

**Meeting Minutes
Joint Meeting of Board of Selectmen and
Finance Committee
February 21, 2008**

On February 21, 2008, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 7:00 PM at the Town Office Building in Lakeville. The meeting was called to order by Chair Yeatts at 7:00 PM. Selectmen present were: Selectman Yeatts, Selectman Evirs and Selectman Maksy. Also present were: Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator, and Christine Weston, Recording Secretary.

Gary Mansfield called the Finance Committee meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Finance Committee Members present: Gary Mansfield, Mike Petruzzo, and Jim Hanlon.

Resignation Letter of Rick Velez

Chair Yeatts stated that sadly the Board has to accept a letter of resignation from Finance Committee Member Rick Velez. He should be sent a letter of thanks for all the work he has done for the Town installing the fiber optics so that the Town could connect to TMLP for the internet. He actually helped to dig the trenches to lay the fiber optics. He also spent a lot of time figuring out the true cost of electricity and heating fuels for the pool at the Intermediate School.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Evirs; seconded by Selectman Maksy it was:

VOTED: To accept the letter of resignation from Rick Velez of the Finance Committee and to send him a letter of thanks for all that he did for the Town during his term.
Unanimous in favor

Review Letter of Interest from Steve Olivier

Chair Yeatts stated that the vacancy on the Finance Committee can be put it in the paper to notify the public. The Board of Selectmen will be meeting on Monday, February 25th and then again on Monday, March 10th. There is also another Budget Meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 6th, so if any more letters of interest come in, the Board can decide then who to appoint to the Finance Committee. If Steve Olivier is the only candidate, then we can appoint him. The letter of interest from Steve Olivier will be held until the Board advertises the vacancy again.

Meet with Town Clerk Janet Tracy

The Town Clerk's salary includes a two (2) percent increase. Under Election expenses, the printing has increased because the Town has two (2) new handicap-accessible voting machines. The State paid for the programming last year, but will not for FY 09. Also, the Town has had to purchase a new \$7,000 server to accommodate all the information that the State is mandating communities supply to them. The Town Clerk is currently working on the 2010 census. Towns had a choice to do the census on paper maps or on the computer. She has decided to computerize it. New voting equipment will be needed in FY 09. Lakeville will need three (3) voting machines, one for each precinct, at a cost of \$6,500 each. At this time, it is not known if the Federal Government will provide funding. It might be an item to include in the Capital Plan. The equipment includes the voting box and the memory card. They also need to be programmed which comes out of the printing expense for Elections.

Mr. Hanlon asked if there was anything else coming down the pike, such as unfunded State and Federal mandates. Ms. Tracy responded that the State is talking about doing Same Day Voter Registration which would require a computer at the polls and more poll workers. The State has not implemented it yet, but they are looking at it. She might have to adjust her FY 09 budget, if it is mandated. Selectman Evirs asked about reviewing the fees that are charged at the Town Clerk's office. Would Ms. Tracy look at where Lakeville is in relation to other towns? Look at the fee structure, and the last time Lakeville increased Town Clerk fees. Selectman Maksy suggested that Ms. Tracy do a brief survey of surrounding towns.

Meet with Treasurer/Collector Debra Kenney

The Treasurer/Collector's salary includes a 2% increase. The \$1,000 Certification Stipend was reviewed. Ms. Kenney has been certified for five (5) years and just received recertification. Course credits, certifications, and incentives for other Departments including the Schools were discussed. They should be uniformly administered. Selectman Maksy stated that the School Department uses this incentive a lot. The Town does not know what their incentives are for. Maybe look at this as a Town wide policy and see if the Town can afford those that the School Department has.

Expenses for the Department were reviewed. Ms. Kenney stated that she has three (3) full time employees in the office. She gave up one full time position. The Town has outsourced a lot. The new postage machine and bulk mailing has helped to offset the increased cost of postage. We are doing what can be done to save money. Selectman Maksy asked if there were any capital items that can be done to help cut costs in the future. Town Administrator Garbitt noted the Town changed payroll companies and went to bi-weekly payroll several years ago which has saved thousands of dollars. The quarterly real estate tax payment system saves over \$60,000 in annual borrowing costs and has increased investment earnings over \$20,000 a year. The Treasurer has also been active with tax titles. The budget has remained at \$40,000 for over ten (10) years because we are always looking at ways to cut costs. Municipal Lien Certificate (MLC) fees were discussed. Ms. Kenney will check the legislation to see if the fees can be increased.

