

**TOWN OF LAKEVILLE**  
**Board of Selectmen/Finance Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 9, 2017 – 7:00 PM**

On May 9, 2017, 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 Powderly at 7:00 PM. Selectmen present were: Selectman Powderly, Selectman Hollenbeck and Selectman Burke. Also present was Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator. LakeCAM was recording the meeting.

Finance Committee Chairman Vlahopoulos called the Finance Committee to order at 7:00 PM. Members present were George Vlahopoulos, Joseph Flemming, Katherine Desrosiers, Ryan Trahan, and Daniel Holland.

**Meet with Department Heads to review their FY18 Budget Requests**

**7:00 PM Board of Library Trustees**

*Jamie Viveiros, Library Director and Nancy LaFave, Richard LaCamera and Ruth Gross, Library Trustees were present for the discussion.* Ms. Viveiros stated that the budget represents what would be needed for FY18, taking into account step increases. Since union negotiations are underway, the budget contains FY17 wage rates. Some information was provided by Ms. Viveiros regarding things that are going on in terms of staffing at the Library midway through FY18. It is hoped to increase staff hours. So far the feedback has been positive. The expense lines are basically staying the same. Electricity was increased a bit, along with heating, based on past spending. Monies were moved from some line item accounts into buildings and grounds.

Chairman Powderly asked what the reimbursement was from the State. Ms. Viveiros responded that it was approximately \$17,000. The State requires a 2.5% increase in the budget, and this budget reflects that. There are requirements for libraries regarding the amount of hours that the Library is open to the community, expenditures of the total budget with materials, etc. in order to receive State aid. Based on tonight's budget, the Library has to expend 16% on materials, which is approximately \$56,000. Chairman Powderly noted that the money for grounds keeping seems to be large. Mr. LaCamera asked if the \$8,000 was set aside for irrigation. There had been \$350,000 raised, which was used to purchase computers, furniture and do landscaping for the Library. \$5,000 was used to clean up the landscaping. Chairman Powderly noted that there is approximately \$30,000 left, minus the \$5,000 used for landscaping. What is the plan for using those funds? There was also a significant donation from Mr. Savas, has that been used. Has Mr. Savas been provided an annual report? Mr. LaCamera explained that the original fund was \$25,000. In order to use it, what was needed had to exceed \$50,000. This took place last fall. Money used for programs that will be implemented this summer.

Selectman Hollenbeck mentioned previous discussions regarding landscaping and custodial costs. Through the Town Facilities budget, two (2) new part-time Custodians are being added. The Library has its own line item, but how does that impact State aid, what has to be spent State aid, and is it better to come from the Library budget? However, that would impact the Library requesting funds from the facilities budget. Ms. Viveiros stated that she would have to examine

the figures to see if it was taken out. Is this being proposed? Selectman Hollenbeck stated that she was just asking if it would make a difference. Ms. Viveiros responded that it may not; the 16% figure is basically to make sure that libraries are keeping up their collections. We would probably be spending that amount anyway between materials and programming. Any technology replacements, materials and other costs come out of that, but there is not a lot left over at the end of the year.

Selectman Burke gave further explanation about the line item fund established under the direction and control of the Building Commissioner for buildings and grounds. We don't want each Department to eliminate this line item from their budget completely. Having this other fund will allow for Department Heads to know that they have some resources to handle issues, such as typical maintenance of the building. This line item in the Library's budget has increased from \$6,500 to \$10,500. Will that help address anything on the building? Selectman Burke stated that if the Library needs anything related to the maintenance of the building, make sure that Mr. Darling is aware of it. Mr. LaCamera stated that the reason that particular line item is increasing is to maintain some of the landscaping that has not been maintained. A clean up should take place every spring and fall and weeding done throughout the year. To keep up with it, it is approximately eight (8) hours a week. Chairman Powderly suggested that the Superintendent of Streets be made aware of this. Selectman Burke stated that it is a totally reasonable request to put the money where it is needed. Ms. LaFave stated that the retention ponds need to be cleared. Ms. Garbitt noted that the retention ponds work would be through the Highway Department. She added that letters of interest have been received for seasonal workers, and hiring will start soon. Mr. LaCamera stated that weed whacking needs to be done around the Library after it is mowed.

