

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday – January 27, 2004
LSRHS Conference Room – 7:30pm**

Present: Co-Chair Bob Jacobson & Marty Ragonas, Bill Kneeland Rowe, Sheila Stewart, John Nikula, Larry Rowe.

Also Present: Robin Porcella, Recording Secretary, Maureen Valente, Town Manager, Selectmen John Drobinski & Larry O’Brien, Lincoln FinCom members: Pat Phillips, Susan Brooks, Alvin Schmertzler, & Paul Griese, LSRSH School Committee members: Eric Harris, Jack Ryan, Laurie Wishner, Eileen Glovsky, Mark Collins, and Renel Fredriksen, Pauline Paste, LSRHS Business Director, and SPS School Committee members.

Item 1: Opening remarks:

The meeting was opened at 7:40pm by Eric Harris, chair of the LSRHS school committee. He introduced Jack Ryan of the LSRHS school committee who would be making the presentation. Jack Ryan informed everyone that tonight’s presentation is to drive home the point that the situation at the high school is very serious. He wants to paint a picture for every one of what the picture looks likes with the slide show. He informed everyone that the new building is not the driving source of the problems. If there is no override in Sudbury, approximately \$732,000 to \$845,000 would need to be cut from the budget. Since 1995, the school has seen an increase in the student population, but they are losing faculty members. The school can not continue this trend, and be expected to provide a good & adequate education.

Comparative Data: Per Pupil cost for FY02 & FY04 equal exact spending amounts. For FY05 & FY06, the figures do not include and pension or benefits figures.

	FY02	FY04	FY05	FY06
Enrollment	1,377	1,418	1,503	1,567
FTE	136.2	133.2	132.5	120.5
Per Pupil	\$9,877	\$9,613	\$8,790	\$8,528

No Override Estimate @ minus 12.0 FTE

		Target	Current	Estimate
	FY02	FY04	FY05	FY06
Class Size	21	23	24	28
Teacher Load	80	88	94	118
Counselors	191	205	218	245
%classes = +/30	1%	2.1%	3%	23.8%

Minus 12.0 FTE (expected cuts):

- Loss of a foreign language
- Loss of science electives
- Reduced course load for students
- Reduce double enrollment opportunities
- More generic courses
- Contract issues (counselors are already over load stated in the current contract)
- Additional Cuts: 5 support staff positions, & close one of the house offices

The Lincoln Finance Committee is looking at a potential \$300,000 override, and this does not include funds needed for LSRHS. \$118,000 would be for the elementary & middle schools, \$150,000 for the Town, and \$40,000 for the library. If they needed to include the 11% increase for the high school, they would be looking at an override of approximately \$600,000.

Bob Jacobson stated that he believes all the Finance Committee members are looking at the override budgets. He believes that schools are short on funds, but reminded everyone that the Town is lagging further behind.

John Drobinski reinforced the point that the Town is hurting, but their goal is to be equitable to each of the cost centers. He believes an override amount over \$3 million, will not be passable at Town Meeting. He believes they need to present an amount that has the possibility of passing; otherwise, everything will be in disarray. He asked the cost centers to think about what will happen in the following fiscal year. Just because we have an override for FY06, does not mean FY07 will be any better.

Jack Ryan stated the he believes any amount will pass, if the reasons are clearly explained to the voters. He believes the voters will vote on what makes sense to them.

Larry O'Brien stated people are constantly asking what amount is going to be presented for as the override amount. He asked people in the meeting to tell him what amount they thought will be passable at Town meeting. The only dollar figure given was by Mark Collins, and he gave an amount of \$3.8 million (operating & capital).

In closing, John Drobinski reminded everyone that they need to work together, and sell the override collectively. If not passed, this could be devastating to all. Eric Harris stated he understands that this is a hard decision, and he appreciates all of the effort that everyone is putting into this budget process. He reminded everyone that the high school will be a different place without an override.

Item 3: Senior Citizen Residential Exemption

Ralph Tyler made a brief presentation on the Senior Citizen Residential Exemption Article that he has proposed for Town Meeting. Mr. Tyler thanked the committee for giving him the opportunity to present this information. He provided the committee with a copy of the article, a copy of the Property Tax Equity Review Committee Report, and a parameter model of the proposed exemption.

Mr. Tyler stated the both Cambridge & Somerville offer exemptions if you own your property. He believes the State will see this as a creative article, and that it might set a precedence. He thanked Maureen Hafner, Director of Assessing, for helping him with the spreadsheet.

The seniors would need to apply for the exemption by September 30, and there would be no recourse if they missed the deadline. There is a 60 year old age requirement, but there are no income guidelines that need to be met. The senior has to own the property and Sudbury must be their primary residence.

Mr. Tyler believes this article might help get the override that the Town is looking for passed. By supporting this article it would show that The Town is showing an interest in helping the seniors. He stated he put this article together at the last minute since nothing else was proposed to help the seniors of Sudbury. He believes it might not be the best option, but at least it is something that will help some of the citizens of Sudbury. Bob Jacobson stated that he appreciates Mr. Tyler's effort in keeping this issue alive in the Town. He wants Mr. Tyler to realize that everyone knows that rising taxes and keeping seniors in Sudbury are both issues the Town is facing.

Item 4: Other Business:

The Committee was asked to vote whether or not to allow the Highway Department to deficit spend their Snow & Ice Account.

VOTED: Motion made by John Nikula and seconded by Bill Kneeland to approve the deficit spending of the Highway Snow & Ice Account. On vote, motion carries 6 in support, 0 opposed, 3 absent (Billig, DeLuca, Grosberg).

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 10:50pm