Employee Group Benefits were reviewed. The FY 09 request for health insurance is based on a 9% increase. The Town is working on meeting the requirements of GASBE 45 right now, which includes calculating the cost of post employment health and life insurance benefits for retirees. Like pension benefits, eventually the Town will have to fund post employment insurance benefits. Employee contribution rates were discussed. Ms. Kenney stated that the percentage that the employees pay should be increased, but not until the unions agree to an increase. The Town cannot have different contribution rates for different classes of employees unless it is agreed to. Increased co-pays and deductibles would save money, but the unions have to agree to that too. We also have to look at the cost of health insurance for part-time elected officials. It should continue for those that are already on it, grandfather them, but we should not provide health coverage to any new officials. The Town can do all elected officials, but right now it is just a recommendation for the part time elected officials. Selectman Maksy asked who would be considered part time and who would be considered full time. Ms. Kenney responded that the full-time elected officials have a different classification under Chapter 32. Selectman Maksy stated that he personally feels the Town should look at all of it, the 80-20 and the 90-10. Chairman Yeatts responded that the Town already knows and is working on it. Ms. Kenney mentioned that in Rockland they zeroed the stipend. If there is no stipend, then there is no benefit. It is the trend right now, but it is not up to me to make the decision or the changes.

Town Administrator Garbitt stated that a lot of what is driving this is the potential cost of GASBE 45 to communities on a yearly basis. It is only a matter of time until cities and towns will have to fund it. The Town Administrator will put together a survey of similar towns regarding benefits for part time and full time elected officials, etc. Selectman Maksy stated that he wants to evaluate the whole thing, not pick it apart a little here and there. If he could say the Town's side would never go up, only the employee's side, but the Town is stuck in a quandary right now. Any information that can be found on this would be good to pass along. Ms. Kenney mentioned that it used to be a nice perk and was affordable, but now it costs the Town \$15,000 a year for a family plan. Mr. Hanlon added that it made great sense at the time, but times have changed.

Meet with Library Director and Library Trustees

Library Director Olivia Melo and Library Trustees, Nancy LaFave, Paul Meleedy and Elizabeth Walters were present for the discussion.

Ms. Melo distributed passport brochures so that everyone would know what hours the Library is open, since more than just books are offered at the library. The passports were done at no cost. The materials and time were donated.

The Library Director's salary includes a two (2) percent increase. Town Administrator Garbitt explained that Ms. Melo is not requesting any new employees, but she would like to increase the hours of some of the employees. Not all of the employees are at the top step, so the wages include a 2% increase and some step increases. Selectman Evirs and the Town Administrator were looking to cut the Library request by \$10,000. On the expense side, now that the HVAC system is operating correctly, we have a better handle on the utility costs.

Ms. Melo mentioned the amount for the additional 18 hours is \$13,000. If the \$10,000 was cut, it would still allow for four (4) additional hours a week. The Library has had the same staffing for the past three (3) years, only some of the hours have been increased. There are six (6) employees. Ms. Melo is presently working about 20 hours a week at the circulation desk, but that is not what she was hired to do. She was hired to do more than check in and check out books. She would like to do more for the Library, and there are services that the Library can offer. The Library has increased its circulation from 65,000 items to 116,000 a year. This is a reflection of the usage of the videos, audio books, donations of materials, new books, new programs, etc. The Library needs two (2) people to cover each end of the building. There are times when only one (1) person is at the front desk and with the phone ringing, fax usage, the internet, someone needing help, etc. it can be very busy. The collection holdings have also increased by about 8,000 items in one (1) year. This is books, videos, audio books. To get those items out there for people to check out takes a lot of behind the scenes staff work. The work is getting done after hours or whenever an hour or so can be squeezed in.

Mr. Mansfield asked if the \$25,000 is the mandated amount the library is to spend. Ms. Melo responded in the affirmative. In materials, the Library has seen a steady incline of 5,000 a year. It was 13% this year. The Library is mandated to spend a certain amount. They have found the resources to remain in the category of what the State expects the Library to spend. They have been making it every year. The Library has to show an increase each year. The Library has actually come down in expenses and has been resourceful with its spending, fixing things, and keeping a tight eye on services. Everyone is shutting off lights and being careful with utilities. There have been more and more people using the meeting room, so the lights are on there more

often. There is a lot of natural light, so there is the ability to shut the lights off during the day and put them on at night. The Library is saving on those things but would like to increase the staff and materials. Library Trustee Nancy LaFave stated that since Ms. Melo has come on board, she has done quite a bit. But one can only go so far with those efficiencies, so it is hoped that the Board looks at the increases and sees the need for additional staffing at the library.

Selectman Evirs asked if the Library has a volunteer program to check out books. Ms. Melo explained that the Library cannot use volunteers for the check outs since it has confidential information. Volunteers take care of covering the books. One person can do 39 books in an hour. That is covering and labeling a book. So when there are things for the volunteers to do, we have them come in. The Library also has volunteers that come in and dust once a week. Other volunteers cut crafts for story time or put books back on the shelves. Some of the volunteers have to do Honor Society service and Community Service, so this helps. But there are also things that only the staff can do. Mrs. LaFave stated there is the genealogical collection that has been waiting for Ms. Melo to do since she was hired. There is updating the Library website. Ms. Melo said it all takes time, but we feel like hamsters in a wheel. We do not know how long we can keep up this pace without additional staff or hours. This is the most dedicated staff Ms. Melo has ever worked with. Surveys were recently done and 95% of the surveys reflected that the people want the Library open more hours on Saturday, more nights and on Mondays. But we cannot do that since we do not have enough staff hours. It is time to look at the staff needs now. The Library is not open on Saturdays during the summer.

Mrs. LaFave explained that the Library is holding at the same staff level as at the old Library. They have always tried to be very prudent. But right now we are paying the Director's salary, and she is working the front desk. In case of an emergency or a sickness that is fine, but she should be doing the Director's job on our time. Ms. Melo mentioned that when the Town's population reaches 15,000, the Library has to be open more hours. She will still be short \$12 by the \$10,000 cut and adding four (4) hours per week. Selectman Evirs stated that maybe next year the Board can give eight (8) hours, but right now the Town is in between a rock and a hard place this year.

The expense budget for the Library budget was reviewed. Mr. Mansfield asked about the building maintenance increase from \$5,000 to \$7,000. Ms. Melo responded that it was a reclassification from Contracted Services as different contracts were finalized. The Library has had some jobs done, when possible, on an hourly basis so that it is more cost effective for the Town. The need for security and parking lot lighting was discussed. Town Administrator Garbitt explained that they cannot set the timer on the parking lot lights. They go on and go off when programmed. All of the lights in the back are on one circuit. Selectman Evirs stated that those perimeter lights should stay on for security and are small wattage. Selectman Maksy is concerned about the parking lot lights. Mrs. LaFave explained that people coming in at night do not know about the sidewalk that comes out and that it is two-way traffic so we have done things for visibility for people. We are not as lit up as people think we are. With a new building the systems are really more complicated than was realized. The systems are computerized, timed, and one cannot just flick a switch. It could be looked at it when there is a service call, but it would cost money to call in a service person to figure it out. Ms. Melo stated that it is \$65 an hour to have a person come out. There is a light out in the parking lot, but she is waiting for another to go out rather than spend the money for two (2) trips. The Library has saved money though with the decrease of the lights. Mrs. LaFave added that people do drop off books at all times of the day and then with the night meetings there are the concerns of having issues with liability with someone coming out of the building and not sure of the sidewalks and the two-way

drive, etc. Selectman Evirs suggested that the system may need an override, and it would save money in the long run.

Selectman Maksy mentioned that this is the Board's first round of looking at cuts. We will be going throughout the Town looking for places to make reductions. So another employee at this time would be difficult to fund. Ms. Melo explained that this is just adding four (4) hours to an existing employee. It would not increase benefits by allowing the present staff to work additional hours. Mr. Hanlon asked if funds are received from the Friends of the Library. Mrs. LaFave responded that they do not fund anything in the budget. It is for additional materials or items needed. Ms. Melo added that authors programs, etc., are all funded by the Friends. The other part time position for a Page, at minimum wage, is something which the Library Trustees will be going before the Wage and Personnel Board on. It would be paid for out of the State aid that is awarded every year to the Library. As part of the non-resident circulation that the library does, serving other towns, the State pays additional money to the Library. \$2,900 will be received this year, so we would like to use that money to pay for this position. It is strictly for clerical work and shelving books, etc. Mrs. LaFave explained that volunteers are volunteers and they have things that come up in their lives and cause them not to come in. The Library is fortunate to have some very dedicated volunteers right now. Ms. Melo added that the Library receives an incentive grant, municipal equalization grant-matching funds, a Library incentive grant and then the non-resident one, which is done through a formula that the State uses. The amount will go up through usage (NRC). Salaries have to be appropriated out of the budget, but we can use the NRC monies for the part time position. It is a yearly position as long as the money is there. The money does not go through the General Fund. It is for the Library. The difference for materials use comes from the NRC account such as software and other things that come up that the Library cannot pay out of the appropriated budget. Mr. Hanlon asked if the Library is looking at alternative ways for raising revenue. Ms. Melo responded that they increased the fees for dvds. It was only a five (5) cent late fee and people were abusing it. We increased it to fifty cents. People make in memory donations all the time, like donating \$50 to buy books in memory of someone.

