

SELECTMEN'S MEETING
Monday, March 2, 2009

On March 2, 2009 the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 6:30 PM at the Town Office Building in Lakeville. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Evirs at 6:30 PM. Selectmen present were: Selectman Evirs, Selectman Maksy and Selectman Yeatts. Also present were: Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator, Cynthia McRae, Town Accountant, and Tracie Craig, Executive Assistant.

Discuss Trench Permit Fees

Chairman Evirs said the Board had received a memo from Robert Iafrate, Building Commissioner, regarding setting a fee for the new trench permits. He suggested a fee of \$25.00. Chairman Evirs said this fee would be for trench permits issued by the Building Department, Board of Health and the Superintendent of Streets. Ms. Garbitt said some Towns have decided to have one (1) person in charge; some have multiple parties. Selectman Maksy said lets see how it works. We did not consider a back up person in case there is a complaint, like on a Saturday.

Upon a motion from Selectman Maksy, seconded by Selectman Yeatts, it was:

VOTED: To set the trench permit fee for the Town of Lakeville at \$25.00.
Unanimous vote.

Meet with Finance Committee to discuss Joint Budget Meeting held on February 23, 2009

Finance Committee members present were: Gary Mansfield, Chairman, Michael Petruzzo, Steve Olivier and Melissa Hopkins. James Hanlon entered the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Gary Mansfield stated that the Budget Subcommittee, consisting of the Town Administrator, Town Accountant, Selectman Yeatts himself, has been meeting and going over budgets and making revisions. Selectman Yeatts said from those meetings, we have made more reductions. We have reduced \$10,000 from the Assistant Animal Control line, and we would not have an Assistant Animal Control Officer on in the evenings, but have the full time Animal Control Officer (ACO) go out on calls. Ms. Garbitt said we pay a \$50 stipend if an Assistant has to go out. If the full time Animal Control Officer (ACO) has to go out, he would be paid the stipend. Chairman Evirs asked do the other Towns bring dogs in during off hours. Ms. Garbitt said very few, but they are charged a drop off fee. Selectman Maksy said he did not know if we could pay the ACO a stipend, he may have to get a two (2) hour minimum. Ms. McRae said there is nothing contractual with the ACO and he has agreed to the stipend. Ms. Garbitt said the ACO is a salaried position. Selectman Maksy said he would rather give him comp time. The Wage & Personnel Board did not accept that policy. We need to run this by the Wage & Personnel Board.

Selectman Yeatts said the shortfall for FY10 that we are looking at is \$1,599,833. We went through every nickel and dime. Mr. Mansfield said our revenues are down \$525,000 going into FY10. Expenses look like they will be up \$1,000,000. We are still whittling down what is necessary for Departments to function. Selectman Yeatts said we looked at everyone's level

funded budgets and then looked at 10% cuts. If they weren't losing a person, then we put that onto the other side. We tried not to lose any people. Ms. Garbitt said Robert Marshall, School Committee member from Old Colony, called her and told her it looks like Lakeville may have a \$7,000 decrease in their FY10 budget. We have not received their voted budget yet. Mr. Mansfield said we are comparing to the FY09 budget, taking into consideration the level funded request and comparing that to our recommendations. Ms. Garbitt said the FY09 figures include the cut of \$99,000.

Selectman Yeatts said now that we have come up with this, we need to meet with the Department Heads. These are not the end of the line cuts. We made recommendations where we thought more should come off. Mr. Olivier said before we do that, what your mindset was getting to this number. He was assuming that the wage increases and longevity increases are still in there. Mr. Mansfield said there are not many employees with step increases. Ms. Garbitt said some of the raises are not in there. Mr. Olivier asked what that number is. Ms. Garbitt said Ms. McRae is working on it. Mr. Olivier asked if there was an approximate number. Ms. Garbitt said approximately \$43,000 for non union wage increases and longevity. Mr. Olivier asked if the 25% contribution to the health insurance had been voted yet. Ms. Garbitt said yes for the Police and Fire, but not for the non-union or Teachers. Mr. Olivier said the Police and Fire salaries were increased to reflect that, so there are no savings there. Mr. Mansfield said not in the first year, but going forward there will be. Mr. Olivier said we need to discuss 25% contribution rate in FY10 with no salary increases. It's not popular, but we need to discuss it for everyone. We need a wage freeze, a longevity freeze and the 25% contribution with no salary increase. Selectman Yeatts said the Fire and Police were the first unions to agree to the increase. They needed the incentive. It's not fair not to give the non union and Teachers some incentive, but maybe not as much. Mr. Olivier said he could appreciate that, but it was a different economic period then. We need to revisit that; it can't be left off the table. You can't do for one and not the other. Selectman Yeatts said we may not be able to do it at that level, but you have to do something. There is no one to speak for the non union employees.

