

**Sudbury Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2020**

ATTENDANCE

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

ABSENT: Chris Carmody

ALSO PRESENT: Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector; Jennifer Roberts and Janie Dretler, Members of the Sudbury Select Board; Bill Barletta, Combined Facilities Director; Maryanne Bilodeau, Interim Town Manager; Brad Crozier, Superintendent Sudbury Public Schools; Silvia Nerssessian, Member of the Sudbury Public Schools Committee; Mara Huston, Member of the Park and Recreation Commission

CONVENE:

Chairman Jeff Atwater called the virtual meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

ITEM 1: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 2: General Business

- **Approve Meeting Minutes**

There were no minutes to approve.

- **Transfers**

There were no transfers. In answer to a question, Dennis Keohane replied that there may be transfers coming in relation to the pandemic.

- **Liaison Reports**

Ron Brumback stated that LSRHS has shut down and are working to offer some continuity to students with online learning and are working to address access for students who may not have internet access or a computer at home.

Scott Smigler noted that the Finance Committee has received the report from CIAC with recommendations on capital requests.

Jeff Atwater has talked to Dan Carty, Select Board Chair, about changes that may need to be made to the timing of the Town Elections and the Annual Town Meeting due to coronavirus.

Eric Poch mentioned that CPC's most recent meeting was mostly about their administrative expenses.

ITEM 3: Fairbank Discussion

- **With Working Group Reps**

The Chair introduced this agenda item and the reps on the virtual meeting were asked to respond to the follow up questions that the Finance Committee had submitted after the committee's meeting last week.

1. Has a Form A been submitted?

The Finance Committee received a copy of the Form A prior to this meeting.

2. Do all 3 user groups support the proposed Fairbank project as proposed?

Mara Huston, Park and Recreation Commissioner, responded "yes" for the Park and Rec Commission and stated her understanding that all three user groups have voted to support the project.

3. Assessment from Town Staff. Does the current facility pose a clear and immediate risk to public safety and health?

Bill Barletta, Combined Facilities Director, answered "no." Jeff Atwater asked how close the building was to posing a clear and immediate risk. Bill Barletta responded that there's been no indication that there is a clear and immediate threat. Every building has a life, but as far as he knows no study had indicated an immediate danger. Bryan Semple asked if the roof is still leaking. Bill Barletta responded that roof leak is sporadic and intermittent. Areas are prone to leaking under certain conditions, due to innumerable seams and joints, and they patch as they go. Bill also clarified that there was a boiler room leak, which was a mechanical failure before he joined. Jean Nam asked about a claim that SPS Administrators needed to cover computers with tarps when it rains. The SPS Superintendent indicated that in the past 2 years they have not needed to cover equipment with tarps. .

4. Walk through projected operating and capital maintenance costs. Understand deltas from prior Fairbank financial estimates. What assumptions are used?

Dennis Keohane stated he did not compare this project to the earlier one because they are not comparable. Projections for operating costs include a 32% increase (the scale of the increase of the building size) for custodial, maintenance, and utility costs and a 40% decrease in utilities based on ICON Architecture estimates of efficiency savings. Comparing this to the current cost, the operating increase would be minimal.

Maintenance costs over 5 year are just under \$60K/year. The projection for the maintenance costs of the new building being the same as the current maintenance costs is based the assumption that a decrease in need for maintenance offsets increase cost of maintenance due to larger size.

Bryan Semple stated he thinks we need to be setting aside money in a capital fund so that in 10-20 years we can do major renovations/replacement. Dennis Keohane agreed but stated that to compare costs we would need to calculate the amount the Town should be setting aside for repairs for the current

building. Bryan stated he was advocating for figuring out how to set money aside to maintain the facility if this project goes forward, not requesting that amount be added to the project cost per se.

Jean Nam questioned the typical life cycle of about 20 to 30 year listed in the Form A. Bill Barletta responded that assumes that in 20-30 years the facility will need some major repairs - roof, mechanical, programmatic changes, technology changes, etc. Basically, this is the point at which the Town will need to make some major reinvestment in the building.

