

Town of Lakeville
Joint Meeting of Selectmen and Finance Committee
Wednesday, April 29, 2015
7:00 PM – Town Office Building

On April 29, 2015, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 7:00 PM at the Town Office Building. Chairman Burke called the Lakeville Board of Selectmen to order at 7:03 PM. Members present were Aaron Burke, Miriam Hollenbeck and John Powderly. The Lakeville Finance Committee meeting was called to order by Chairman Petruzzo at 7:03 PM. Members present were Michael Petruzzo, Maureen Candito, George Vlahopolous, and Joseph Flemming. Also present was Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator and Christine Weston, Recording Secretary for Lakeville Committees. LakeCAM was recording the meeting.

Discuss Vacancy on the Finance Committee

Ms. Garbitt stated that she had thought that Donald Healy was going to have a sticker campaign at the recent Town Elections, however, he did not. Chairman Petruzzo stated that traditionally it is difficult to fill positions on the Finance Committee. He would though like to try going through the process again to seek more candidates. Ms. Garbitt will advertise the vacancy in next week's Gazette. Selectman Powderly stated that Matt Ferreira should be provided with a list of appointed positions that will have vacancies after July 31st, along with the present vacancies for Town Boards to advertise in the paper.

Discuss FY16 Budget Requests and Review FY16 Budget

Selectman Hollenbeck stated that the \$253,000 in 40S money is in the Governor's budget, but not in the House Ways and Means budget. It has been funded every year, except for one (1) year. Only the Town of Lunenburg and Lakeville receive 40S money. Selectman Hollenbeck will contact Representative Keiko Orrall regarding this.

Selectman Hollenbeck said presently the budget has a deficit of \$366,801. That is presuming certain things happen, such as the water tower sale going forward and the sale of the Howland Road property that was authorized at the last Town Meeting. If the water tower sale goes through, the Town would not have to pay the debt service payment, which is \$225,000. Then, \$190,000 can be used from the sale of the Howland Road property to help pay off the debt at Ted Williams Camp. Selectman Powderly stated that the Park Commission has already asked for a \$25,000 subsidiary. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that the Park Commission's Retained Earnings have been approved in the amount of \$68,000. They are also looking at selling the loam that they have left over. Selectman Powderly stated that the quote that came in from the bid for the loam was \$2 per square yard. The Park Commission will take what they need from that pile for the fields. What is left over will be sold. Selectman Powderly stated that the Park Commission should still be responsible to pay for the full amount that they have outstanding on the loan, even if the sale of the Howland Road property or the Water Tower do go through. Chairman Burke stated that the Park Commission has an Enterprise Account, and the goal of that is to be self-sustaining. They should be doing better now with Loon Pond Lodge completely renovated and able to generate revenue.

Selectman Hollenbeck stated that the same amount of students is being used to calculate the tuition for Old Colony. If not all the students go, that will provide a bit of a cushion. There is a cushion with the Veterans benefits. Free Cash has been certified just over \$900,000, which could

be used for capital projects and towards the existing debt service. However, there will be a deficit if the sale of the Howland Road property does not go through. A transfer would have to be made from Stabilization and will have to be put back to restore it in the amount of \$183,185. Ms. Garbitt noted that Free Cash was used in two (2) places at the Annual Town Meeting in 2014, so the Department of Revenue has requested that one (1) amount be taken out of Stabilization and then put back into the General Fund. Borrowing took place for the new ambulance and Free Cash was used for everything else. There had been a lot of tax title payoffs that helped with Free Cash. Selectman Powderly stated that Free Cash comes in due to underestimated receipts and budgets not being completely spent, so it is somewhat mis-budgeting. Ms. Garbitt noted that the Motor Vehicle Excise and Building Permits went towards Free Cash. She had gone back and put in actual estimated receipts in FY14. One time monies cannot be reflected from year to year. Selectman Powderly stated that he is looking to be more specific. Ms. Garbitt stated that she had not received the breakdown for how Free Cash was figured.

Selectman Hollenbeck stated that the Board should be mindful of the water tower sale and Howland Road land sale. It is better to air on the side of caution, if there is a \$400,000 debt that the Town has to pay. The Region's budget has been reduced, since with their original figures, they did not have the adjustment included. The Town asked them to reduce it by \$600,000 and they reduced it by only \$500,000. They are using other funds to make that amount up. There has been a change in Old Colony's assessment of \$300,000 due to the fact that they are doing capital projects that the Town has to pay for. The additional eight (8) students cost a little over \$300,000, so the Town had to pay more there as well. Chairman Burke stated that there was an issue with last year's assessment, and there has been a vote by the Regional School Committee to return \$268,000 to the Town of Lakeville. The Town's attorney and the Region's attorney are working on a friendly lawsuit by which they would repay the money over three (3) years through Excess & Deficiency. However, right now there is no agreement. There was a vote with attorneys talking, and this seems to be taking far too long. It is his opinion that if they do not get the agreement in place by Town Meeting, we will have to take \$268,000 right off the top of the Region's budget.

