

**Sudbury Finance Committee  
Virtual Meeting Minutes  
December 18, 2023  
7:00PM**

**ATTENDANCE**

Members of the Finance Committee present were: Co-Chair Mike Joachim, Mike Ferrari, Colin Wang, Susan Berry, Ryan Lynch, Henry Sorett and Maura Carty.

**ABSENT**

Co-Chair Eric Poch and Andrew Bettinelli

**ITEM 1: Welcome and Member Roll Call**

Co-Chair Joachim called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00PM, declared a quorum present, and roll-called members present. He read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer.

**Opening Remarks by Co-Chairs**

This meeting is the budget pressures meeting with Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School.

**ITEM 2: Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**ITEM 3: FY25 Budget Pressures Meeting with Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School**

Co-Chair Joachim welcomed representatives of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School: Andrew Stephens, Superintendent/Principal, Kirsteen Patterson, Director of Finance and Operations, Ravi Simon and Cara Endyke-Doran, LSRHS School Committee members.

Ms. Patterson stated that the school is within FY24 budget parameters. She noted that large increases in health insurance costs will be a budget pressure. Mr. Stephens added that scheduling “pinches” due to contraction will create a pressure for next year.

Regarding revenue: the state enacted Student Opportunity Act, updating the Chapter 70 formula. LS received slightly more transportation reimbursement than what they predicted at the end of FY24. Shift to online transcript service at the end of FY24 will result in lower revenue in FY25.

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- Parking passes bypass the general fund and go directly into a revolving fund used for parking lot and related repairs.
- Additional Chapter 70 funds in the amount of \$274,948 were allocated to reduce assessment to two towns.
- State reimbursement for regional transportation in the amount of \$120K.
  - Unless voted to move to stabilization fund, monies used to offset costs.
  - Regional transportation reimbursement budget number determined each year in statewide budget.
- Regarding solar array, LS receives no revenue but only offset to energy costs.

- In consideration of state notice to districts of 14% increase in OOD expenses, supplemental budget including pot hole money to offset costs was given to select number of districts in extreme need and severely impacted, but did not include Lincoln or Sudbury.
- Increased Medicaid aid has direct correlation to additional student services.

#### *Staffing*

- All changes to staffing not reflected in FY24 budget were due to slight variances in departmental transfers at the high school level within different categorical areas.

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- Anticipated patterns for substitute line item.
  - Although not as high as pandemic levels, there still may be significant absences to cover as well as general coverage in a given year.
  - Coverage can include short-term or long-term including unannounced medical leave with variances in cost.
- Impact of teacher attrition and replacement in light of declining enrollment.
  - Dependent on enrollment class size year to year, but as much as possible maintain FTEs as “lifeblood of the school.”
  - High school is much different than elementary/middle schools as students enroll in seven different classes and a slight drop in enrollment does not affect staff needs.
  - Enrollment is expected to decrease and will level off at 1,300s.
  - Although a large number of retirees are not expected this year, replacement of higher paid retirees with junior level results in savings, with challenges in the market for math and science teachers.

#### *New Initiatives*

- Advisory program for students who are assigned in groups to dedicated teacher advisors.

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- Funding of program next year includes .25 FTE and \$125K total allocation for teacher stipends.
- .25 FTE for substance interventionist to handle reality of high school life in every school struggling with the impact of vaping and other ways of easy access to substances and utilization of them.

#### *Grants*

- Speech and language pathologist provides services to students as part of Individualized Education Plans in a range of areas to address various speech/language disabilities.

#### *Capital Projects*

- All FY24 projects completed including feasibility study of stairwells.
- FY25 anticipated projects.
  - Carryover for actual building of concrete exterior stairwells.
  - Wi-Fi replacement.
  - Lighting panel for interior lighting control.

#### *Enrollment and Out-of-District Costs*

- Projected enrollment number of 1,454 this year; actual is 1,461.
- Five-year model projection in FY26 of 1,393 and the following year 1,345, stabilizing after that in the mid-1,300s.
- Actual enrollment figures available as of October 1<sup>st</sup> in academic year.

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- Mr. Sorett asked about the contract with the developer of Cold Brook Crossing for mitigation of higher than projected student enrollment numbers.
- Increase in out-of-district enrollment of 10 students within the budgeted tuition line item.

*Circuit Breaker*

- \$3.05M was used to offset the anticipated \$5M in out-of-district costs before assessment to the towns.
- Anticipated same rate of reimbursement in FY25.

**ITEM 4: Other Budget Discussion**

**Discuss Budget Pressures Meetings**

FinCom members expressed the following feedback:

Mr. Ferrari will request a completed cost center spreadsheet from LS prior to the January 29 meeting.

Chair Joachim to send email to Mr. Keohane and Mr. Sheehan requesting information by the next meeting: a) what is provision in contract pertaining to the housing project re mitigation payment owed to the Town; and b) how many students are coming from project impacting the schools' trigger contractual provision.

**Discuss FY25 budget guidance and capital planning**

Chair Joachim reported that the Town provided budget guidance to the three cost centers. It issued initial guidance numbers and then amended them after learning that new growth was higher than anticipated. Since the Town alone sets the guidance, the Committee agreed to wait to discuss it further until the next meeting, when Mr. Keohane and Mr. Sheehan would be available to provide the rationale.

**ITEM 5: General business**

- **Preparation of 2023 Annual Report**

Mr. Ferrari agreed to draft the FinCom summary for the 2023 Annual Report and distribute to members for discussion at the next meeting and finalization by the end of January for submission to the Town Manager's office.

- **Transfers and other business**

There were none.

- **Liaison reports**

Ms. Carty –

She will send Chair Joachim an updated report for the Fire Station and Fairbank Community Center.

Ms. Berry –

SPS will vote on the budget this Thursday and she will provide an update.

- **Calendar**  
January 8 and 22  
January 29 – budget hearing for LS  
February 12 – joint capital meeting with Select Board and CIAC  
February 15 – budget hearing for SPS  
February 26 – budget hearing for Town
- **Approve meeting minutes of November 27 and December 5**

**Upon motion duly made by Mr. Ferrari and seconded by Ms. Carty, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of November 27 and December 5, 2023 as amended. Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Mr. Wang-Y and Ms. Carty-Y. Motion carries 7-0, unanimous.**

- **Rescind prior vote and re-approve meeting minutes of October 16**

**Upon motion duly made by Ms. Berry and seconded by Mr. Lynch, it was unanimously voted to rescind prior approval of the minutes of October 16 and approve the minutes of October 16 as amended. Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Mr. Wang-Y and Ms. Carty-Y. Motion carries 7-0, unanimous.**

#### **ITEM 7: Public comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **ITEM 8: Adjournment**

**Upon motion duly made by Mr. Sorett and seconded by Mr. Ferrari, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Mr. Wang-Y and Ms. Carty-Y. Motion carries 7-0, unanimous.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:13PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford  
Recording Secretary