

**Budget Strategies Task Force
Sudbury, Massachusetts**

July 6, 2015

Flynn Building, Silva Meeting Room (2nd Floor)

Present: Susan Berry, Chair; Chuck Woodard, Vice Chair; Maryanne Bilodeau; Radha Gargeya; Patty Mostue (until 7 pm); Ellen Winer Joachim; Anne Wilson; Bella Wong.

Absent: Fred Floru, Robert Haarde, Lucie St. George.

Others present: Mary Will, Director of Business and Finance, Sudbury Public Schools; Joan Carlton, Sudbury Finance Committee member, Adrian Davies, Sudbury Finance Committee Member.

Susan Berry, Chair, called the Task Force meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

Item 1: General Business

Ellen Winer Joachim will take minutes for this meeting.

The Task Force discussed future meeting dates and set two meetings:

August 4 at 6 pm

September 1 at 6 pm.

There are no minutes to approve.

Item 2: Cost Centers' Historical Data

The Task Force discussed the historical data contained in the charts created by Ms. Berry and attached to these minutes. The Task Force noted the following: the charts are based on the warrants and Fin Com worksheets; the Sudbury Public Schools Out of District number on the charts is tuition only; the operating expense column is based on the number included in the following year's warrant; the percent allocation column is based solely on the three cost centers.

The Task Force discussed what other information it should gather. There was a lengthy discussion about class size information including whether average class sizes are helpful, what classes should be included in the average (core classes vs. all classes), and more generally the usefulness of class size data. The Task Force also discussed gathering information related to the costs of special education and would like information on the cost of in-house programs for students who but for those programs likely would be placed out of district. The Task Force also discussed what information would be relevant for the Town side and agreed that it would be helpful to gather demographics – the total number of households, the number of households with children, the senior population. The cost centers will also provide information about staffing changes due to services that have been contracted out or those that have been brought in. SPS and LS will check the out of district numbers on the charts and will add actual numbers for FY '15 and budgeted numbers for FY '16.

Item 3: Budget Guidance Process

The Task Force discussed the current Fin Com budget process and possible changes to that process for this year. In particular the Task Force discussed the possibility of gathering information from the three cost centers earlier in the fall. One suggestion was that the Fin Com liaisons meet with the cost centers before the Fin Com sends out its budget guidance letter to allow cost centers to share, among other things, planned improvements for the following year. Another suggestion was for cost centers to estimate what it would cost for the same staff with FY '17 increases. The Task Force then discussed whether the current Fin Com questions in the budget guidance letter are the most meaningful. Task Force members will look at the questions and bring comments to the next meeting, including any additional questions that would be helpful. There was a lengthy discussion about the timing of the budget process and whether or not the cost centers could provide answers to the Fin Com questions earlier.

Item 4: Cost Sharing Possibilities

This will be a standing agenda item to allow the Task Force to discuss any cost sharing possibilities that may arise.

Item 5: Topics for Next Meeting

The Task Force discussed whether it would be helpful to research what other towns do in terms of allocations, are they the same year after year and, if not, what is the process for deciding on the allocation each year. There was consensus that it would be important to look at other communities with regional schools such as Lincoln and Concord. For the next meeting, members will think about questions to ask other communities and which communities to include.

Item 6: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Item 7: Adjourn

Maryanne Bilodeau moved to adjourn the meeting. Anne Wilson seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.