

**Sudbury Finance Committee
Virtual Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2024
7:00PM**

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Finance Committee present were: Co-Chair Michael Joachim, Michael Ferrari, Andrew Bettinelli, Henry Sorett, and Susan Berry. Co-Chair Eric Poch and Ryan Lynch arrived late.

ABSENT

Colin Wang and Maura Carty

ITEM 1: Welcome and Member Roll Call

Co-Chair Joachim called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02PM, roll-called members, and declared a quorum present. He read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer.

Opening Remarks by Co-Chairs

This meeting is devoted to reviewing Town Meeting warrant articles.

ITEM 2: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 3: FY25 Budget Discussion

MBTA Zoning Articles

Co-Chair Joachim introduced Adam Burney, Director of Planning and Development, to address the warrant articles prepared by the Planning Board to achieve compliance with the MBTA Communities Act, which places housing requirements on the 177 cities and towns in the MBTA's service area.

Discussion ensued including the following issues:

- Mr. Burney clarified that that the Act does not require units to be built but calls for zoning to allow them.
- Regarding costs associated with new development, Mr. Burney stated that it was difficult to quantify resulting town service expenses because there were no projects on the table.
- Non-compliance could result in cessation of significant grant programs, which would significantly impact the Town.
- An additional 300 units would be eligible for development in the proposed area.

Article 3: Operating Budget

As Mr. Ferrari was not present at the prior meeting, he offered his comments on the Article, and Co-Chair Joachim reviewed comments on the Article from the prior meeting.

Upon motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Ms. Berry, it was voted to recommend approval of Article 3 in the amount of \$121,605,022. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-N, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 6-1.

Article 4: Capital Budget

Co-Chair Joachim reviewed the capital budget. Mr. Keohane noted that the present number of \$713,697 may be lowered because of alternate use of ARPA funds.

Ms. Berry suggested that the Committee comment on the fact that since fewer items now fall within the threshold for the Town Manager's capital budget, the threshold might be raised, and that items that appear on the capital request list year after year might be funded in the regular maintenance budgets of the cost centers although that will take some time.

Upon motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Mr. Lynch, it was unanimously voted to recommend approval of Article 4 up to the amount of \$713,697. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Articles 5, 6 and 7: Enterprise Funds

Co-chair Joachim reviewed the Articles.

Upon motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Mr. Bettinelli, it was unanimously voted to recommend approval of Articles 5, 6 and 7: the transfer station enterprise fund budget in the amount of \$329,869, the pool enterprise fund budget in the amount of \$537,783 and the field maintenance enterprise fund budget of \$243,663. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 10: Chapter 90 Highway Funding

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Berry and seconded by Mr. Bettinelli, it was unanimously voted to recommend approval of Article 10, Chapter 90 highway funding. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 11: Fiscal Year 2025 Stabilization Fund

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Mr. Berry to recommend approval of Article 11, Fiscal Year 2025 Stabilization Fund in the amount of \$201,507. Mr. Keohane confirmed that the purpose of the Article is to get the stabilization fund up to 5% of the prior year's operating budget in accordance with the Town's financial policy. The most recent balance in the fund is \$5,565,366.

Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 12: Fiscal Year 2025 Revolving Fund Spending Limits

Motion duly made by Ms. Berry and seconded by Co-Chair Poch to recommend approval of Article 12, Fiscal Year Revolving Fund Spending Limits.

Mr. Ferrari reiterated his concern that SPS had asked for an increase in the revolving account, but he did not think it prudent to oppose the Article as a whole.

Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 13: Capital Stabilization Fund

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Co-Chair Joachim to recommend approval of Article 13, Capital Stabilization Fund in the amount of \$250,000. Discussion included the following:

- Amount is funded from free cash; \$1,550,000 presently in capital stabilization fund.

- Monies are put in the general fund but kept separate in the general ledger and invested in diversified areas.

Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 14: Revoke Opioid Stabilization Fund

Co-Chair Joachim reviewed the article. In answer to Mr. Ferrari's question, Mr. Keohane confirmed that the Town has received funds in the amount of \$101,201, but there is no request to spend funds.

Motion duly made by Ms. Berry and seconded by Co-Chair Poch to recommend approval of Article 14, Revoke Stabilization Fund. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 15: Means Tested Senior Tax Exemption Extension

Co-Chair Joachim reviewed the article. Mr. Sorett stated that he would like to see the amount increased to help seniors who are struggling to stay in their homes.

