

Budget Strategies Task Force (BSTF)
Minutes, January 13, 2017

Members Present: Lucie St. George, Anne Wilson, Melissa Rodrigues, Radha Gargeya, Bella Wong, Susan Berry, Elena Kleifges, Joan Carlton, Chuck Woodard, Richard Tinsley

Also Present: Sherry Kersey (LS Director of Finance and Operations)

Susan Berry, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:06 am.

Item 1 - General Business:

Joan Carlton volunteered to take minutes for this meeting.

The minutes of the December 2, 2016 meeting were reviewed and amended. Chuck Woodard amended page 4 paragraph 3 from “five critical pages” to “eleven critical pages”. Elena Kleifges made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Lucie St. George 2nd the motion. The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.

Item 2 - Discussion of Budget Hearings, Budget Allocations and Preparation for Joint Meeting with Finance Committee.

Susan Berry explained that Melissa Rodrigues, Anne Wilson and Bella Wong have all agreed to support the balanced (3.58%) budget as the no override budget.

Melissa Rodrigues explained that she is considering an approximately \$493,000 override for the town budget which would fund four additional firemen and one additional policeman.

Anne Wilson explained that she and the school committee are still working on the SPS override budget. The current override amount is \$2,025,233.

Bella Wong explained that LS has no override request at this time but the LS school committee has yet to vote on the budget. They are still working to close a \$221,000 gap. They are considering using funds from LS’s E&D fund to close the gap.

Bella’s comments were followed by some discussion on whether LS should use money in the E&D fund to close an operating budget gap.

- Radha Gargeya said the he would like guidance on what percent of the E&D fund could be used to close an operating budget gap.
- Chuck Woodard stated that if LS uses E&D funds to close an operating budget gap than this should be explained as part of the ATM Budget Presentation making it clear that if E&D funds had not been used then LS would have also needed an override.
- Richard Tinsley questioned why the money in the E&D fund is not returned to the towns.

Melissa explained that the Town, SPS and LS worked as a team to develop the balanced (3.58%) budget. Anne Wilson agreed that it was very much a team effort.

The Town and SPS's balanced budgets increased by 3.58%. The LS balanced budget increased by 3.34% but with a 3.58% increase in Sudbury's assessment for Sudbury's portion of the LS budget, thus allowing for some increase in the assessment.

Radha Gargeya explained to the committee the process by which Sudbury's and Lincoln's assessment for the LS budget is determined. He explained that a certain percent is determined by a formula set by the state and the remaining percent is determined by a formula in the LS agreement that is based on the number of students attending LS from each town.

Susan Berry stated that at the next FinCom meeting the members would work towards getting agreement on both the amount and the allocation for the non-override budget. Melissa Rodrigues, Bella Wong and Anne Wilson all felt that it was very important to get the non-override budgets resolved before moving on to potential override budgets.

- Lucie St. George stated that she didn't think it was right that the FinCom could determine the allocation for the non-override budget.
- Susan Berry explained that for many past years the allocation was equal for the cost centers. With the SPS enrollment going down and while trying to

be more responsive to the needs of the cost centers, the FinCom has not gone with strictly equal allocations for the last two budget cycles.

- Chuck Woodard explained that the specifics of the allocation have always been the responsibility of FinCom for the non-override budget that they present at the ATM.
- Melissa Rodrigues explained that the Town, the Board of Selectman, or other cost centers can present competing budgets at the ATM.

Item 3: Future Meetings

Susan Berry explained that if the FinCom at their January 17th meeting doesn't agree with the amount and the allocation of the balance (3.58%) budget as proposed by the Town, SPS and LS, then this should be the primary agenda item for the Combined FinCom/BSTF meeting scheduled for January 19th. She also thought that since the 1st combined FinCom/BSTF would likely be focused on the non-override budget, an earlier time may be needed for the 2nd combined FinCom/BSTF. It was agreed that Susan would send an email to the BSTF members after the January 17th FinCom meeting explaining the results. Based on these results, she would plan the next meeting.

Susan requested that the cost centers each submit their three reconciliation budgets side-by-side on the same page before the January 19th meeting.

Richard Tinsley asked for guidance on what would be a sustainable growth rate for the SPS budget.

Chuck Woodard commented that he thought it was amazing that the three cost centers came together to come up with the balanced non-override budget.

Item 4: Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Item 5: Adjournment

Anne Wilson moved and Melissa Rodrigues seconded the motion that the January 13th Budget Strategies Task Force meeting adjourn at 9:21 AM.

The motion carried. The vote was unanimous.