

**Sudbury Finance Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 30, 2020**

**ATTENDANCE**

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

**ABSENT:** Chris Carmody

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector; Dan Carty, Select Board Chair, Pat Brown and Jennifer Roberts, Select Board; Dan Nason, Director of Public Works; Sherri Cline, CPC Chair; Silvia Nerssessian and Meredith Gerson, Sudbury School Committee;

**CONVENE:**

Chairman Jeff Atwater called the virtual meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**ITEM 1: Public Comment**

No public comment

**ITEM 2: General Business**

- **Approve Meeting Minutes**

The committee reviewed minutes from December 9, 2019 and March 23, 2020

**Motion and Vote**

Susan Berry moved, and Lisa Gutch seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2019, meeting as amended.

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

**Motion and Vote**

Ron Bromback moved, and Eric Poch seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2020, meeting as amended.

**The motion carried. The vote was 7 in favor and 1 abstention.**

- **Transfers**

There were no transfers.

- **Liaison Reports**

Susan reported that SPS had gotten guidance from DESE on contracted service. In summary the guidance is to pay contracted services while the schools are closed.

- **Calendar**

The Chair announced that the joint meeting with the Select Board was cancelled since Town Meeting was postponed by the Select Board with no new date selected and therefore the Warrant deadline is on hold. Jeff suggested we schedule a meeting for the

end of April, and April 27th was added to the calendar as a placeholder.

### **ITEM 3: CPC Article Review**

- **Discussion with CPC Representative**

**Article 44 Design of Wayside Inn Road Bridge over Hop Brook** - CPC Chair, Sherri Cline, introduced the subject. She stated that the bridge needs to be repaired and this article requests funding for a design. The CPC felt this was an appropriate use for the historic category of CPC funds since the bridge is in the Historic District and is in front of the Wayside Inn.

Scott Smigler had a question about whether the Town is pursuing the driver who caused the damage for payment. Dan Nason responded that this is in the hands of the Town Council.

Scott also had a question about how the design process will play out with multiple groups involved in making the decision (CPC, Historic Districts Commission [HDC], Mass DOT, and the Wayside Inn). Dan Nason's concerns are mostly around how many design iterations will be needed and keeping those within the budget. The design is balancing the need to meet DOT crash standards and HDC esthetics requirements. Scott also asked how much money has been spent for the temporary fix of the bridge. Dan Nason responded about \$120K to \$130K.

Jean Nam asked where the buck stops if the back and forth gets too expensive. Dan Nason could be that person; he is helping facilitate the process. When he presented to HDC, he explained that he is looking at all aspects: Safety as number 1, fiduciary, timing, and esthetics. This is HDC's project and Dan thinks they are close to an agreement on the design that satisfies these aspects. Sheri Cline was asked if CPC will fund the project once there is a design, but the CPC has not discussed this. Jean Nam asked if the bridge in its current condition is safe and Dan Nason responded that it is and in answer to Pat Brown's question, Dan Nason confirmed that it also meets Mass DOT standard.

Sheri Cline reviewed the CPC budget and the funds that are carry forwarded from prior Town Meeting articles. She went over the status of funds that have been granted but have not been or have only been partial spent.

**Article 42 Historic Resource Inventory Survey** - This article is to fund the documentation of historic properties (built before 1940) that are in the Town. The Historic District Commission has a list of 100 properties that either have not been documented or have been inadequately documented by volunteers. The information can be useful to determine if areas need to be added as Historic Districts. Also, the information can be used to document need for preservation.

**Article 43 Removal of Invasive Species from King Philip Woods** - The committee had no questions about this article.

**Article 45 Remediation of Water Chestnuts from Hop Brook Pond System** - Jean Nam asked what the downside is of not doing this. Sherri Cline answered that the ponds will get choked and the longer the remediation is postponed, it just gets harder to do the remediation. Funding would be for the next three fiscal years.

**Article 46 SHA Acquisition, Creation, Preservation, and support of Affordable Rental Housing** - This is the yearly 10% allocation of estimated revenue to housing. The Housing Authority plans to bundle this with other appropriations to further affordable housing. The Select Board has recently assigned the right of first refusal to the Housing Authority (SHA) for a property which the SHA is hoping to purchase. SHA also recently won the support of the Select Board to apply for a grant from the Sudbury Foundation to evaluate other properties in Town for suitability for affordable housing.

**Article 47 Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) membership fee** This is an annual fee for Sudbury's membership in the RHSO.

