

**Sudbury Finance Committee
Virtual Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2023**

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Finance Committee (FinCom) present for the Virtual Meeting were Co-Chair Michael Joachim, Co-Chair Eric Poch, Susan Berry, Andrew Bettinelli, Michael Ferrari, Hank Sorett, and Colin Wang.

ABSENT: Sonny Parente

ALSO ATTENDING the MEETING

Dennis Keohane, Finance Director/Treasurer; Sandra Duran, Combined Facilities Director

ITEM 1: Open the Meeting

- **Welcome and member roll call**

Co-Chair Joachim called the meeting to order at approximately 7:03 p.m. and roll-called members of the FinCom present for the March 20, 2023, Virtual Meeting. He stated that the FinCom meeting of March 20 is being broadcast live and recorded for viewing by the public. He read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer.

- **Opening remarks (Co-Chairs)**

Co-Chair Joachim reviewed the agenda.

ITEM 2: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 3: Budget Discussion

Co-Chair Joachim proposed that the committee take up discussion and vote on Article 3 first and the committee agreed.

- **Article 3 Deliberation and Vote (under the agenda item Deliberate and Vote on Articles)**

Co-Chair Joachim noted that there is a new Article 3 that includes \$150K added to receipts under Medicaid Receipts and this \$150K was added to the SPS budget amount.

Susan Berry went over information known and estimated which she used to show that the gap might be able to be closed with circuit breaker and other funds in FY24, but that is not sustainable and in FY25 SPS would need an override or would need to make cuts.

There was discussion about whether the deficit is chronic or acute and that using one-time funds in FY24 would give another year to see if some of the additional counseling resources would be needed in FY25. The committee considered the increase in real estate tax burden. Members reviewed the possible additional State Aid that the Town may receive which will lower the potential increase in taxes that would

be needed for the override.

Co-Chair Joachim reiterated the importance of educating Sudbury's children and the need in terms of social, emotional, and mental health and from pressures in other areas. He also reviewed what others had mentioned - questions about what other sources for funding might be available and whether the needs seen now will continue into the future whereas the increase in the levy limit is permanent.

Co-Chair Poch's comments focused on the overall budget and the needs expressed by all three cost centers and the likelihood that new growth will be lower going forward. Given that, Co-Chair Poch suggested the committee might want to propose a non-override budget that is different from the one proposed by the Town. A discussion of the possibilities followed.

The committee reviewed the LS and Town pieces of the budget. Hank Sorett expressed concern about the financial information on the solar array. There was some discussion that it would be helpful to FinCom to see the full amount of cost for items and then the amount of offsets.

Hank Sorett offered a motion to reduce the Town budget by \$129,790, the cost of the two new positions to stop the growth of the Town personnel. Mike Joachim seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Eric Poch, no; Susan Berry, no; Andrew Bettinelli, no; Hank Sorett, yes; Mike Ferrari, no; Colin Wang, no and Mike Joachim, no.

The motion failed. The vote was 1 in favor and 6 opposed.

The committee moved to a discussion of a vote on the override and non-override budgets. On a straw vote the committee was leaning yes on the override budget. Mike Ferrari voiced a concern that the override is not sufficient for all the needs of the town, and an override for SPS alone may make it more difficult to get an override for the remaining needs. On a straw vote the committee was in favor of leaving the non-override as currently presented.

Motion and Vote:

Susan Berry moved, and Andrew Bettinelli seconded the motion that the FinCom recommend approval of the FY24 Override budget in the amount of \$115,512,355.

Roll call vote:

Eric Poch, no; Susan Berry, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Mike Ferrari, yes; Colin Wang, yes; Hank Sorett, no; and Mike Joachim, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was 5 in favor and 2 opposed.

Motion and Vote:

Susan Berry moved, and Eric Poch seconded the motion that the FinCom recommend approval of the FY24 Recommended non-override budget in the amount of \$114,766,895 as presented in Article 3.

