

**Town of Sudbury
Budget Strategy Task Force
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday, August 4, 2015**

The Town of Sudbury's Budget Strategy Task Force (BSTF) meeting was held in the Flynn Building and was called to order at 6:09 PM by Chairman Susan Berry.

BSTF Attendance

- Present: Chuck Woodard, Anne Wilson, Maryanne Bilodeau, Susan Berry, Fred Floru, Bella Wong, Ellen Joachim, arrived later Radha Gargeya
- Absent: Bob Haarde, Patricia Mostue, Lucie St. George

Item 1: General Business

Selection of Clerk

Fred Floru was selected to take minutes

Meeting Schedule

Need to schedule meetings beyond September 1st: Discussion of whether to try some early morning meetings. One possibility is to meet early mornings 7:30am – 9:00am. Susan will try a Survey Monkey.

Minutes discussion and approval

None to discuss. It is recommended to keep "Tracking Changes" when making modifications to minutes.

Item 4: Feedback from Committees: BoS, FinCom, SPS and LS

Susan Berry asked if there is any feedback from the BoS, SPS or LS to the BSTF. Bella Wong indicated that LSRHS had discussed the questions in the Finance Committee guidance letter to cost centers and that LSRHS agrees with the question set.

Susan Berry mentioned that the Finance committee agreed that it would be a good idea for the liaisons to meet with their committee assignments in early October. FinCom and BSTF may discuss further what questions to ask at these earlier meetings. FinCom is still looking at the guidance process. The FinCom spreadsheet will be reviewed to see if there is data to include that the committee is not getting at the moment or if there is data that we are getting but are not finding particularly helpful.

Item 3: Budget Guidance Process

Guidance Questions

Susan Berry asks if all the questions are relevant.

Chuck Woodard: Believed a question about the OOD costs should be part of the questions.

Bella Wong and Anne Wilson: Agreed it's important for the Finance Committee to get grant information and how this may change from year to year.

Susan Berry's take away was that FinCom may need more information about grants, not just amounts but also how a cost center is depending on the grants. Chuck Woodard suggested maybe need more information on fewer grants – raise the level of the grants asking to be reported on.

Ellen Joachim: Wondered if FinCom wants to get information about new initiatives that cost center wants to take.

Susan Berry noted that perhaps estimates on OOD costs and possible new initiatives should be discussed in the early October meetings.

Chuck Woodard: The answers to the questions came in December.

Radha Gargeya: May be able to give some info on the cost for the coming year; the picture on the review may not be clearer until later.

Fred Floru: Brought up question 9 [about salaries over \$100,000] still relevant? Chuck W answers that it needs to be on the warrant, people want to know. Susan B said that the question may need to be rewritten, instead of "highly paid" perhaps "over a certain \$TBD amount.

Item 2: Cost Centers Historical Data

Discussion of Cost Center Historical Data

The Chair checked that everyone had the SPS update handed out at the meeting. OOD tuition and transportation costs were discussed by Fred Floru, Chuck Woodard and Bella Wong. Bella will check if OOD tuition numbers shown in the LSRHS numbers are net of a Federal grant or gross.

Susan Berry: Asked if the gross tuition cost in the SPS numbers includes prepayments. Mary said the cost included only the actual tuition cost for the current year.

Fred Floru: the percentage of OOD cost is getting higher and higher. Bella Wong responds that the OOD cost is a concern and that is why LS asked the Walker Partnership to do an evaluation of the LS programs last year. There are five programs in the district in place to help keep students in the district. The newest program is the one additional program suggested by the Walker Report. The report also confirmed that the programs in the district are the appropriate ones to have in-house. The transport cost has been reduced a bit due through better management.

Susan Berry asks Maryanne Bilodeau to report back on the number of households and number of households with children. Data in FY10 is from federal census. Numbers from FY15 are from the Town census. It is noted that some people do not respond to town census and therefore the federal census is more reliable. It is approximated that 52% of the households have children.

Susan Berry asked about class sizes at LSRHS. SPS reports an average class size of 24 for middle school. Bella Wong notes that the guideline of 22 per class it's "nice" to have. The national guideline is no more than 24 due to safety issues in the labs. Anne Wilson is hesitant to give a number because it varies from class to class needs. Bella Wong says that some classes

need to have a low number of students due to disabilities. Fred Floru asks if the class size discussion is relevant to this committee. Radha Gargeya responds that teacher load may affect the quality of teaching and learning. Anne Wilson notes that there is a balance between the budget, FTE and class size. Ellen Joachim mentions that there is no study which correlates class size and education quality. Fred Floru agrees. Bella Wong says that the quality of instruction is the most important factor-. However the stress level is higher in large classes.

Susan Berry and Fred Floru ask the cost centers how many individuals are eligible for benefits vs. FTE number. Maryanne Bilodeau will provide this information in the insurance sheet.

Allocation Process

Which towns should be interviewed about how they determine allocations between cost centers?

Radha Gargeya proposes to start with other regional high schools such as Dover-Sherborn, Acton-Boxborough, Concord-Carlisle, Northboro-Southboro, Groton-Dunstable, Hamilton-Wenham.

Susan Berry asks if the teachers have the same contract in each town. Do they have one budget for the school and a separate one for the Town? It's noted that these questions may be available on the respective town website.

Radha Gargeya and Ellen Joachim want to know if the student enrollment shows a pattern shifting from the K8 to high school and therefore the resources are allocated as such?

Chuck Woodard would like to know how they handle the OOD costs.

Susan Berry would like to know if their cost centers get the same percentage increase each year. If not, how are the allocations decided?

Chuck Woodard wants to add to the list of questions if they have a different budget for K8 and high school or just a K12 budget?

Maryanne Bilodeau would like to know the benefits costs and in whose budget is charged. Also, she recommends that all these questions should go the Finance Director(s).

Fred Floru would like to know if these towns prefer to keep the K8 education (and budget) local and keep just the high school regional. Any thoughts of expanding the regional high school agreement to K8?

Susan Berry will put together the questions we want asked and will sent them to the committee. The following people volunteered to interview the towns asking these questions:

Chuck Woodard: Acton – Boxborough

Anne Wilson: Dover – Sherborn

Maryanne Bilodeau: Northborough – Southborough

Radha Gargeya: Groton – Dunstable

Ellen Joachim: Hamilton – Wenham

Bella Wong: Concord - Carlisle

Item 5: Topics for Next Meeting

Brainstorm about OOD costs

Feedback from other towns

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Other ways to allocate the budget
Discuss results of the survey

Item 6: Public Comments

None.

Item 7: Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: Radha Gargeya

Second: Bella Wong

The decision to adjourn at 7:40pm is unanimous.