Sudbury Finance Committee Virtual Meeting Minutes December 16, 2024 7:00PM

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Finance Committee present: Co-Chair Michael Joachim, Co-Chair Michael Ferrari, Andrew Bettinelli, John Baranowsky, Andrew Sousa, Ryan Lynch and Eric Poch

Absent: Henry Sorett and Karl Fires

Also in attendance: Finance Director Victor Garofalo

ITEM 1: Opening Remarks and Member Roll Call

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

ITEM 2: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 3: Budget Pressures Meeting with Lincoln Sudbury Public Schools

Co-Chair Ferrari welcomed Superintendent/Principal Andrew Stephens, Finance Director Kirsteen Patterson, School Committee Chair Cathie Bitter and Member Maura Carty. Mr. Poch asked Superintendent Stephens to update the Committee on where LS currently is in terms of the FY25 budget.

Superintendent Stephens noted the following highlights:

- Unpredictability of substitute coverage as long-term absences were high over last two years as well as day-to-day routine absences.
- General staffing and rest of budget lines where predicted.
- Navigating two-year trend for lower student enrollment and even out in following year; lowest based on five-year average is 1,343 and next year at 1,390.
- Contract negotiations began in September.
- Out-of-district placements last year was a high of 60 and has reverted to low 50's/high 40's which is expected to stabilize; programming within district as an option to OOD provides a wide range of services to students; Student Services Director stays in regular communication for upcoming student needs from lower grades.
- There have been no pre-payments of circuit breaker funds for FY25.
- Capital planning for roof projects.

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- Actual numbers for substitutes has exceeded that budgeted by \$16K; however, long-term absences have levelled off.
- Health insurance has increased 10-15%.
- Middlesex County Retirement has assessed the district \$975K over the budgeted amount of \$950K
- Utilities running under budget of \$500K now at \$375K.

Ms. Patterson then went on to review the answers to the Committee's specific questions. Discussion ensued.

- The increase in Chapter 70 funds did not affect the assessment.
- Declining student enrollment at the high school level does not immediately justify a reduction in FTE, but a trend needs to be identified in order to assess staffing.
- Parking lot solar is locked in for nine years and subject to credits; but new roofs do not have capacity for solar as the weight would be cost prohibitive; reconstruction of roofs and not renovation is needed to designate as solar ready.

ITEM 4: Other Budget Discussion

Discuss LS Budget Pressures Meeting

Co-Chair Ferrari led a discussion following the LS presentation, including a) varying enrollment over the next two years; b) the impact of leaving guidance on the table last year resulting in a smaller guidance this year; c) Chapter 70 funds are given directly to the district as opposed to SPS; d) new initiatives; e) LS budget is full percentage point lower than SPS; f) educational philosophy of regional district as opposed to individual town district.

Municipal Finance Forum

Co-Chair Joachim reported on the overview of municipal finance at the forum.

Discussion on Privatization of Ambulance Services

Co-Chair Ferrari stated that, in Mr. Sorett's absence, the item will be tabled until the next meeting.

ITEM 5: General Business

• Transfers and other business

There were none.

• Liaison reports

The following reports were made:

Mr. Baranowsky – Permanent Building Committee

Capital Improvement Advisory Committee

Mr. Sousa – SPS School Committee

Mr. Bettinelli - CPC

Calendar

Next meeting: January 13 and 27; dates for budget hearings tbd.

• Approval of Minutes – October 28, 2024

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Poch and seconded by Mr. Lynch, it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Co-Chair Ferrari-Y, Mr. Poch-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sousa-Y and Mr. Baranowsky-Y. Motion carries 7-0, unanimous.

• Annual Report

Mr. Baranowsky is continuing to draft the report

ITEM 6: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 7: Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Baranowsky and seconded by Co-Chair Joachim, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Roll call vote: Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Co-Chair Ferrari-Y, Mr. Poch-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Sousa-Y and Mr. Baranowsky-Y. Motion carries 7-0, unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford Recording Secretary