

TOWN OF LAKEVILLE
Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2021 – 3:30 PM
REMOTE LOCATION

On March 1, 2021, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 3:30 PM remotely from various locations. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by Chairman LaCamera. Selectmen present were: Chairman LaCamera, Selectman Fabian and Selectman Day. Also present was Tracie Craig-McGee, Executive Assistant. LakeCAM was recording the meeting for broadcast.

Interview the finalists for Town Administrator

Present for the meeting were members of the Town Administrator Search Committee: Nathan Darling, Todd Hassett and Clorinda Dunphy. Selectman Fabian read the memo to the Board of Selectmen regarding the three (3) finalists submitted to the Board of Selectmen. The memo also described the process that the Search Committee used to choose the finalists.

Justin Casanova Davis

Mr. Davis gave some general information about himself. He has been the Assistant Town Administrator in Brookline for 2.5 years. Selectman Fabian asked about Mr. Davis' experience in grant writing. Mr. Davis said he has written grants before and is comfortable with that. Selectman Day asked how he would bolster community interest for municipal service? Mr. Davis said it is a challenge that you see in many communities. Mr. Davis said he likes building relationships in the community. You need to go where people are and talk about government. Chairman LaCamera asked how involved are you in the creation of the budget and where are you in the budget process right now and are there major challenges. Mr. Davis said the budget is his priority. He is working with the Departments on a daily basis. He keeps track of budget spending. Their budget was released a week ago and it has been a difficult budget this year. An area of concern is revenue as it is down. Selectman Fabian asked what is the ideal relationship between the Town Administrator and Selectmen? Mr. Davis said being a Selectman is a great amount of work. It is a collaborative partnership based on trust; trust that he would give you the information you need to make decisions. He is flexible and can work with various style Selectman. Selectman Day asked is there a policy or strategy that you were unsuccessful in implementing and what would you change from the first attempt. Mr. Davis said we tried to upgrade our budget system in Cambridge. We went through a long process and got a company. We never implemented the upgrade although we were close. We decided to go with the same product for a few more years. We had everyone involved and we now have a different product.

Chairman LaCamera asked Mr. Davis to explain the capital plan process for Brookline. Mr. Davis said Brookline has a six (6) year long range plan. We have a working relationship with our Department Heads and Advisory Committee. Selectman Day asked how Mr. Davis viewed IT in local government and for specific projects he was involved in. Mr. Davis said the pandemic has made municipalities look at IT infrastructure. Brookline brought OpenGov in; there is an open portal for residents to understand the budget with an interactive budget book.

He was in charge of CARE bills. Innovation is a long-term vision. He has done a lot of IT projects. Chairman LaCamera asked what are the key issues in Lakeville? Mr. Davis said growth in development is a large issue. There has been a change in Department Heads. In adopting development change, you need to engage residents and keep them informed. These projects are time consuming; you need someone that can provide the big picture of what this is leading to. A Town Planner should be a part of this time to help with projects that are coming down the pipeline. Selectman Fabian asked how would you use social media in a positive way? Mr. Davis said social media is important because how people receive information is changing. He keeps his website up to date. It is an important tool. Not everyone is on social media. Selectman Day asked what level of oversight to you expect from a Department Head after going through budget and Town Meeting. Mr. Davis said if it is done properly, you will understand challenges in the next budget cycle and work with the Department Heads on it. Selectman Day asked if Department Heads are given autonomy or do your check in. Mr. Davis said you definitely check in, but it is their budget. Some Department Heads are not comfortable with their budget and are looking for you to be hands on. Some Department Heads do not need that. He is not a micro-manager; we are all one team working together, but he is always checking in. Chairman LaCamera asked what are the most important qualities in hiring an employee and why are they important. Mr. Davis said he likes team orientation and how willing people are to take on different challenges. Do they want to grow and take on different projects? You look at their resumes and projects handled. If someone loves what they do, they will be a good member of your team. Selectman Fabian asked about grants for various Department. Mr. Davis said Brookline is very aggressive in getting grants. They are working on zero emissions by 2015 and have overhauled their fleet. He described the process of obtaining grants for this project. Lakeville should be pursuing a variety of grants. Having your State legislators on board is a vital component on obtaining grants. Selectman Day said residents are very vocal on social media. What strategies would you use to limit direct impact on households for maintaining the current character of Town. Mr. Davis said he purchased a home because he likes small Town charm. Lakeville is beautiful and he understands why people would want to keep that. Residents want great schools, roads, and public safety without a rise in taxes. We need to communicate the Town's financial status. Residential properties bear the burden of tax revenue. You need to diversify. Lakeville took on marijuana businesses. Do you want a lower tax or to preserve the character? You need to diversify the tax base. He is experienced with the Community Preservation Act. He has worked in a community that was going to adopt it and already had.

