

**Sudbury Finance Committee
Virtual Meeting Minutes
January 25, 2021**

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Finance Committee present for the Virtual Meeting were: Co-Chair, Eric Poch, Co-Chair Scott Smigler, Susan Berry, Ronald Brumback, Howard Feng, Michael Joachim, Jean Nam, and Sonny Parente

ABSENT: Saji Johnson

ALSO PRESENT

Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector, Sherrill Cline, Chairman, Community Preservation Committee, Adam Duchesneau, Director of Planning and Community Development, Cynthia Howe, Chair of the Sudbury Housing Trust, Dennis Mannone, Director of Parks, Recreation and Aquatics, and Jennifer Roberts, Vice-Chair, Sudbury Select Board

CONVENE:

Co-Chair Eric Poch called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Co-Chair Poch roll called members of the Finance Committee present at the January 25, 2021, Virtual Meeting.

ITEM 1: Open the Meeting

- **Welcome and Member Roll Call**

- **Opening Remarks (Co-Chairs)**

Co-Chair Smigler noted that the Capital Plan item that has been added to this agenda coincides with the CPC Warrant Articles.

Co-Chair Poch stated that Town staff has asked for Finance Committee preferences in terms of how they would like to receive the budget book i.e., print or electronically. Members requested to receive a printed copy of the budget book. Jean Nam stated that she would deliver the budget book to those members who are requesting a printed copy.

ITEM 2: Public Comment

There were no public comments.

ITEM 3: Updates from Town Manager and Finance Director

- **State Guidance, Numbers validated (State Aid, E&D, etc.), Tax Classification, Quarterly financial reporting, other relevant updates.**

Dennis Keohane, Finance Director stated that he has no new financial updates. He noted that the Governor's proposed budget is expected to be released this week.

Henry Hayes, Town Manager stated that warrant article submissions are due Friday, January 29 at noon. He stated that he will review the submissions and send them to the Select Board and Finance Committee for their review before February 22.

ITEM 4: Discuss and Vote on CPC Articles

- **Presentation from Applicants**

Co-Chair Smigler opened this item for discussion and welcomed Sherrill Cline, Chair of the Community Preservation Committee, and Adam Duchesneau, Director of Planning and Community Development.

Jean Nam introduced the applicants and provided an overview of the CPC Projects. Ms. Nam noted that Ms. Cline and Mr. Duchesneau have answered the Finance Committee's questions about the Articles and have provided documentation from the proponents.

Ms. Cline stated that the applications are aligned with the recommendations in the proposed Master Plan and are in keeping with the Town's objectives. Ms. Cline provided a financial overview of the FY22 CPC Financial Projections. She noted that the Financial Projections is a document that the CPC uses as a financial guide and is provided to the CPC every year by Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector. Ms. Cline provided an update on the 10% funding allocation in FY22 for, Historic Preservation, Community Housing, and Recreation and Open Space.

Ms. Cline provided additional information on the Housing Trust Rental Assistance Program. She stated that \$25,400 has been approved for this program. She stated that the emergency rental assistance program is new this year with the advent of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and at the urging of the Mass Housing Partnership (MHP) and Citizens Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA). Ms. Cline stated that the Regional Housing Services Office (RHSO) created the guidelines and administer the program. She added that the funds come from the Housing Trust who is asking for monies to continue the program. Ms. Cline

summarized the guidelines. The conversation veered to a discussion on awareness of the program.

Cynthia Howe, Chair of the Sudbury Housing Trust joined the conversation and answered questions on how the program is marketed and who is eligible.

Ms. Cline provided information on the RHSO CPC request noting that the request is for the annual membership and that this is Sudbury's 9th year of paying the membership which is \$30K. She summarized the details of the membership.

Ms. Cline provided information on the Housing Production Plan. Ms. Cline stated that the request comes from the Planning and Community Development Department and is something that is done every five years.