### **7:20 PM Veterans Agent**

*Wil Corey, Veterans Agent, was present for the discussion.* Chairman Powderly noted that the Agent is basically asking for a level funded budget. His salary line has a level and a step change. Mr. Corey provided a handout about Chapter 115 which goes back to 1916 with the French and Indian war. It was established to make sure that Veterans and their families would be taken care of. Massachusetts is the only State that does this. The State benefits help people putting in disability claims, pensions, and hospitalizations through the Veterans Administration. Chairman Powderly asked about the general reimbursement received back from medical claims? Mr. Corey stated that what is submitted to the State is 75% reimbursable. Ms. Garbitt asked if 75% is reimbursable of medical or medical and dental. Mr. Corey responded that it is medical, dental and fuel. Ms. Garbitt said that the Town received back \$76,000 as a reimbursement, but that is not 75%. Selectman Hollenbeck noted that it was the \$106,000. Chairman Powderly stated that it needs to be determined that the Town is getting reimbursed appropriately. Mr. Corey noted that there are some reimbursements that come back at 100%. Ms. Garbitt noted that \$147,923 should be the correct amount of reimbursements.

### **Old Business**

Selectman Hollenbeck stated that she had a discussion today with Chairman Vlahopoulos regarding the School Budget. Chairman Vlahopoulos stated that he had concerns of how things

are proceeding with the School Budget. The Schools always ask for more money, and now the Town is not conceding. There may be a need to have an override next year. However, what can be done this year to meet them halfway? It is understood that Freetown would have to be in agreement as well. The Town does have the means to provide additional funds. Selectman Burke stated that the School Department does this every year. They say that the sky is falling, but it is not really falling. It is due to mistakes they make. They find themselves in a hole every four (4) to five (5) years from poor decisions or things beyond their control. An override is what needs to take place to correct that. That is a political decision that the School Committee makes. If they want to decimate the School District, they can by laying off Elementary School Teachers or whomever they want to make everyone panic. It is a cycle; the Finance Committee needs to remain objective. Mr. Holland asked about the history of overrides? Selectman Hollenbeck stated that there had been an override about four (4) years ago. Chairman Powderly explained that some of the overrides have been for facilities, and there was also a technology override. However, 85% of the budget is steps, levels, and health insurance. The request is \$875,000, and the two (2) Towns give them \$1million. The School Department has to change something. Everyone is encouraged to attend the School Committee Meetings. The money the Schools ask for is double and triple the amount that the Town has available. It would be short sighted of the Board to take from any of its other accounts. If the School Department is running low in its Excess & Deficiency (E&D) account, they panic. They need to change their budget or ask for an override. Whether the Selectmen agree to provide more or not, that is another thing.

Selectman Burke stated that a contract cannot be negotiated in a vacuum and believe that it will not have any impact, which the School Department does. Mr. Flemming stated that he “didn’t drink the Kool-Aid”, but he sees the School Department lining up the kart before it is paid. Based on his union background, contracts should be renegotiated, especially if there is not enough money in the kitty. Selectman Burke stated that the School Committee is supposed to negotiate the contracts; however, they seem to just agree to the terms to close the contract. To be a successful negotiator, they need to have an awareness of the sustainability for the Town and its long term plan with respect to the budget. However, there is no dialogue between them with the Town. Perhaps it is the culture of the relationship with Schools and Towns. Regional districts are unique; they typically do not have the same relationship. There has been a history of one town being played against another, so it is an advantage for the two (2) Towns to get together and be on the same page. If Lakeville decides to give money and Freetown says no, then that is the end of it. The Town does not know what the split will be from year to year.