Motion duly made by Mr. Ferrari and seconded by Co-Chair Poch to recommend approval of Article 15-Means Tested Senior Tax Exemption Extension. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 17: Acquisition of MBTA Buildings

Town Manager Sheehan and Facilities Director Duran showed pictures of and described the two facilities to be acquired from the MBTA. The former will need approximately \$22K in restoration costs and the latter minimal restoration costs and will be maintained at an annual cost of \$600. The Historic Commission has an interest in both these buildings for their historic significance along the rail line.

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Mr. Lynch to recommend approval of Article 17-Acquisition of MBTA Buildings at an estimated purchase price of approximately \$2.00. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Articles 18 & 19: DPW Swap Body Trucks w/Plow and various Bodies; Pickup Truck

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Co-Chair Joachim to recommend approval of Articles 18 and 19-Swap Body Trucks w/Plow and Various Bodies and Pickup Truck in the amount of \$560K and \$120K to be appropriated from free cash. Discussion ensued on the balance of free cash. Co-Chair Joachim noted a breakdown of capital expenditures as follows: \$950K from levy and \$1.1M from free cash.

Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 20: Town-wide Drainage and Culvert Reconstruction

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Mr. Bettinelli to recommend approval of Article 20-Town-wide Drainage and Culvert Reconstruction in the amount of \$625K to be appropriated from the levy. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 21: DPW Rooftop/HVAC Unit Replacement

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Ms. Berry to recommend approval of Article 21-DPW Rooftop/HVAC Unit Replacement in the amount of \$200K to be appropriated from the levy. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 22: DPW Salt Shed Vinyl Cover Replacement

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Mr. Lynch to recommend approval of Article 22-DPW Salt Shed Vinyl Cover Replacement in the amount of \$125K to be appropriated from the levy. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 23: Atkinson Pool Renovation

Mr. Ferrari noted that the pool has been in disrepair, and given its proximity to the Fairbanks Center, it should come online at the same time. Co-Chair Joachim stated that he is in favor of in-levy debt rather than as a debt exclusion.

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Mr. Lynch to recommend approval of Article 23-Atkinson Pool Renovation in the amount of \$2,350,000 to be financed by in-levy debt. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 24: SPS - Classroom Instructional Equipment

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Ms. Berry to recommend approval of Article 24-Replacement of SPS Classroom Instructional Equipment in the amount of \$100K to be appropriated from free cash. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Article 25: SPS Haynes School Dehumidification HVAC Equipment

Motion duly made by Co-Chair Poch and seconded by Co-Chair Joachim to recommend approval of Article 25-SPS Haynes School Dehumidification HVAC Equipment in the amount of \$150K to be appropriated from free cash. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

Discussion of FinCom Report

Co-Chair Joachim reviewed the outline of the FinCom report and asked for volunteers to write drafts of segments as follows: Opening – Co-Chair Joachim; SPS – Mr. Lynch; LS – Mr. Ferrari; Town – Mr. Bettinelli; Capital and debt – Ms. Berry; Conclusion – Co-Chair Poch

ITEM 4: Rules and Operating Procedures

Co-Chair Joachim reviewed the draft of the amendment to the language on minority reports.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Berry and seconded by Mr. Ferrari, it was unanimously voted to approve the amendment by deleting the last paragraph on page 6 and replacing it with the proposed amendment as presented. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

ITEM 5: General Business

- **Transfers and other business**

There were none.

- **Liaison reports**

Ms. Berry provided an update on the SPS MSBA application with regard to Nixon and Haynes roofs. Mr. Ferrari noted that the LS Excess and Deficiency fund was certified at \$1,218,547 and that LS would seek approval to transfer \$300K into the OPEB trust fund and \$500K in the LS stabilization fund.

- **Calendar**

March 18 – deliberation/vote on warrant articles; review draft of report.

- **Approval of Minutes of February 8 and 15, 2024**

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Berry and seconded by Mr. Lynch, it was unanimously voted to approve the minutes of February 8 and 15, 2024 both as amended. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Ferrari-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sorett-Y, Ms. Berry-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Co-Chair Poch-Y. Motion passed 7-0, unanimous.

ITEM 7: Public comment

Jen Roberts, Select Board liaison, appeared before the Committee. She invited the committee to attend a public information session on the firearms bylaw on March 28th and added that in April there would be a public hearing. Committee members raised questions about the bylaw, and Ms. Roberts stated that all questions would be addressed at information sessions and the hearing. Co-Chair Joachim noted that given the noted schedule, the FinCom might not vote in advance of the printing of the Warrant.

ITEM 8: Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary