

Budget Strategies Task Force
BSTF Minutes
September 23, 2016

Present: Anne Wilson, Melissa Rodrigues, Pat Brown, Radha Gargeya, Bella Wong, Susan Berry, Joan Carlton, Chuck Woodard, Elena Kleifges, Maryanne Bilodeau

Absent: Patricia Mostue, Richard Tinsley, Lucie St. George

Also present: Susan Rothermich (SPS Director of Business and Finance), Sherry Kersey (LS Director of Finance and Operations)

Susan Berry, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:02 am.

Item 1. General Business:

Selection of Clerk

Susan Berry asked if anyone volunteer to be the Clerk for this meeting. Elena Kleifges said she would Clerk and take the minutes.

Meeting Schedule

Susan B. reported that the meetings have been set for October 21 and December 2 but a November date still needs to be scheduled. She will send out a Doodle Poll requesting available dates.

Approve Minutes

Radha Gargeya moved to approve the minutes from the 8/25/16 BSTF meeting as amended (with the corrected typos). The motion was seconded by Pat Brown. All were in favor of the motion with the exception of Chuck Woodard who abstained. The minutes were approved.

Financial Calendar Updates

Susan reported the Fincom wants to do two budget meetings and a joint budget meeting. She is hoping draft budgets can be made public before the end of December to present to Fincom and final version for final budget meeting in February.

Ann Wilson reported that SPS will have the Budget Public Hearing December 7.

Item 2. Cost Center Updates

Susan asked that cost centers pass along any information that may have changed since last meeting regarding budget.

Anne Wilson reported that SPS has added FTEs for student needs.

Bella Wong noted the LS out-of-district costs are over budget. She also reported that insurance managers are indicating a possible 12% increase, higher than in the past.

Melissa Rodrigues reported that there is a new DPW director who starts October 17. His name is Dan Nason and he is from Northboro.

Melissa Rodrigues noted that budget issues for FY'17 included consulting needed until Sudbury Station is finished. For FY18 she is waiting for OPEB information which should be available at the end of September.

Item 3. Preliminary Budget Reconciliation Sheet

Susan B. said Fincom read through the preliminary budget reconciliation sheets mainly looking at increase for COLAs, Step and Lanes and OPEB costs. Overall, the collective budget currently is up 3.2% looking at just those three things. The Liaisons should be getting in touch with cost centers regarding assumptions which should all be the same to help with guidance letter. The Fincom is continuing to discuss guidance letter process.

Susan Berry reminded everyone that the updates to the FinCom spreadsheet with 5-year comparative data is due October 6, with the FY16 actuals and any corrections to FY17 appropriations.

Pat Brown reported that currently the SPS administration is housed at the Fairbank Center and the costs are absorbed by the Town. Space occupancy should be attributed to the cost center in some way and should be worked into the budget. The cost center should share cost of the building. Susan B. noted that Fairbank is currently talking about sharing of costs.

Item 4. Override Process Clarification

Susan Berry commented on the Override Process Clarification that Melissa Rodrigues provided. It was made clear that the Town Meeting votes on a final budget or budgets one of which may include the need for an override but that the Board of Selectmen decide if an override will be on placed on the ballot for a vote by the Town.

The Selectmen can call a special election but must submit the ballot questions to the Town Clerk no later than 35 days prior to the date of the election. Chuck Woodard asked if the 35 days noted in the process clarification meant calendar days or business days. Melissa noted that it just said 35 days, so she assumed it was calendar days. If an override is going to be on the ballot at the time of Town Elections, final recommendations on an override budget would need to be made by Fincom prior to Feb. 20, the date by which the ballot question would need to be received by the Town Clerk. Information should be introduced before Town Meeting. Susan noted that if an override budget is proposed, that Fincom will have to make a recommendation on both an override and non-override budget.

Radha Gargeya commented on sequence between election and Town Meeting. If the question for the override budget is on the ballot before Town Meeting, the community needs to be educated by way of town forum etc to present information to people. This needs to be widely publicized so when people go to the ballot they understand what they are voting for. Chuck Woodard agreed and talked about prior experiences with providing information to the public

Item 5. Capital Funding Process

Susan Berry noted that there needs to be further discussion of increase of busing cost due to longer day at Curtis. SPS and LSRHS are currently showing a combined \$700K increase in transportation costs. Anne Wilson reported that in addition to decoupling of buses due to new schedule, there was also a request for new buses and seat belts in the buses. Currently they are looking at a one year contract with the current bus company without the addition of new buses and seat belts. Susan asked Anne if the committee could discuss not extending the school day until 2019 because they are currently looking into modifying start times for Curtis and

some of the elementary schools and this could have an effect on the extended day release time.

Chuck Woodard asked Anne if increase in budget is due to labor for extended day or buses for extended day. Anne reported that it would be difficult to parse out what part of COLA increase is due to extended day. Chuck wants to know what it costs to extend the day.

Bella Wong explained that LS is also looking at decoupling of buses for reasons that could include increased ridership and traffic patterns.

Susan Berry put together a draft of the Capital Funding Process as it is at the moment. The members of the Task Force read through the draft and offered comments. Melissa Rodrigues and Chuck Woodard offered some clarifications of the procedures. Susan will confirm with CIAC and CPC deadline dates and will revise the document with corrections and clarifications.

Item 6. Cost Sharing/Savings - Rolling Stock Review Update

Jim Kelly (Town Facilities Director) and Kevin Rossley (LS Director of Facilities) have had some discussion already informally but need to meet formally to discuss further.

Item 7. Suggestions for Agenda Topics

OPEB information will be discussed at the next meeting when the reports have been provided. Susan reported that Fincom will discuss recommendations based on the new numbers.

Pat Brown asked about the cost of Minuteman. Melissa Rodrigues will be getting information from Minuteman School Committee. Regarding transportation, the Town will be looking into transportation to be included in the Town budget.

Item 8. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Pat Brown moved to adjourn the meeting. Radha Gargeya seconded the motion. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:32 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Elena Kleifges