

**Town of Sudbury
Finance Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 4, 2014**

Minutes

The Town of Sudbury's Finance Committee Meeting, held in at LSRHS in Conference Room B, was called to order at 6:09 PM by Chair Susan Berry. Those present were Susan Berry, Joan Carlton, Mark Minassian, William Kneeland, Andrew Sullivan, Jeff Barker, Adrian Davies, Fred Floru and Jose Garcia-Meitin.

Item 1: Update on Police Station Project and Financing

Presenting information: Mike Melnick (PBC), Jim Kelly and Chief Scott Nix. Also in attendance to answer questions were Town Manager Maureen Valente and BOS Chairman Chuck Woodard.

Financing – Chuck Woodard read the handout for Town Meeting and the group discussed various questions and issues as follows:

Q: Could we use Free Cash to pay for this and if so why is this not being considered an option?

A: No, Free Cash is not available for use again until it is certified for FY14.

Q: Could we use money from general Stabilization to pay for this?

A: Yes but that was not considered by the project sponsors or the Board of Selectmen.

Q: How does non-excluded debt differ from what we've always done in the past?

A: There are two main differences. First, the ballot results at the election will not matter. Second, if the motion passes at Town Meeting, the debt service will be paid for by taxes raised within the regular levy meaning that there will be approximately \$21,000 less available for all other operating expenses.

Q: Could we wait to authorize this part of the project until later when Free Cash would be available?

A: Yes, but there is the risk that the total cost of the project would increase since there would be a delay in awarding the contract(s) for these few remaining items. Also, that was not mentioned as an option back in May or leading up to the Special Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen has voted in favor of the non-excluded debt option as least costly to taxpayers and in keeping with previous discussions on this project as well as overall strategic financial planning for the Town.

Project cost – Mike Melnick, Jim Kelly and Scott Nix explained what has changed since May and what do we need moving forward.

The strategy for the bidding process was to consider certain items as alternatives as highly desirable if we could afford them in the main award. In this case, 3 alternatives were considered: required site landscaping, a canopy between the building and cruiser parking area and a separate utility building for large item evidence storage. Based on the winning bid, the PBC has decided to recommend that the Town move ahead with the landscaping and canopy as part of the main award.

The group discussed various questions and issues as follows:

Q: If the costs end up coming in lower than expected particularly having to do with the contingency will the PBC and others consider moving ahead with the utility building?

A: Yes, the utility building has always been considered a necessity.

Q: Is the contingency which is (only) estimated at 6% of the total project cost too low?

A: No, since most of the typical unknowns for a project like this have already been sorted out during the extensive design work and bidding process. We still need to carry some contingency in case we encounter problems during the construction phase particularly once digging begins.

Q: Does the Town or PBC have any comments regarding statements made in opposition to Article 1 that were sent as part of the election warrant?

A: The PBC disagreed with the statements. In particular, the increase in estimated costs for the traffic center resulted from the construction environment and adjustments deemed necessary once actual construction began.

Q: How long will it take for the Police Station project to finish?

A: Approximately 14 months from now. This essentially adds two months of time and cost to our original estimate in case we have problems or delay in construction due to severe winter weather.

There being no further discussion, Bill Kneeland made a motion to support the motion as written for article 1. The motion was second by Jose Garcia-Meitin. The motion passed by a majority with margin of 8 in favor to 1 opposed (Mark Minassian).

Item 2: Non-binding resolution article 2 and 3

Presenting information - FinCom member Andrew Sullivan also founder and only principal for Sudbury Greenways, Inc., a Massachusetts non-profit corporation.

Mr. Sullivan provided the group with a preview of his presentation on the motions for both articles. He believes that Greenways can be constructed in Sudbury for a small fraction of the cost it will take to build MA DOT standard rail trails. Assuming that Sudbury Greenways, Inc. is successful in obtaining approval for funding at a Special Town Meeting later this year, Mr. Sullivan believes that Phase 1 can be completed for a total cost of only \$160,000 or a total cost of \$450,000 for the entire rail trail by early 2015. He further went on to state that the DCR which owns the right of way is eager to work with Sudbury and surrounding communities to make these greenway projects happen fast. He feels it would be preferable for Sudbury to retain control of this project with our ConCom and local regulations as opposed to its being a State project with Federal funding. This type of rail trail project does need to follow Chapter 40B procurement regulations and still needs to be put out to bid by the Town of Sudbury. However, Mr. Sullivan indicated that it is likely that Iron Horse and his personal choice for a combination design/build bid would be the only or best option for the Town.

There being no further discussion, Jeff Barker made a motion that the FinCom take no position at this time on article 2 and 3. The motion was second by Bill Kneeland. The motion passed by majority with 1 abstention (Andrew Sullivan).

Item 3: Motion to Adjourn

There being no other matters before FinCom, Bill Kneeland made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Jeff Barker. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 PM