

Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday – December 19, 2005
Fairbanks Senior Center – 7:30pm

Present: Co-Chairs Bob Jacobson & Marty Ragonas, Tracy Billig, Bill Kneeland, Larry Rowe, Sheila Stewart, and Debbie Zurka. Also present: Suzanne Petersen, Finance Director, and Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary.

Item 1: Opening Remarks:

The meeting was opened at 7:40pm.

Item 2: Approve Minutes:

Bob Jacobson asked the committee if they have any comments on the minutes submitted for the Nov. 14th meeting. Marty Ragonas asked that “Debbie Zurka, who has banking experience, offered her help” to the end of the first paragraph in Item 4. Tracy Billig stated that in Item 6, the SPS meeting time was 7:30am, and not 7:30pm as listed.

VOTED: On motion, to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2005 meeting with the understanding all stated changes will be made. Motion made by Bill Kneeland, and seconded by Larry Rowe. On vote, motion carries 7 in support, 0 opposed, and 2 absent (Grosberg, Verni).

Item 3: Transfer Requests:

#06-03 Salary Contingency: Request #06-03 is in the amount of \$6,815.96 and is requested by the Information System Department. These funds will be used to cover the shortfall in the technology assistant’s salary line. The position was reclassified to a higher grade, and the work week was amended to 40 hours per week from 35 hours.

VOTED: On Motion, to approve the Salary Contingency Request (#06-03) in the amount of \$6,815.96. Motion made by Larry Rowe and seconded by Bill Kneeland. On vote, motion carries 7 in support, 0 opposed, and 2 absent (Grosberg, Verni).

#06-04 Reserve Fund Transfer: Request #06-04 is in the amount of \$8,346.00. These funds will be transferred to the Assessed Tuition line, to cover the tuition for a high school student who chose to attend Norfolk County Agricultural School. The amount is to cover the first semester. Sue Petersen reminded the committee that this is for the tuition only, and that the SPS paid the transportation cost upfront, with the understanding that they will receive the money back.

VOTED: On motion, to approve the reserve fund transfer (#06-04) in the amount of \$8,346.00. Motion made by Larry Rowe, and seconded by Bill Kneeland. On vote, motion carries 7 in support, 0 opposed, and 2 absent (Grosberg, Verni).

Item 4: Discussion of Special Ed by L-S and SPS:

SPS Superintendent, John Brackett, explained to the committee that one presentation has been prepared for both schools. The Special Education Directors (Deborah Dixon, SPS, and Joanne Delaney, L-S) were introduced to the committee. The presentation was made by Deborah Dixon.

Deborah Dixson gave a background of the Federal & State laws relating to Special Education. IDEA-2004 is the Federal Law and Chapter 766 is the Massachusetts's State Law. Whichever law has the higher standard is the one that the school departments are required to adhere to. Some other laws relating to Special Education are ADA, Chapter 688 of the Acts of 1983, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Special Education was explained to be a specifically designed instruction to meet the unique needs of an eligible student, and/or related services necessary to access and maintain progress within the general curriculum.

A student is eligible for Special Ed. if the student has 1 or more disabilities, not making effective progress in school, lack of effective progress is caused by the disability, or if they require Special Ed. in order to make effective progress. Bob Jacobson asked who decided if the student is making effective progress. He was informed that a team, consisting of the parents, classroom teacher, and Special Ed. teacher. They make sure that the student is making academic progress in the required curriculum. The student has to be progressing, but does not need to be at grade level.

The school departments are required to educate the students from the age of 3 to 22, or until they graduate; whichever comes first. Marty Ragonis asked who set the age limit of 3 to 22. Deborah Dixson said she was not sure, but it has been that way for the past 20 or 30 years.

Bob Jacobson stated he believes that there is a perception that needs to be addressed by the school committees and administration. The perception is that budgetary requirements for Special Education are crowding out the schools' ability to provide funding for regular education classes. He has heard from parents complaining about regular class sizes increasing and partially blaming Special Education funding requirements as the cause. Jack Ryan argued that this topic should not be brought up at the budget hearings because it could pit the parents of regular education students against the parents of Special Ed. students and the real cause of the problem are the state unfunded mandates. Deborah Dixson reminded everyone that the increased number of students in the regular class sizes do affect most of the Special Education students as well since many participate in both the Special Ed. classes and the regular classrooms.

Item 5: Liaison Updates:

Tracey Billig stated that it is looking bleak for a non-override budget for SPS. Class sizes will most likely increase, and she believes John Brackett will recommend a 6% increase.

Bill Kneeland stated that if SPS is looking bleak, than LSRHS is looking even bleaker. Their target budget is 8%. They had to vote on the highest budget. Their issue will be PR, because they are going to have to explain this budget to the public. He stated that they will be having another meeting before their budget is presented.

Bob Jacobson stated the LS building committee had settled the major lawsuit.

Sheila Stewart stated that \$320,000 that was never expended by the Sudbury Housing Authority from 3 Town Meetings ago has been returned. One project that might have lots of questions this year is the \$960,000 being asked for the fields and track at the high school by the CPC. This project will be considered recreational, since the Town will have use of the track and fields. Maureen Valente stated that this could be a beneficial project for the Town, since the Town will be able to use the fields on nights and weekends. It will also save the Town from having to go out and purchase land.

Item 6: Other Business:

Suzanne Petersen stated that the Capital Improvement has submitted a total request of \$332,000. Some of their projects are to: complete the replacement of the boiler at the Fairbank building, update the HR/Personnel (Munis) system, purchase a new postage meter, purchase codes and permits software, purchase tax collection software, repair the pool's gutters, and replace 4 DPW vehicles.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:37pm.