

## **Budget Strategies Task Force Minutes of the October 29, 2015 meeting**

Attending: Maryanne Bilodeau, Anne Wilson, Susan Berry, Radha Gargeya, Lucie St. George, and Chuck Woodard

Chair Susan Berry called the meeting to order at 6:46PM.

Meeting schedule: November meeting may be rescheduled to assure a quorum. Susan will follow up.

Minutes: Minutes for the meeting of September 16 were approved by unanimous consent.

Budget Guidance Letter: Susan reviewed the annual Budget Guidance Letter sent out by the FinCom on October 26. A copy is attached to these minutes. She made the following comments on the letter:

- If the total budget increase of the three cost centers combined exceeds the expected no override growth level of 2.6% each cost center will be asked to spell out with specifics how they would cut their budget back to 2.6% growth.
- A 2.6% budget increase would not necessarily be allocated in the historical proportions of 50/25/25.
- Cost centers still negotiating labor contracts should assume a 0.1% COLA. This will avoid suggesting an amount while providing a number that can be used via multiplication to analyze the budget impact of various COLA levels.
- Reviewed the line items in the new addition to the Budget Guidance Letter- the budget growth reconciliation worksheet.
- In response to a question from Chuck Woodard, confirmed that there is no guarantee that any cost center will be allocated budget growth sufficient to cover the cost of contractual compensation increases. If the allocated budget growth were to be less than contractual compensation increases there would likely be layoffs.

Budget Hearing Schedule: Susan reported on the FinCom's current thinking regarding the schedule for FY17:

- Move the schedule up two weeks from last year to allow time after the hearings to discuss the budget requests and agree on recommendations to the Town regarding the amount and allocation of a budget increase.
- Plan on at least two meetings of the BSTF, with the FinCom in attendance, to: 1) discuss the specific budget requests of the three cost centers as outlined in the budget growth reconciliation worksheet, and 2) try to agree on which should be funded and to what extent.
- Consider using a third party facilitator to moderate the joint FinCom-BSTF meeting.

Susan asked all of the members of the BSTF to get back to her on their availability for meetings on Feb 3 or Feb 4 and Feb 10 or Feb 11.

Cost Sharing Possibilities: Susan noted that both schools are seeking a permanent finance director and asked whether they might share one. She added that both schools have mentioned the need for a data analyst and wondered if this position might also be shared.

Radha noted that the Tri School Forum agenda included a discussion of cost sharing among LS, SPS, and the Lincoln Public Schools.

Public Comment:

Adrian Davies suggested considering the Town Moderator as facilitator for the joint FinCom-BSTF meeting.

Elena Kleifges said, in response to the cost sharing suggestions, that with a requirement to report to both Sudbury and Lincoln it would be difficult for an LS finance director to also take on the SPS function.

Mary Will noted that a single finance director for both schools was considered after Judy Belliveau left LS. The conclusion was that the savings would be minimal because of the need for junior staff to support the single finance director.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:30.