

TOWN OF SUDBURY  
– FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING and BUDGET HEARING  
Wednesday, February 4, 2015

Present: Chairman Susan Berry, Vice-Chairman Joan Carlton, Jeff Barker, Adrian G. Davies, Fred Floru, Jose Garcia-Meitin, William E. Kneeland, Jr. and Mark Minassian.

The Town of Sudbury's Finance Committee Meeting and Budget Hearing was held at the Lower Town Hall, 322 Concord Road and was called to order by Chairman Berry at 6:38pm.

**Item 1: Interview Candidates for FinCom Vacancy and Vote**

Chairman Berry thanked candidates John Baranowsky and Jeff Atwater for applying to this position. She also explained the process of choosing the candidate. First each candidate will be interviewed, then each current member of the Finance Committee will vote, and the results will be announced tonight.

Then Chairman Berry invited candidate Jeff Atwater to approach the microphone. Chairman Berry asked Mr. Atwater to give the panel a brief introduction of himself and his professional background, including his current responsibilities, and any knowledge that he has about the Finance Committee.

Mr. Atwater replied that he graduated from Babson College and he is currently the CFO of a company. Mr. Atwater indicated that he has 3 children, a first grader and two younger ones, one of whom will soon enter Kindergarten. When asked he indicated he feels the biggest challenge that the Finance Committee is facing seems to be allocating resources in line with the objectives that the town has and making sure to do the best to have all these projects move forward.

Ms. Berry invited the second candidate, Mr. John Baranowsky to approach the microphone.

Mr. Baranowsky indicated that he detailed all his experienced in his resume. He has a background in civil engineering. He also indicated that he always goes to Town Meeting. Presently he is part of the Route 20 Sewer Citizens Advisory committee and the Vocational Education Options Committee. When asked he indicated he feels the biggest challenge that the Finance Committee is facing at the moment is to create a balance between all three cost centers which is even more difficult now given all of the competing financial needs.

After the interview period concluded each member of the committee submitted their selection on a piece of paper. The results were as follows:

Chairman Susan Berry, voted for Jeff Atwater  
Vice-Chairman Joan Carlton, voted for Jeff Atwater  
Jeff Barker, voted for Jeff Atwater  
Adrian G.Davis, voted for John Baranowsky  
Fred Floru, voted for Jeff Atwater  
Jose Garcia-Meitin, voted for Jeff Atwater  
William E. Kneeland, Jr., voted for Jeff Atwater  
and Mark Minassian, voted for Jeff Atwater

In Summary : The Finance Committee voted 7-1 for Jeff

**2: Budget Process Overview by LSRHS**

Bella Wong, Principal Superintendent presented with Patrick Collins, Director of Planning and Operations.

Bella Wong's presentation closely followed her PowerPoint slide show on the screen and was also provided as a handout to the audience. Certain elements of Chapter 70 State Aid were discussed along with Regional District assessments.

**Item 3: Presentation of the FY16 No Override Budgets and Level Service Budget for Sudbury Public Schools**

Dr. Ann Wilson, Superintendent and Mary Will, Director of Business & Finance presented. Dr. Wilson distributed a handout with the slides of her budget presentation. She then presented the FY16 budget.

Ms. Carlton stated that she noted that the number of out of district student placements seems to go up throughout the year; are those children evaluated every year to see if they can be brought back? Dr. Wilson replied that the end of the year number is just that; every year the students on IEPs have evaluations to decide the placement. When SPS sees that they have a number of students with the same profile is when SPS tries to create a program in town and bring the out of district students back, and or preventing students from going to an out of district placement.

Ms. Carlton asked if FY16 budget includes OPEB contributions. Dr. Wilson replied that it does not, because they do not know yet that number.

Ms. Berry asked if the increase in salaries of 2.77% is based on the 1% increase. Mary Will replied that yes it does include 1% increase in salaries.

Mr. Floru asked what happens with the Chrome Books once the students leave at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Dr. Wilson replied that they will know when that happens, because this program is new and this is the first generation of students with the Chrome Books. The books have a life of three years, at the end of this period they will probably be recycled and they will certainly re-use the ones that are in good condition.

Mr. Garcia-Meitin asked if Dr. Wilson could go over the new positions that are mentioned in her budget. Dr. Wilson replied that the full day kindergarten change is a programmatic change, it is a huge change in the budget. The co-teaching is just a continuation of a pilot, it is an expansion, and it is not a new service, again benefiting the students; the psychology/counseling/ABA is the behavioral, social and emotional support that SPS need to address. The Assistant Principal is something that has been in the SPS list for a number of years, this person will be able to help with student safety and staff supervision. The Data Analyst is an enhancement, is something that has been missing.

