

Meeting Minutes
Joint Meeting of Board of Selectmen and
Finance Committee
March 6, 2008

On March 6, 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 Chairman Yeatts at 7:00 PM. Selectmen present: Selectman Yeatts, Selectman Evirs and Selectman Maksy. Also present: Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator, and Christine Weston, Recording Secretary.

School Committee Chairman David Goodfellow called the Lakeville School Committee to order at 7:02 PM. All School Committee members were present with the exception of Charlene Shea.

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

Also present: Superintendent Stephen Furtado, Business Manager Lou Rodrigues, and Principals Megan Beaubien, and Laurie Hunter.

Request for appointment to Finance Committee - Steve Olivier

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

VOTED: On a polled vote to appoint Steve Olivier to the Finance Committee with a term to expire April 6, 2009.
Unanimous in favor

Town Clerk Janet Tracy was present to swear in Steve Olivier.

Meet with Lakeville School Committee

Chairman Goodfellow stated that the School Committee voted on the amount of \$5,533,201 at their meeting the night before as the budget number for their FY09 budget. It was the consensus of the School Committee that this figure represents a budget that responsibly reflects the needs of the Lakeville School Department to responsibly operate and educate the children. This figure is from the January 4th submission of the budget, since other financial items have come in since the October preliminary budget was proposed. Chairman Mansfield asked if Mr. Goodfellow would mind going over the \$490,000 difference from FY08 to FY09. Mr. Goodfellow distributed copies of the budget. Dr. Furtado then gave a brief overview of budget then permitted Ms. Beaubien and Mrs. Hunter to highlight the critical needs of the budget. When the Administration was building the budget in September and October, it was not a wants budget, it was a needs budget. Items that had been set aside from the past two (2) years were included. There are some additional staff and services for the special education students since the district was on the cusp of being noncompliant with the state and federal government with respect to the number of special education children in the classroom. The Intermediate school has struggled with the proper staff ratio for the students since it opened. Staff has been borrowed from Assawompset School to help teachers with art and music at GRAIS, so this budget was to finally provide the necessary staff for physical education, art and music. What is appearing in the budget is the additional staff, salaries and supply needs. This is the staff that has been sorely needed for years in the schools.

Ms. Beaubien stated that a few months ago we went through the budget together with the Administration. To reiterate what Dr. Furtado said, this is for the full time specialists in the building, which include a full time art teacher and a full time music teacher, and to restore some of the things at Assawompset which have not been taking place in the building since it had to be eliminated. Ms. Garbitt stated the amount mentioned at the joint meeting at the Assawompset School meeting was \$44,934, but if the cuts were made at the Regional level, it would trickle down to the Local school budget. Dr. Furtado stated that \$66,000 is for the Region, so it would be a \$20,000 reduction for the Lakeville side. Looking at the budget last evening, the School Committee did not want to react to the Region's numbers at this time and wanted to move forward with the educational needs of the building. The Region still has a few more meetings to determine what they will do, but basically it would be about \$20,000 on the Lakeville side.

Mr. Goodfellow stated that the School Committee is not in a position where we can really make a decision that the 4th grade will go without resources because the 5th grade cannot provide it due to the Region's finances. There are a lot of things involved in this, such as making the school a school. It would mean a 4th grade teacher being able to attend a professional development class but a 5th grade teacher could not. The School Committee does not have enough information at this point to make these decisions, so we will go with its originally proposed budget. The School Committee is also waiting for other committees to give a firm stance. Selectman Maksy stated that the figure is an 8.4% increase over last year. With the Town there is only a 2.5% increase, and that is only what can be done for the Town. Mr. Goodfellow stated that the School Committee can only allow everyone to hear the rest of the budget. It would be very difficult to go with that. It is understood where the discussion is going. Mr. McQueeney stated that the DPR growth factor for Lakeville is about 6%. Mrs. McRae stated that it varies from year to year. Mr. McQueeney stated that the growth factor for Lakeville is a lot closer to 6%. Selectman Maksy stated that the Town does not know that yet.

