

Sudbury Finance Committee
Virtual Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2025
7:00PM

ATTENDANCE

Members of the Finance Committee present: Co-Chair Michael Joachim, Co-Chair Michael Ferrari, Andrew Sousa, Karl Fries, Andrew Bettinelli, Ryan Lynch and John Baranowsky.

Absent: Henry Sorett and Eric Poch

Also in attendance: Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director Victor Garofalo and
Town Manager Andrew Sheehan

ITEM 1: Opening

Co-Chair Ferrari called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00PM, roll-called the members, and declared a quorum present. He read the Municipal Remote Meeting Disclaimer and reviewed the agenda.

ITEM 2: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 3: Budget Pressures Meeting with Sudbury Public Schools

Co-Chair Joachim clarified that the budget pressures meeting is to discuss the budget pressures of the current year's budget, and how they will impact the development of the FY27 budget.

Co-Chair Ferrari welcomed Superintendent Brad Crozier and Human Resources/Finance Director Don Sawyer. SPS Liaison Ryan Lynch asked Mr. Sawyer to review the Exhibit 1 addressing the answers to the previously submitted FinCom questions, including the following highlights:

- Unanticipated expenses for the current year.
- Unanticipated revenues.
- Unanticipated hiring and/or staffing challenges.
 - Total number of actual and budgeted FTEs by position.
 - Unexpected activity with respect to turnover, retirements, etc.

Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- Increase in contract services because of labor shortage and length of vacancies in some positions; at this point even with salary expense but monitoring of salary vs. non-salary expense continues.
- [Budget over actual increase in transportation services dependent on wide various is cost of placement.]
- Other teaching services include teaching assistants, reading tutors and ABA tutors, some of which are grant-funded and others general funded; further breakdown in staff categories needed in comparison with FY25.
- Paraprofessional support for in-district students who go out-of-district are reviewed and either not filled or redeployed to other students, some of which may be coming into district.

Mr. Crozier continued with the presentation as follows:

- New initiatives for FY26.

- New initiatives that were not anticipated in FY26.
- Initiatives that will be continued in FY27.

Discussion ensued on the various initiatives:

- EL curriculum rollout – separate warrant article – will be continued in FY27 base budget.
- MS science curriculum – in the base budget – same.
- EDL retrofit – separate warrant article – same.
- Math course pathways revision – same.
- World language review – same in FY26 budget.
- Curriculum team is working on timetable for long curriculum cycle refresh phased in consideration of staff capacity.

Mr. Sawyer continued with the presentation as follows:

- Grants in excess of \$50K received for FY26.
- How many FTEs and what positions are grants supporting.

Discussion ensued as follows:

- The next year's budget is based on a projection of the total of grants received in previous years, as notification of actual grant awards is not made until after the next year's budget is released.
- The increase in the Metco grant this year was an anomaly, as deviations from previous year's grant award is unusual.
- In the case of reduction of federal/state grants, reductions in budget line items are considered.

Mr. Sawyer continued with the presentation as follows:

- Status and issues regarding capital projects for FY26.
 - Curriculum line items being considered to be funded in operating budget.

For SPS/LS:

- Actual student enrollment statistics vs. budget.
- Actual OOD tuition costs vs. budget.
- Circuit breaker.
 - FY24 circuit breaker funds unused in FY24 and carried over into FY25.
 - FY24 circuit breaker funds used to prepay FY26 expenses.
 - Actual circuit breaker amount to be received in FY26 based on payments to date vs. estimated amount.

Discussion ensued on the circuit breaker funds. Mr. Sawyer reported that to date out of the available \$960K, \$720K has been spent, leaving \$200K for the remainder of FY26. He noted that this is the lowest amount available in years.

Mr. Lynch noted that the budget pressures of this year are similar to those of last year. He then began the discussion on the FY27 budget pressures forecast, including the following highlights:

- Unsettled salary contractual obligations.
 - Contracts expired June, 2025.
- Enrollment changes across grades affecting staffing in accordance with School Committee class size guidelines.
- SPED student service and out-of-district costs backed by circuit breaker funds, which built-in mechanism acts as a stabilization fund; appropriation needs approval of the School Committee whereas a stabilization fund requires a vote of Town Meeting.
 - Circuit breaker funds also allow a protection for families of special needs students as opposed to the need to go to Town Meeting for public vote.
 - Any unused funds in any given year can be prepaid in advance to the following year.

Discussion ensued on the process for the use of circuit breaker funds starting in FY22 and ending at the close of FY25. Mr. Sawyer will develop a multi-year spreadsheet delineating the numbers.

A sub-committee of the School Committee has been formed to focus on the specific tasks and challenges of the budget. Mr. Crozier stated that budget drivers will be reviewed in the development of the budget in light of the constraints of the levy to meet the Town Manager's guidance.

Co-Chair Ferrari thanked Messrs. Sawyer and Crozier for their input.

ITEM 3: Town Finance Discussion

Budget Pressures meeting and Financial Condition of the Town

Co-Chair Ferrari invited feedback from the Committee on the SPS presentation. It was noted that the biggest pressure revolved around contract negotiation. Mr. Sheehan noted that he and Mr. Garofalo have been asked to participate in union negotiations. Mr. Lynch noted that the town is an "inflection point where the inevitability of having overrides is upon us" within the constraints of Proposition 2 1/2, which does not meet the reality of inflation rates. Co-Chair Joachim noted the importance of clearly communicating the issues to Town residents.

Mr. Garofalo reviewed his PowerPoint five-year preliminary projections and revisions to be made. Discussion ensued on various aspects of the budget drivers of the cost centers.

Town Manager stated that, insofar as there remain many financial unknowns, he is not revising his guidance at this time. In light of circumstances, the School Committee has been granted additional time to complete their budget.

Finance Director Update

No updates at this time.

ITEM 4: General Business

- **Transfers and other business**
No transfers.
- **Liaison reports**
CPC – Mr. Bettinelli.
- **Calendar**
Next regular meeting: December 15 - LS budget pressures meeting.
- **Approval of Minutes**
Tabled to next meeting.

ITEM 5: Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM 6: Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion duly made by Co-Chair Joachim and seconded by Mr. Baranowsky, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Co-Chair Ferrari-Y, Co-Chair Joachim-Y, Mr. Sousa-Y, Mr. Bettinelli-Y, Mr. Baranowsky-Y, Mr. Lynch-Y and Mr. Fries-Y. Motion carries 7-0, unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary