

Jesse Limanek, Chair person
Jeffrey Bannon, Vice Chair
Jonathan Anderson, Clerk
David Hall
Wendy M. Mead



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James A. Smith, Town Manager

Town of Sutton
Select Board

Meeting Minutes
Joint Meeting: Select Board/Finance Committee/OPEB

**Minutes Accepted and filed with the Town Clerk on 3/1/2022 by a roll call vote of 5-0 (roll call vote)
6:00 p.m. – February 15, 2022**

Roll Call vote taken:

Members in Attendance in person and Zoom:

Chairperson Jesse Limanek (in person), Vice Chair Jeff Bannon (in person), Clerk Jonathan Anderson (Zoom) & Select members David Hall & Wendy Mead (in person).

Also in attendance in person: Town Manager James Smith, Town accountant Tim Harrison & Deb Jacques, secretary

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairperson Limanek recites the following: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, this meeting of the Sutton Select Board is in a hybrid format with both in-person and Zoom component. To join the meeting visit www.zoom.us/join and enter Meeting ID 810 3969 2313 & Passcode 279300. The meeting will be broadcast and recorded on local public access station (Verizon 31 & Charter/Spectrum 191) and live streamed on the Towns YouTube channel when available.

Public Forum – N/A

Select person Hall motions to approve as presented the February 1, 2022 Select Board meeting minutes, Select person Mead seconds passes 5-0 - with Roll Call vote

FY23 Budget Presentation (power point attached to final minutes) Town Manager Jim Smith presents the FY23 Preliminary budget of \$35,874,505 (an increase of \$827,450 or 2.30% over FY22 budget. With significant projects within the next few years (Blackstone Logistics and Unified) eventually this will add to our operational revenues. One time funds such as the ARPA (\$2.8 million) and CARES ACT (\$782,000) were received. We were able to repair the MBR tank at the school using some of the ARPA funds. Funds from our state delegation to assist in the Fiber project, and Dam work is expected but the cherry sheet numbers show we owe money to the state. For FY23 the school appropriation will increase by \$500,000. Out of district SPED costs continue to be a challenge growing from 1 million in FY20 to 2 million in FY23. We will use \$700,000 from Free Cash this fiscal year and next FY to help offset this increase. There will be a separate warrant article at the May town meeting and it can only be used for out of district SPED costs. The school committee chose to not fill the school choice seats this past year which left a reduction of \$60,000. In revenue to the school. We are 3.7 million over the net school spending required and have just heard there are 4 additional applications to Norfolk Aggie so these figures may increase. Health Care remains to be a big budget item- last year we left Fallon and went to MIIA which put us in a larger pool. We are going in to the 2nd year of a 3-year agreement with MIIA and expect an increase of 3.75% from last year. Active employees on the towns health insurance have all been enrolled in an HAS account. Public Safety budgets have increased by 4.2%. We added to the inspectional services line item to cover for additional services due to the proposed projects. The Police Dept. secretary will become a full time position and the Fire Dept will have a new part time secretary added. The Fire dept has applied thru safer grant for a 3 year grant to pay for an additional full time fire fighter. Showing on the yearly trend page State aid is still below the 2009 figure. We continue to bring in revenue thru the Hotels & Meals tax, the rental of Manchaug Library and the solar panels on town owned buildings. In addition to the increases in public safety and education we have added an additional \$25,000. to Snow and Ice and an additional \$30,000. for tree removal. The enterprise funds continue to run smoothly. The Capital Plan for FY23 is \$1,259,000. Some of the items covered will be the paving at the ELC/Elementary school parking area as well as a new vehicle and loader for the

Highway Dept., emergency generator at the sr. center and Fiber for Wilks. The town has a solid stabilization fund at \$2,650,000, an OPEB trust fund of \$3,000,000. SPED Stabilization fund \$685,000., a five-year capital plan and smaller class size are a positive but SPED costs continue to be a challenge. Select person Hall says this was a very comprehensive presentation. Years of fiscal conservative planning puts us in a healthy place. It is good that the fiscal cliff we have discussed over the past few years has been pushed back. Our biggest issue is the school- but this is a long term concern- our primary goal is to educate the kids- we may have to commit more funding to the school. Select person Mead continues to be thankful to the conservative spending. Wendy does not want the school to convert the additional funds we are providing in this budget into their annual operating budget. Select person Anderson says this budget remains very conservative and is a well-managed budget. Jonathan is concerned that the school shows a continuing decline in enrollment- why is that. He feels we have the seats available we should use school choice to fill them. Jonathan also mentions the Police Reform Act and the added cost associated with it. Vice chair Bannon feels it is important to focus on the good position we are in. Schools have so many unfunded mandates and SPED projections are different every year. Jeff says it is always a conundrum when we look at the BVT figures, number of students go down but our contribution goes up. Chairperson Limanek says year after year we see a conservative needs based budget and we always have moving pieces such as the unforeseen SPED issue. Last year we budgeted 19.5 million to the school- they need to do what they can to offset expenses. The School Committee had a bonus program last year during COVID for staff showing up and doing their job- plus they reopened the teachers' contract which will also cause budget issues. Jesse is glad to see there will be added secretary support for Police & Fire. In regards to the special SPED article- Jesse hopes the school does not look at this as a bail out- over the years we have spent a lot on capital plan items saving the school from having to pay for them- we all want good for the school but are we getting those results with the kids- are their test scores good.

Request to overspend Snow & Ice Budget FY22- Town Manager Smith requests per MGL Chapter 44 Section 31D the Town to overspend the FY22 appropriation for snow and ice. The Chief Operating Official (Jim) can approve this but he likes to bring it before the board. Hearing no concerns or issues Select person Mead motions to overspend the Snow & Ice budget for FY22 Vice Chair Bannon seconds passes 5-0 roll call vote taken

Town Manager Update:

- Housing Choice Act- Jen Hager will be at the March 1 Select Board meeting to discuss. This will satisfy the requirement for the town to apply for the one-stop grant as well as other state & federal grants. CMRPC is assisting us with a bylaw which would be at the Spring 2023 town meeting.
- 2nd Floor of Town Hall is scheduled to be painted. EW Gemme & sons will be doing the job. The cost is \$4880. And below the capital plan requirement.
- Rehab & Reconstruction of Central Tpk. Will be out to bid 2/17 this is to run from 409 Central Tpk to the Oxford line. Bids are due 3/24. Total cost is \$700,000.- \$750,000.
- Masks at town hall- Feb 21st, 2022 masks will not be required. It will be a personal decision whether to wear a mask or not. After consultation with the Town Nurse this was decided.

Announcement's/Round Table

Select person Mead asks all parents of teenagers to be aware of bullying on social media- kids can be brutal and there are ramifications to words- it is easy to be a key board hero- be kind to each other.

Chair person Limanek says the Food Pantry is full but cleaning supplies are always welcome.

Correspondence from Jim Baker was received and will be reviewed by the board.

Select person Mead motions to adjourn, Vice chair Bannon seconds- Roll Call vote taken- passes 5-0

Meeting adjourned 8:00pm