

**dSudbury Finance Committee
Virtual Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2026
7:00PM**

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Finance Committee Present:

Andrew Sousa, Karl Fries (arrived late), Andrew Bettinelli, Henry Sorett, Ryan Lynch, Co-Chair Michael Joachim, Eric Poch (arrived late), and John Baranowsky

Absent:

Co-Chair Michael Ferrari

Also in Attendance:

Assistant Town Manager / Finance Director Victor Garofalo

ITEM 1: Opening Remarks and Member Roll Call

Co-Chair Joachim called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 PM, conducted a roll call of members, and declared that a quorum was present.

He read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer and reviewed the meeting agenda.

ITEM 2: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 3: Deliberation on Warrant Articles

Co-Chair Joachim stated that due to the absence of **Co-Chair Ferrari**, the Committee would review warrant articles but defer voting until the next meeting.

The Committee reviewed several warrant articles related to the FY27 operating and capital budgets.

ARTICLE 3: Operating Budget

The Committee reviewed the Town, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (LS), and Sudbury Public Schools (SPS) operating budgets.

Discussion highlights included:

Town Budget

- Mr. Sorett discussed the desire for more detailed line-item information in the budget book included with the warrant article to allow Town Meeting members greater ability to amend specific items.

- Members of the committee noted that the allocation of staffing positions is at the discretion of the Town Manager, and salaries or positions cannot be amended on the floor of Town Meeting.
- Maintaining the Town’s AAA bond rating was noted as important to securing favorable borrowing rates.
- Members discussed the Town’s approach to local receipts, with several noting that a more aggressive revenue estimate provided flexibility in the FY27 budget.
- Fixed costs, particularly employee benefits, continue to grow faster than revenues.

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

- Members noted that, similar to the Town budget, fixed costs are increasing faster than revenue growth.
- Debt service is decreasing due to the payoff of building-related debt.
- Enrollment projections over the next five years are expected to remain relatively flat.
- Two additional paraprofessional positions are included in the FTE count.

Sudbury Public Schools

- Increasing enrollment was noted as creating additional budget pressures, particularly with respect to teacher salaries and classroom support.
- The potential impact of prepaid Circuit Breaker funds was discussed.
- Some members expressed concerns about the budget development process within the district, though it was acknowledged that school budgeting is outside the direct purview of the Finance Committee.

ARTICLE 4: Town Manager’s Capital Budget

The Committee reviewed the Town Manager’s proposed capital budget of approximately \$1.19 million, slightly lower than the prior year’s capital budget.

Discussion highlights included:

- The capital budget represents a 2% decrease from the previous year, reflecting the current capital needs of the Town and current financial pressures.
- Members suggested improving the Capital Night review process to allow for deeper discussion of alternatives such as repair, replacement, or extending the useful life of assets.
- The Committee noted that the Town may face \$50–\$70 million in infrastructure needs over the next decade, requiring a more strategic capital planning approach.
- Some members suggested the Town consider dedicating \$5–10 million annually toward long-term infrastructure needs.
- Discussion included improving preventive maintenance practices, particularly for vehicles and equipment.

The Committee agreed to delay voting until the following meeting.

ARTICLE 27: Public Works Consolidated Articles

The Committee reviewed Public Works capital requests of \$2,170,000 to be fully funded through Free Cash.

Discussion highlights included:

- The proposed vehicles represent replacement of aging equipment, not additions to the fleet.
- Parking lot improvements for Town and SPS facilities will occur in phases over the next five years.
- Consultant services associated with culvert work relate specifically to culvert repair projects, not walkway construction.
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ARTICLE 28: Combined Facilities – Town and School Capital Improvements

The Committee reviewed capital projects funded through free cash, totaling \$1,821,000.

Discussion highlights included:

- Funding includes school safety improvements, including security upgrades, surveillance equipment, and signage.
- ADA transition and compliance projects were discussed as part of an ongoing multi-year effort.
- Members reviewed the breakdown of project phases and funding levels.

ARTICLE 29: Fire Department Breathing Apparatus

No discussion occurred.

ARTICLE 30: Lincoln-Sudbury Wastewater Facility Control Panel

No discussion occurred.

ARTICLE 31: School Classroom Instructional Equipment Replacement

Members noted that this project had been funded through the tax levy in the previous year but is proposed to be funded through free cash this year, which was described as one of several strategies to avoid a tax override.

ARTICLE 32: DPW Garage Concrete Floor Replacement

Some members raised concerns about whether alternatives to full floor replacement had been considered.

The Committee requested that Combined Facilities Director Sandra Duran provide additional information regarding potential alternatives at the next meeting.

ARTICLE 36: Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funding

Discussion highlights included:

- Portions of the Broadacres property being converted to athletic fields are not under conservation restriction.
- Some members suggested that the Housing Trust consider purchasing smaller older homes to expand the affordable housing inventory.
- Questions were raised regarding maintenance responsibility for accessible trails proposed under CPA funding.

Additional Budget Items

Transfer Station Enterprise Fund

- The Committee noted that the reliance on Retained Earnings has grown in recent years.
- Staff indicated that fee adjustments may be proposed in FY28.

Snow and Ice Deficit

- The snow and ice deficit continues to grow and will require a Free Cash Transfer at Town Meeting. Estimated projections are in excess of \$750,000

Stabilization Funds

- Additional information regarding stabilization funds will be presented at the next meeting.

Revolving Funds

- Additional information will be provided at a future meeting.

Transportation Program

- Further discussion will occur at a future meeting.

Solar Canopy Projects

- Additional information will be presented at the next meeting by staff.

Citizen Petition Articles

- Further discussion of Article 20 and related citizen petitions will occur at a future meeting.

Finance Committee Budget Report

Co-Chair Joachim asked members responsible for drafting sections of the Finance Committee Report to submit their drafts to him and Co-Chair Ferrari by the end of the week so they can be reviewed at the next meeting.

ITEM 4: Replace with wording in agenda

Follow-up Discussion of Town Budget

Mr. Garofalo reported that the snow and ice deficit continues to increase and that a budget transfer will be required

ITEM 5: General Business

Transfers and Other Business

None reported.

Liaison Reports

None reported.

Calendar

The next regular meeting is scheduled for **March 16, 2026**, with meetings continuing each Monday in March.

Approval of Minutes

No minutes were presented for approval.

ITEM 6: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 7: Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion duly made by Mr. Poch and seconded by Mr. Baranowsky, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.

Vote:

Co-Chair Joachim – Y

Mr. Sousa – Y

Mr. Poch – Y

Mr. Baranowsky – Y

Mr. Sorett – Y

Mr. Lynch – Y

Mr. Fries – Y

Mr. Bettinelli – Y

Motion carried 8-0 (unanimous).

The meeting adjourned at **9:41 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary

Reviewed and Amended by Victor Garofalo, Assistant Town Manager