

**Sudbury Finance Committee  
Virtual Meeting Minutes  
January 10, 2022**

**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, and Scott Smigler

**ABSENT**

Sonny Parente

**ALSO ATTENDING the MEETING**

From Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, Bella Wong, Superintendent/Principal, Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations, and Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee members, Cara Endyke Doran, Chair, Heather Cowap, and Kevin Matthews

Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer-Collector

**CONVENE:**

Co-Chair Poch roll-called members of the FinCom present for the January 10, 2022, Virtual Meeting.

**ITEM 1: Open the Meeting**

- Co-Chair Nam stated that the FinCom meeting of January 10, 2022, is being recorded via [www.sudburytv.org](http://www.sudburytv.org). She read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer.
- **Opening Remarks (Co-Chairs)**  
There were no opening remarks.

**ITEM 2: Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**ITEM 3: FinCom Budget Year FY23**

- **Budget Pressures - Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High**  
Co-Chair Poch opened this item for discussion and yielded the floor to Michael Joachim and Ronald Brumback to introduce the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School Budget Pressures presentation.

Michael Joachim welcomed Bella Wong, and Kirsteen Patterson, as well as members of the Lincoln Sudbury Regional District School Committee, Cara Endyke Doran, Heather Cowap, and Kevin Matthews. Mr. Joachim stated that in December, FinCom agreed that this meeting would be a meeting that would focus on budget pressures for the fiscal year 2022. He noted that L-S has prepared the

fiscal year 2023 budget, which they have shared with the School Committee and the Lincoln Finance Committee. He stated that the L-S FY2023 budget would be presented to FinCom during the Budget Hearing on February 7th.

Mr. Joachim invited Ms. Wong and Ms. Patterson to respond to Exhibit I questions. Ms. Wong and Ms. Patterson began with question 1: Unanticipated FY22 expenses (including Covid) and responded to Mr. Joachim's question about substitute compensation in terms of getting a better sense of the financial impact on the FY22 budget. Ms. Wong and Ms. Patterson explained the complexities of substitute compensation, staff compensation, and finding professionals to cover vacancies or providing substitutes to cover medical leave. Ms. Wong described Covid related expenses including staffing to address intervention, and behavioral and mental health concerns. Ms. Wong noted that 2.0 FTEs would come out of grant funding for FY22 with anticipation of leftover funding for staffing in FY23.

Ms. Patterson responded to question 2: Unanticipated FY22 revenues (including COVID, ARPA, and others). She provided information on the use of ARPA funding (American Rescue Plan Act), ESSER III funding (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief), and FEMA funding (Federal Emergency Management Agency).

Ms. Wong and Ms. Patterson responded to question 3: Staffing. Ms. Wong described adjustments to staffing that were made through the ESSER III and COVID relief grants. Ms. Patterson provided a thorough analysis of FTE positioning around student needs and coursework in a program or department at L-S. She noted that there is movement and that the areas of coverage needed might be slightly higher or lower. This is the natural movement to accomplish coverage. A brief discussion ensued on Steps and Lanes. Ms. Patterson stated that she would forward a list of FTEs, and FY22 Steps and Lanes percentages to Mr. Joachim.

Ms. Wong responded to question 4: New Initiatives. She described costs associated with the Advisory Pilot Program for senior students. She noted that the costs were minimal. She also noted that if the Advisory Program were to be implemented for all four grades it would require additional staffing and scheduling changes.

Ms. Patterson responded to question 5: Details on the use of grants in excess of \$50,000 received for FY22. Ms. Patterson stated that the IDEA and the Title I funds are annual entitlement grants, which are meant to supplement the budget;

they do not replace budgets. She stated that Title 1 is used for staffing and additional resource for tutoring, etc.

Ms. Wong and Ms. Patterson responded to question 6: capital projects. Ms. Patterson responded that the L-S capital projects were on budget. She stated that the quotes that were received remained true to the projects themselves. She stated that there was a little bit more in the football field replacement as a contingency, but the project came in pretty close to the expected budget. She stated that the replacement van remains on back order, and she is hopeful they would have the replacement van in late spring. She added that all of the other projects have been completed.

Vice-Chair Nam asked if L-S had plans to replace the track or will it be done as a separate project. Ms. Wong responded that the track would be a separate project. It is not online to be replaced. She stated that L-S has been included in the town's CIP process and has submitted a request for the chain link fence replacement item. She stated that overall L-S is very appreciative of being included in this process. The discussion turned to a conversation on the need for additional technology support. Ms. Wong described the shift in FTE support for technology that would remain going forward.

Ms. Wong and Ms. Patterson responded to question 7: COVID funding. Ms. Wong responded that the COVID relief grants that L-S has received have been a lifesaver. It has allowed L-S to expand capacity in areas of service for the most vulnerable students without having to take funds from the general operating budget. Scott Smigler mentioned a concern that FinCom raised last year regarding COVID-19 expenses not being covered by state and federal funding and asked if current funding was sufficient to cover those costs. Ms. Wong stated that L-S is trying to be ahead of what the needs are and that the biggest challenge is filling vacancies. Ms. Wong also stated that pool testing has been paid for by the state and they have given L-S the staffing needed to collect the tests although L-S uses their staffing in the collection process as well. Ms. Patterson noted that L-S received \$75K in ARPA funding.

Ms. Wong and Ms. Patterson responded to questions on student enrollment statistics vs. budget, out-of-district tuition costs vs. budget, the number of out-of-district students vs. budgeted, and Circuit Breaker. Mr. Joachim asked for more background on how L-S uses Circuit Breaker. He stated that he knows that L-S takes some of its circuit breaker and uses it to offset district expenses in the L-S budget.