Ms. Garbitt asked if the \$44,934 was for the special education teacher. Ms. Beaubien responded that she had in her notes that it was supposed to be for the art teacher. It was a typo. Dr. Furtado stated that the District would like to have another special education teacher considering the number of students in the building. It is not absolutely needed, but if one (1) is not included by next October, there may be numbers exceeding the law, and we would be in noncompliance. More than likely the District will be out of compliance for all three (3) buildings. A letter was received from a parent yesterday who made it clear that if the District could not provide services to a student in the 7th grade, then they would be looking for a private placement. That would mean an increase of about \$67,000. The school also needs a full time art teacher. On the Regional side of the budget, Lakeville is funding 37% of a full time art teacher, so that would be included under the salary for a specialist teacher. Ms. Beaubien stated the special education numbers are very close to being out of compliance. Legally in one (1) class, another student cannot be added. In the other class, only one (1) student can be added. So if two (2) students enter the District, the District will then be at the point where they will need someone this year. Kids come in, and things change during the year and from year to year.

Mrs. Hunter stated the biggest impact is the staff requests since that has the greatest impact on the students. Water also needs to begin being added to the water budget since the credit has been used up at the Taunton Water Department. A reading specialist and an additional special education teacher are needed because the staff is stretched very thin from Kindergarten through the third grade. Mr. Goodfellow said the Selectmen knew where the schools were in January with special education, but even if the District legally meets the number, if the District cannot provide the support services, then the student will be going to an out of district placement.

Selectman Maksy asked who makes this decision. Mrs. Hunter responded the parent can make the demand of the School District. Selectman Yeatts said they can make the case for the student. Dr. Furtado added they can appeal to the DOE (Department of Education), and they are usually not friendly to the school districts. If the parents challenge the IEP (Individual Education Plan), then the school district loses. Mrs. Hunter stated that is rare for us, since we work with the parents, but then the decision is mutually made between the District and the parent. Selectman Maksy asked what the out of district cost would be. Dr. Furtado responded that there is one student that is \$217,000, not in Lakeville. Selectman Yeatts said if we can provide a comparable service, they can stay within the District. Dr. Furtado stated we have been able to save a few kids by supporting the students in the District. So there is a savings on tuition and also with transportation.

Mrs. Hunter said the only other increase is for the custodians to overlap so that more cleaning and maintenance work will get done at Assawompset. Selectman Evirs stated we have to increase our spending at the Region by \$213,000. Where do you suggest we take that from? Dr. Furtado replied that is not a fair question to us. Mr. Goodfellow said we have walked down that road before. Selectman Evirs said we recommended a budget of about \$5.1 million, and like last year, we recommended a budget, and you gave us the amount that you wanted. Mr. Goodfellow replied I am not sure that you can expect us to come up to your number. We need to present to you a budget that represents the true needs of the system. I do not think we can come up with a number that you present to us. Selectman Evirs said but that is what money we have allotted. Mr. Goodfellow responded but then we would not be able to engage in conversations to let you know the needs. We have made reductions and cuts. There was further discussion about what took place last year at town meeting. Selectman Maksy stated the School Committee knows the position we are in as a town financially. We are looking to do the best we can. The businesses are not coming in as fast as we thought they would. The economy has changed. We are really digging. Mr. Goodfellow said we understand that. It is a constantly changing thing. We are also very conscious of the fact that we are part of the community and not the only ones coming for a piece of the pie. But we also would not be doing our job if we did not come up with a budget that adequately reflected the needs of the students. It is not your job or our job. It is our job together.

Dr. Furtado stated the legislators made it very clear that overrides are not needed in cities because of all the monies they receive in entitlements, etc., but, short of a major mall or the lottery, the only options towns have are to do overrides. It is unfortunate that that is the only mechanism that towns have had for 27 years, and that law is outdated and flawed, but it is the only way to raise revenue. Mr. Mansfield said we have a finite amount of money, and we understand that you are to advocate the needs of the students, but we are going through all the budgets and the other departments are all in the same position. We are going to have few alternatives. One would be an override, but that may not take place, or to cannibalize the budgets. I do not want to see channel 4 here again saying that are no police available and places closed throughout the Town. We are facing a very difficult time right now, and we have to look inside and find what we can do for the community as a whole. Unfortunately, we do not have the money to support this request. Not that it is not needed, but we just do not have it.

Selectman Yeatts stated this is not just happening in Lakeville. Other school districts are maintaining or laying off staff, and we are looking at adding five (5) new staff. We have to hold our own to either work together for the School and Town needs for an override. Mr. Goodfellow said I believe we should be doing that right now. There is no question in my mind of not doing that. Chairman Yeatts replied we have not done what we need to do for an override. I personally believe that the bond the Region cashed in saved us. No one felt any pain when they

did that. The people of Lakeville are not going to vote for something that you throw on for an override for the School. They need to have the Town included. Maybe we need a power point presentation on the Town side as well. We can go department to department and show that too. We need to do it together. If you do it separately, then it fails, then they see it again. I think the wake up call is the charging for sports, or no freshman sports. Then people will wake up and take notice. You would be working against us if you did an override this year. We are trying to make it through one (1) more year. If it does not come through with the businesses, then we will have to step up to the plate and do it together.

