

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
APRIL 4, 2006 7:00 PM

The Board of Selectmen held a meeting on April 4, 2006 at 7:00 PM at the Lakeville Public Library. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM by Chairman Hurd. Present for the meeting were Selectman Hurd, Selectman LaCamera, Selectman Yeatts, Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator and Tracie Craig, Executive Assistant.

Also present from the Finance Committee were Martha Weeks Green, Richard Velez, Gary Mansfield, Steven Olivier and Robert Hill. Members from the Lakeville School Committee were Lorraine Carboni and Robert Canessa; Cynthia Benard, Lakeville representative, Regional School Committee; Dr. Stephen Furtado, Superintendent of Schools, Lou Rodriques of the Regional School Department; Jean Fox, Freetown representative, Regional School Committee and Cynthia McRae, Town Accountant.

Review FY07 Regional Budget

Dr. Furtado said that the transportation bid has come in, and he has tweaked a few other lines in the budget, but there is not a significant difference. Selectman LaCamera asked about the different scenarios. The one that was approved by the School Committee, dated February 15, 2006, was that Sheet 4? Dr. Furtado said it was Sheet #3. He noted that he has had one meeting with some of the Freetown Selectmen and Finance Committee members and a final meeting hopefully Thursday night. Lakeville has continued to support the original stated number. We are currently under the assumption that we would be receiving \$140,000 less from Freetown than what was requested. The total requested difference is \$174,156. What we will also be doing is using some funds from the interest account for the high school and middle school building projects to offset the difference to \$174,156. This is the best case scenario. Ms. Green asked what he was reducing. Dr. Furtado said legal fees and software, but no personnel. This would impact some of the computer purchases.

Dr. Furtado said Scenario 2 shows the difference between the first and second scenario and goes up \$300,000, with transportation increasing. Scenario 3 uses a minimum of \$1.6 million; it shows a \$516,561 decrease in the budget, adding in the \$104,000. All of these scenarios factor in that we will be receiving Freetown's appropriate money. The next page shows the amount of money \$4,960,000 that they are recommending. \$126,166 from Lakeville based on the split. \$831,306 plus the \$104,000 we have already decreased. On the back page, I am showing you some of the ideas we would decrease for a total of \$516,561. However, the Regional School Committee has not seen this yet. We tried to decrease from places in the budget that would not impact staff, but at the same time we are reducing text books in all schools, all computers, library books, writing, software, athletic transportation, electricity, and SPED afternoon class. It is our first pass. We do know it will get serious if Freetown recommends \$4,960,000 which will force us to prepare for the decreases. We won't be providing staff with materials, supplies, textbooks and computers. Mr. Mansfield said this would have a major impact on programs. Dr. Furtado stated that we have had a serious request for science textbooks in the middle school due to MCAS and languages at the high school. We may need to consider fees to transport athletes. Mr. Mansfield asked if these decreases would affect accreditation. Dr. Furtado said yes. Mr. Mansfield and Ms. Weeks Green stated this is unacceptable. Dr. Furtado said the Regional School Committee has discussed that they could use some of the \$1.6 million

to help offset the decrease, but that is not going to be the end all. We need \$5.1 million from Freetown or we are heading towards a Joint Town Meeting. Because of the timing, I need to notify all staff by June 15 that they may pink slip (non professional staff). This is a precaution to protect ourselves. We are hoping for better news from Freetown. If we were to use the money out of the \$1.6 million, it would be used to fund capital expenses(textbooks and computers). We are trying to come up with the most creative ways to make this work. This budget does not contain any new staff or new programming; it is a maintenance budget. We have heard the requests from all the buildings, there is a serious bubble in the 5th grade coming up. I don't expect good news from Freetown.

