

TOWN OF LAKEVILLE
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 21, 2017 – 5:00 PM – Freetown COA

On February 21, 2017, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 5:00 PM at the Freetown Council of Aging. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hollenbeck at 5:02 PM. Selectmen present were: Selectman Hollenbeck, Selectman Powderly and Selectman Burke. Also present were: Rita Garbitt, Town Administrator, Lakeville Finance Committee Members George Vlahopoulos and Michael Petruzzo, and Christine Weston, Recording Secretary. FreeCAM was recording the meeting.

Present from the Town of Freetown were: Paul Sadeck, Robert Jose, and Lisa Pacheco, Freetown Board of Selectmen, John Healey, Freetown Town Administrator, Freetown Finance Committee Members: Robert Alderson, Paul Deneault, George Grunwald, Joel Pacheco and Kent Wilkin and Alexandra Golz, Recording Secretary. Chairman Sadeck called the Freetown Board of Selectmen to order at 5:00 PM.

Also present were Freetown Lakeville Regional School Committee Members Robert Clark, Jean Fox, Sherrill Barron, Carolyn Gomes, Bret Kulakovich, Stephen Owen, Derek Gracia and William Sienkewicz, Jr., Richard Medeiros, Superintendent of Schools, and Fred Baker, Director of Finance, were also present. The Regional School Committee called their meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Meet with the Freetown Board of Selectmen to discuss the FY18 Assessment for the Regional School District

Selectman Powderly handed out the Preliminary Calculation for the FY18 assessment for the Region and worksheets showing a budget reduction of \$1,500,000, budget reduction of \$1,000,000, and budget reduction of \$500,000. Selectman Powderly stated that he wanted to ask the Boards/Committees present if they want to do what has done the past few years. He stated that lines 8 and 9 are the required contributions, \$18 million and \$2.6 million, bringing the figure to \$20,674,592. This represents a 2.5% increase between both Towns. That would be in addition to the typical shortfall on transportation and any new capital items approved. The normal breakout formula is not known at this time, but this is what was mutually agreed upon by both Towns last year. It is intended to go along the same way this year. Mr. Sadeck stated that it is being proposed to give the schools what is required by State law, then 2.5% over Net School Spending (NSS).

Chairman Hollenbeck stated that she would like to do what both Towns did last year. She took the calculation and the Cherry Sheet, since there are only the House numbers at this time, and she used the formula for increases to Freetown and Lakeville. There are comparisons from each year, and she also has proposed three (3) different options. Mr. Sadeck noted that last year, Lakeville bore the brunt of the increase. He asked what is required for Freetown. Chairman Hollenbeck stated \$249,000 for Freetown and \$52,333 for Lakeville. Mr. Sadeck stated that there would be \$935,000 more, since you have to add in debt service.

Chairman Hollenbeck asked if it is possible to agree on a figure? Mr. Sadeck responded that it was. Chairman Hollenbeck asked ideally it should be what Freetown and Lakeville are willing to come to the table with and what can each Town afford. This year the formula is unfavorable to Freetown. It seems to go back and forth each year. What can each Town actually afford as a maximum number? Working together is certainly better than working apart. Selectman Powderly said last year the wealth index came into play. The Town was focusing on \$516,000 as the total number. Lakeville and Freetown would be increasing what it gave to the Schools by \$600,000, split between both Towns. Chairman Hollenbeck noted that there was a significant increase to Transportation costs this year. Any shortfall of Transportation is to be covered by both Towns. Mr. Sadeck stated that no matter what, what the School Department can operate under is what this hinges on. At some point, when the figures are put in there, it will be higher based on the 2.5% and Transportation.

Chairman Hollenbeck stated that capital is included as part of the operating budget. This is the last year of technology, but that was a Debt Exclusion anyway. Selectman Powderly stated that he doesn't need to have an answer tonight; this meeting tonight was a philosophical one. Chairman Hollenbeck stated that this discussion is just between both Town Boards to try to have a united front and discuss what is acceptable as an increase for both Towns. The School Committee has no direction from the Board and neither does the Regional Finance Sub Committee. Mr. Sadeck suggested a 1% increase. Selectman Powderly explained that Lakeville increases the taxes by 2.5% and then runs the rest of the Town on 2.5%. He doesn't want to give more or less to the Schools. He would like to give them the same that the rest of the Town is working on. Selectman Burke stated that it is not bad saying what about 1% to see what that impact is and then maybe decide if it is or isn't appropriate. There needs to be a starting point. The budget from the Schools that the Boards look at is their first shot at the budget, and typically the number comes down.

Mr. Sadeck mentioned \$833,000, a figure which he was provided from a Freetown Finance Committee Member. There was an increase of \$800,000 from the contracts; Health Insurance increases of \$400,000; Transportation increase of \$183,000; and then SPED tuition. The Board keeps telling the Schools that it is unsustainable, but they don't do anything to hold back costs. After their next contract negotiations, it will really be unsustainable. When he steps down in two (2) months, he hopes the new Board of Selectmen feels the same way, to hold down the taxes for the citizens of Freetown.

Chairman Hollenbeck reviewed the scenarios from last year and then the options for FY18. The focus is on the bottom line. The total max scenario for Lakeville is \$1,119,000. Mr. Sadeck stated that Freetown's 2.5% increase is just over \$470,000, so in essence that would take the whole 2.5% with Freetown giving \$465,000 to the Schools. He doesn't want to do that. Selectman Burke stated that Mr. Sadeck is highlighting the problem. It needs to be determined what each Town's threshold is.

Chairman Hollenbeck stated that she looks at it with the overall increase to the budget. If Freetown is willing to come to the table with an extra \$180,000 to offset Transportation, what is the bottom line, for the increase? Lakeville is in a positive position and wants to know what Freetown is willing to come to the table with. No one is asking for a decision tonight.

Selectman Burke stated that this is what the Towns do each year. Last year a majority of Lakeville's money went to the Schools. This is just to get the conversation started. Selectman Powderly stated that Lakeville decided to use its entire tax increase to give to the Schools and use money out of Stabilization to run the schools. Lakeville paid 5% to the Schools, but that is what was agreed upon to do. Mr. Jose stated that Freetown needs to determine what the levy is and what they can tolerate. Ms. Pacheco stated that the other message, which all will agree upon, is that the School Committee will not get its requested budget that they want now. They need to go back and look at cuts, since neither Town is in the position to do that. Chairman Hollenbeck agreed. There are the health insurance costs and the labor costs with steps and levels to consider; it is unsustainable. Ms. Pacheco pointed out that she works for the extended care program; she takes no money from the taxpayers, or from any part of the School Committee budget. In 2008, Freetown spent \$11 million in the School budget. Last year, Freetown spent \$9.5 million in the budget. This is to point out that Regionalization did help out Freetown, and allow the Town to give to other Town Departments. Mr. Jose asked if you remove Transportation, what the percentage for Freetown is. Chairman Hollenbeck said she would get back to Mr. Jose on that. Ms. Pacheco stated that what it comes down to is affordability for both Towns.

New Business

There was no new business presented for discussion.

Old Business

There was no old business presented for discussion.

Any other business that may properly come before the meeting

There was no other business presented for discussion.

Adjournment

At 5:49 PM, upon a motion made by Selectman Burke; seconded by Selectman Powderly it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting.
Unanimous in favor.