

**TOWN OF LAKEVILLE**  
**Joint Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee Meeting**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 16, 2010**  
**7:00 PM**

On March 16, 2010, the Board of Selectmen held a Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee at 7:00 PM at the Town Offices. The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Maksy at 7:00 PM. Selectman present: Selectman Maksy and Selectman Yeatts. Also present: Town Administrator Rita Garbitt and Town Accountant Cindy McRae.

The Finance Committee's Meeting was called to order by Chairman Mansfield. Members present: Gary Mansfield, Mike Petruzzo, Melissa Hopkins, and Steve Olivier (entered at 7:12PM).

**Appoint Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee Member**

*Present for the discussion: Town Moderator Gordon Goodfellow, Superintendent John McCarthy, Director of Business Mike Ward, Principal Laurie Hunter, and Local School Committee Members; Aaron Burke, David McQueeney, and David Goodfellow.* The Local School Committee's Meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM.

Selectman Maksy stated that the purpose of the Town Moderator being present this evening is that the Board of Selectmen and the Local School Committee need to jointly appoint a member to the Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee. Robert Marshall has sent a letter expressing his interest in being reappointed to the position. Selectman Yeatts nominated Mr. Marshall to be reappointed. Mr. Goodfellow then asked if there were any other nominations, and none were put forward. Mr. Goodfellow then closed the nominations.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Yeatts with and with Chairman Maksy stepping down to second and stepping back up to vote, the Board:

VOTED: To appoint Robert Marshall to the Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee for a three (3) year term, beginning April 30, 2010 through April 30, 2013.  
Unanimous in favor

Upon a motion made by Aaron Burke and seconded by David Goodfellow, the School Committee:

VOTED: To appoint Robert Marshall to the Old Colony Regional School Committee for a three (3) year term, beginning April 30, 2010 through April 30, 2013.  
Unanimous in favor

**Meet with School Department to review FY 11 Local School Budget**

Superintendent McCarthy stated that the \$251,000 increase includes the step and level increases for the teachers, as well as, other obligations and to build back what has been too lean this year in maintenance, supplies, basic expenses, etc. Included in that figure are curriculum leaders. They were cut out last year, so technically it is not a level services budget, since that was in there. That was backed out and essentially that is the same with \$239,000. Also, there is a warrant article for a special needs van. The present van has over 250,000 miles on it. If it cannot be replaced, then the School Department will have to vendor out some of

those runs and increase that cost even more. The SPED van piece needs to be included in this discussion, to either lease or purchase. He added that Anne St. Pierre is still putting a proposal together regarding contracting out SPED transportation aspect. The cost will be more than what it is presently with the Local School doing it. However, the School Department is finding it very difficult keeping the vans on the road due to their high mileage. A regular replacement schedule needs to be put in place. The vans are out on the road a lot. When the vans are not replaced, and there is not a schedule for replacement, then maintenance problems take place. The van will be part of the Capital Plan. It will be over \$40,000, if the School Department has to vendor out the van and does not get one. Also the computer work stations are another item for the Capital Plan.

Selectman Yeatts stated that the Capital Expenditures Committee has not met to vote yet, but most likely they will vote in favor of the School Department getting a van. Mr. McCarthy stated that the SPED position was not in the budget, but it was funded beginning in December when it came on line. The Region will be facing a pretty significant cutback as well, and there is the possibility that they may cut those positions out, and that would need to be accounted for somehow. Mr. Ward stated that \$4.486 million is the level services budget, and the \$4.534 million includes the SPED position, but not the van. Selectman Maksy stated that he did not see a problem with the School Department getting the van. Selectman Yeatts stated that she is on the Capital Expenditures Committee and does not think that there will be a problem about the van. Mr. Olivier asked for clarification on that since that is a \$60,000 increase. Mr. Ward responded that it is \$48,000 for the SPED teacher. Selectman Maksy stated that that increase is pretty substantial considering where we stand with the rest of the Town. It could affect the Town, if there is additional staff and the health costs. Mr. McCarthy stated that the increase was because steps and levels changes are included. The proposed increase by the Town for the Local School is \$104,838, which is a 3.12% increase. Selectman Yeatts said if the increase is \$288,155 and that includes the \$48,000, it is actually a 6.78% increase. Mr. McCarthy stated that the \$104,000 is the step and level increases. The current budget is not sufficient, and the School Department is running into trouble now and that will be discussed at the end. Ms. Hunter stated that transportation, sick leave buyback, longevity, supplies, are areas that are crucial right now. That is the other \$100,000 plus.