Meet with Superintendent of Streets Christopher Peck

Mr. Peck explained that he moved an employee from an hourly position to a salary position. The employee was averaging 900 hours a year in overtime so this will save quite a bit. The part time laborer is a Park employee. The increase in hourly wages overtime was for Police Details for the tree removal as discussed with the Board of Selectmen. The tree removal was for an outside company to come in and remove trees that the Highway Department could not handle. It is figured they can get 200 trees down with \$100,000. The Highway Department would get the wood and wood chips from the contractor.

Vacation buyback was discussed. Only a few Highway employees have been budgeted for. Town Administrator Garbitt explained that not all departments budget for this. According to the Wage & Personnel Plan, if the Department Head does not budget for it, then the employee cannot buy it back. If the Town eliminated it, it would not save a lot. It helped out this year because three (3) Departments did not budget for longevity, but they did budget for the one week buyback. The employee received their longevity, but could not buy back the week of vacation. It is a little bit of a cushion if there are any errors in the wage budgets. If it is not used, then it helps with the end-of-year transfers and shortfalls or Free Cash is increased. Selectman Maksy stated he felt this was something that the Town should look at. Town Administrator Garbitt explained that it was difficult for the Town Accountant and the Animal Control Officer to take all of their vacation time because there was no one to cover them when they were out.

Selectman Evirs stated that the Town does not have enough people in every area to have people take their vacation time. Selectman Maksy stated we will discuss it at Wage & Personnel.

The Expense budget was reviewed. Mr. Peck explained he has increased the electricity line item because his office has electric heat. They are in the process of putting in a wood stove when it is donated to the Highway Department. Selectman Maksy offered a wood stove that he was going to have. He will talk to Mr. Peck about it. The Highway Barn has a used oil furnace and uses the donated oil to burn for heat. R&M Office equipment has been reduced. R&M for Motor Vehicles was increased because they do 90% of their own repairs, but with the new diesel vehicles, they have to be contracted out because the Town does not have a master mechanic on staff. R&M Building and Grounds remained the same. Other Contracted Services is the largest item to be increased. Originally he had included more for the tree work. The Department is doing the majority of the tree removal; but not the ones near the electrical wires. There is a Tree Wardens' meeting this evening in Plymouth, and they were going to discuss some funding options and there is other talk about that with the State. \$2,000 was included in Supplies to buy saws and ropes to take more trees down. Selectman Maksy mentioned that he thought the MG&E was going to trade in their old bucket truck, not a junk one. Lakeville would have to pay the trade in value. Maybe the Highway Department should look at that. Mr. Peck mentioned that he did purchase one off the State surplus list. It works for cutting off hanging branches, not tops of trees though.

Selectman Yeatts asked about the Telephone expense. Mr. Peck responded that he had not received the new Sprint bill when he had originally put this budget together. This is for nine (9) Nextel phones. The Diesel usage will drop dramatically once winter is over. Supplies/Machinery is for maintaining the fleet from the Park Department so that is why that line has increased. Gasoline is \$2.95 through the Town and 3.05 for diesel. Mr. Hanlon asked if there was any way to make revenue. Mr. Peck responded that they could sell the wood from the trees that come down or are taken down, but they do not have the man hours to do that. Most of the wood is rotted and has poison ivy on it. It is just sitting at the Barn right now. It could be burned for heat. Maybe we could get a wood furnace, which is installed outside, although the initial cost is high. It would be great since the Highway Barn has an endless supply of fuel. It is about \$10,000 installed. Selectman Maksy stated that he would encourage that, but the Highway Department's fuel bill is not high as it is. Maybe have it at the school and deliver the wood down there. Mr. Peck explained that the Highway Department has drums that they have gathered with used oil which is used for heat during the winter. Others are utilizing it more now since it is so hard to get. They use about three (3) drums a week at the Highway Barn. If, in the future, we build a new Highway Barn, the Town should look into a wood furnace to supply the outbuildings.

Meet with Council of Aging/Veterans Agent Marilyn Mansfield

Mr. Hanlon asked how much was returned to the Town that was not used. Ms. Mansfield responded that she did not know. The COA contracts for the vans through GATRA. The Board of Selectmen signed a contract and about \$27,000 a year comes back to the Town for gas for the vans and to pay the drivers. Lakeville's population is aging, and every year letters are sent out to those that turn 60. There were 131 residents who turned 60 this past year. The COA lets them know what the COA does. The COA budget does need to reclassify the Water Service and Rubbish Removal to separate line items. Town Administrator Garbitt stated several departments need to reclassify these items.

Mrs. Mansfield explained that she has two (2) part time clerical people and three (3) part time van drivers. Volunteers deliver the meals on wheels, and they receive a stipend that is paid from Old Colony so it does not even show in her budget. The COA operates with a lot of volunteers. They deliver about 12-15 meals a day, five (5) days a week. They are very conscientious about the lights, heat and parking lot lights. They keep the entry way light on all the time and have motion sensor lights as well, but do not keep the parking lot lights on. All the computers were paid for through grants and donations, not one cent of taxpayer money. Mr. Hanlon asked if she has seen an increase in Veterans. Ms. Mansfield explained that you never know what the case load is going to be. It goes up and down. She tries to get the person on to the Federal program for VA benefits.

Meet with Historical Commission

Nancy LaFave and Brian Reynolds were present for the discussion

Mrs. LaFave explained the significance of having a Historic District and the procedure to become certified. Once the Town receives the certified designation, we would be eligible to receive grant monies. Repairs to significant buildings and cemeteries were discussed. Chair Yeatts mentioned the erosion at Pond Cemetery, and the work that needed to be done on the Historic Library. The Historical Commission wants to have at least one Historic District in Town. There are so many areas that could be included such as the; Sampson Cemetery, Dickran Diran Square, The United Church of Christ, the Historic Library, the Old Town House, and Pond Cemetery.

Ms. LaFave mentioned that the Historical Commission is going to share the cost of the sprinklers for the Old Town House with the Library. \$1,300.00 will be transferred from the Library expense budget to their budget for the FY 09 water service. Also the Old Town House needs to be scraped and painted again. Hopefully, they have the money in their budget to pay for most of it. Prisoners from the Plymouth County Sheriff's Office did power wash it once, but they have not been able to get anyone from the Sheriffs Office this year because they are all booked. Mr. Hanlon asked if there were any opportunities for revenue. Ms. LaFave responded that they do have a friends group, POLL. They sell books, afghans, etc., but they cannot raise money. They can match funds for grants.

Ms. Lafave invited everyone to a meeting of the Historical Committee at the Library on March 4th to educate the public about historical sites. The discussion will be about the Roche estate and its history. There will be some of Lydia Roche's artwork on display. People that worked there will be present, etc. Also, the Historical Commission will be talking about preservation awards for those who own businesses or private property to recognize their preservation. It is hoped to do two (2) or three (3) of these a year. There will also be an educational program for people to explain to them the difference between POLL, the Historical Commission and the Historical Society.

Ms. Garbitt presented an update on the Old Colony Budget. It could decrease \$1,000 to \$2,000. The enrollment numbers at Bristol Aggie are not known at this time. The deadline for students to apply is April.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Mansfield; seconded by Mr. Hanlon it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 9:45 pm.
Unanimous in favor

Town Administrator Garbitt stated that with the South Coast Rail Project, the EOT has set up a Civic Engagement meeting, expecting about 100 people, at the Library on Tuesday, March 11th, 6:30-8 PM. Ms. Grubb said they are not hearing any opposition from Lakeville. The rail will be going down Taunton Street. This was mentioned on the three (3) hour bus tour that the Town Administrator, Selectman Evirs and Ms. Grubb took. Selectman Maksy said he would attend the Meeting on March 11th. Hopefully the members of the Planning Board will attend the meeting on March 20th. The Conservation Commission will also be notified. The rail will go by a lot of houses in Lakeville, and people do not realize how many residents it will actually effect. They also want to do a kick off meeting with local dignitaries. The March 20th Kick Off meeting will be will for local dignitaries, consultants from the State, Representatives from Canpro, etc., approximately 12 to 20 people. It will be held at 7 PM. The hearing for Route 79 is scheduled for March 19th at the Library, and the Capital Expenditures Committee is meeting on March 18th.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Evirs; seconded by Selectman Maksy it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 9:50 PM.
Unanimous in favor.