

**Sudbury Finance Committee
Virtual Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2021**

ATTENDANCE

Members of the FinCom present for the Virtual Meeting were Co-Chair Jean Nam, Co-Chair Eric Poch, Susan Berry, Andrew Bettinelli, Ronald Brumback, Blair Caple, Michael Joachim, Sonny Parente, and Scott Smigler

ALSO ATTENDING the MEETING

From Sudbury Public Schools, Brad Crozier, Superintendent, and Donald Sawyer, Director of Business & Finance, and Sudbury School Committee members, Silvia Nerssessian, Chair, and Meredith Gerson, Vice-Chair
Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector

CONVENE:

Co-Chair Poch roll-called members of the FinCom present for the December 7, 2021, Virtual Meeting.

ITEM 1: Open the Meeting

- Co-Chair Nam stated that the FinCom meeting of December 7, 2021, is being recorded via www.sudburytv.org. She read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer.

- **Opening Remarks (Co-Chairs)**
Co-Chair Poch noted that this meeting is not being broadcast live but recorded via Sudbury TV. Co-Chair Poch also stated that Dennis Keohane is attending the Select Board meeting this evening, and if he can attend the FinCom meeting later, he would. Co-Chair Poch referred to an email on a potential warrant article regarding climate emergency declaration.

ITEM 2: Public Comment

There were no public comments.

ITEM 3: FinCom Budget Year FY23

- **Budget Pressures - Sudbury Public Schools**
Co-Chair Poch welcomed Brad Crozier, Donald Sawyer, Silvia Nerssessian, and Meredith Gerson. Michael Joachim noted that FinCom had seen the responses from SPS on Exhibit 1. He stated that FinCom would consider the answers one by one and that he and Susan Berry would share further insight as the presentation progressed.

Superintendent Crozier prefaced the discussion by noting that SPS has worked hard to put SPS and the Town in a position to respond to emerging needs within the context of the COVID-19 Health Emergency. He stated that he feels good about the proactive planning of the FY22 budget. He also stated that he is excited to talk about the SPS Task Force on Capital.

With regards to question 1: Describe any unanticipated FY22 expenses (including Covid), Superintendent Crozier stated that a lot of what was planned for was anticipated except for a fourth preschool section that was added this year. Mr. Sawyer noted that the additional section involved a teacher and support staff funded by the PreK tuition, not operating funds. Mr. Sawyer also pointed out that any changes mentioned in Exhibit 1 are reflected in the SPS FY22 revised budget as of September 1, 2021.

Mr. Sawyer responded to question 2: Describe any unanticipated FY22 revenues (including Covid, ESSER ARPA, etc.) and how it relates to professional staff. He stated that SPS received a grant from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). He stated that SPS has 2.6 FTEs on staff that were not budgeted and are funded with the ARPA grant. He stated that the goal is to maintain these positions and get them into the budget as permanent positions. He noted that the grant is non-recurring. Mr. Sawyer explained that the ESSER grant was applied to offset increased utility costs due to Covid.

In response to question 3: Staffing, Superintendent Crozier and Mr. Sawyer engaged in a comprehensive discussion on how new positions are funded, turnover and retirement, and filling uncertified positions.

Superintendent Crozier responded to question 4: New Initiatives and answered Ron Brumback's question on the SMILE Program (Summer Math Intervention and Literacy Engagement). Superintendent Crozier stated that over 200 children participated in the program from grades K-5. He stated that Town Meeting appropriated \$309K for the program, and SPS received an additional \$100K grant from the state. He stated that SPS underspent the SMILE appropriation by approximately \$100K, which will be returned to the Town or he would advocate for that funding for a second SMILE program.

Superintendent Crozier and Mr. Sawyer responded to question 5: Please describe any Grants in excess of \$50,000 received for FY22. Superintendent Crozier and Mr. Sawyer explained how grant funding has been used.

Superintendent Crozier and Mr. Sawyer responded to question 6: Capital Projects. Superintendent Crozier confirmed that the Loring School Playground Access Walkway contract was signed in June 2021. A comprehensive discussion followed on the Town Manager's new Capital Improvement process. Mr. Sawyer noted satisfaction with the new capital process.

Superintendent Crozier and Mr. Sawyer responded to question 7: COVID. Susan Berry asked for a list of COVID-related expenses for FY22 (i.e., PPE, Transportation, Utilities, etc.). Mr. Sawyer stated that SPS would forecast the expenses and send them to FinCom.