Selectman Maksy stated that he needs to see a breakdown to make sure that the Town and Schools are on the same playing field. Mr. McCarthy explained that there are things in the budget over and above the maintenance and supplies, but it is just not adequate where it is. The School Department will need to make a decision of cutting back another staff member or two to fund some of that money. Mr. Maksy stated that if he were to give the School Department a homework assignment, it would be to put the 2% in first, since that is where we are looking for the whole Town. Mr. McCarthy stated that the School Department is talking about a 2% increase on the base of salaries. If the base is \$38,000, then that is 2% on that. Then, a teacher will get a step and educationally they get different levels. So there are three (3) different types of movement. Steps and levels are contractual and have to be honored. The percentage increase is made through collective bargaining. In FY10 they took no step, but did get \$2,400 on the base for the insurance change. They froze at their current step, and with levels, about a 1/3 way through the school year they moved a level thus saving 1/3 of the level increment. Selectman asked for the School to back out the supplies from the budget so that it can be looked at with just the contractual steps, raises and the 2%.

Selectman Yeatts asked for an explanation for the increase in the grounds and maintenance. Ms. Hunter responded that she shaved it really deep last year. The School has avoided costs by having cooperative help with the Highway Department. There are so many unpredictable factors that she may not be able to make it through the end of the year with the current budget. Selectman Yeatts stated that discussion had taken place before about privatizing the janitorial service, and she would feel better if she knew that all these things are being explored so that maybe money can be saved to then save teachers. Ms. Hunter stated that since the School is so small, it may turn out like the privatizing of the SPED vans, it will cost less to do in-house. If there are cuts planned, the School has no place to start. Right now the School is out of compliance in

substantially separate classroom settings. The numbers are growing in the classes, since the classes are so large. There will be 30 students in grade one. The middle layer of people is gone. To have lost so many paras and other support, that has made a huge difference in what we cannot do for kids, the nursing situation, etc. The anxiety of taking another cut is huge.

Selectman Maksy stated that, as a Town, it is \$780,000 in the red right now. Mr. McCarthy stated that, depending on where Chapter 70 comes in and Net School Funding, we are anticipating a cut at the Region of \$1.5 million. The Region still is in a better position to help, compared with both the locals (Freetown and Lakeville), but it will become more challenging, and he has to look at all three (3). The Region is in a better position to help, but that is getting more difficult in this budget. They will have to vote on the SPED positions that they have in each of the schools. Mr. Ward added that transportation has not come in from the State; it will come in two (2) more increments. It is at 56% now and was budgeted at 50% and 4% reduction in Chapter 70 monies. Mr. McCarthy stated that the School Department is starting to project revenues and where it will be at the end of this fiscal year. They are looking at the Excess & Deficiency (E&D) account and how much will come over from that.