Mr. Olivier said at the Regional School Committee meeting, we talked about the E&D fund. Mr. Rodrigues, Acting Superintendent of Schools, said the Region had \$1.9 million in the E&D fund. If he takes \$700,000 out of that for the FY10 budget, he is going to have \$1.2 million left. If they were to give back \$600,000 from the E&D fund to the two (2) Towns, we would get a little more than \$300,000. Mr. Rodrigues said he likes to hold on to an E&D fund of \$400,000 to \$500,000. If they gave \$600,000, they would still have that number. Some of their concern was regarding Freetown being late paying their assessments. We need to work with Freetown to ensure that they pay their assessment on time. Mr. Rodrigues said he would be more comfortable doing something like that if Freetown paid on time. Mr. Mansfield said the only way they could turn it back is at the end of the year upon certification. They would have the option to apply towards next year assessment. Selectman Yeatts said the legality of it gets a bit gray in some areas. Ms. McRae said the Regional E&D certification is done once a year by June 30th. The funds are available to spend this fiscal year through June 30, 2009. There is nothing available to spend until it is certified again. It will be available at this Town Meeting coming up. Chairman Evirs asked what is the Town's Stabilization Fund balance was. Mr. Mansfield said \$495,000. Chairman Evirs said he did not see why they can't give \$500,000 to Lakeville and a corresponding percentage to Freetown if they are going to receive more money for FY10. We will be giving them additional monies in FY10, so is Freetown. They should send it back to the member Towns. It would be nice to put it back into the Local School budget to help offset their

budget cuts. That could bring the Local down to perhaps a 10% cut, which is a more reasonable cut than 20%. David McQueeney, member of the Local School Committee, said maybe the Local School Committee should put some pressure on the Region. Chairman Evirs said this is logical. The money would go from one School Budget to another School Budget. Mr. Olivier said if K-12 were regionalized, they would be doing it. Chairman Evirs said it still comes down to us asking. There is nothing that says they have to give it to us. Selectman Yeatts said if that is what you would do if all grades were regionalized, then do it. Ms. McRae said according to the Department of Revenue, the E&D account can only be spent during the current fiscal year. Chairman Evirs said that would still leave them with over \$300,000. If they are worrying about a Town not making their monthly payment promptly, that should still be enough. Mr. Olivier said the Region has a buffer of cash that they can use from other sources. Selectman Maksy asked if the situation with Freetown was recent. Mr. Mansfield said at the meeting about six (6) weeks ago, it was quoted that Freetown is three (3) months behind on their payments. Mr. Olivier said they could assess a finance charge for a late payment.

Chairman Evirs said it is probably impossible to do a flat across the board cut. For instance, in the City and Town publication for January/February, it stated that when a public library is not certified, the municipality is not eligible to apply for funds in construction programs and existing grants could be invalidated. We could be looking for monies that could be in jeopardy if we lose our library certification. We cannot afford to lose our certification. Mr. Mansfield said we looked at maintaining the minimum purchases and hours for certification for the Library. Ms. Garbitt said we recommended reducing the Library hours for personnel by 14, which would keep certification. However, with a 10% cut we would lose certification. Selectman Yeatts said we need to meet with each Department to discuss potential cuts and answer their questions. Mr. Olivier asked how does the Board feel about the issues he brought up regarding a wage and longevity freeze. Chairman Evirs said regarding having the non union employees not be compensated, that comes down to \$1.15 an hour added to their wages or \$42.00 per week. Mr. Mansfield said you are basically asking the non-union employees to underwrite their health insurance, but not the Fire and Police Unions. Selectman Maksy said he was under the impression that you can't treat the non union employees different than the union employees. If we say tomorrow the non-union employees do not get anything, he was not sure if we would be subject to unfair labor practices. We just can't say we are not going to honor the Union contracts. Selectman Yeatts said they could do it voluntarily. Mr. Olivier said he is asking that we budget with the \$2,400 increase not in place. There was further discussion regarding health insurance contribution rates for union and non-union employees. Mr. Hanlon said with a wage freeze and everything, we are only talking about \$105,000 including the school. For just the Town, it would be \$58,000. Selectman Maksy asked about freezing the steps. Ms. Garbitt said the longevity amounts, including a 2% increase, is minimal. Mr. Hanlon said its maybe ½ of 1 percent. Ms. Garbitt said a 2% increase on longevity would be \$47,000 total for longevity. The Police and Fire also receive longevity.

