

Town of Sudbury
FY13 Budget Hearings Schedule
SPS, L/S Regional High, No Override Budget FY13
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, February 13, 2012
7:00 p.m.

The Town of Sudbury's Finance Committee Budget Hearings for SPS, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School and Municipal Government No Override Budgets for FY13, held on the first floor of the Town Hall, was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairman James Rao. Present for this meeting were Joan Carlton, Jamie Gossels, Bob Jacobson, Bill Kneeland, Mark Minassian, Jim Rao, Robert Stein and Chuck Woodard. Doug Kohen arrived at 8:10 p.m.

Sudbury Public Schools

Superintendent Anne Wilson continued the presentation of the FY13 SPS budget summary and goals and was assisted by Mary Will, SPS Business Director. Dr. Wilson walked through a presentation comparing the preliminary FY13 No Override budget to the FY13 Roll Up budget reviewed on February 9th. On the subject of collective bargaining, Chuck asked Dr. Wilson if there was any discussion amongst the superintendent community in Massachusetts regarding alternatives to the current step tables which have very large differences between beginning and peak salaries that, as a result, require significant annual salary increases for many years on top of the amount of any COLAs. Susan Iuliano, School Committee Member, answered and explained that as per the rules of the collective bargaining process, they cannot comment issues and/or changes that impact collective bargaining, one of which is the Step process. Ms. Iuliano reminded the Committee that the SPS teachers in fact gave up Steps in FY10, and they have addressed this issue in the past. Mr. Carpenter, Superintendent of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School made mention that Sudbury got through the economic crisis' in relatively good shape as a result of the of the concessions made by the teachers and other personnel working for the town. Again it was stated that the School Committee was in a very difficult position and could not comment on collective bargaining. Again Chuck said he was interested in answers for the future, not as it pertained to the current negotiations. Mr. Carpenter said that one can unfortunately not comment on what may or may not happen as it pertains to issues regarding collective bargaining.

Jim Rao asked if there were any Public Questions and there were none.

FY13 No Override Budget Request Municipal Government

Maureen Valente, Town Manager, presented updates from the FY13 No Override budget and was assisted by Andrea Terkelsen, Finance Director/Treasurer. Ms. Valente walked through a presentation comparing the preliminary FY13 No Override budget to the FY13 Roll Up/Level Service budget reviewed on February 9th. Maureen said that she knew that schools do face challenges but she did want everyone to be cognizant of that the town also has needs.

From a capital perspective, over the next several years there is a definite need to begin to make building improvements as there are several older buildings that are wearing down and have out of date infrastructure systems. Robert Stein read a quote to the presenters and asked them if the town had received quotes regarding the \$130,000 for the emergency dispatch. He was told that this is in process. The Fire/Police dispatch will be merging and this takes effect on July 1, 2012. The equipment we are buying is useable regardless of the final options chosen.

Joan asked about the timing of the GIC rates. Maureen told her the rates will be coming out between April 9th and May 7th of this year. The decision for employees is whether they want to continue with HMOs vs. PPOs and Harvard Pilgrim vs. Fallon Health Plan. Bob Stein asked what percentage was set aside for mitigation and was told the percentage was 35 percent. Chuck suggested setting aside money for unfunded retiree healthcare benefits.

Jim Rao asked if there were any public questions, and there were none.

Lincoln/Sudbury Regional High School FY13 Budget

The Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School presentation was made by Scott Carpenter, Superintendent and he was assisted by Judy Belliveau, Finance Director. Mr. Carpenter went through a presentation comparing the preliminary FY13 No Override budget to the FY13 Level Service/Roll Up budget reviewed on February 9th. Nancy Marshall, L/S Committee Chair, presented the health insurance changes for L/S. The school committee made the decision to stay with the Minuteman Nashoba Health Group (“MNHG”) as they were able to lock in savings for FY13 given that MNHG has already published their rates for next year. Through a combination of rate changes and agreements reached with the L/S teachers, the high school will see a reduction in healthcare costs of \$339,075 as compared to the FY12 budget, a reduction of nearly 11 percent. Bob Stein asked if L/S could opt out MNHG in a year and move over to GIC if they deemed savings from the GIC to be greater? The answer was yes; they could do so in one year. Mark Collins, L/S School Committee Member, spoke up and said that L/S was moving forward with a plan that allows for savings today but flexibility for changes, if needed, in the future. He stated that FinCom should be pleased with this and believes this was the best deal L/S could obtain. Whereas the GIC is a three-year commitment, MNHG is only a one-year commitment.

Joan asked what the numbers were for Sudbury vs. Lincoln students for out of district Special Education. She also asked what the breakdown for dollars was in SPED by town. Judy said she would get the full breakdown for her. Bob Stein asked what the dollar value was per student. Judy and Scott were hesitant to give dollar amounts per student given potential privacy concerns. Jamie added that, while this data is interesting, we cannot change anything right now from a town funding perspective because of the structure of the L/S Regional School Agreement

Judy mentioned there is the chance L/S qualifies for special assistance regarding SPED reimbursement, and she said the state uses different formulas for this reimbursement calculation. Bob Stein asked why the average cost goes down and Scott reiterated that the costs for one or two students can skew the totals significantly year-to-year.

Chuck asked how much capital is spent for technology in the FY13 budget? He was told that \$31,000 was budgeted for infrastructure only as there were no technology requests able to be funded at the moment. Bob Stein asked what was happening with the White House building and if we could use the special revolving accounts for that since it was not being used. He was told that in the short-term, they could not access these funds and use them for the operating budget until such time that a decision was made to no longer support the property. Scott and Judy both expressed optimism in getting assistance from the state for their rising SPED costs.

Jim asked if there were any public questions.

Dan DePompei asked why L/S did not apply for special state relief for SPED costs last year, and Scott answered that L/S did not qualify based on the requirements. Scott told the committee that a loss of teachers would most likely mean more parents wanting their children to go out-of-district to satisfy their specific needs.

There was much discussion regarding out-of-district SPED students versus in-district SPED students. Questions were asked what would be needed to get more students to stay in district. Mr. Carpenter stated that an initial investment would be to fund an incremental 1.25 FTEs to create smaller class sizes and specialized course offerings needed to deal with a certain sub-segment of students. However, he cautioned that while he believes the district would benefit from lower out of district SPED costs, there was no guarantee that parents would make the decision to bring their children back into L/S.

Jim asked if there were any further questions. There were none.

Jim stated the next meeting would be Thursday February 16, 2012 on the second floor of the Flynn Building at 7:30 p.m. Motion was made by Bill Kneeland to adjourn and was seconded by Jim Rao.

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 10:10 p.m.