Roll call vote:

Eric Poch, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Mike Ferrari, no; Colin Wang, yes; Hank Sorett, no; and Mike Joachim, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was 5 in favor and 2 opposed. Both Mike Ferrari and Hank Sorett were in favor of increasing the non-override budget with some amount of Free Cash.

- Discuss FinCom Warrant Report
Co-Chair Joachim briefly went through the sections that were updated since FinCom's last meeting. Co-Chairs Joachim and Eric Poch requested that FinCom members send edits to this version which they will consolidate. The committee will finalize the report at the 3/27 meeting.
- Deliberate and Vote on Warrant Articles
Co-Chair Joachim reviewed the articles that the committee still needs to vote on.
Article 12 FY24 Revolving Fund Spending Limits - The committee decided to defer on a vote and ask SPS if they would increase the Bus Spending Limit.

Article 15 Fairbank Community Center Audio-Visual Equipment and Associated Funding - Hank Sorett urged FinCom to recommend support of this article so that the building can open fully accessible. Other members agreed having received comprehensive information about the process and the costs and disruption involved if done later.

Motion and Vote:

Hank Sorett moved, and Eric Poch seconded the motion that the FinCom recommend approval of the Article 15 Fairbank Community Center Audio-Visual Equipment and Associated Funding.

Roll call vote:

Eric Poch, abstain; Susan Berry, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Mike Ferrari, yes; Colin Wang, yes; Hank Sorett, yes; and Mike Joachim, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was 6 in favor and 1 abstention.

Article 26 DPW Office Building Renovation - Director Duran was recognized to explain why this article and the Snow Management Building Renovation Design request in the Town Manager's Capital budget were not combined. She stated that the two were not combined because they are two separate

scopes of work in different areas of the building - one for design and Article 26 for design and reconfiguration.

Motion and Vote:

Eric Poch moved, and Susan Berry seconded the motion that FinCom recommend approval of the Article 26 DPW Office Building Renovation in the amount of \$125,000 from Free Cash.

Roll call vote:

Eric Poch, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Mike Ferrari, yes; Colin Wang, yes; Hank Sorett, no; and Mike Joachim, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was 6 in favor and 1 opposed.

Article 27 Space Use and Facility Condition Study - Co-Chair Joachim shared that CIAC voted 5-1 in favor of the article. Mike Ferrari asked about the intended scope. Sandra Duran went over which buildings are expected to be studied. Schools are likely to be a focus of the conditions assessment.

There were questions about whether this study could be delayed or eliminated, and the money used for SPS. Co-Chair Poch remarked that the FinCom has been asking for a study of space and condition for several years.

Motion and Vote:

Eric Poch moved, and Susan Berry seconded the motion that FinCom recommend approval of the Article 27 Space Use and Facility Condition Study in the amount of \$300,000 from Free Cash.

Roll call vote:

Eric Poch, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Mike Ferrari, no; Colin Wang, yes; Hank Sorett, no; and Mike Joachim, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was 5 in favor and 2 opposed.

- Discuss other items relevant to FinCom review of Budgets and Warrant Articles
Hank Sorett proposed that FinCom hear from the Town and Sustainability Committee and take votes on Article 30 and Article 31.

ITEM 4: General Business

- **Liaison reports**
There were no liaison reports.
- **Calendar**
Co-Chair Joachim noted that the Co-Chairs will be meeting with the Select Board to report on FinCom's recommendations. The meeting has been posted so other members can join.
- **Approve Meeting Minutes**
There were no minutes to approve.

- **Transfers and other business**

There were no transfers or other business.

ITEM 5: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 6: Adjourn

Motion and Vote:

Eric Poch moved, and Hank Sorett seconded the motion that the March 20, 2023, Finance Committee meeting be adjourned at approximately 10:51 p.m.

Roll call vote:

Eric Poch, yes; Susan Berry, yes; Andrew Bettinelli, yes; Mike Ferrari, yes; Colin Wang, yes; Hank Sorett, yes; and Mike Joachim, yes.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

The next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee is a joint meeting with the Select Board on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.