Ms. Wong stated that the intention of the circuit breaker from the state was to offer reimbursement for out-of-district costs. She stated that the allotment that L-S receives is for actual tuition costs over a certain threshold. She stated that this year L-S received 75% reimbursement which is not always the case, and that L-S is not expecting to receive that amount next year.

Ms. Patterson stated that the state does not allow L-S to hold back all of the reimbursement funding in a given year. She stated that the state wants school districts to spend the majority of their reimbursement down because the intent of that funding is to offset what has already been paid out. She stated that the increase in what the state has added to the transportation component for out-of-district transportation is what all of the districts are getting back from the state. The discussion turned to a conversation on the certification of E&D funds. Ms. Wong noted that L-S cannot receive approval for the use of E&D funds until the funds have been certified. Ms. Wong stated that she would like to build capacity for the future. She added that L-S is not looking to use E&D funds for FY23. She stated that she would like to use a portion of E&D funds to contribute to the OPEB Trust. She also stated that she would like to add to the Capital Fund which can be used for emergencies or for future large capital asset replacement.

Upon completion of the L-S Budget Pressure presentation, a brief discussion followed on the capital warrant articles. Scott Smigler noted that the Select Board has received the draft CIP articles. Susan Berry noted that she has received from SPS their Budget Reconciliation and Multi-year Data Comparison spreadsheets. A general discussion ensued.

#### **ITEM 4: General Business**

- **Liaison reports**

Co-Chair Poch stated that FinCom still has an opening for Park and Recreation Liaison. Andrew Bettinelli volunteered to serve as liaison.

Michael Joachim noted that L-S and SPS have resolved their contracts with the teachers' unions. He stated that L-S has a contract going forward for three years. He also stated that SPS has a one-year contract and an additional three-year contract for teachers for the 2021/2022 and 2022/2025 contract years. He stated that the first contract includes a one-time payment equivalent to 1.5% of the employee's base salary or \$750, whichever amount is greater. The 2022-2025 agreement allows for cost-of-living adjustment increases of 2% in each of the three years.

Jean Nam proposed that FinCom focus on reviewing the CPC warrant articles to let the CPC know which articles FinCom would need to hear more about. She suggested putting this item on the January 24, 2022, agenda.

- **Calendar and Budget Process**

Co-Chair Nam provided an update on a budget calendar meeting she and Co-Chair Poch had with the Town Manager. She stated that she updated the FinCom budget calendar, noting that the deadline for department requests is due to FinCom by January 31, 2022, per town bylaws.

Scott Smigler asked if the Select Board Financial Policies have been approved and if FinCom can get a current copy. Co-Chair Nam responded that she would work on getting a current copy for FinCom and will put it on the agenda for January 24, 2022. Dennis Keohane stated that the Select Board is meeting on January 18 and this item would be on their agenda.

Co-Chair Poch stated that the subcommittee on Financial Policies met with the Select Board and the commentary and feedback FinCom provided have been taken into consideration and incorporated into the final draft.

- **Review Goals/Future Agenda Topics**

Future agenda items include a review of the Draft Financial Policies and CPC Warrant Articles.

- **Transfers and Other Business**

There were no transfers and other business.

- **Approve Meeting Minutes**

- **Motion and Vote**

- Scott Smigler moved, and Michael Joachim seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 1, 2021, as edited.

- Roll call vote:

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

- **The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 8-0.**

- **Motion and Vote**

- Scott Smigler moved, and Michael Joachim seconded the motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 15, 2021, as edited.

- Roll call vote:

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

**The motion carried. The vote was seven yes, and one abstention.**

**ITEM 5: Discuss Requesting that CIAC Meetings be Recorded**

Co-Chair Nam stated that having this meeting recorded by Sudbury TV would be amazing for everyone. FinCom members agreed that it would be helpful to have recordings of the CIAC meetings. A general conversation followed about the approach FinCom should take. Co-Chair Poch stated that he and Co-Chair Nam would discuss it offline and decide whether to put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

**ITEM 6: Discuss the 2021 Annual Town Report**

Co-Chair Nam stated that FinCom will need to submit the Annual Town Report by January 28, 2022. She summarized the changes she had made to the document. A brief discussion followed on small changes.

**ITEM 7: Discuss ARPA**

Co-Chair Nam opened this item for discussion. General commentary followed on criteria for eligibility for funding. Susan Berry commented that this item would be on the Select Board's January 18<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda. Dennis Keohane summarized general guidelines on spending. He noted that the funding available is \$5.9M. A general conversation followed on which pieces would need immediate consideration. Co-Chair Poch stated that FinCom would continue to follow this item.

**ITEM 8: Updates from Town Staff**

- 3-year Revenue Projections  
Susan Berry stated that it looks like a very large revenue projection in FY23 and FY24. She asked if it was based on the expectation of new construction or housing. Dennis Keohane responded that it depends on which number you are looking at. He stated that if you are looking at real estate and personal property that number is based on new debt coming on. He added that most of the estimates will be in line with historical numbers.
- Review Initial Budget Targets Given to Cost Centers  
Dennis Keohane stated that the overall budget target for each Cost Center is 3%.

**ITEM 9: Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**ITEM 10: Adjournment**

**Motion and Vote:**

Susan Berry moved, and Scott Smigler seconded the motion that the January 10, 2022, Finance Committee meeting be adjourned at approximately 9:51 p.m.

**Roll call vote:**

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

**The motion carried. The vote was unanimous, 8-0.**

*The next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is Monday, January 24, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.*

**Minutes Prepared by**

Cheryl Gosmon