Mr. Davis said he has spoken a lot to the search consultants and the Search Committee. He would like to understand what is expected of the Town Administrator. Selectman Day said he would like a Town Administrator that wants to come in help the residents become informed and make it easy to find. Getting out correct information is often a challenge. Mr. Davis said he enjoys looking at data and breaking it down. Every budget he has been involved with has won an award. In Cambridge, he worked on improving performance measurement. He enjoys breaking things down for residents to be able to understand. Selectman Fabian said she would like to see a new Town Administrator come in and give the Planning Board and Building Commissioner some help. She would good explanations to residents on things that need to happen. Mr. Davis thanked the Board and everyone involved in the process. Lakeville is a community that will have challenges and opportunities; his background dealing with a variety of projects. He likes the small community feel. He is not looking for a position anywhere else. He

is approachable and a hard worker and a team player. He is excited about this opportunity and he would love to be a part of it. Chairman LaCamera said there will be a 10-minute break.

David Marciello

Mr. Marciello told the Board general information about himself. Chairman LaCamera asked about his experience. Mr. Marciello said he was Town Administrator in Rehoboth for 10 years; Interim Town Manager in Lunenburg and Town Administrator in Millbury. Selectman Fabian asked about his grant writing experience. Mr. Marciello said you need to reach out and get experts in that field of grant writing. He turned a \$18,000 fine into a grant in Rehoboth. In Millbury, they received millions in grants. We got experts to assist writing the grant in that area. He has general grant writing experience. Chairman LaCamera asked about his budget experience and process; what are the biggest challenges in FY22. Mr. Marciello said in Millbury, he had complete control over the budget. He had a \$51 million budget. He brought free cash up to \$2.3 million from \$1 million. Reserves went from 2% to 10% in a 3-year period. He expanded some Departments with no major tax increases. He understands the process from beginning from end. Challenges in Lakeville may be a 1% reduction in revenue according to the cherry sheets. The excise tax is down by \$23,000, but State Aid is level. A 1% reduction is not insurmountable. Look at growth numbers; it can it be absorbed with growth. Where are you in the levy; can it be squeezed? Look at real estate abatements; how aggressively have you gone into your abatements. Should some of it be released or will there be expected abatements. If so, you will have to hold it. He would call the stakeholders to the table to absorb the 1%. During the 2009/2010 recession, we experienced losses. He has lived through expansions and reductions. He can do the budget from beginning to end. In Rehoboth, the Finance Committee was front and center. In Millbury it was his budget. He is comfortable doing it either way. Selectman Day asked is there a policy or strategy that you were unsuccessful in implementing and if so, what would you change. Mr. Marciello said in Rehoboth he entered into a regional agreement that bought salt. It was a great dramatic reduction in cost and looked like we were saving money, but it was not an effective contract. The bid called for payment by delivery. The company delivered to the shortest distance rapidly and would run out of salt and sand and not have supplies for the other communities. You need to pay attention to the mission and effectiveness, then the budget and can you afford it. Another scenario he changed was to change over the telephones to VOIP, which saved a dramatic amount of money. He had a backup with cellular service to transfer calls to cell phone. All essential 911 calls had a copper wire backup in case the internet went down. He contracted with the local county sheriff in the event of a catastrophic failure. We did have that happen, but the backups kept the Town going.