Selectman LaCamera stated that in Scenario #3 there is a \$516,000 deficit; you could take part of the \$1.6 million to cover that shortfall. If Freetown decides not to match our funding, that would mean reductions in staff. We do not want any reductions in staff or programs and absolutely no fees. I look at the numbers on the sheet attached recommending cuts. Most of the items on the list are one shot deals. Ms. Weeks Green said this budget has been gone over and over in the past four years; any fat has been excised years ago. There is nothing left to cut that won't damage the students. I won't support any further cuts. Dr. Furtado said when the principals came to us; we were clear, no new staff. It does show you the need for additional staff and capital expenditures. We have to be prepared for the worst case scenario with an eye on the May 1st Freetown meeting and May 8th for Lakeville with consideration of a Joint Town Meeting. I will have to make some serious recommendations to the Region to cut an additional \$300,000 out of the budget for a worst case budget. I would have to cut staff. There is no fluff. Selectman LaCamera said even with the best scenario, the 5th grade bubble will still not be addressed. Dr. Furtado said staff wide this is a level staff budget. This does not address any enrollment increases or programming or core selection needs at the high school. This is a stay put budget. Mr. Velez said this is a step back, treading water. Selectman LaCamera said Senator Menard said the Senate gives more money than the Governor, right now we are looking at 69% reimbursement, it might go to 76% but we don't know that yet. Dr. Furtado said we will let you know on Friday what Freetown says. Selectman LaCamera said that he was sure the Finance Committee will support \$5,021,897.25.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Velez, seconded by Mr. Mansfield, the Finance Committee:

VOTED: To approve a budget for the School Department of \$5,922,009.27, which includes \$600,112.02 excluded debt.
Unanimous vote.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Yeatts, seconded by Selectman LaCamera, the Board:

VOTED: To support a budget for the School Department of \$5,922,009.27, which includes \$600,112.092 excluded debt.
Unanimous vote.

Review FY06 Town Budget-Lakeville

Selectman LaCamera said that the Town is finalizing the numbers for FY06. At the last meeting, we spoke about deficits that we needed to cover for 06. They are pretty much identified in the right hand column, snow and ice, special education deficit of \$23,000, legal expense

deficit of \$30,000, unemployment for an employee at Assawompset of \$18,000 and a deficit in health insurance costs for the school of \$12,000 for a \$175,000 total. The left column are the accounts we will transfer from. We will still have to look at a few places to get some more, but aren't really worried about it. We are asking for \$20,000 from the Assawompset budget. Based on a conversation with Dr. Furtado, we feel that there is \$28,000 available, asking to transfer \$20,000 from Assawompset budget. Ms. Carboni said we will be speaking about that tomorrow. When we went through the process on the charge backs, we figured out there are some that affects this year.

Review FY07 Local School Budget (including special Ed)

Selectman LaCamera said that the Selectmen we will go into more detail tomorrow night at the Finance Committee meeting on the Local School budget. On the first page are the revenue summaries. Instead of \$300,000, our free cash came in at \$525,000. That is the major difference in the numbers. We are still using the same state aid and new growth numbers. Ms. Weeks Green asked if he was comfortable with the overlay surplus. Selectman LaCamera said yes. All of the budgets are the same, but the Town Administrator has adjusted a few. The Fire Department was reduced by \$10,000. We have eliminated the Vision Contract from the Assessor's Office. We are all set with Old Colony. On the same page with Special Needs, we thought it would be \$20,000 less, but \$452,000 is the correct number for special needs. For Vocational Education, we will continue to budget \$136,000. The difference in the Elementary School budget is the \$385,000 increase. Dr. Furtado said there is a change in the handout in the Lakeville budget: on the second page, the Intermediate School, text math cross that out and that is a part professional, moving from 4th grade to the Region. Selectman LaCamera said that the budget that Dr. Furtado has here reflects the corrections to the chargeback and rental income credit for GRAIS, which is \$468,000. There was a reduction in bus transportation for fourth grade students of \$42,000, for a \$126,000 difference between what was requested. We had previously offered \$300,000, now we are giving \$385,000, and we need \$41,000.

Selectman LaCamera noted the cuts on the second page: computer attendance, salary MCAS (MCAS tutor) kindergarten and general supplies, no shuttle (bus to go from Ted Williams to the school for events due to no parking); Exp. Inst. Tech, van driver, transportation and equipment for custodian for a total of \$115,101. The budget is right to the penny. Ms. Hunter noted that the shuttle from for Ted Williams was subsidized by the Parent Teacher Organization last year, but not in the future.