Scott Smigler asked Dennis and Bill Barletta if they feel we have a good assessment of the cost of the capital maintenance over the life of the building. Dennis stated he feels confident about the operational costs; that they will fit withing the operating budget. Bill Barletta could not put a number on the full life capital cost of the building currently. Scott Smigler stated that the credit rating policy requires the town to analyze the full life cost. Scott is requesting an estimate over 20-30 years of the cost of repairs and replacements. Dennis responded that we have the cost of the building, an estimate of the operating cost, and until there is a design it is not feasible to estimate the cost of major repairs and replacements. Therefore, we have the best estimate we can make at this point.

5. Had the architect and relevant Town staff reviewed and certified the square footage numbers and costs presented on February 3rd, prior to the presentation? If not, when will this happen? If so, who on Town staff has signed off? Bill Barletta put together an answer and read it to the Committee. The architect worked with the Fairbank Working Group to assign spaces according to end users. This was further refined to separate out the aquatics from the recreation uses. Work was produced with the best information at the time. As the study continued, information about square footage was refined. As a study, measured drawings are not produced. Work from existing pdfs and scaling has a small degree of inaccuracy. There were some failed measurements and information from stakeholders, as well. There was a discrepancy withing the table where SPS space was assigned a multiplier when it should not have been. The study team examined enough data to program. The existing total building square footage matches previous studies. Changes to the existing program have been made to make the representation of the existing conditions, renovations, and costs more descriptive. Costs were estimated by the same firm that estimated the station #2 project and a facilities director reviewed the estimates. It was confirmed that, yes, the architect reviewed the most recent numbers presented to us, and they are accurate.
6. Please clarify conflicting numbers, sourced from the architects: How many total square feet is the existing

structure, vs the proposed structure? How much dedicated space will be allocated to each cost center excluding aquatics? How much shared space will there be?

Jennifer Roberts confirmed that the numbers presented at the Finance Committee February 25th meeting are the correct ones. This information is also posted on the Town website [Icon (Consultant) Report Presentation Updated 03/02/2020]. Scott Smigler asked about the total Recreation space and for an explanation of the difference in the numbers from the earlier presentation - 5,507 square ft. as opposed to approximately 11,000 in the November presentation. Jennifer Roberts responded that the primary difference is that upon review, space that was originally allocated to Recreation was determined to be more appropriately allocated to aquatic. Mara Huston added that the dedicated Recreation space consists of Program rooms, toddler room, and office space. Currently, the only dedicated Recreation space are the toddler rooms; program room 1 and 3 are shared spaces. In the proposed building, Recreation will have dedicated program rooms. The gym is dedicated to Recreation and the fitness studio is a shared space, where the seniors will have priority and Recreation can access in evenings and weekends and request times during the day. Shared spaces also include the multipurpose room, kitchen, and art studio. The aggregate number for Recreation includes bathroom and hallways, etc. Mara argued that the idea that Recreation is going from approximately 11,000 to approximately 21,000 square feet is not really what is happening. Recreation dedicated space will include the toddler room, pool, lockers rooms, general program rooms, office space, and storage space. She mentioned that on the Town website under the Recreation section of the Fairbank Project page there is a side-by-side comparison of recreation space in the current building and the proposed building.

7. Feedback from Town's bond consultants. Potential bond rating risks if we finance over 30 years vs 20.
Dennis Keohane stated that it is highly unlikely to have an impact on the town's bond rating unless there were other issues. Jeff Atwater asked if recent stock market and other financial issues would impact our bonding capability. Dennis did not believe so; the Town has a very attractive AAA rating.
8. During the November 7, 2019 Fairbanks Working Group meeting, the following steps were outlined: Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype (build, model, critique), Test (sharing proposals in public domain), Implement. Is this still the plan? What revised dates are now attached to each of these phases?
Bill Barletta responded that the process is intentionally intuitive. It is not a straight line as it might be with a single stake holder. As a study with multiple stake holders, the process can be expected to go around within itself several times to yield consensus. Public sharing and test are the presentation, committee reviews, town forum, Town Meeting, and the subsequent project approval path and process. With multiple users and not just multiple users in the building but

with intimate sharing of space and programming, hour of the day types of programming use, and multiple use rooms, it has been a process of fit and refit; pull apart and refit again. Speaking for some of the users, it has stretched them and stretched their way of thinking and the process has resulted in a good feasibility study that can be taken down to the next level with schematic design development, ultimate design, and final approval. It has been a process with revisions as suggestions are made and this will continue.

