

**Sudbury Finance Committee  
Virtual Meeting Minutes  
February 28, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE**

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

**ABSENT:** Sonny Parente

**ALSO ATTENDING the MEETING**

Henry Hayes, Town Manager; Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer; Andrew Lewis, Inspector of Buildings; Cynthia Gerry, Director of Assessing; Lori Capone, Conservation Coordinator; Dan Nason, Public Works Director; Bill Barletta, Combined Facilities Director; John Walen, Fire Chief; Esmé Green, Library Director; Bill Murphy, Health Director; Maryanne Bilodeau, Assistant Town Manager/Human Resources Director; Mark Thompson, Technology Administrator; Dennis Mannone, Director of Parks, Recreation & Aquatics; Adam Duchesneau, Director of Planning & Community Development; Scott Nix, Chief of Police; Patty Golden, Senior Administrative Assistant to Town Manager; Debra Galloway, Senior Center Director; Beth Klein, Town Clerk

**ITEM 1: Open the Meeting**

• **Welcome and member roll call**

Co-Chair Poch called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and roll-called members of the FinCom present for the February 28, 2022, Virtual Meeting. Co-Chair Nam stated that the FinCom meeting of February 28 is being broadcast live and recorded for viewing by the public via [www.sudburytv.org](http://www.sudburytv.org). She read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer.

• **Opening Remarks (Co-Chairs)**

Co-Chair Poch mentioned that if he and Co-Chair Nam are successful in their respective campaigns for public office, they will need to resign from FinCom. He also stated that they both are available to answer questions from anyone interested in applying for membership on FinCom.

**ITEM 2: Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**ITEM 3: FinCom Budget Year FY23**

• **Town Budget Hearing**

Co-Chair Poch invited Town Manager Hayes to begin his presentation of the Town Department budgets. Mr. Hayes began by sharing his presentation, Town Budget Presentation Fiscal Year 2023. In answer to a question by Michael Joachim about the Revenue slide and whether the State Aid number shown was

pre or post the Governor's budget, Dennis Keohane responded that this is the number from the Governor's budget minus the state offsets.

There was a question about the increase in the Law budget and what is driving the increase. Mr. Hayes responded that the increase reflects the trend in spending over the last few years.

In response to Jean Nam's question about the percentage of students going to each vocational school, Mr. Hayes responded that four students will attend Minuteman and seven, Assabet in 2022-23.

There were questions about the maintenance money added to the Combined Facilities budget, the reason for the increase and split in allocations for SPS facilities and Town facilities.

Fire Chief Whalen explained his request for a Fire Inspector, one of the unmet requests. The present system of 4 primary and 4 backup people inspecting residences and commercial buildings for compliance with fire codes leads to inconsistencies that would be eliminated with a dedicated inspector, in addition to being more efficient.

Police Chief Nix explained his request for an additional officer, another unmet request. A member of the force was added as the third School Resource Officer, depleting the patrol force by one. There is also a need for a dedicated accreditation officer which could be combined with a supervisor to oversee the rolling out of a body cam program.

There was a discussion about decreasing the Reserve Fund which is currently at \$300K. Dennis Keohane will get FinCom the data on 10 years of use of the Reserve Fund. Michael Joachim asked if the method for providing guidance for the cost centers takes into account that the LS budget includes employee benefits and OPEB while the others don't, and Mr. Keohane responded that it does.

Scott Smigler asked about staff workload in light of the fact that there is no increase in employees. Town Manager Hayes responded that the workload has definitely increased, and the staff is task saturated. Jean Nam asked about what sort of market analysis of staff salaries the Town has done. Mr. Hayes responded that Sudbury is competitive in comparison to peer communities for the most part.

Dan Nason was asked about the staff he requested that did not fit in the budget. He responded that there are increasing recreation and open space areas that the department is responsible for maintaining. Scott Smigler asked about the

walkway project and why it has a high priority. Dan Nason responded that it connects communities to existing walkways and all the needed easements for this walkway have been obtained.

In answer to a question by Michael Joachim, Town Manager Hayes explained the process of prioritization across departments, which includes a numerical scoring and a discussion that includes department heads. Jean Nam noted that perhaps some of the items on the Free Cash list might have been postponed so that some of the cost of the drainage article could be paid with Free Cash.

Mark Thompson was asked about the rotation cycle for computers and cybersecurity and explained his process for extending the rotation and the layered approach to cybersecurity.

In answer to a question by Scott Smigler about fee changes, Dennis Mannone confirmed that Parks & Recreation has made some changes to their membership costs at the pool and have increased some of the fees on the fields as well. On the Rec side, they are constantly assessing increases to camp fees. He acknowledged that it is very difficult to increase fees to cover the increase in cost for staff.

In answer to a question from Scott Smigler, Fire Chief Whalen responded that the Permanent Building Committee is moving the Fire Station 2 project in a positive direction. If the article for the additional funding is not passed, the Chief said they will have only a design. However, he is hopeful that the article will pass because the project is really needed. There was also discussion about the possibility of using ARPA money for the additional funding needed for the project.

The discussion about trying to find ways to decrease the debt for the TownWide Drainage and Roadway Reconstruction article was continued. There was a question about the extent of similar future projects. Dan Nason responded that he is working on sanitizing a list and will share it with FinCom when he has a final one.

- **Other items relevant to budget preparations, review, or informing the Finance Committee budget deliberations**

A request for a road map on where the current Fairbank Project stands vis-à-vis the original plan is an outstanding item.

Ron Brumback expressed the need for a comprehensive, forward looking financial planning process that takes into account the costs of the projects each of the departments and cost centers see will be needed in the future and prioritizing those. Discussion of the planning process followed.

- **Discuss FinCom Budget Report**

Jean Nam has done some more updating using last year's report, but the committee did not discuss the report further.

**ITEM 4: General Business**

- **Liaison reports**

There were no reports.

- **Calendar and Budget Process**

Co-Chair Poch stated that next meeting the committee should be ready to do more detailed work on the Finance Report for the Warrant. The committee decided that another meeting is needed for the work that is remaining before its report is due to the Select Board, and a meeting was added to the 14<sup>th</sup> of March.

There was discussion of what would be covered at the meetings on the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup>. The committee also discussed with Dennis Keohane the funding of the \$3.5M for the TownWide Drainage and Roadway Reconstruction article.

- **Review Goals/Future Agenda Topics**

There was no discussion on this item.

- **Transfers and Other Business**

There were no transfers. Dennis Keohane announced that the Town is now spending in a deficient for Snow & Ice, resulting in a likely transfer request at a future meeting.

- **Approve Meeting Minutes**

There were no minutes to approve.

**ITEM 5: Updates from Town Staff**

There were no updates.

**ITEM 6: Public Comment**

Co-Chair Poch recognized Select Board Chair Jennifer Roberts who suggested that the Finance Committee address its request for an update on the Fairbank project to the Town Manager and the Permanent Building Committee.

**ITEM 7: Adjournment****Motion and Vote:**

Ron Brumbach moved, and Blair Caple seconded the motion that the February 28, 2022, Finance Committee meeting be adjourned at approximately 10:20 p.m.

**Roll call vote:**

Susan Berry, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Ron Brumbach, yes; Blair Caple, yes; Michael Joachim, yes; Scott Smigler, 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, March 7, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.*