**Article 48 Library Historic Room Conversion** - The Goodnow Library is seeking funding for capital improvements to rehabilitate the spaces in the Historical Room (1895) and the mezzanine of the original octagon (1862). In the octagon on the second floor the plan is to raise the banister to meet code and to remove empty shelves and then display paintings by Florence Hosmer that are owned by the Library but are currently in storage. In the Historical Room the plan is to install locking cases to display historic artifacts, books, maps, and documents. They also plan to install a sound deadening panel so the space will be available for quiet work and study. According to the CPC's interpretation of an opinion by the Town Council for a different project, this work is an appropriate CPA expenditure. Sherri Cline also pointed out that 25% of the cost is being paid by the Goodnow Library Foundation. Also CPC asked for and received a letter from the Historical Commission that the books and other objects are of historical significance.

In answer to questions by Scott Smigler, Sherri Cline responded that the 1<sup>st</sup> floor will be open to the public and accessible. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is for staff, but the public will be able to see the Florence Hosmer paintings from the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

**Article 49 Reversion of Funds** - This article requests the reversion of funds to the appropriate CPA category for monies remaining from projects that have been completed. The FinCom had no questions about this article.

**Article 50 General Budget and Appropriations** - This article requests approval of the FY2021 Community Preservation Act budget as proposed by the CPC. In response to a question from Bryan Semple about how the State establishes the match amount and what that is based on, Sherri Cline related that the match is established in November and is based on the revenues primarily from the registry of deeds.

- **Possible vote on articles**

The Chair suggested that the Finance Committee wait on voting on the CPC articles and asked if there were other opinions. Scott Smigler noted that one follow-up item for these articles is hearing from the Historic District Commission on the Wayside Inn Bridge article.

**ITEM 4: Discuss current economic situation**

- **Impact on FY21 budget, capital spending and overall town financial position**

Dennis Keohane said the Town is working on adjustments to the revenue projections based on the economic situation. Susan Berry mentioned that the Town Manager recommended and the Select Board at their last meeting asked the Town to go back to look at projected revenues and the Town Manager's Capital Budget. Scott Smigler reflected that any revenue projections in the current circumstances are going to be uncertain and suggested that FinCom support the Town's asking various cost centers to relook at their budget and that FinCom add other objectives in order to get maximum support from the committee. Lisa Gutch suggested that we can get information from the cost center on their needs.

Ron Bromback mentioned that he does not think FinCom has the information to make an independent projection. Jean Nam's position was that FinCom should stay away from the cost center budgets but Free Cash could be used for some of the capital projects to lower the tax burden. Dennis Keohane mentioned that all of these things are on the table, including what Free Cash would be spent on and the Town Manager's Capital budget and how it will be funded.

- **Draft and vote on guidance to town and Select Board**

The Finance Committee reviewed the list of possible recommendations that Bryan Semple had put together and shared with the Finance Committee at the 2/23 meeting as a framework of consideration. After reviewing the list, the Finance Committee prepared a draft document to offer guidance to the Town and the Select Board on the areas of consideration the committee felt were important:

*The Finance Committee recognize and appreciate the work of the Town Staff, SPS, and LSRHS under very difficult circumstances to keep the town operating during the current COVID pandemic. As the town staff and Select Board proactively begin to review*

*the FY21 budget and the financial impact of the pandemic, the Finance Committee offers the following recommendations be considered in the process:*

- o *Defer as many financial expenditure decisions as possible*
- o *Re-analyze all monied town meeting articles for non-critical and non-time sensitive spending that can be deferred until Fall Town Meeting or later as appropriate.*
- o *Make sure public safety departments are fully funded (including Board of Health).*
- o *Identify ways to minimize tax increases on residents*
- o *Where possible, maintain full employment across all the cost centers, including some part time, and the part time positions of our vendors*
- o *Maintain strong free cash position for any contingencies*
- o *Identify both short-term (FY21) impacts and longer-term impacts like state aid and health insurance rate increases.*

#### **Motion and Vote**

Jean Nam moved, and Scott Smigler seconded the motion to approve the draft and have the Chair send it to the Interim Town Manager, Dennis Keohane, and the Select Board.

**The motion passed with 7 in favor and 1 abstention.**

#### **ITEM 5: Town Meeting articles**

The Committee was in favor of holding on any changes to votes on articles for now.

#### **ITEM 6: Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **ITEM 7: Possible Future Agenda Topics**

- **Calendar Review** - The Chair reiterated that there will be a meeting scheduled for April 27 as a place holder. As Jeff gets more information about a date for Town Meeting and the Warrant deadline, FinCom will review the budget and articles it has voted on to date to decide if the committee needs to revote any of these.

#### **ITEM 8: Adjourn**

- **Motion and Vote:**  
Eric Poch moved, and Scott Smigler seconded the motion that the March 30, 2020, Finance Committee meeting be adjourned at approximately 9:50 p.m.  
The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

*Next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is Monday, April 27, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.*