Jeff Atwater asked Bill Barletta to walk through next steps if the project is approved. Bill responded that the Town would go through a process to hire an owner's project manager. Then there would be a designer selection process to hire a designer, the architectural firm to do the schematic, the design, development documents, and the construction documents. The firm would work with town staff and user groups, interacting with the building department and planning department to ultimately arrive at an approved design for the building.

Scott Smigler asked if the plan still is to share a prototype with the community to give the community an opportunity to provide feedback that could ultimately shape the project. Bill Barletta responded that he was not able to say what each of those points will look like but there are points in the process built in for public input and for public approvals at all levels - the planning process where public meetings are convened and the concept and site planning is discussed, presentation to committees, a town forum for public to provide feedback.

Janie Dretler stated that it is important for the public to have input in the design. Scott asked when that would happen. Janie and Jennifer Roberts stated that once the project passes at Town Meeting and the ballot, then that process will have to be set up. Bill Barletta added that what we have now is a blocking and stacking diagram, not a design.

9. If this passes at Town Meeting, who will be responsible for overseeing the project through completion.

Janie Dretler read the answer from Maryanne Bilodeau that the project will fall under the Town Manager working with the facilities director and other staff.

10. Assessment from Town Staff. Have we verified proposed project will have sufficient parking for peak volume times, such as elections?

Bill Barletta responded that the parking appears to be generous based the ICON estimates of the need for 215 spaces and the fact that there are 165 spaces currently and 308 spaces across the street that can be used for Fairbank.

11. Who are the primary users of the competition pool? Are pool direct and indirect costs (operations, maintenance, capital improvements) offset by its revenues and user fees?

Mara Huston replied to this question that the user consist of "lap" swimmers, swim lessons, swim teams {Sudbury Swim Team, LS, Nashoba, and Bromfield}, and groups such as the Scouts who rent the pool or the dive well. She stated that pool staff are covered by pool enterprise fund, but capital improvements are not.

Jean Nam mentioned that this question was also an attempt to understand what percentage of the 70,000 pool uses are team, rental, individual, etc. Mara stated that a best estimate are 30,000 are swimmers who "swipe in." Lessons and swim team do not. Jean asked for confirmation that a little less than half are swimmers who swipe in to swim, a little less than half are swim teams, and rest are lessons and rental. Mara added that Wild Wednesday and Sudbury Summer also use the pool, and that a little more than half of lap swimmers are not Sudbury residents. Jean asked for a chart with the breakdown of users. Mara confirmed that amongst lap swimmers, 50%+ are nonresidents who pay more, and most lap swimmers are adults.

12. What is the recovery estimate for Park & Rec programming at Fairbank?

Dennis Keohane took this question and answered that all the programs run through the revolving fund and operate at roughly break even so if there is increased programming with increased cost that would be covered by the users' fees.

13. Can we get data on what programs ran for 2019 and 2020?
Programs offered/programs cancelled.

Janie Dretler read the Park and Rec answer to this question. Park & Rec had significant amount of staff turnover in 2019. This turnover along with EEE in the fall caused staff-run programs to be cancelled such as the Fall Festival. The core programs - Sudbury Summer Camp, Sudbury Adventure, PreSchool Pals, Sudbury Summer, and Wild Wednesdays - were not affected. Vendor program were cancelled due to staff turnover. The new director joined in December. He informed the P&R Commission that he was able to hire full-time staff by early February. In the interim Wild Wednesday and various vendor programs continued to be managed by the new director and other staff.

Dennis Mannone, Parks, Recreation and Aquatics Director, joined the meeting. He said that some of the programs offered before had no rhyme or reason to them. He is pairing back the offerings to make sure P&R are running good quality programs. Some of the programs that were cancelled, he cancelled because there was not the staff to run them. The Director is slowly rebuilding the program.