Mr. Goodfellow said this is the first time you have said you are against an override. We are perfectly willing to step up to the plate. We always have been. We have demonstrated what the needs are and identified that there is a potential revenue source, the override. We never wanted that for the schools. We wanted it for the entire community and to do it together, but at this time we are presenting to you a budget that demonstrates the needs of our schools. We are not saying that we will not work within our needs, we have. Chairman Yeatts responded that she did not want to put this on the back of the taxpayer. The amount of money that we need is not known. It depends on the businesses going in for how much we will need for an override. We will know better next year what shape we are in for revenue. Mr. Goodfellow stated we only have these kids for 13 years. They will have lost a year. Selectman Evirs said he was not in favor of an override, however, we are elected to provide the best services for those we are elected to represent, the children in your case, our case, the Town. No doubt about it. We are also elected to work within the budgets we are given, and we squeeze as much out of that as we possibly can. The people that voted for us knew we would watch the pennies and maximize the monies that we have. I know we may be hurting and educating the children is very important, but we also have to protect the children, their homes, and the roads they travel on. It is all related.

Selectman Maksy stated he has never been in favor of an override. We are all on fixed incomes, and we have to be aware of the Town's oil bills and all of the issues that the Chair has brought up. Also, some of the parents may feel that they do not want to support an override since their child may only have one (1) or more years left to go in the school system. The senior citizens will not come out to support an override. So now we are seeing the bare bones. That is what I need to see. Mr. Olivier said he has not been to any of these presentations recently, but he has been on the Finance Committee for six (6) years. The Region was going to do an in-depth analysis of how the money is spent, and I do not know if that was done. I look at doing the most effective cost savings ways first. I will not support an override until I am comfortable that we have done everything possible on the expense side, making sure that there are no more efficiencies to be gained. I read in the paper the other day about health insurance costs. We have not had to lay any people off, and people have been able to enjoy a very comfortable contribution to their health insurance. I did an analysis on that three (3) years ago. To bring the employee contribution to 25% would save the Town \$25,000. I know that is uncomfortable, but that is what I pay, so, I am looking at this as a taxpayer since I represent the taxpayer as well. A consensus can be had as long as we have looked at all the areas that we have. We have been fortunate that we have grown, but I think it is time to look at the health insurance. It is long overdue.

Ms Garbitt stated health insurance premiums have increased 10% over the past few years, but the Town has saved over \$100,000 a year in premiums since we left Plymouth County and joined Gateway Health Group. The Town would save about \$300,000 if the health insurance contribution rate from employees was increased to 25%. If co-pays and deductibles were raised, there would be another big savings, but that has to be bargained. Mr. Olivier said I think it is time for the unions to step up and say that they need to pay their share. Further discussion took

place regarding the health insurance contribution rates and increasing the co-pays and deductibles. Mr. Mansfield added there is also a big difference between private business and the public sector for retirements, etc., so it is not just the health insurance. You have to look at the total package for the employees. So the school employees will have to take a hard look. The world has changed, and we need sharper pencils.

Selectman Evirs stated when it comes time for the people of the town to step up, we have supported many debt exclusions, funded projects like the schools, the park, the Library, and these were mostly for the children. We have had an override for the operating budget for the Intermediate School. Mr. McQueeney said it seems that there is a good reason for an override this year, to bridge the time until these projects do come through. According to the DOE, Lakeville is seventh from the bottom with respect to its contribution to education. We were 2nd from the bottom. We do not contribute a lot to the schools. Freetown is higher than us on per pupil spending. Selectman Yeatts asked what criteria do they use. What if they need metal detectors and police officers for their schools? Mr. McQueeney responded they say it includes not only the school budget but all the expenses of the town that relates to the schools. It is just to give you a perspective. There is quite a range. Mr. Goodfellow stated he knew that Lakeville has always been very very concerned with the education of the students. He just knows that \$5.1 million will bring us down to reducing staff at our local school. We may not be able to replace a retiring teacher.

