

**Finance Committee ~Minutes of Meeting  
Tuesday, March 11, 2003  
Curtis Middle School Library – 7:30pm**

**Present:** Co-Chairs Michael Grosberg & Tracy Billig, Marty Ragonas, John Nikula, Bob Hurstak, Sheila Stewart, Bob Jacobson, Don Hutchinson. Also present: Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary, and CPA Committee members: Mark Kablack, Sigrid Pickering, and Chris Morely.

**Opening remarks from Co-Chairs:**

Co-chair Michael Grosberg opened the meeting at 7:44pm. He stated he did not have much to say, except he would like to know if Bob Hurstak had made a decision about returning for another term on the Finance Committee. Bob Hurstak informed the committee that he is not planning on returning after his term expires in April. At this time, he feels it is the right decision for himself and the committee. He believes it is time to get someone new with some different views onto the committee.

**Item 1: Approve Minutes from 2/6 and 2/11 meeting:**

Co-Chair Michael Grosberg asked all members to review the minutes from the February 6<sup>th</sup> and February 11<sup>th</sup> meetings and state any concerns they might have.

**VOTED: Move to approve the minutes from the February 6 & 11, 2003 meetings. Motion made by Don Hutchinson and second by John Nikula. On motion, vote carries 8 in favor and 0 opposed.**

**Item 2: Review / Vote on petition articles for Town Meeting:**

**Real Estate Exemptions:**

Kerry Speidel, Finance Director, discussed the Real Estate Exemptions petition that has been submitted by Ralph Taylor. The committee was informed that a similar article in regards to this petition was presented at last years Annual Town Meeting. This year's petition came in very late and is difficult to analyze at this time of year, but would be worth while to look at over the summer. Kerry Speidel informed the committee that she and the Town Assessor have concerns with this article.

The committee was presented with a memo prepared by Assessor Maureen Hafner which shows the estimated cost of this program, and a brochure stating the requirements for the different exemptions available to Sudbury residents. Kerry Speidel reminded the committee that these are not exact figures. They are the most accurate figures that were able to be obtained in such a short period of time.

Co-Chair Tracy Billig asked if this would be for every year. Kerry Speidel informed her they would be permanent figures.

Kerry Speidel point out the fact that the petition is not taking income into considerations. There would be no income requirements.

Bob Hurstak informed the committee that this issue was discussed 5 to 6 years ago. Demographics have changed, and seniors are being replaced. He believes seniors need to be taken into consideration.

John Nikula asked if any other towns had something similar to the petition being presented. Kerry Speidel informed him not to her knowledge.

Bob Jacobson stated he would approve an article serving this purpose, but on a much smaller scale. He stated that the committee needs to find out from the legislature if anything like would get approved.

Sheila Stewart asked what percentage of seniors receive exemptions. Kerry Speidel informed her she did not know, and more research would need to be completed.

Tracy Billig stated that this is something worth considering, and should be looked into after Town Meeting. She believes this should be put onto the May agenda for the Finance Committee.

Don Hutchinson reminded the committee that the parameters tend to be high in this type of petition, and need to be looked at very precisely.

**VOTED: Move to “Not Recommend” at Town Meeting. Motion made by John Nikula and second by Bob Jacobson. On motion, vote carries 8 in favor and 0 opposed.**

**Permits /Zone 2 of Town Water Resource Protection:**

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that there was no financial impacts involved with this petition. She has asked the Planning Board and Conservation if they had any other information to pass on, and nothing was presented. She recommended that the committee take no position.

**VOTED: Move to “Take No Position” at Town Meeting. Motion made by Bob Jacobson and second by Don Hutchinson. On motion, vote carries 8 in favor and 0 opposed.**

**Transfer of land to Conservation Commission:**

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that this petition is in opposition of the land transfer to the Housing Authority. This petition is being submitted by the property owners who abut the land, and they are asking that the land be transferred to the Conservation Commission.