Ms. Garbitt asked about the transportation to the Intermediate School. Mr. Rodriques said there is a \$23,100 saving between \$47,000 last year and \$23,900 for the coming year. Dr. Furtado said other reductions were made in math textbooks, supplies and fuel. Mr. Velez asked how the fuel was reduced. Dr. Furtado responded that it was a roll of the dice. Ms. Carboni said that a public hearing is needed on the local budget. Ms. Hunter noted that there are two special needs students coming in as kindergarten. They will need two ½ time aids, the students are twins. If those positions don't get funded, she will be borrowing from other programs.

Review FY07 Capital Plan

Mr. Velez said there are two (2) issues that were on the table: two (2) special needs vans and infrastructure for Assawompset, roof and modifications looking to be made. The difficulty

with the infrastructure repairs, roof flooring, etc. was we ran into a problem with timing. The State has changed the process prioritizing who gets what money. Now it is a statewide thing, they put your wish list into a hat, and they come out with a report that says what they will give on the projects. Timing is a problem because before that prioritization is made by the State, we will have had our Town Meeting. In anticipation of having the State address our needs, we figured the best thing to do would be to put in the \$400,000 figure, contingent upon approval by the State to support our requests. We felt it was the most prudent thing to do instead of waiting for another cycle. The special needs vans are beat up and need replacement. Selectman LaCamera said that the State has done a need analysis already of Assawompset. We do not have the results back yet. That will categorize whether the repairs are a safety issue. We don't want to hold a Special Town Meeting just for a roof. The roof has to be done within the next two (2) years, no matter what. If we don't start the process now, we won't be able to get it done in the summer of 2007.

Ms. Weeks Green asked if the roof and vans count towards net school spending. Ms. McRae said it is short term borrowing and it can count. Selectman LaCamera said we have the replacement now for the special needs van, schedule for two (2) this year and one every year after. Mr. Canessa asked if the roof is done by the Town before it is funded, we won't get the money from the State? Selectman LaCamera said he thought that if the Town puts the money up and pays for it, it's gone. The guidelines are supposed to come out in May and he is hoping for some reimbursement. One section was done four (4) years ago, which was financed for five (5) years. Ms. Garbitt said the borrowing is up this year. Mr. Mansfield said he didn't see anything for maintenance of the police station; some serious money will have to be invested into this building if we don't build a new one. Selectman LaCamera said we have a Request for Proposals ready for design specs, after Town Meeting, we will go out to bid and form a committee to look at this. Mr. Mansfield stated there are problems, even in the short time; minimum repairs should be budgeted for. Selectman LaCamera said major repair greater than \$10,000 go into the capital budget. Mr. Mansfield said we should look at the cost to bring it to a reasonable level over time; it is getting worse rather than better.

At this time, the Finance Committee asked to reorganize.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Weeks Green, seconded by Mr. Mansfield, the Finance Committee:

VOTED: To appoint Richard Velez as Chairman.
Unanimous vote.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Mansfield, with Chairman Velez stepping down to second, the Finance Committee:

VOTED: To appoint Martha Weeks Green as Vice Chair.
Unanimous vote.

Continue Review FY07 Capital Plan

Mr. Velez questioned the difference in the numbers between the requests and what was recommended. Ms. Garbitt said that the Selectmen are taking a couple of the requests out of the

Capital Plan and including them in the operating budget. Ms. Weeks Green asked if this is the exact amount that the Fire Department came in for in 06. We need to see what they are looking for and what the Town is saying we will plug in. Ms. Garbitt said she did meet with the Fire Chief. Selectman LaCamera said for the Highway dump truck in the amount of \$120,000, Roger did go out and get estimates, then we will go out to bid and it could be less. Ms. Weeks Green said she had heard from some department heads they have requested things that have not gone into the Capital Plan. Not the amount recommended; the actual items. Ms. Garbitt said that last year they were not all recommended. This year we discussed with Park and Fire what we could fund. Ms. Weeks Green said she would like to see everything that is requested. Selectman LaCamera said nothing got eliminated that he remembered. Ms. Weeks Green asked about the lights for the fields at Ted Williams Camp. Mr. Hill said nothing was eliminated from the Park's request. Mr. Velez noted that they have come to an understanding for cruisers.