Ms. Garbitt distributed information regarding net school spending that was given to the Finance Committee at a net school spending workshop they attended. The numbers in Column H are incorrect. The previous school administration did not submit the correct budget information so it appears we were below Net School Spending, but that is not the case. We are currently \$4.1 million over Net School Spending at the Elementary School. Dr. Furtado stated he did not want to get hung up where Lakeville ranks. There is no doubt about what the Town has done in terms of the Schools over the years. The quality of the services that we are able to provide could not be done without the Town's help. What we are facing is similar to what other towns have been facing these past few years. You have already provided more than the minimum, and now the shocking reality is that the minimum is the maximum. So last year delayed it by using the bond, but this year, there are no rabbits, no money from the sky, and we are looking at the minimum as the maximum and it is shocking. It is not our job to pit one department against the other. We understand where you are and that you could put on a power point presentation and show how the town is struggling. I think you need to do that to show what is happening and what could happen in the long run. We have heard loud and clear where you are going. But the number that the Board of Selectmen is recommending is not a number that we can get through easily or without pain. We would like to leave here this evening, but if you are saying \$5.1 million is the number, then we need to go back and have more discussions.

Selectman Yeatts said an override is forever. It is not for one year to bridge the gap, unless we did an under-ride. That is state law. That becomes part of your operating budget moving forward. Mr. McQueeney stated you are not required to spend the money that you could raise the following year. You could lower the tax rate. Mrs. Carboni said to Selectman Evirs, you are saying to hold on one (1) more year, but with all the departments you have, you are not saying to cut staff. But it will do something harmful here from the school perspective. To cut from the Regional and Local budget without asking the question, have I really done as a School Committee member all that I could do for the students and for the education of the Town. The schools cannot hold on for another year, so how can we not ask the question on town floor. If the town responds no, then we will have to go back and make those severe cuts to our budgets. Selectman Evirs responded that we have been asking the other departments to hold back; the

police, fire, town hall, etc. We netted out about $\frac{3}{4}$ of one employee, we added new employees only as a result of retirements and deaths. We are not hiring anyone this year. I hear the school side. You must hire special education teachers. There is not much you can do about it. Unfortunately, if you have to go from 20 students in a class to 25 students to have that special education teacher, then that is what you have to do. It is not an easy decision for you we know, but we have that also.

Selectman Maksy said there are places to cut back like insurance, from 90%-10%. That is killing people everywhere. So maybe negotiate that when the contracts come up. The hiring practices, you cannot bring people in on those steps. We have great colleges that we can get teachers from, and we have yet to see an advertisement for a teacher at the Town Hall. Maybe look at an outside opinion on what you can do with the budget, to cut back, to try and find money. The insurance alone would probably pay for ten (10) teachers. It is a big number. We need to look further than just one year. We have to look ten (10) years. Mrs. Gomes stated we are not arguing the point, but in a perfect world each classroom would have less than 20 students, but as of right now the fourth and fifth grades have 24-26 students in each class and that is without any cuts. So if we eliminate another teacher, then those numbers will go up even more, so there is a breaking point. Mr. Hanlon said he needed to know how they will lose a teacher with the Board of Selectmen's recommendation. Dr. Furtado responded that the fixed costs are over \$5.2, so the decision could be, do not replace a classroom teacher that is retiring. We have a plethora of third grade teachers. The unfortunate aspect is that we have advertised for one of the retirees, we budgeted \$49,000 for the speech pathologist and received one (1) resume. If the district hires that person they would come in at \$60,000. You will not find a certified speech pathologist at that rate. They need their masters degree and certifications. The District needs to have one on staff or it will have to provide that service outside of the District. We have advertised again, but if we are \$17,000 short there, we need to make it up someplace else and given the \$5.1, I do not think we can keep all the staff we have. We have to take care of the special education services, and if there is only so much money in the pie, we have to get rid of something or someone else. Mr. Mansfield said then the burden on the schools is to prioritize what teachers to keep and what teachers not to retain. Dr. Furtado responded that the 7th grade will be at a class size of 33-35 next year. Mr. Mansfield said we are sensitive to what you are saying and understand the need, but we are sitting here with our hands tied. There are a limited amount of resources to keep things running. Selectman Maksy said my job is to find revenue through economic development so that we do not continue to have this happen to us. Selectman Yeatts said she has been to so many meetings trying to get these businesses jump started.

