

**Town of Sudbury ~ Finance Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Monday – May 11, 2009
6:30pm – LSRHS Conference Room A205**

Present: Chairman Chuck Woodard, Jamie Gossels, Bob Jacobson, Bill Kneeland,
Marty Ragonas, Jim Rao, Sheila Stewart, and Debbie Zurka

Absent: Todj Gozdeck

Opening Comments:

The meeting was opened at 6:50pm.

Articles 2 thru Article 8:

The committee was informed that a motion will be made to postpone all of the remaining budget articles to June 15, 2009. The hope is that the town will have a better understanding of the cuts to State Aid.

VOTED: To support the postponement of Articles 2 thru 8 until June 15, 2009. Motion made by Marty Ragonas, and seconded by Bill Kneeland. On vote, motion carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Gozdeck).

Article 3 - Stabilization Fund:

The committee was informed that if that a vote needs to be taken on this article, in case the postponement of the ATM to June 15th fails, it should be indefinitely postponed. The original intention was to use the new meal taxes to fund this, but we will not be receiving the new tax. There are no funds available to contribute to this account.

VOTED: To support the postponement of Article 3 until June 15, 2009, or to indefinitely postpone the article if the postponement of the budget articles until June 15th fails. Motion made by Marty Ragonas, and seconded by Bill Kneeland. On vote, motion carries 8 in support, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Gozdeck).

Budget Line – 1000 Employee, Benefit & Contingency Expenses:

The committee discussed the orange hand-out that will be provided to voters at the ATM. The sheet is in regards to Article 4, and the discussion revolved around the creation of the new budget line # 1000 - Health Care Reserve Fund.

Maureen Valente informed the committee that this line was discussed at the working group meetings as a response to questions concerning how to adjust the budget after Town Meeting in the event the healthcare plan agreed to in union contract negotiations differs materially from the current healthcare plan as assumed in the budget, and no issues/concerns were raised. The goal of this new line was to provide for the transfer of budgeted healthcare dollars to other operating accounts as required under the terms of any union contract settlement without the need to call a Special Town Meeting, all without any increase in the total budget.

Bob Jacobson explained that the committee agrees with the concept of the new budget line, but when the time comes to transfer the funds it should be done at public/televised meeting. The committee believes an explanation is owed to the public. Maureen Valente stated that the committee should inform SPS immediately regarding the request of having the transfers approved at a televised meeting.

Maureen Valente reminded the committee that the town is used to having to make presentations to the committee when asking for funds to be reallocated. She reminded everyone that this will be a new concept for SPS, since they are used to working with a bottom line budget.

Bill Kneeland stated that his issue as a taxpayer is that if there is a savings in health care, why is that savings being spent elsewhere. The taxpayers need to be told what will be happening with any potential savings.

The committee discussed the possibility of re-writing the motion to include a section that explains the transfers would be presented at a televised public meeting. Maureen Valente stated that if the committee decides to re-write the motion, they should show the revised motion to Paul Kenny & Myron Fox before the Annual Town Meeting is reconvened.

Maureen Valente reminded the committee that since the unions tend to settle at different times, than they would have to have several meetings televised. Once a contract is agreed upon by both sides, it must be funded.

Sheila Stewart stated that she disagrees with this plan, especially since this was the first that she was hearing of it. She also does not like the fact that multiple meetings would have to be held for the transfers to take place.

Overall the committee agreed with this concept, as long as the cost centers still stayed within the non-override budget. At the same time, the committee was very concerned about the lack of transparency regarding the spending of the funds if the transfers were not approved at a televised public meeting.

The being no further business, the committee adjourned at 7:25pm to attend the 2009 Annual Town Meeting.