

Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Thursday – January 10, 2008
Lower Town Hall – 7:30pm

PRESENT: Chuck Woodard, Jamie Gossels, Jim Jacobson, Bill Kneeland, Marty Ragonas, Sheila Stewart, and Debbie Zurka

ABSENT: Bob Jacobson, Ralph Verni

Item 1: Budget Hearing – Minuteman Regional Vo-Tech High School

Chuck Woodard opened the hearing at 7:41pm, by introducing Thomas Markham, Asst. Superintendent.

Thomas Markham thanked the committee for the opportunity to make the presentation tonight. He stated he will not be going over each page of the budget proposal, but will instead summarize some of the important factors. He stated that it is important to note that this is the proposal that the administrators are proposing, and that the school committee has not voted on it yet. The school committee is scheduled to vote on the budget at their next meeting, which is scheduled for January 22nd.

Thomas Markham stated that the administrators believe that this is a fair and appropriate budget. The main concern the district is facing is the drop in the enrollment figures. They are planning a reduction in both the teaching and administration staff. The FY09 collective bargaining figure has not been arrived at yet.

Marty Ragonas asked about the duration of the contracts. Thomas Markham stated that the contract is settled on a yearly basis, but are looking to make it a multi-year one in the future.

Thomas Markham stated that in FY04 State Aid was cut by 20%, although the enrollment figures were going upwards. As of this year, the school district has not made it back to the aid figure that they received in FY04. It is always possible that the State Aid figure might go up drastically or down, which would make this proposal obsolete.

Minuteman School Committee member Paul Lynch was introduced to the committee. He stated that this will be his last year serving on the committee. He stated that enrollment has been a main concern of his for some time, and was a priority during their search for a new superintendent. He believes that the enrollment figures are stronger in other school districts. He stated that 4 of his 5 children attended LSRHS, and that they thrived there. He stated that his child who attends Minuteman is also doing very well, and that the environment is a perfect fit for his child. He stated that there is a select group of students who thrive at this type of school, and believes that the school has a lot to offer to the

students in Sudbury. He believes there is not a clear understanding in the community of what the vocational school has to offer.

Item 2: Other Business:

Selectmen Larry O'Brien presented two articles that the board has book marked for the Annual Town Meeting.

The first is for the police station. There has not been a formal vote, but he believes the article will be pulled. The board still feels a need to find a solution to the need for additional and upgraded Police Department space. The board formed a Blue Ribbon Committee, consisting of 9 citizens and 2 permanent building committee members. There is a mix of people, with a variety of backgrounds.

The Blue Ribbon Committee must take two things into consideration when making their decision:

1. Any new station must be expandable in the future. This means it must have the ability to have another floor added, or be able to knock a wall down and put on an addition.
2. The new station must have a joint dispatch center.

The second is in regards to Senior Tax Deferral. Some of the Council on Aging members made the recommendations. The town is restricted as to what can be done because of existing State laws. They are asking that the Deferral Program be changed to a flexible schedule, meaning it would follow the Senior Circuit Breaker schedule. Currently the income maximum is \$60,000, and this proposal would increase it to \$72,000.

Chuck Woodard asked if once the article was submitted, if anything would be allowed to be added. Larry O'Brien stated no. What is to be presented to the State has to be voted at town meeting first.

Jamie Gossels asked why the town program is better than the one offered by the state. Larry O'Brien stated that there is no residency limit of how long you have lived in Sudbury. He stated that the program has been very successful in the past.

Town Manager, Maureen Valente stated they are still in negotiations with two unions. An article similar to the one presented at the Special Town Meeting for the Fire Union will need to be presented.

Item 3: Community Preservation Committee Hearing:

Chairman of the committee, Christopher Morley, and Director of Planning Jody Kablack were in attendance for the CPC.

For the benefit of the TV audience, Chris Morley gave an overview of the committee and what their objective is. He informed the committee that they asked for proposal ideas

every summer. They then review/discuss these proposals from September through December, and then the committee takes a final vote in December as to what should be presented.

Chris Morley informed that committee that going forward the match from the state could be a problem. It is not expected to be 100% anymore. The best estimate for FY08 is that we will receive a 70% match, and this payment is expected to be paid in October 2009. There is legislation being presented that would keep that match at no lower than 75%.

Chris Morley went over the 11 projects that will be proposed at Town Meeting. He informed the committee that a description of each project is listed on the CPC's website.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 9:45pm.