The committee was informed that the Park & Rec. Commission is considering this, and were having a meeting tonight (March 11, 2003) to discuss this topic. The Commission does not want to have the land taken out of their jurisdiction. Right now, the commission does not feel that they have enough information to make a decision and would basically like to have the land frozen at this time so that know one may use it. There would need to be a 2/3 vote from the Park & Rec. to have this land transferred.

**VOTED: Move to “Take No Position” at Town Meeting. Motion made by John Nikula and second by Bob Hurstak. On vote, motion carries 8 in favor and 0 opposed.**

**Item 3: Review / Vote on CPA Articles:**

CPA Committee member, Mark Kablack, informed the committee the CPC have proposed and prepared their article for the Town Meeting. Their current budget does not take into consideration the money that is to be received. There would be a residue impact in year 5 of \$0.06 / \$1,000 of assessed value.

The final warrant articles are going to 31A, 31B, 31C, 32A, 32B, and 32C.

Chris Morely presented the fact that the key point of the CPA is bonding. He stated that without the ability to bond, the CPA should be eliminated. With only a 3% surcharge, enough money can not be raised to complete any project, and short term bonding can be detrimental to the Town.

Mark Kablack inform the committee that the CPC wants to keep a rainy day fund for larger purchases, and pay cash up front for the smaller ones. He stated that the money for the State match is currently still in the budget.

Sigrd Pickering stated that assuming that the CPC uses bonds, the rate can go down 1 or 2% points. The rate has to stay at 1, 2 Or 3%, and can not be changes to a fraction or a half percentage.

**VOTED: Move to "Report at Town Meeting". Motion made by John Nikula and second by Bob Jacobson. On motion, vote carries 8 in favor and 0 opposed.**

**Item 4: Review / Vote on land transfer articles for Housing Authority:**

**VOTED: Move to "Report at Town Meeting". Motion made by Bob Jacobson and second by John Nikula. On motion, vote carries 8 in favor and 0 opposed.**

**Item 5: Discussion on expectation for Town Meeting:**

Tracy Billig informed the committee that different FinCom members will voice the FinCom's positions and read motions for the articles. The Finance Committee will need to explain why they do or do not support the different articles.

Sheila Stewart informed the committee that the Town Moderator will want to know before the meeting starts, who will be making the presentations for the Finance Committee.

Michael Grosberg informed the committee that they need to listen at Town meeting, because some valid points can be made and we need to stay open-minded.

**Item 6: Discussion on FinCom report to Town Meeting:**

Michael Grosberg informed the committee that he believed it was a good group effort on getting the report together. He stated that there were recommended changes presented by the Town Manager to him and Tracy Billig to be made to the report, but they declined on making the changes.

**Item 7: Formal thanks to outgoing members of the FinCom:**

On behalf of the other FinCom members, Michael Grosberg extended thanks to out going FinCom members Bob Hurstak and Don Hutchinson.

Michael Grosberg stated that one of Don Hutchinson's main objectives was to educate the citizens of Sudbury, and this became a reality this year.

Michael Grosberg thanked Bob Hurstak for his leadership and informed him that whoever succeeds him will have big shoes to fill". Bob has been a strong presence for the Finance Committee that past couple of years.

John Nikula informed the committee that he would be staying on for another 3 years.

Kerry Speidel reminded Don Hutchinson and Bob Hurstak that they were still members of the Finance Committee until the end of Town Meeting.

**Item 8: Review Monthly Financial Statements:**

Michael Grosberg stated that Kerry Speidel would be bring forward any large changes in the statements. She informed the committee that there was nothing out of the ordinary. Expenses are at 52.2% through January. The largest expense currently is salaries. As of January, the Building Department has already

brought in 100% of their estimated revenue. The Snow & Ice Budget is over by roughly \$100,000, and is expected to have a \$200,000 deficit by the end of the fiscal year.

**Other Business:**

Kerry Speidel informed the committee that she has received confirmation that the Town will receive a Triple A bond rating. This is based on the financial stable outlook for the Town. The Town will be selling bonds on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2003. The Town is currently waiting for the official report.

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:24pm.**