Upon a motion made by Mrs. Carboni; seconded by Mr. McQueeney it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the School Committee meeting at 8:16 PM.
Unanimous in favor

Meet with Building Commissioner – Robert Iafrate

Ms. Garbitt stated she put the original budget together for the Building Department before Mr. Iafrate came on board. He has since reviewed the budget and has revised some of the numbers which are bolded. Mr. Iafrate thanked the Town Administrator for her assistance. The line item for the Alternate Inspector has been reduced by \$1,000, and with the implementation of the BMSI software, Computer Services has been reduced by \$500. Education and Training has been increased by \$500 because the new building codes are coming out and the other inspectors need to take the training. There are four (4) inspectors altogether. The Printing expense has been increased from \$250 to \$300. \$500 was included in the vehicle gasoline line for maintenance on

his vehicle such as oil changes. He currently receives \$60 a week or \$3,120 annually as a car allowance as part of his contract. Selectman Evirs stated he felt that the \$500 should be in the car allowance line. Selectman Maksy suggested that maybe they should let the Town Administrator look at this since it may be a change to the contract. We should put a hold on this. Mr. Mansfield stated that employees are using their own cars and this is subsidizing the town because the IRS allows fifty cents a mile and we are reimbursing them thirty seven cents a mile. Selectman Evirs said the amount needs to be in the proper account or he cannot use it. Mr. Iafrate stated he could reduce the In-state Travel account from \$500.00 to \$300, so the total expense budget would be \$5,700. The total Building Department budget would be \$106,731, which is about \$1,000 less than last years budget and is also less than the previous year's budget. Selectmen Yeatts said we will take this under consideration.

Mr. Iafrate said the second part of my budget deals with the inspectors. Typically the money in the budget has not been sufficient to cover the inspections, so I am asking for an increase in each inspection budget, except for the Sealer of Weights and Measures since that is included in the Town Administrator's budget. Mr. Iafrate distributed information on what the Town brought in for inspections fees and what was paid the inspectors. Ms. Garbitt stated that we typically have to transfer funds for the inspectors every year at the Spring Special Town Meeting. If all of the proposed projects go through, there will be a big increase in inspections. We could increase Estimated Receipts. Selectman Maksy said a licensed plumber can also do gas inspections but not vice versa. So why do we have two (2)? We should have one (1) position to do both. Mr. Iafrate replied that practice was in place when he was hired. Selectman Maksy said I would like your input on that. Mr. Iafrate stated this is unique to this Town. Selectman Maksy said I do not think we need it. It is two (2) people who will get themselves into the retirement system. If they go to a County, State, or municipal job they could take this time with them. So put \$12,000 in the plumbing account to take care of everything. We are sending two (2) people to do the same job. Mr. Iafrate responded they are both part-timers. Mr. Mansfield stated we should consolidate and increase revenue. Selectman Maksy said one (1) is the plumbing inspector and one (1) is the assistant. They can split the time. Mr. Iafrate asked if he wanted the plumbing inspector to do the gas inspection when he is already there doing the plumbing inspection. Selectman Maksy replied this saves on trips. The plumbing inspector goes out and looks at the gas and plumbing, so there is only one (1) trip and only one (1) person. Mr. Iafrate said I will have to find out how their code is set up. It may be that there are two (2) separate inspections. It may be set up for two (2) fees in the code, although this is unique to Lakeville. The permit fees for new residential are on the high side, but it is less than in some towns. Lakeville is in the upper 75%. All the rest of the fees are pretty much competitive. Mr. Mansfield stated it goes to what Mr. Olivier was saying. Efficiency is the answer. Mr. Iafrate replied that he will certainly look into it.

Meet with Board of Assessors

Assessors Chairman Janet Black and Assessors Office Manager Jamie Velazquez were present for the discussion.

It was stated that the FY 09 budget for the Assessors was pretty close to the budget that they had last year. Salaries are basically the same. Under expenses, the \$5,000 request for computer services has been removed because they Town has signed a contract for IT services. Education and Training has gone up slightly since we have two (2) new Assessors. They will have to take courses to be certified as mandated by the State. The Assessors are doing well with their new their new leased vehicle. It is working out great. Ms. Garbitt said there is a separate warrant article in the amount of \$2,711 for the annual lease payment. \$12,500 is for valuation upgrades and maintenance. Selectman Maksy asked how the computer services for the Assessors ties in

with the town. Ms. Garbitt replied that the cost for the IT contract is included in the Town Office budget. Mr. Mansfield asked if a 2% raise was included. Ms. Garbitt replied yes. Some of the employees also moved a step. Minor further discussion took place about longevity, etc. There were three (3) Town Departments that did not budget for longevity, but they had budgeted for vacation buyback. The Assessors was one of those departments. The vacation buyback was transferred to the longevity line.