Mr. Barker asked if it is true that the negotiation will have an impact in the budget. Dr. Wilson replied that as she has mentioned before, they need to negotiate in good faith, so she would assume it could have an impact in our budget. Anything other than no increase at all will impact their budget.

Ms. Berry asked if special education instruction includes out of district placement and in district placement. Ms. Will replied that yes, salary and transportation is also included.

Ms. Carlton stated that the Finance Committee asked for a 2.5% budget and she believes SPS has not presented a budget with this request. Ms. Berry pointed out that it is important to hear what SPS would lose by making a budget of 2.5%. Dr. Wilson pointed out that the biggest challenge will be funding the full day kindergarten. SPS is not able to maintain the program as half day, when they currently only have 9 children enrolled.

Ms. Berry stated that this year particularly is going to be very challenging because each cost center has unusual needs and there will not be enough money within the levy to meet all of these. Ms. Berry feels that the committee needs more information at this time in order to start to make some decisions. Dr. Wilson stated that they presented their budget, and she feels that this budget represents what is needed. It is up to the school committee to decide what to take out or what changes to implement.

Ms. Ellen Joachim, Chairman of the Sudbury School Committee, interrupted to add that next year they will only have 4 children for the half day kindergarten, and next year the options are to have a lottery for full day and thus force some children into half-day or to have a full day kindergarten for all. That is the current trend around the State.

Mr. Davies asked how many hours in a full day kindergarten? Dr. Wilson replied it is a regular school day, from 8:55 am to 3:25pm.

Mr. Floru asked if the town offers full day Kindergarten, will that bring children that otherwise are going to a private Kindergarten in or out of town, because it is now free? Dr. Wilson replied that she does not know, she will know in the future. They have noticed that when paid full day Kindergarten was offered, they had many children that signed up, that otherwise were going out of town. Also in first grade they also see an increase in the number of students from Kindergarten to First Grade.

Ms. Carlton asked if there is a way to get some help funding the full day Kindergarten. Ms. Will replied that no, it will make little difference in the Chapter 70 funding. She explained that when we have a half day program, and we have a tuition full day program, all students are counted as a half day program. With a full day program the influx of money does not happen the first year, it will show up the second year, because it is based on October 1<sup>st</sup> enrolments.

Ms. Berry pointed out that teachers' salaries are the largest part of the budget and she feels there may be a structural problem. One thing that will be helpful for her is to see a chart with the steps for the teachers. Dr. Wilson replied that yes that is something that they are able to prepare.

Ms. Andrea Terkelsen, Finance Director of the Town of Sudbury, approached the microphone and shared the great news that the Town of Sudbury has been awarded a Triple A Credit Rating. Sudbury has been a Triple A community since 2001, when the town began all of the updates of their schools. She also shared that the Town will be selling bonds next week for a total amount of 19 Million Dollars, and this credit rating should help the town receive the best interest rates they can for the Police Station Project, the Nixon School Project, the purchase of Johnson Farm as well as a refunding. By re-financing some original bonds, the town will probably produce a savings of about \$600,000.

#### **Item 4: Presentation of the FY16 No Override Budgets and Level Service Budget for Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School**

Bella Wong, Principal Superintendent presented with Patrick Collins, Director of Planning and Operations.

Mr. Barker asked a question about utility savings, he read in the newspaper that this number was close to \$100,000. He asked if that number was right. Ms. Wong replied that the solar array is not complete, it has not been plugged in yet, it is not done, and they have not had the chance to check it out. The savings are coming because they upgraded their energy management system.

Ms. Carlton asked a question about the increase in the salary budget from FY15 to FY16 - assuming that the percent of budget for salaries is the same in FY15 and FY16, with an increase of 5% on the budget, doesn't

this represent an increase in salaries of 5%. Ms. Wong replied no. Mr. Collins responded that Ms. Carlton is right, earlier he talked about the impact of public employee step raise schedule and their step system in the FY16 Budget, and this year part of the negotiations of the existing contract was the mid-year increase, so all of that has being factored in.

Mr. Minassian asked what the ARC is in a fully funded model. Mr. Collins replied that is over \$1.600.000.

**Item 5: General Business**

**Approve meeting minutes**

No Minutes to approve

**Transfers and other business**

No transfers

Budget books are at the Police Station for pickup.

Town Manager Maureen Valente has resigned, she will be working for the State Treasurer's Office.

Maryanne Bilodeau our Assistant Town Manager will be the Interim Town Manager.

**Item 6: Public Comments**

No public comments

**Item 7: Adjourn**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.