Jean Nam explained that a question arises whether P&R needs all the space in the project if the space request is based on the programing in the catalogue and a large percentage of that

programming was cancelled. Dennis Mannone answered that a lot of the programming space needed does not show up in the brochure, i.e. Wild Wednesdays, Middle School programming, and even programs running currently.

Dennis Mannone was asked how the space would accommodate current program and the ability to expand programs. Again, the fact that most programs are run in shared spaces, limits P&R's ability to expand programs like Sudbury Summer.

Scott Smigler noted that there are 529 non-Sudbury households registering for 1.6 programs each. What programs are these non-resident users signing up for. Dennis Mannone responded that those are primarily the vendor programs that will be a mix of residents and non-residents. The traditional programs run in house, like Sudbury Summer, Wild Wednesdays, etc. are 99% residents.

14. Could Senior Center or Park and Rec expand into SPS space, structurally?

Bill Barletta said yes, it would be a matter of reconfiguring walls.

Jeff Atwater reviewed the open questions: A breakdown on pool usage, a breakdown of programs used by non-Sudbury households, and enrollment data on programs for 2019-20.

Bryan Semple stated that he does not agree with the working group's analysis on the comparative cost over 20 years of renting and the cost of the SPS space in the Fairbank Community project. There was a discussion of how to estimate the cost of renting. The Chair suggested that we have the estimates and the Finance Committee should discuss how it wants to use this information in making a recommendation on the Fairbank Community Center in the Committee's deliberation.

Members of the Committee had a back and forth discussion about the Fairbank Community Center project. Concerns expressed included whether this project will meet future needs of the Town; about process, ownership, and accountability - the new Town Manager is going to own this project but has not vetted the project; whether P&R needs all the space in the plan, and based on the SPS lease analysis, that might make more sense to do a lease and do an analysis of the space needs of the town. Other members are convinced by the analysis that has been done on the space needs; that the Fairbank Community Center needs to be replaced, renovated, or repaired and that renovation or repair is not a realistic option; that either of these options would result in less space available to the user groups; that the Town should provide Town-owned space for SPS employees; and that this is the best option to take care of the needs of these three user groups and provide a needed emergency shelter.

Motion and Vote:

Lisa Gutch moved, and Ron Bromback seconded the motion to recommend approval of Article 18 Fairbank Community Center Design and Construction Funds.

The motion did not pass with 4 in favor and 4 opposed on a roll call vote.

Item 4: FY 2021 Budget Discussion and Vote

Jeff Atwater confirmed the issues that the Finance Committee would like to mention to the Select Board when we meet to present the Committee's recommendation on the budget: the contracts, that LS and SPS are still two separate cost centers, and a facilities plan.

Motion and Vote:

Susan Berry moved, and Brian Semple seconded the motion to recommend approval of Article 3 FY21 Budget as presented in the most recent Budget Book.

The motion pass unanimously on a roll call vote.

ITEM 5: Town Meeting Articles

No action

ITEM 6: Social Media Policy

Jeff Atwater began this discussion by reminding the committee that it was in the context of Sewataro that the committee agreed not to comment on social media about items that we have not yet voted on and asked if the committee is in agreement again this year. There was some discussion about how comprehensive this should be and whether it should include not talking to those on other boards. There was a suggestion that the Committee needs to return to the process of looking at relevant policies and procedures at the beginning of the term.

ITEM 7: Possible Future Agenda Topics

The Chair reminded the Committee that we have meetings on the 23rd and the 30th. Jeff will check about the meeting on the 31st with the Select Board, whether and how that might happen. The Chair will plan a presentation on the CPC articles at the meeting on the 23rd or 30th.

ITEM 8: Public Comment

Janie Dretler, member of the Select Board, thanked the Finance Committee for trying out a virtual meeting and encouraged everyone to practice social distancing to keep healthy.

ITEM 9: Adjourn

Bryan Semple moved, and Scott Semple seconded the motion to adjourn our first virtual meeting at 10:33 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is Monday, March 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.