Chairman Burke stated that he would be in favor of simply taking the full amount, since his experience in school and municipal government is that people forget and people come and go, and if you do not strike when you can, it will not happen. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that the last update from the Town's attorney is that they met with the Region's attorney and they were to file suit. It is not known if that has happened. The Town's attorney should let them know that, unless the Town receives some form of confirmation that this is in process, that the full amount will be taken right off the top. This needs to take place by June 1st. Ms. Candito noted then that effects every budget going forward. Chairman Burke noted that the irony is that Freetown got the break when the miscalculation happened in the first place, so they get a break twice. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that Superintendent Medeiros is aware of this, and both sides should be pushing for this to take place. There is a School Committee meeting tonight, and Mr. Medeiros was ready to bring it up. The Town's attorney will be contacted again tomorrow to find out if there has been any movement.

Selectman Hollenbeck stated that Regional Transportation has been another issue. Chairman Burke stated that that does not have to be dealt with right now, just the Town budget at this time. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that since the Selectmen's Budget has not really been discussed, that could take place first, then the Administrative needs in the Town. When all the Town Departments came forward, they all had Administrative needs. Selectman Powderly stated that the Howland Road figure should be changed to reflect the Park Department debt.

Individual pages of the budget were then reviewed. Page 12 was the Selectmen's Budget, and it reflects the 1.75% raise. The overtime for the Highway Department has been increased due to the Snow and Ice Account, and expenses have been left at \$16,500. Page 15 is the Finance Committee in the amount of \$900. Page 23 is the Legal account and Wage & Personnel. The Legal budget has been kept at \$40,000. It had been typically budgeted at \$60,000 each year; however, it has been reduced. The Wage & Personnel budget is \$750. Page 31 is the Town Office/Fire Station. Selectman Powderly asked if repairs and maintenance is being put into this budget, specifically pre-planning repairs. Ms. Garbitt responded that the Assessor's Office and Senior Center do not have a lot in their budget. The Fire Station had a few air conditioners that went down, and this account covers all the unexpected expenses. It has been increased under other contracted services and telephone. The cost of the internet was \$500 per month and now it is \$3,070. That amount comes out of the telephone budget. Selectman Powderly asked what the two (2) largest expenses were. Ms. Garbitt responded that it is IT, which is most of the \$25,000. The breakdown per vendor is being worked on. The Selectmen have indicated that there should perhaps be a Technology budget. Page 32 is the Town Reports budget. Page 33 is the Cable Advisory Committee. Ms. Garbitt indicated that this account should be increased, since a letter has been received that they will be starting negotiations with Verizon. Any expenses for Peter Epstein can be absorbed into the legal account. Page 34 is General Government. Prior year expenses have been increased and then reduced to \$3,000 and then back up to \$5,000. Page 64 is for Street Lighting. Page 77 is for the Historic Library, which is level funded. Page 85 is the entire Debt Schedule. Page 79 is Unemployment. This is budgeted in the amount of \$1,000 every year. It is in the negative right now by approximately \$1,000. Page 82 is for health benefits. When new employees are hired, it is assumed that they will want family plan. Ms. Garbitt stated that she will provide a breakdown of estimated receipts.

Minor discussion took place on stipends and health insurance. Ms. Garbitt stated that for the Selectmen and the commitment that they have, with all the meetings they attend, if the Board is going to remove the option for Health Insurance, then their stipend should be increased. Stipends were reduced by half in 2010. It was noted that a part time Town Employee (20 hours) is eligible for Health Insurance. The Board of Health, Board of Assessors and Board of Selectmen are all eligible for Health Insurance. The Town Moderator is no longer eligible for Health Insurance.