Selectman LaCamera said priorities are based on projected funding. We moved the School study to 08 before we found out what the State said. Ms. Weeks Green said in the first year there were questions regarding things that were left out. Department heads are only asking on what is planned on being funded. Selectmen LaCamera said the \$30,000 four wheel drive truck for the fire truck is in there. Norbert Fredette spent a lot of time on the Highway Department's needs last year. Mr. Mansfield asked if we should put in a new building under police. Ms. Garbitt said it is under General Government. Mr. Velez asked about the septic system at Clear Pond. Selectman LaCamera responded that when the Park Commission and Selectmen looked at upgrading the restrooms, we got a preliminary design. The Title 5 test said it was borderline; it needs to be replaced. Roger Hamilton will do some of the work, but we need to hire a contractor. The septic system is 30 years old. Mr. Mansfield agreed that the system is inadequate. Ms. Weeks Green asked if the old library renovation includes the septic system? Selectman LaCamera said yes, it includes the septic system and maybe replacement windows and roof repairs, but this is not being done unless it is leased.

Mr. Mansfield asked if any of these assume federal grants going forward. Ms. Garbitt said we will apply for a federal grant in 08 for the fire truck. Selectman LaCamera said the only other grant money would be for the roof for Assawompset. No other grant money is available. Ms. Garbitt said the Highway's multi purpose truck has increased from \$85,000 to \$120,000 as they need a larger gross vehicle weight. Ms. Weeks Green asked if the truck would be used for the Highway and Park Departments; Ms. Garbitt said yes, in addition, it can be used with a sander. Ms. Garbitt noted that there was \$8,200 budgeted for the Park Department for a tractor rake; we have added it to the Highway budget. Mr. Mansfield asked if there was a gifts and grant account for the Animal Shelter. Ms. Garbitt said yes, but she uses some of that money for veterinary expenses.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Mansfield, seconded by Ms. Weeks Green, the Finance Committee:

VOTED: To accept the Capital Plan as presented.
Unanimous vote.

Selectman LaCamera said that the Selectmen feel good about these numbers; the budgets are good. The revenue numbers and budget expenses are solid. We were a little more conservative on cost estimates for health insurance. We increased it by 12%; which we feel is a

good number. Ms. Garbitt stated that Gateway Health Group voted to increase rates no higher than 11.7%. We did a comparison to our rates; our health insurance would be \$110,000 more this year if we were with Plymouth County. Ms. Garbitt said regarding the LDC debt, this is the last year for the Ted Williams Camp payment. We will take \$17,990 from the stabilization account until the last lot in the Industrial Park is sold. Ms. Mansfield believed there is around a \$100,000 balance. Selectman LaCamera said we will put the money back once the lot is sold. Ms. Weeks Green said the process is a little easier with no discretionary spending. Selectman LaCamera noted there is a lot of cooperation between the Boards. They put realistic budgets together. Ms. Garbitt said our free cash is a testament to our discipline. Mr. Olivier said all parties did an excellent job and the budget seems a lot easier this year.

Discussion regarding ambulance personnel hours

Selectman LaCamera spoke about the request of the Finance Committee to the Fire Chief for an analysis of the personnel for the ambulances. The information that was asked for, some of it is easy to provide, but you need to come up with a model of how you want us to calculate the costs. Some of it can be complicated and we don't want to create an analysis like that. Ms. Weeks Green said that the Finance Committee wants a breakdown on labor regarding the number of hours worked on the ambulance. Selectman LaCamera said the tough part is the different levels of peoples' pay, their qualifications, paramedics versus EMTs. Unfortunately you never know when the calls are going to come in. If on a shift change, two (2) guys show up, two (2) guys are now on, now you have to pay overtime for the two (2) guys on the road. Mr. Mansfield said we understand, but there has to be some way to get a figure of the number of hours personnel spend on the ambulance. Selectman LaCamera said say an ambulance call is two (2) hours; they have to stay there at Morton Hospital. Ms. Weeks Green asked if they write this on their time card. I thought that when a clerk came in this would be addressed. Selectman LaCamera said the clerk isn't there 24/7. They have medical reports that they fill out. If we did that and the call was two (2) hours, how do we put a price tag on that?

Mr. Velez said there are a number of variables on each call depending on the level of care. Ms. Weeks Green asked does the pay rate change. Selectman LaCamera responded it could. Ms. Weeks Green asked how do we know how many hours the employee worked that day? Mr. Mansfield asked if there is differential in his pay. Ms. Weeks Green said it is a flat rate plus paramedic incentive. Ms. Weeks Green asked if this is based on individual time. Mr. Velez said that part of the difficulty that we are having is that there are inventory maintenance budgets affected by replacement gear, there is some documentation existing somewhere to trigger all these things. What is baffling is how we can be generating so much data, but not getting any information out of it. Selectman LaCamera said we will try to give you something. Mr. Mansfield said maybe we are missing something. Mr. Velez said it is helpful to have a sense of how much information is being tracked. Mr. Mansfield said the main discussion is payroll. Seems to me that there are not a lot of differential within each individual firefighter. The number of calls is not excessive to make the time of calls. Selectman LaCamera said it is easy to come up with the expenses for the ambulance. If we administer drugs, we have to submit that to get reimbursed, which we do. Mr. Mansfield said from what he understood the big issue is where the payroll is being assessed: to the Fire Department or to the ambulance. Selectman LaCamera said to the Fire Department. Ms. Weeks Green said there should be some way to work on the ambulance figures. Mr. Olivier said we had to hire paramedics and EMT's when AMR left. That is the tradeoff, you incur costs to have paramedics and EMT's when we need them. The

benefit is that they are there when we need them and get to bill the insurance companies for some of the costs. Mr. Velez said we know they are balancing out, but there is no place that we can see that it works out. We can't prove that it pays for itself.

Selectman LaCamera said prior to taking the ambulance in house, we would always send out the rescue truck, which was really an ambulance, maybe stabilize the patient and then AMR would transport the patient. We got there before AMR did. In the last five or ten years, the number of fires has gone down. Very rarely do we have major house fires. The Fire Department does not respond to as many fire calls. Ms. Weeks Green said in 2005, the average personnel cost for the ambulance was \$40,000, if we take the chief out it is \$580,000 in salary. Selectman LaCamera said that does not seem right. Ms. Weeks Green said the question is: did we actually make that much money? Ms. Garbitt said we went into two (2) months and took the calls and figured it out for two (2) months. Ms. Weeks Green said the number of hours at this rate, overtime rates; it's not that difficult to figure out. Selectman LaCamera said don't forget about the shift of personnel. Mr. Mansfield asked if the Fire personnel had timecards. Selectman LaCamera said yes, but they are not sophisticated. Ms. Weeks Green asked how many hours they are working on the ambulance and what are they being paid. Mr. Velez said there are cascading costs that this call creates. Selectman LaCamera said that car accidents are the problem. Ms. Weeks Green asked if the 600 calls include inspections. Ms. Garbitt said no, just ambulance. Mr. Velez said each call is unique and some are not reimbursable. Selectman LaCamera said if we don't transport, it's not reimbursable. Mr. Olivier noted that the AMR contract would cost more today, not \$30,000. Selectman LaCamera said that we are getting all the costs reimbursed from the insurance company, plus the Town fee. Mr. Olivier said we are going to pay for that paramedic; we are still going to break even. Selectman LaCamera said the response time is very very good. Ms. Weeks Green said she is not questioning the quality of the service, just for information that the Finance Committee has been asking for four (4) years.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Mansfield, seconded by Mr. Hill, the Finance Committee:

VOTED: To adjourn at 8:45 PM.
Unanimous vote.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Yeatts, with Selectman LaCamera seconding, the Board:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:45 PM.
Unanimous vote.