Chairman LaCamera asked about Mr. Marciello's experience in capital plans and the process for both Rehoboth and Millbury. Mr. Marciello said Millbury has a five (5) year capital plan that was amended. An audit was done on the existing capital plan. A home rule petition was passed that automatically put money in five (5) stabilization accounts. It was funded with marijuana revenues. It was bolstered by altering the way the budget was done to have a large amount of free cash left over. That helped fund the capital plan items. In Rehoboth, there was a five (5) year plan. The plan was revamped to see what projects could go forward; pause or scale back. Chairman LaCamera asked how many marijuana facilities were in Millbury. Mr. Marciello said Nature's Remedy had a retail and medical facility. There was another firm that he was dealing

with for a testing/grow facility and one that was a retail facility. Based on the alcohol licenses, these were the licenses available. They needed special permits and we would work in a development agreement that did not sunshine. Impact fees were 3%/3%/3% for five (5) years and 3% of sales in perpetuity that escalated 2.5% each year. The agreement ran with the land. If the use was changed, then it disappeared. Selectman Fabian asked what is your ideal relationship with the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Marciello said it revolves around professional, respect and cooperation. You are a team. The Town Administrator keeps everyone on task. Selectman Day asked how would he drive community engagement and awareness to participate. Mr. Marciello said you need to be involved in events in the community to engage with residents. Being a role model in the community shows residents that it is important to volunteer in the community. Chairman LaCamera asked what he saw as the key issues in Lakeville now? Mr. Marciello said his job is not to tell the Selectmen what is important to the Town; you tell me what the important issues are. Chairman LaCamera asked if Millbury and Rehoboth had master plans. Mr. Marciello said yes. A planner was hired in Millbury to implement the Master Plan. Rehoboth has a master plan, but there was no political will to get to the next step. The real estate market is driving development there. Since he left the position, there has been no movement to get back on the track. Selectman Fabian asked about his thoughts on a planner for Lakeville. Mr. Marciello said Rehoboth had a planner, but not someone that is experienced and educated. In Millbury, a professional planner was hired, who was also a grant writer. That work returned her salary 20X over. We were able to implement the Master Plan. The State has changed the way retired people can collect money from the pension plan; you can hire a retired planner and not pay benefits. Selectman Day asked about the role of IT in government; any projects that resulted in a significant benefit. Mr. Marciello said in Millbury we had technology to compare budgets and it could be compared to other Towns. You do the same thing with the webpage and Facebook and take that data to make it work for the Town. We had reverse 311 calling with geotracking to inform residents of upcoming things. There was 211 through the School Department. He likes to get information out through technology and not allow a lot of comment back. There are other ways to get comment back. It goes awry on social media.

Chairman LaCamera asked what are the most important qualities in hiring a town employee. Mr. Marciello said merit; the person must be qualified for the job. Then consider if they are a good fit. Selectman Fabian asked about using social media in a positive way? Mr. Marciello said it is a positive tool if used effectively. He had taken on an intern to manage social media; get the metadata in and graphs on where the information is going. Selectman Day asked about the level of autonomy on Department Head budgets. Mr. Marciello said it depends if they are elected; we can have oversight on if it is keeping with the plan. If it is someone that answers to the Selectmen, we should have interaction to see if they are on task. Quarterly there should be a meeting with everyone. Selectman Day said residents want to keep Lakeville's character and charm, but no raise in taxes. What kind of strategies are there to keep the character but minimize tax increases. Mr. Marciello said he would look at outside revenue sources, and partner with non-profits. If you have a bylaw for special permits and they want a permit, the permit comes with a price and you earmark the things that need to be funded. That frees up other money for operational things.

Mr. Marciello asked the Board what their perfect Town Administrator relationship is. Selectman Fabian said most important thing is trust. She wants to feel confident that she doesn't

need to do lots of research for meetings. Department Heads need someone to rely on. Mr. Marciello said he was the only Town Manager that implemented policies on Department Heads to be licensed and certified in their specific area. That can affect your bond rating. We will discuss sharing resources in weekly Department Head meetings. He is looking for a place to make him feel comfortable and use his education and be happy.