Mr. McCarthy stated that they have been looking for the language regarding the split for Administrative Services-Region 60%-Lakeville Elementary 20% and Freetown Elementary 20%. Ms. McRae stated that it is in the Superintendent's agreement. Mr. McCarthy stated that they are still looking for it and know it must be out there somewhere. Selectman Maksy explained that the SPED costs were talked about at the last meeting of the Finance Committee. Is it possible that the School Department can put that all together and start a program? It would be nice to be similar to Freetown. Roll it into your whole number so that the number is in the Local Schools, and per student, looks the same. Can we do that and add the \$113,000 and the \$48,000 and actually work on a program? Ms. Hunter responded that they have been looking at that. The difficulty is the grouping of the students. The students are in substantially separate categories and can only be grouped together in particular settings. The students that are out of district are isolated in their needs and cannot be put into the same program. SPED costs have been going up, and the Local Elementary budget has been going down. If when fully regionalized, the two (2) towns might collectively build some programming and there is the incentive. If you want to build an intermediate step, we can speak with Anne St. Pierre and see if there is a possibility to build that in there. Mr. Maksy stated that he thought they could present it that way. All the Finance Committee was thinking about was just moving the SPED costs into the Local School budget. Mr. McCarthy responded that it is an intriguing thought, and it is worth looking at, but everyone needs to be cautious that it does what you want it to do, of being more efficient with SPED funds. We all know that a student moving into the district with large needs could add \$100-\$200,000 to the budget. Mr. Maksy stated that there is no accountability right now and this would put that on the School Department. Further discussion took place on the topic.

Mr. McCarthy distributed a letter to the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen regarding the anticipated deficit for FY 10. The letter request is really to address what is an anticipated shortfall for FY10, certainly things may break our way with no unanticipated maintenance or leaves of absence, but there is a potential of there being a \$25,023.73 shortfall. We hope it is lower than that, or that we finish the year in the black. Mr. Ward explained that Ms. Hunter came to him with this in January. They carved away everything, and in January we were \$3,000 in the black, but that did not hold. They waited another month and it was worse, so he ran the anticipated expenses again, and this is what it would be. Fuel is one of the items that was looked at, and there may be some savings there. He keeps track of what is being used at Assawompset by looking back at FY 08, he then breaks it out in gallon usage. He looks at the prices of oil daily. Selectman Maksy stated that the Town would need a warrant article for that amount, or actually, the Town can do a transfer. Mr. Ward stated that he needs a directive if that is going to happen. Otherwise, they will have to lay off staff members. Selectman Maksy stated that he needed to speak with the Town Administrator on how to structure that, but the Town does not know about snow and ice, and what is going on this year

with that. Selectman Yeatts stated that she is not saying the Town has the money, but the hard part was done last year with the 20% cut. Ms. Hunter stated that she has had 700 students in the school before. Not having the staff supports for them is what is making it very difficult.

Mr. McCarthy stated that he understood that the Town is trying to help as much as it can and that is really appreciated. The Town needs to know that that is being seen at the School Department. We do have hard work in front of us, but what we have in place is not sustainable. Financially the model (as whole) does not sustain itself and something has to change in a major way, and it needs to happen statewide and nationwide. It is happening everywhere with just keeping level services you are going no where. Mr. Mansfield stated that this will not be an immediate turnaround like we have seen in other recessions. It will be slow and a growth process. Mr. McCarthy added that the Regionalization between the Towns will help temporarily, but the structural problem still needs to be addressed with education, and we are not doing that. It will take the State and the teachers unions, etc. We will try and lead the change and put it out there. It has to be a collective effort to get a quality program and sustain it over time.

The Local School Committee adjourned their meet at 8:25 PM and left the meeting.

### **Other Business**

It was noted that on March 24<sup>th</sup> the School Department will be having a meeting on “How to win an override”. Should they be using public property to be holding a forum for an override? Selectman Yeatts stated that she will have a decision in writing by tomorrow since she put something in writing to the State about that, herself personally. She stated that she needs to confirm with the State in writing that they can do it. They did ask if there would be equal access, meaning that an anti override group could also be hosting a meeting in the same building.

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Mike Petruzzo and seconded by Melissa Hopkins, the Finance Committee

VOTED: To adjourn their meeting at 8:31 PM.  
Unanimous in favor.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Yeatts, and with Chairman Maksy stepping down to second and stepping back up to vote, the Board

VOTED: To adjourn their meeting at 8:32 PM.  
Unanimous in favor.