Meet with Park Commission

Park Commissioners Dan Hopkins, Darryl Bernier, Al Linton, Barry Evan, and John Maloof are present for the discussion.

Chief Hopkins stated the Park's budget is pretty much the same as it was last year, give or take a few hundred dollars. Ms. Garbitt said the General Fund subsidiary was reduced by \$10,000 last year. Chief Hopkins stated the Park Commission did request \$55,000 from the General Fund for FY 09. If the Town is going to reduce that amount, the Commissioners need to know as soon as possible so they can rework the figures. Clear Pond opens when school gets out which is the third week in June. It costs \$37,000 to run Clear Pond the nine (9) to ten (10) weeks that it is open. When it opens at the end of June, the money generated will finish the remaining budget year up. If Clear Pond is closed, there will be a savings, but there will also be lost revenue, since a lot of season passes are sold when it first opens up. Mr. Mansfield said it would be nice if we could save one (1) week of expenses, but not lose on the revenue end. Chief Hopkins stated we are thinking of opening Clear Pond only five (5) days a week and maybe have corporate companies come in and rent it out on the other two (2) days.

The maintenance budget for Jon Paun and all the other parks is \$7,000. Right now there are two (2) people from the Highway Department who cut the grass. Selectman Maksy asked how it is was working out with the Highway Department. Chief Hopkins said no one has been working this winter, so we are behind the eight ball when we start, but they are down there working now. There is always more work that can be done down there, but we are doing the best we can. We are making it work. You might think the fees the organizations pay are low, but all of the organizations put a lot of money into the park that no one sees except for the Park Commissioners. This year we are trying to have all the organizations send us their receipts so that the Town can have a better idea of what they are doing for the parks. The Commissioners are also looking at increasing the fees, but we also look to the organizations to knock off the costs at the other end. Selectman Evirs asked if they are thinking of revenue options at Clear Pond. Chief Hopkins said next year we are thinking that way since several companies have already booked their places of where they will go this year, so maybe for next year. Mr. Olivier, asked how do they get the leads for companies to do that. Chief Hopkins responded through advertising and from previous companies that come every year. They tell others. Most of them go to Ted Williams Camp. We have not had Clear Pond open just for that. Those are just some options that the Park Commissioners are looking at as a board.

Mr. Mansfield asked if the swimming lessons compete with the pool. Chief Hopkins responded yes and no. Clear Pond used to be open every day with lots of people. The lessons have gone down since the opening of the pool at the Intermediate School. They have a good program at the pool, and some people would rather go to the pool instead of the pond. Ms. Garbitt stated if you are going to close Clear Pond, it would be better to close it at the end of the season, rather than the beginning of the season. Chief Hopkins said the Park has brought in \$38,000 so far. \$58,000 has been spent, so we are down \$20,000. But we are actually ahead of the game with what goes in at the end of the season, about \$99,000 in total. The Park Commissioners will keep an eye on

it. Park maintenance is only used for the cleaning of the building right now. \$6,000 from Retained Earnings will be used next year. Selectman Evirs stated that the Park Commission can have Comcast advertise for free on cable. It would help a lot, and it is free advertising.

There was discussion regarding the renovations to the Commissary at Ted Williams Camp. Chief Hopkins stated the building really needs a new roof, but we do not want to do if the entire building is going to be rehabbed. The roof that was put on it was put on by the prisoners in 1986 when it was taken over by the Town. We should get a committee to seriously look at it since the Town uses it for voting. We already have an engineering spec on it. Ms. Garbitt stated we did have a committee look at a few years ago. The proposed renovations were estimated to cost between \$300,000 to \$325,000 including the septic system. Selectman Maksy asked if the Town can start looking at it now. Borrow the money and get that done since you will get that money back with a bond. Selectman Evirs asked if it is included in the Capital Plan. Ms. Garbitt responded that it was, but it keeps getting moved out to the next year. Mr. Bernier said the building gets a lot of use. The Park Department would make more money if we could rent it during the winter, but right now it costs too much to heat. Mr. Mansfield said we really need to look at the Park Department to be revenue neutral. We know that is not easy, but we need to with the situation that the Town is in.