Discussion then took place on the Administrative requests by the Departments. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that the Police Department requested an additional six (6) hours. Their Administrative Assistant is only working 24 hours a week and had been cut back from 40 hours. The additional hours would amount to \$8,000, and the employee is already benefit eligible. The Fire Department is looking to move the 18 hour Clerk to 40 hours. That would be a \$10,000 increase. The Conservation Commission (page 26) wants 15 hours which would be \$11,383. They have a temporary part time position at this time. Their increase is due to the fact that instead of the time for the night meetings being paid out of the secretarial pool, it is coming out of the Clerk's wages. This would be a reduction in the Secretarial Pool and an increase in the Conservation Commission budget. It also reflects a 1.75% increase for the Conservation Agent. The Highway Department has 24 hours (\$23,159) for a Clerk and the Landfill has 16 hours (\$15,439) for a Clerk. That totals 40 hours for about \$40,000. With IT they want a computer technician, but it is not in the budget. This is more of a wish list item. In the Treasurer's Office, she is to move the 20 hour position that was never filled to 40 hours. That is a position that was agreed to be given up for only one (1) year, seven (7) years ago. The Town Clerk is changing the position of Assistant Town Clerk to a Clerk, so that is reduction in that budget. The Park Commission is adding eight (8) more

for a part-time Clerk. Ms. Garbitt stated that there may be impacts to the Health Insurance with the increase in the Fire Department, Highway Department and for the Treasurer's Office. This has been included in the event that these positions move forward and are filled.

Mr. Flemming stated that he has not personally seen how these Departments are running. Have they leveraged the technology available to them for their request, or is the Town putting good money after bad? Chairman Burke explained that they are not leveraging technology to its best, but this is due to a lack of IT personnel for training. Everyone does the best that they can though. Ms. Garbitt explained that it was difficult just for the Town Office building to even be wired and to get the taxpayers to fund it. The network was built on a shoestring budget, and it was not until recently that the Town could really invest in it.

Chairman Burke stated that he met with the Assessors on Monday. The Principal Assessor has left for another position, so this is an opportunity to get a handle on what takes place in that office. No one has a clear answer, so a consultant will come in and assess what they do. That will help determine what their manpower needs are. It is easier to do these types of things when there is a change in personnel. The Building Department is the second busiest office in Town. Mr. Vlahopolous stated that these offices can function when the people that are supposed to be there are there, however, if someone is out then it is difficult. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that 24 hours is needed for the Clerk in the Selectmen's office and maybe that person could also cover some portion of the Fire Department and the Transfer Station. Of the Department requests, not all the hours being requested will be provided. It is intended to provide the Police Department with six (6) additional hours, the Fire Department with eight (8) additional hours and then the Treasurer's Office with their request which has been funded in the amount of \$20,000, knowing that the person would be benefit eligible. Selectman Powderly stated that the increase in the hours for the Park Department would be coming out of their budget. The proposal for Administrative increases is for \$40,000. Other personnel increases include two (2) Firefighters and one (1) Police Officer. Selectman Powderly stated that he would support one (1) additional Firefighter. The Call Firefighters come in now to cover shifts. It is hoped that when the Fire Department hires someone, it will be from the pool of Call Firefighters, since they have been trained very well and seem to be reinvigorated. Ms. Candito stated that she would agree to one (1) Firefighter but not two (2). Selectman Powderly stated that there are presently nine (9) Firefighters, the Chief and the Deputy Chief. They were provided with an additional Firefighter last year. They do deserve another based on the number of ambulance calls that have been done. Police Officers are being lost through attrition or movement to bigger towns or to the State Police. The Police Chief has provided facts and figures which indicate that it would be appropriate to increase their force by one (1), however, they do not have it in their budget, and the Town's demographics do not support it at this time.

Ms. Garbitt stated that there is an increase of \$68,000 for Police Wages, which is wages and administration. Expenses went up \$25,000 for the storage shed and tasers. Selectman Hollenbeck stated that the Police Department will have one (1) person added and the Fire Department will have one (1) person reduced. With the Assessor's budget, the 40 hour person will be reduced to 30 hours, and their budget will be reduced by \$10,000. The Library will remain the same. Other Administrative proposals can be looked at. A discussion on repairs and maintenance will take place at another meeting. Other considerations are: Free Cash, the water tower, Howland Road, the debt for Ted Williams, and the money the Region owes the Town. Selectman Powderly stated that he does want to come back again in the future and go through the budget page by page. Ms. Candito asked about the Library. Ms. Garbitt stated that each staff person was given 2.5 additional hours.

New Business

Chairman Burke stated that the Selectmen spoke on Monday about creating a Committee to discuss the building space needs in the Town. The Committee would look at each Town Department, and see if they are utilizing it as efficiently as possible and to determine needs.

Old Business

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Board of Selectmen's meeting at 9:00 PM.
Unanimous in favor.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Candito; seconded by Mr. Vlahopolous it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Finance Committee meeting at 9:00 PM.
Unanimous in favor.