Selectman Hollenbeck noted that the debt exclusion for the technology override will end this year. If fewer students attend Old Colony Regional Vocational School, Lakeville’s contribution will most likely go up. If enrollment declines, Lakeville has less of an assessment and its contribution increases. We shared with Freetown last night that Lakeville is providing \$449,000 to the Regional Schools and \$122,000 to Old Colony, which is a total of \$570,000 for education. That is \$60,000 over the 2.5% guaranteed increase. The Board needs to keep in mind the sustainability of the Town. If the Stabilization Account is used, then what needs to be done for the Town over the long run will not take place? The long term needs to include both the Town and the Schools. If Freetown says no to having a joint Town Meeting, that means 1/12 for the Schools, which is not good for anyone. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that Freetown is giving \$551,000 this year. The education aspect is a huge component, and it is always increasing. It is

not the Selectmen's responsibility to determine what they do with their funding. They have a budget increase that is approximately \$1.2 million. The Town is only bringing in \$510,000, plus some additional receipts, and there may be some one time revenues. The Regional Finance Committee has not been able to meet this year; the meetings kept getting cancelled.

Chairman Powderly stated if the Schools go bankrupt, blame the School Committee. If the Town goes bankrupt, blame the Selectmen. The system is the problem. Selectman Burke stated that the Regional Finance Subcommittee was designed to give everyone a voice, the Selectmen, the Finance Committees and the School Committee. However, they are not meeting and that is too bad. Chairman Powderly added that since the system is broken, the Town cannot pour more money at it without fixing the system. State aid is consistent, and the Schools are not changing their cost structure. Selectman Burke noted that there are certain Best Practices they can adopt to be as efficient as possible. Ms. Garbitt stated that in 2010, two (2) override options were presented at Town Meeting. The vote passed 477 to 5 at Town Meeting. However, the vote failed at the polls. The Town had to cut from the Police and Fire Departments, and the Town is just getting back to restoring those Departments. Chairman Vlahopoulos stated that the School Department is talking about \$800,000-\$1 million in cuts. Looking at the "easiest" spot to take the funds is to cut teachers. Selectman Hollenbeck agreed that the easiest way to get to this amount would be to cut a teacher from each Elementary Grade, but those decisions need to come from the School Committee. The Town has still increased their budget; they are getting an additional \$1 million plus this year. They choose where to apply it. There are other options for them, but reducing teachers is the only option provided to the Board. They did add 17 paraprofessionals in between the budget year two (2) years ago. Then they added another eight (8) more. The Finance Committee is encouraged to dig into the details. The School Department can certainly find areas to cut, like not replacing retiring teachers.

#### **7:40 PM Council on Aging Director**

*Kelly Conway, Council on Aging Director, was present for the discussion.* Chairman Powderly asked if there is any proposed change in head count. Ms. Conway stated that there has been an increase of senior citizens. She is looking for another part time person, since it is extremely busy. The Council on Aging is averaging 36 people per day, which means that there is an average of 36 people being serviced through Meals on Wheels, phone calls, people coming in, etc. The three (3) busiest days have brought in 54 people. There are two (2) full time and one (1) part time employee at the Senior Center. We are on track for servicing 11,000 people this year in one way or another. That is a lot for the amount of people in the office. Having another part-time person would allow there to be a full time person at the reception window. It is hoped that the Selectmen and Finance Committee would support a bit more help in the office.

Chairman Powderly noted that the only additional request is an 18 hour person. Ms. Conway stated that the regular budget had decreased by about \$5,000 by re-categorizing things. Chairman Powderly noted that no employees were added last year. He asked what the percentage increase was of people coming through the door compared to last year. Ms. Conway responded that she didn't have those numbers; however, but the population of Lakeville is 11,000, and the Senior Center is servicing 2,700, which is about ¼ of the population. She will start tracking that. Over the last four (4) years, the numbers have subtly come up. The Senior

Center has also been reaching out to people. Selectman Hollenbeck asked about the part-time person. Ms. Conway stated that she is five (5) hours a week, being paid for through a grant. The Senior Center is refunded this expense each year. Selectman Hollenbeck asked if that position would be in addition to the 18 hour clerk request. Ms. Conway responded that it would be in addition. The grant is for one more year. When the grant runs out she will shift around services and the duties will probably go to the Clerk. Chairman Powderly asked about volunteers. Ms. Conway responded that there are a lot of volunteers, and the Senior Center continues to reach out for more. There are over 80 volunteers who accomplish the Meals on Wheels, medical rides, making meals, etc. However, it would be helpful to have someone trained on staff to handle all the issues that come through the door. Selectman Hollenbeck asked if additional GATRA van rides are anticipated. Ms. Conway noted that while van rides are up, there is only one (1) driver for one (1) van. The van is very busy each day and is maxed out. Selectman Hollenbeck suggested to maybe reduce it by \$1,000, as it may not have much of an impact. Chairman Powderly stated that all their expenses basically went down. They are only really looking to add a part-time person.

### **8:00 PM Cemetery Commissioners**

Ms. Garbitt stated that Mr. Beal will not be attending. However, she could speak to the Cemetery Budget. Chairman Powderly noted that the budget is basically self-explanatory.

### **8:15 PM Town Clerk**

*Lillian Drane, Town Clerk, was present for the discussion.* Ms. Drane stated that there had been a step increase for the Assistant Town Clerk. Expenses have gone up by \$3,190. She is looking to increase her salary by 2%. Ms. Drane stated that she is also asking for \$1,200, which is for the extra responsibilities that have been added to her job. The job is very complex. There was early voting in 2016, which will take place every two (2) years. The State is asking that Towns include Saturdays and Sundays for early voting. The Town Clerks Office was open for an additional 89 hours on its own this year to allow people to vote. It was tremendously challenging. The voting went on during the day on top of the everyday duties. It was close to an additional 40 hours a week. It got done, and it was handled well.

Ms. Drane said she has also been designated the Town's Records Access Officer. There have been 15 Public Requests for Information since January. Public Requests are very time consuming. It can be done; however, it is hoped for some compensation. Also, there are Certifications which the Town Clerk has to have in place. It is hoped that the Selectmen would accept the additional pay to compensate for her Certification, which was obtained in 2013. There are only 103 Certified Town Clerks in the State of Massachusetts. She will be taking the Massachusetts Town Clerk Municipal Certification test after July 1<sup>st</sup>, so she is looking for the Board to allow the additional compensation. Ms. Garbitt mentioned that she had included the information about Ms. Drane's Certification in the Board's budget. Ms. Drane stated that she did not increase her budget and is giving back \$68 to the Town.

Selectman Hollenbeck asked about the status of the dog licensing with the increased fines. Ms. Drane stated that if she collected all the fees, it would be \$2,052, but some are going to

court. There are outstanding fees for 2016 and 2017. It is a State law that dogs need to be licensed.

### **8:30 PM Town Treasurer**

*Debra Kenney, Treasurer/Tax Collector, was present for the discussion.* Ms. Kenney thanked the Board since her Department is fully staffed, and everyone is doing a great job in the office. She did not go up in the budget, but things were moved around. It is hoped to get the Fire Department, Town Clerk and Town Treasurer's Office on Unipay. This would encompass dog licenses, taxes and burn permits. Ms. Garbitt stated that the banking service is free. Ms. Kenney added that the card swiper is \$30 a month. The Fire Chief has people coming in purchasing burning permits with cash and debit cards. Ms. Kenney stated that she has been the Treasurer/Tax Collector for 15 years. If she retires, it would be good to have the compensation in place for certification.

Ms. Garbitt stated that there is a \$1 placeholder for the advertising each year for tax title. Selectman Hollenbeck suggested that there be a real budget for this category, so that a transfer does not have to take place. Selectman Burke noted that there are three (3) Clerks in the office. Ms. Kenney responded that there were and it includes Ms. Dunfy. She is working on an Assistant Treasurer position. There are some new people in place to see how it works out.

### **Discuss FY18 Budget Summary**

Ms. Garbitt stated that the big reduction in the Selectmen's budget is moving the custodian and longevity into the Facilities Budget. The Selectmen will discuss this at their meeting on Thursday. Wages from the 1115 account are being used in part towards a Town Coordinator. Part of the new position has been funded for. The budget is actually being reduced by 18%, but that is the amount moving to the Facilities Budget.

Page 15 is the Finance Committee Budget. The Finance Committee is charged for the printing for Town Meeting. In 2016 it was taken from the Selectmen's Budget. Dues and subscriptions are memberships to the State for handbooks, etc.

Page 16 is the Accounting Office and Payroll. The Clerk moves to the 15 year mark increasing longevity. \$34,000 was taken from Computer Services and put into the Technology Budget. The fee for the Town Accountant has been reduced by \$10,000. Overall there is a decrease of 21%.

Page 23 is Legal Services. This account has been kept within \$40,000. The Personnel Board increased by \$50 due to MMA dues and Fair Labor Standards subscription. Information Technology is a guess; the Request for Proposals is ready to go out. It may be for a Director plus an hourly person, hopefully under \$50,000. After meeting with John Barker, it has been determined what the Town has to pay for maintenance, software and licensing fees of approximately \$41,000. The money from TMLP is under the Town Office budget for telephones. Technology supplies are estimated at \$5,000 and \$30,000 to replace PC's and laptops, so roughly \$200,000.

Chairman Powderly asked what is new. Ms. Garbitt stated that currently \$90,000 is being paid to Dyntec and it is hoped that the figure comes in less. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that there should be a savings on licenses from what the Town is paying to Munis. Ms. Garbitt stated that \$10,500 is paid to maintain the GIS every year. She has been tracking expenditures from each Department for ten (10) months. Overall, it is hoped to be less than what is being spent through all the budgets.

Page 28 is the Planning Board budget of \$50. Page 29 is Zoning Board of Appeals. Their secretary's wages comes out of the secretarial pool. Ads are paid through the agency account.

Page 30 is the Historic Town House. The only change is a sprinkler system, but it was suggested to put \$1,000 in repair and maintenance, since that is an old building. Selectman Hollenbeck suggested to move it to facilities budget.

Page 31 Assessors. Selectman Burke asked if money should be set aside for the move for the Assessors. Ms. Garbitt stated that she will have the Highway Department help with the move. Smaller desks will have to be purchased. The present filing cabinets in the Town Office Building are being categorized. Selectman Burke suggested that money be set aside for the reconfiguring to paint and carpet the rooms. Ms. Garbitt stated that the painting could be absorbed in the maintenance budget. There should not be a need to do any carpeting. The last time it was done was in 1994. Repainting has been discussed with Mr. Darling. Chairman Powderly stated that it should be under \$50,000 to get things done. When will the Assessors building be listed? Ms. Garbitt stated that the Planning Board will be signing the plan. The Request for Proposal is ready, but Town Counsel had some questions about the septic system and the Zoning Board's Appeal Period is not up. The matter is on for Monday night's agenda for the Selectmen.

Selectman Hollenbeck noted that there is a deficit of \$40,000 for Dyntec, but it is really being moved over. Ms. Garbitt stated that it will have to be off set. The Town did well with the heating oil and is spending too much on Dyntec. Ms. Garbitt stated that the Town Reports have been level funded and the Cable TV Advisory Committee is level funded.

Ms. Garbitt stated that she is working on Article 1 of the Special Town Meeting for the transfers with the Town Accountant. The warrants are ready for the Selectmen to vote on. Selectman Burke stated that the presentation should only be one hour. Selectman Hollenbeck suggested holding a meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup> or the Board could go through the budget summary on May 11<sup>th</sup> after the meeting with the Lt. Governor in the History Room at the Library. Then the Board could meet on the 16<sup>th</sup> with the Finance Committee at 6:30 PM.

### **New Business**

There was no new business presented for discussion.

## **Old Business**

*Richard Medeiros, Superintendent of the Lakeville-Freetown Regional Schools, was present for the discussion.* Mr. Medeiros stated that he would like to respond to the “Kool aid and crying” comments. The School Department needs a short term and a long term solution. The sustainability issue is understood. The Schools have to reduce the budget by \$1 million. There are contract obligations, and it is agreed that this cannot be a pattern moving forward. 82% of budget is personnel. If the Boards in Freetown and Lakeville are prepared, the reduction will be done, and it will be devastating. It is understood that negotiating contracts needs to be looked at, but it does not solve the issue now. The funding is misleading, since both Towns have available capacity to support the Schools. Selectman Burke stated that the Board made an agreement with Freetown last night for an amount. Mr. Medeiros stated that the amount was not voted. Saying that an override is the only option is misleading.

Chairman Powderly stated that the Chairman of the School Committee said that to him. Mr. Medeiros said the School Department has been trying to bring a collective of the larger Boards together. A public session was held, and no one showed up. Mr. Medeiros said he was present to represent the kids. As Superintendent, he has a different role. It is also not about pulling teachers, it is about personnel. To meet the current proposed numbers, it has to meet personnel. The Towns are only a month away from their Town Meetings. It may be that everyone has to get together. He cannot recommend reducing the budget by \$1 million in good conscience this year. There are options and it is felt that everyone needs to meet and discuss those options. There is no other mechanism right now. When he spoke to the Finance Committee last Thursday, he told them to be prepared for cuts. He will do the same when he meets with the Freetown Finance Committee. Unless you understand how a High School works, saying that the cuts should come at the secondary level is misguided. The Superintendent will meet with Freetown tomorrow at 7:00 PM. He stated that he is looking for support from the Finance Committee. Obviously there are steps that can be taken in the process; however, he was not here for that with the contract in years 1 and 2. This has been inherited. Representatives of the Board did vote on the contract. Selectman Hollenbeck responded that they had not. The Boards are told of the meetings, but are only told the end result and have no input.

Selectman Burke stated that the point is the disconnect. It is appreciated what is being said, and it is understood what is being asked for. There is an issue and it needs to be worked on, but it needs to be pointed out that there is a cumulative effect to a certain degree. Chairman Vlahopoulos is looking to have the School Department come to them to look for a new way to get out of this in terms of the budget. There are a lot of different layers of politicking. Mr. Medeiros stated that he did not hear any consideration of any movement on the part of either Board last night. Selectman Hollenbeck explained that through the Regional Finance Committee, when that group was meeting, it had the opportunity to at least explore other options. That option isn’t in place this year. It has been difficult this year to understand the finances of the District without those conversations. The Boards are just getting the figures, but not the components. The Selectmen are trying to articulate that the Town is only bringing in \$510,000 of sustained revenue. The Board is still in the process of going through the Department Budgets. The Schools are one huge component of the entire Town budget; however, the Selectmen have to look at all Departments equally before make any decisions. Usually, the Selectmen are further



along in the process, but it has gotten delayed this year. It is curious where the Schools think the additional money is. There are one time funds, the selling of the land on Howland Road and selling the Water Tower, but how does the Board sustain the Town with one time monies. The Board has already had to redirect other funds without decimating other Town Departments.

Mr. Medeiros stated that he agreed that the one time solution would need to be discussed for a long term solution, but there are viable options to discuss before Town Meetings take place. Chairman Powderly stated that the figure should not be a surprise, since the Board provided the formulas. How the figures were arrived at was the same over the past few years; it has not changed. The Board knew that this was going to be a problem when the contracts were negotiated years ago. Mr. Medeiros stated that the Excess & Deficiency would have gone back to the Towns, so if just that amount alone could be looked at and approached in FY18 to meet the School's needs. \$116,000 is expected to be in Excess & Deficiency this year. Sherry Barron stated that it is a domino effect, if the District starts to remove programs. It is known that cutting teachers is not good. The School District will have an additional 80 students next year, and that means more money. Parents will remove kids from the School system, and less State aid will come in when programs are not available. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that with 2,758 students, State aid came in at almost \$11 million. However, there are long term issues. Yes, there will be ramifications, but it is the School Department's job to make decisions on what it will affect when the Board gives the Schools what it can provide. Ms. Barron stated that it is the School Committee's job to keep the kids in the District and not to have them go elsewhere.

#### **Any other business that may properly come before the meeting**

There was no other business presented for discussion.

#### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Selectman Powderly; seconded by Selectman Hollenbeck it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Board of Selectmen's Meeting at 9:11 PM.  
Unanimous in favor.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Vlahopoulos; seconded by Mr. Trahan, it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Finance Committee at 9:11 PM.  
Unanimous in favor.