Dennis Mannone, Director of Parks, Recreation and Aquatics provided a slideshow presentation on the CPC funding request for Feeley Field Improvements and Smile Playground Improvements. He stated that Phase I will not be disrupted by the work outlined in Phase II of Feeley Field Improvements. Mr. Mannone stated that the Feeley Field Improvements will address safety issues, drainage, and design. He stated that the estimated cost for Phase I is \$393,000. Mr. Mannone provided a financial breakdown for Phase I and Phase II and responded to Finance Committee questions on this CPC Article.

Co-Chair Smigler asked why these projects are not funded through the Town's capital plan. Dennis Keohane responded that Feeley Field and Smile Playground were submitted to the CPC before the Capital Plan discussions. Ms. Cline noted that the CPC has suggested to the Finance Director that Phase II be submitted to the Town as part of the Town's Capital Plan.

Dennis Mannone continued the presentation with the Smile Playground Surface Improvements. Mr. Mannone described the scope of the project. He spoke about tree root discovery and the issues it presents to the PIP (pour in place rubber surfacing). He provided information from the arborist's report and summarized finances for this request. Mr. Mannone responded to additional questions from the Finance Committee. A general discussion followed.

- **Review and Discuss CPC Deliberation and Vote**

The Finance will continue its discussion and vote on the CPC Articles at a future meeting.

ITEM 5: General Business

- **Approve Meeting Minutes**

Motion and Vote

Michael Joachim moved, and Sonny Parente seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 9, 2020, as submitted.

Roll call vote:

Scott Smigler, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Ronald Brumback, yes; Michael Joachim, yes; Howard Feng, yes; Jean Nam, yes; Sonny Parente, abstained, and Eric Poch, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was 7 yes and 1 abstention.

Motion and Vote

Michael Joachim moved, and Sonny Parente seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of December 14, 2020, as amended.

Roll call vote:

Scott Smigler, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Ronald Brumback, yes; Michael Joachim, yes; Howard Feng, yes; Jean Nam, yes; Sonny Parente, yes; and Eric Poch, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

- **Budget Transfers**

There were no Budget Transfers.

- **Membership**

Co-Chair Smigler stated that he has received one application for membership to the Finance Committee. He stated that the plan will be to review the application and vote on February 1.

- **Liaison Reports**

Susan Berry reported on a recent Board of Health Meeting where the Board discussed staffing needs. She stated Health Director William Murphy is looking to fill positions for Public Health Nurse and Health Inspector. She added that the Board discussed the pay level that would be needed for the positions. Ms. Berry stated that Fire Chief John Whalen and Health Director William Murphy discussed with the Board of Health the need for an Emergency Management Budget. Ms. Berry stated that she is not sure if this is a request for this budget cycle but that it is something the Finance Committee would be hearing more about. Ms. Berry stated that the Board of Health discussed the State's plans to offer free pool testing to schools to identify COVID-19 and that the Board expressed concerns that the Public Health nurse and school nurses are reaching capacity. Ms. Berry reported that the Board of Health voted to request \$40K as

their spending limit for the vaccination revolving account for FY22. A brief discussion followed.

Ronald Brumback reported that L-S has a new OPEB report which incorporates some significant savings. He added that he is expecting to receive a copy of the L-S budget presentation very soon and will forward it to the Committee as soon as he receives it.

- **Calendar Review**

Co-Chair Smigler stated that the Finance Committee will meet again on Monday, February 1, and the top priority on this agenda is the L-S Budget Hearing. After a general conversation, it was the consensus of the Committee not to meet during the week of February 17. If Committee members have questions on upcoming budget hearings the Co-Chairs will collate those questions.

- **Future Agenda Items**

There was no discussion on this item.

ITEM 6: Town Annual Report

Co-Chair Smigler opened this item for discussion. Members reviewed and discussed revisions. Members expressed their appreciation to Susan Berry and Jean Nam for their work on the report.

Motion and Vote

Susan Berry moved, and Scott Smigler seconded the motion to approve the Finance Committee Annual Report, 2020 on January 25, 2021.