Meet with Fire Chief Dan Hopkins

Chief Hopkins reviewed his wage account. He said this year he budgeted 100% (\$95,000) of what it would cost to cover all the shifts for vacation, holidays and sick time. It went down as fast as he put it in. The ninth firefighter will help out with this. It has worked out in the past, even back in FY06, when the budget for overtime was \$55,000. It has been tougher to handle because a lot the guys have been here for a long time, so they receive more vacation time. When he came on board, he was told not to budget for sick time, so he absorbed it. I have had to increase Firefighter Education by \$2,500 for a total of \$13,000 because one of the new Firefighters has an Associates Degree. This person has a degree in nursing so it helps with the ambulance. Three (3) of the nine (9) firefighters have degrees. There are also two (2) firefighters working on their degrees as well. There was further discussion regarding his budget.

Mr. Olivier asked where the revenues were for the ambulance. Chief Hopkins then distributed that information to everyone. The bottom line is that the ambulance side has brought in \$130,000 through January. The February money came in at about \$20,000, so the total is about \$150,000. It will bring in about \$200,000 for the year. If the Town did not have the ambulance, we would have to contract an outside service provider and still pay the Fire Department employees. We have signed on with a collections agency in order to try and collect the money from those who have not responded to the invoices that have been sent to them. It will also be reported to Experian, a credit reporting agency. There is a certain amount of write offs each year which is the difference between what we charge and what Medicare allows.

Meet with Board of Health

Board of Health Members Jennifer Turcotte and Terry Flynn were present for the discussion.

Town Administrator Garbitt reviewed the cuts that were recommended by Selectman Evirs and the Finance Committee. Ms. Turcotte's only concern was the gasoline number since they are already \$3,000 over budget this year. Discussion took place regarding the Board of Health vehicle. They started using the Blazer in August or September. They can track the mileage of the vehicle to see if the gasoline allocation has been applied properly. When Joe Beneski goes

out, the tank is filled at the Highway Barn. The old car is long gone. The Department only pays for maintenance on Town vehicles, not on personal vehicles, although the Board of Health paid for maintenance on the Health Agent's personal vehicle last year. It was paid as a reimbursement because something happened to his truck on the job. He is supposed to be using the Town vehicle when he is here. When they go in different directions, Mr. Beneski and Mr. Perry take different vehicles. The Town will reimburse for mileage. That was a one (1) time occurrence. Further discussion ensued for clarification on this matter. Selectman Evirs stated the Highway Department will do the oil changes for Town vehicles if you supply the oil filter and oil.

Mr. Hanlon asked how many employees are included in the Board of Health budget. Ms. Turcotte responded that there were four (4) employees not including Elected Officials. Mr. Hanlon asked about the Contracted Services and Rabies Testing. We looked at that last year, it was a potential area of improvement. Ms. Garbitt stated that the Rabies Testing turned out to be a very minimal amount. The major part is used for Contracted Services when the Board of Health has to work with Town Counsel or to hire outside consultants. Further discussion took place regarding perc tests and permits. Mr. Mansfield asked about the scheduling of inspections to make sure that the Department is efficient since gas is getting so expensive. Maybe the mileage could be reduced. We just want to make sure that if there are opportunities to do something together with the Departments, that it is done. Ms. Turcotte responded that Mr. Perry is a very busy man. We rarely send Mr. Beneski out. Mr. Mansfield stated the budgets look good, but we will still need to look at more ways to shave off more money. We are just looking for some suggestions from you to make it more efficient.

Meet with Police Chief Mark Sorel

Chief Sorel stated the Town has asked him to level fund his budget, and he has done that for ten (10) years. FY 08 will be the first year that he will be in a deficit. He noted the error in the FY 09 budget for longevity for one of the Police Officers. This person was hired before the latest contract was signed, so the longevity should be at 7% which is a \$2,207 mistake. Expenses only went up an additional \$4,000 except for gasoline. Selectman Evirs pointed out that the electricity account had to be adjusted by \$4,000 to cover the increased cost. Chief Sorel stated for the record, the Department is still under the 1988 number of officers. At that time we had 18-19 guys and 6,000 calls, so the Department is bare bones. The budget has only increased approximately \$7,800, except for gasoline, and one (1) new employee.

