM 9: Adjournment**Motion and Vote:**

Scott Smigler moved, and Ronald Brumback seconded the motion that the December 9, 2019, Finance Committee meeting be adjourned at approximately 10:15 p.m.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is Thursday, January 23, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Cheryl Gosmon, Recording Secretary