Roll call vote:

Scott Smigler, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Ronald Brumback, yes; Michael Joachim, yes; Howard Feng, yes; Jean Nam, yes; Sonny Parente, yes; and Eric Poch, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

ITEM 7: FY22 Budget Update and Discussion

- **Prepare for LSRHS and SPS Budget Hearings**

Co-Chair Smigler opened this item for discussion. He stated that Ron Brumback has prepared questions to present to L-S in preparation for the budget hearing. Members reviewed the questions and provided feedback. A lengthy discussion ensued on the recurring deficits in the L-S Operating Budget one of which occurred several years ago over a miscalculation in the assessment. Susan Berry shared that the percentage to the assessment Sudbury pays has increased over several years which means that the increase in the assessment percentage for L-S is larger than the percentage increase in the Town and SPS budgets. Mr. Brumback spoke

about the efficiencies that have been added to the L-S Budget. Mr. Brumback will submit questions to L-S in preparation for the Budget Hearing.

Susan Berry and Michael Joachim reviewed preliminary questions on the SPS FY22 proposed operating budget with the Committee. Ms. Berry will ask for a link to the SPS budget for Finance Committee's consideration before questions are submitted to SPS.

- **Budget and Budget Summary**

Co-Chair Smigler opened this item for discussion. Dennis Keohane responded to clarifying questions from Susan Berry. A brief discussion followed.

- **Capital Plan**

Co-Chair Smigler opened this item for discussion. After a brief conversation, it was determined that documentation on the financials had not been updated. The conversation continued with a discussion on the proposed FY22 Capital Plan and expenses appropriated to Free Cash. Henry Hayes confirmed that Free Cash has not been certified to date. The discussion veered to a conversation on the 5-year Capital Plan and the development of a 15-year Capital Plan for larger capital items. Mr. Keohane stated that going forward he would like to develop a 15-year Capital Plan and build in escalators that would present a realistic view of estimated costs projections.

Mr. Keohane responded to questions from Jean Nam on the capital request process. He also clarified questions on the categorization of various capital items. Ms. Nam stated that she would like to receive an itemized list of various building improvements that were done in the previous two years. She would also like to receive a list of Town walkways that were done and what the process is to request work on a Town walkway. Ms. Nam asked about demolishing the shed at Broadacre Farm and whether the Historic Commission has signed off on this proposal. Mr. Hayes responded that the Combined Facilities Director is tracking this and communicating with all Boards and Departments involved. Ms. Nam will email her list of questions to Henry Hayes and Dennis Keohane.

Co-Chair Smigler stated that one of the roles of the Finance Committee is to advocate for better Capital Planning because it is such a big part of the budget. He added that this is a chance for the Finance Committee to surface its concerns early in the process and continue the discussion on future year plans and how to improve it.

- **FinCom Report to the Meeting Warrant and Finance Section**

Co-Chair Smigler stated that the Finance Committee will see a template on the structure of the FinCom Report to the Warrant at the next meeting. A brief discussion followed.

Co-Chair Smigler stated that Ron Brumback is working on the Finance Section and will update the Committee.

ITEM 8: Public Comment

Co-Chair Poch opened this portion of the meeting to Public Comment and recognized Jennifer Roberts Vice-Chairman of the Select Board.

Ms. Roberts stated that the Select Board has repurposed one of its subcommittees in which she and William Schineller will lead the review of financial policies as well as the incorporation of the DLS recommendations and will have the first public meeting regarding this next week. Ms. Roberts stated that she will keep the Finance Committee updated and looks forward to Finance Committee feedback.

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

Ronald Brumback moved, and Susan Berry seconded the motion that the January 25, 2021, Finance Committee meeting be adjourned at approximately 10:51 p.m.

Roll call vote:

Susan Berry, yes; Ronald Brumback, yes; Michael Joachim, yes; Howard Feng, yes; Sonny Parente, yes; and Eric Poch, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is Monday, February 1, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by Cheryl Gosmon