Discussion took place regarding the idling of the cruisers. They can idle when the officers go to a call, but not if they are going to speak with someone around the back of a building. When they do shut off their vehicle, they have to also shut down the computer system. Then when they start up, they have to log back on again. There will probably be a budget deficit. Half of the radios have expired and have had to be replaced. A few computers have had to be repaired or replaced. He also presented a request to the Finance Committee. The Department bought a repeater two (2) years ago and it is finished. The antenna at Barden Hill in Middleborough is in real bad shape. They will not allow any radio person to climb the tower because it is so dilapidated. The tower on Freetown Street is only high enough to annex it out. There are not a lot of watts of power to get the signal out. They have had to solder the circuitry board four (4) times. He needs \$1,800. This is a public safety issue in terms of radio communication. If it goes down, there is no radio contact. Nextel works as well as it does, but someone would have to stay at the Police Station. There is one (1) dispatching system. When the Firefighters leave the desk, the Police take over and do the dispatch. Also, the Fire Department is not allowed to use the Leaps computer due to security issues. Civilians and Fire Department employees are not allowed to use

it. It has to be a Police Officer. Mr. Mansfield stated we need to look at different ways of doing things, so that is why we are throwing out suggestions and asking questions. The repairs needed at the Police Station and the revolving plan for the Police cruisers were reviewed.

Schedule Next Meeting

Town Administrator Garbitt explained that now that the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen have met with every department, she will go back and make the changes. Would the Board of Selectmen want to schedule another meeting? She is still trying to schedule a meeting with the Regional School Committee. No one is responding to any of the dates. The budgets for the Selectmen, Town Accountant and Landfill still need to be reviewed. A joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee was scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at 7 PM at the Town Office Building.

Meet with Town Accountant Cindy McRae

Ms. Garbitt stated that she and Selectman Evirs had just notified the Town Accountant that her budget had been reduced. Ms. McRae stated that the Auditors are being required to do more work now due to the GASBE requirements. Thus, this category is only going to go up, not down. Ms. Garbitt recommended restoring the budget for Auditing back to \$28,000. Ms. McRae added that the MUNIS contract under Computer Services is for the basic support and licensing at a cost of \$20,000. That includes all the modules for the Assessors, the Accountant, the Tax Collector, etc. The contract was received after the budget was submitted. It also does not include any additional technical support that might be needed. The Town will be going through an upgrade and will need training. So another \$2,000 would be beneficial for this as well. Ms. Garbitt stated that Ms. McRae gave up some of her training, when the budgets were cut. She did request part of it back, then Selectman Evirs and I took it away again. Ms. McRae added that she goes to Mass. Town Accountants School twice a year. It is at UMass Amherst and on the Cape in the spring. She needs \$1,200 in that category. When she is not at the Town Office Building a payroll or expense warrant cannot be processed without her signature so it is hard for her to break away to go to classes since she is needed in the office.

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

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 10:35 PM.
Unanimous in favor

Any other business that may properly come before the meeting

Upon a motion made by Mr. Olivier; seconded by Mrs. Hopkins it was:

VOTED: To transfer \$1,800 from the reserve fund for the purchase of a new radio repeater for the Police Department.
Unanimous in favor

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

VOTED: To appoint Gary Mansfield as Chairman of the Finance Committee.
Unanimous in favor

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

VOTED: To appoint Steve Olivier as Vice Chairman to the Finance Committee.
Unanimous in favor

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

VOTED: To approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2008 as presented.
All in favor with three (3) abstentions

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

VOTED: To approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of April 30, 2007 as presented.
All in favor with three (3) abstentions

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

VOTED: To approve the following Finance Committee Meeting Minutes as presented; May 7, 2007, May 9, 2007, May 10, 2007, May 29, 2007, June 4, 2007, October 1, 2007, November 7, 2007, November 28, 2007 and January 9, 2008.
All in favor with three (3) abstentions

Appointments to the Wage and Personnel Committee and Capital Expenditure Committee

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

VOTED: To appoint Michael Petruzzo to the Capital Expenditure Committee.
Unanimous in favor

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

VOTED: To appoint Steve Olivier to the Wage and Personnel Committee.
Unanimous in favor

Town Administrator Garbitt spoke about the \$150,000. That is a \$60,000 difference with the steps and raises. Mr. Goodfellow had said he was getting that information for the Board and that was not even brought up this evening. Mr. Mansfield and Jim Hanlon will attend the Local School Committee meetings regarding the budget, and Steve Olivier and Melissa Hopkins will attend the Regional School Committee meetings regarding the budget. Michael Petruzzo will review the Police and Fire Department budgets.

The next Finance Committee meeting will be posted for Monday, March 31, 2008 at 7 PM.

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 10:55 PM.
Unanimous in favor