The conversation continued with a discussion on enrollment and out-of-district tuition. Superintendent Crozier stated that the decrease in enrollment was not anticipated. He stated that he expected more kindergarteners to return in FY22. He noted that this is pretty universal across the state but anticipates the numbers to increase within the coming years. In terms of out-of-district tuition, Mr. Sawyer stated that the original FY21 Circuit Breaker approval was \$1,204,720. He explained how Circuit Breaker funds are paid. He stated that payments are received every quarter and that the fourth payment is received in July or August, and it is generally a revised payment amount. He stated that \$1,290,772 is the FY21 actual amount. He stated that payments are based on FY20 costs and must be used in FY22 or returned to the state. A comprehensive discussion followed on how expenses are pre-paid using Circuit Breaker funding.

Co-Chair Poch expressed appreciation to members of SPS and the School Committee for their helpful responses and comments to the Exhibit 1 questions.

Silvia Nerssessian stated that she would send the SMILE presentation and the MCAS presentation to the FinCom Liaisons. She also stated that the School Committee is looking forward to bringing the new capital improvement process forward with the Town.

ITEM 4: General Business

- **Liaison reports**

Michael Joachim stated that he received Exhibit 1 responses from Lincoln-Sudbury and will send them to Co-Chairs Poch and Nam. He stated that L-S cannot use the DESE categories for reporting this year but will work with FinCom on using them going forward.

Co-Chair Nam reported that the CPC Public Hearings are over, and the next couple of meetings will focus on discussion and votes. She stated that she added the

financial information to the shared drive and if FinCom has any questions, they should let her know.

- **Calendar and Budget Process**

- **Discuss Combined Capital Meeting Date**

- Co-Chair Nam stated that the possible dates for the Combined Capital Meeting are February 1 and February 15. After a brief discussion FinCom decided on February 15.

- **Dec 8 Meeting of FinCom Chairs and TM**

- Co-Chair Nam stated that Town Manager Henry Hayes had scheduled a meeting with her and Co-Chair Poch. She would update FinCom on this meeting.

- **Review Goals/Future Agenda Topics**

There was no discussion on this item.

- **Transfers and Other Business**

There was no discussion on this item.

- **Approve Meeting Minutes**

- Motion and Vote**

- Scott Smigler moved, and Eric Poch seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 20, 2021, as edited.

- Roll call vote:**

- Susan Berry, yes; Ronald Brumback, yes; Michael Joachim, yes; Scott Smigler, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, abstain; Sonny Parented, yes; Jean Nam, yes; Blair Caple, yes; and Eric Poch, yes.

- The motion carried. The vote was 8 yes and 1 abstention.**

- Motion and Vote**

- Scott Smigler moved, and Michael Joachim seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 4, 2021, as submitted.

- Roll call vote:**

- Blair Caple, yes; Sonny Parente, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, abstain; Michael Joachim, yes; Scott Smigler, yes; Ronald Brumback, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Jean Nam, yes; and Eric Poch, yes.

- The motion carried. The vote was 8 yes and 1 abstention**

ITEM 5: Updates from Town Staff

3-year Revenue Projections

Susan Berry noted that FinCom had received the FY23-FY25 Sudbury Revenue Projections and the initial budget targets for the schools. FinCom participated in a comprehensive

discussion on the revenue projections in general and how they are determined. Dennis Keohane joined the meeting. Mr. Keohane explained how revenue projections are calculated. He stated that the projections are based on a five-year average and a historical growth factor on the local receipts. He stated that on Real Estate and Personal Property taxes, the projections are based on estimated new growth plus 2.5%, plus an estimate on future debt. State aid is 1.5% growth. Mr. Keohane confirmed he would give FinCom out-year projections. Mr. Keohane stated that the Town Manager sets the budget guidance for the Cost Centers.

- **Review initial budget targets given to cost centers**
There was no discussion on this item.

ITEM 6: Public Comment

There were no public comments.

ITEM 7: Adjournment

Motion and Vote:

Susan Berry moved, and Sonny Parente seconded the motion that the December 7, 2021, Finance Committee meeting be adjourned at approximately 9:55 p.m.

Roll call vote:

Blair Caple, yes; Sonny Parente, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Scott Smigler, yes; Michael Joachim, yes; Ronald Brumback, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Jean Nam, yes; and Eric Poch, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is Monday, January 10, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by

Cheryl Gosmon