Chairman Evirs said some of the positions could be cut below 20 hours a week, making them not eligible for health insurance. Selectman Maksy said maybe money is not the answer to that difference; maybe there are other ways to reward the employees non-monetarily. Mr. Olivier said we need to make up some ground. Ms. Garbitt said we still do not know about Free Cash and New Growth. These preliminary budget numbers are based on the Governor's budget. Chairman Evirs said these are thoughts on the table still. Mr. Mansfield said they will change weekly. Chairman Evirs said we are trying to save jobs. The last thing we want to do is cut

people. Selectman Yeatts said we still need to do business as a Town. Mr. Olivier said long term; you want the Town to grow. We have great projects on the table. What seems to happen is that the expenses tend to rise. We need to control the expenses. It will come to a point that Lakeville will change. Lakeville will look like Middleboro if we keep building. Chairman Evirs said that is why we rolled the dice last year and took \$400,000 from Stabilization. We did not anticipate that Kensington Court would run into an archaeological problem. Ms. Garbitt said in FY08, we took the \$400,000 banking on National Development starting their project. The next \$400,000 we took from the Debt Service Account from Kensington Court. Ms. Garbitt said we won't realize the money from Kensington until FY11. Before the storm today, Snow and Ice was \$160,000 in the negative. If the Region decided to reduce our assessment it's a one (1) year fix. Selectman Maksy said perhaps the Board should send a memo to the Region like the one sent to Old Colony requesting that they be aware of their expenses.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Maksy, seconded by Selectman Yeatts, it was:

VOTED: To send a memo to the Regional School Committee similar to the one sent to Old Colony with a copy sent to the Freetown Board of Selectmen.
Unanimous in favor.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Olivier, seconded by Ms. Hopkins, it was:

VOTED To join the Selectmen on the memo being sent to the Regional School Committee.
Unanimous in favor.

Schedule Joint Budget Meetings with Department Heads and School Department

Selectman Maksy said when we meet with Department heads, we need to ask them which cuts will cost us money. Will we do that as a Board? Ms. Garbitt said we are recommending that we proceed like last year with Department Heads meeting jointly with the Finance Committee and Selectmen. Selectman Yeatts said we should do this over three (3) nights. Mr. Mansfield said we still have not heard from the Legislature on their budget. Ms. Garbitt said we don't know about the stimulus money for the Schools yet. Laurie Hunter, Assawompset School Principal, said it may be targeted to Title 1 and Special Education. Chairman Evirs said we should invite our Regional School Committee Representatives to meet with us on the School budget. Ms. Garbitt said two (2) members of the Local School Committee are on the Regional School Committee, so we would also invite Bob Canessa and Mr. Rodrigues. Ms. Garbitt suggested March 26th for the School Department at 6:30 PM. On March 23rd we will start our meeting at 6:00 PM and meet with the first round of Department Heads, then March 30th for the second round. Discussion occurred regarding the grouping. Chairman Evirs asked that the Freetown Region representatives be invited also. Ms. Hunter said they would make sure they are invited.

Ms. Hunter asked if the Board had a timeline for final budgets. Chairman Evirs said once we hold these meetings, we will know more. He felt that some Departments were looking for some guidance from the Board. We need to hold talks with each Department Head personally. We have questions about how Departments would operate without personnel or reduced hours. You take an office with a window open to the public, you have behind the scene work and have the window open. Do you work behind the window and not have it open or do you close the office

completely for a day? The work still needs to be done within less time. If your window is open, you may not get the non window work done. It's a difficult balance. We want to get this done well in advance of Town Meeting so we can look at it as a Town. Mr. Mansfield said we have tried to take an approach of lets whittle out everything we can without losing employees and shutting down departments. We have done that as best we can at this point and are still facing a \$1.6 deficit. We would love to say we have done everything. We need \$1.6 to break even. Ms. Hunter said we are doing the same on the school side. Sherry Baron asked when is Town Meeting. Ms. Garbitt said the Selectmen will be discussing it at their next meeting on March 9th. Chairman Evirs said we will be postponing it until June. Ms. Hunter said June 15th is the contractual deadline to hand out pink slips to the teachers. Ms. Garbitt said the suggested date of Town Meeting is June 15th. The Town Moderator is not available the last week of May or the first week of June. Selectman Maksy said what happens if Town Meeting is held on June 15th. Ms. Hunter said she has to pink slip anyone that may be being cut. Chairman Evirs said you would know on June 8th at Warrant Review what budget is being presented to the Town.

At 7:45 PM, on a motion made by Selectman Yeatts and seconded by Selectman Maksy, the Board:

VOTED: To enter Executive Session and not return to Open Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to union negotiations.

Polled vote: Selectman Yeatts-Aye, Selectman Maksy -Aye and Selectman Evirs - Aye.

The Finance Committee adjourned their meeting at 7:45 PM.