Ari Sky

Mr. Sky told the Board general information about himself. Selectman Fabian asked about his grant writing experience. Mr. Sky said he has done it in the past. He understands grant administration. He is working on a SAFER grant right now. Selectman Day asked is there a policy or strategy that did not work out and if so, what would you have done differently. Mr. Sky said he worked in a small town in Pennsylvania. He knew what he wanted to do in that position, but there was a lot friction with the community and government body. He was not mentally prepared then as he is now. He would like to take what he has learned from a management perspective and put it to work. Chairman LaCamera asked about his budget experience, process and any challenges for FY22. Mr. Sky said in the past, budget issues were triggered by business cycle recession events. In 2008, we had to do layoffs, yet not lose services to residents. He is encouraged by what is coming out of Washington. You will be down around \$300,000, but Lakeville should be able to weather it with the Federal Aid. Communication is key; make sure staff knows what you are trying to do. Also, communicate with the community about the Town's situation. He would provide the advice needed for the Board to maintain policy. Selectman Fabian asked what was his ideal relationship with the Selectmen. Mr. Sky said to have a close, functional effective working relationship with the Board. You need to know what the Town Administrator is doing, but allow the Town Administrator to do what they need to do to manage the organization. Ms. Garbitt was here for a long time and did things her way; and there was a comfort level on how things were done. Lakeville is now a place that is changing. He would want a collective understanding of goals and objectives. He would suggest a goal setting exercise early on. Your master plan points to the need of staff complement in planning and conservation. There needs to be conversations with the Board on that. He would want constant feedback from the Board. Selectman Day asked about the role of IT in modern times. Mr. Sky said part of his role is overseeing the IT Department. There was a cyber attack in 2019 in New Bedford which was damaging. They hadn't installed the anti-virus software which would have prevented the attack, but have it now. Not having the network properly protected is huge. When Covid hit, it showed that server capacity was crucial. You need good staff to do in house work. We have open checkbook to allow residents to see what the City is spending money on. Having a decent IT staff that is responsive to the staff is essential.

Chairman LaCamera asked about Mr. Sky's experience in capital planning and the process. Mr. Sky said in New Bedford he developed a Capital Improvement Program. It's a bi-annual process starting with a capital needs assessment, which is a wish list of what Departments need. Then it is culled into a five (5) year Capital Improvement Program. Selectman Fabian asked how would you use social media in a positive way for the Town. Mr. Sky said your tools are not being used properly. LakeCAM is being used as a way to carry meetings. It could be used for outreach by the Town Administrator, review of Town Meeting articles, etc. You do a pretty good job of informing people on things like Code Red. You could encourage residents to create

a Hometown Lakeville page to communicate. You can be on Twitter and engage more on Facebook. Selectman Day said residents are vocal about keeping the Town's character and charm, but they do not want tax rates to go up much. How would you be able to get the Master Plan items funded but not increase the taxes. Mr. Sky said economic development. There is a need to be frank with the community. We have lost the willingness to admit that things have cost. We can manage the debt load and look at the fee structure. If you want nice things, they cost money. Chairman LaCamera said given the size and location of the community, what are the key issues and what would you do to address them. Mr. Sky said there is opportunity for development but you need to think seriously on Lakeville's unique character, which is worth preserving. He summarized his experience in two (2) different counties in Virginia; one heavily developed and the other that did not want that development. He spoke of the positives and negatives of each situation. The Town Administrator, Selectmen and Planning Board need to work together on what they want Lakeville to look like. Selectman Day asked about community involvement. Mr. Sky said he would try to identify people who are interested and encourage them to come forward; be more present on social media. Communities have trouble getting people to volunteer. Part of our roles are to act as cheerleaders for government. You need to work with the community and make ourselves available.

Chairman LaCamera asked about hiring Town employees. Mr. Sky said you look at their capability to do the job and get someone with the right approach and tone. You facilitate an organization based on teamwork and communication. You want that person to have a commitment to the job and pride of work. He has hired and occasionally let people go. The culture fit is important. You need to install culture values and work with the staff to develop a value statement. Selectman Fabian said what would your first 30 days look like? Mr. Sky said he would approach with respect to understand the machine and how it works. He would meet with the staff to see how things are organized. He would work with the Board to understand his approach and what he is trying to do. Listening is important. Covid is a handicap right now. He would set up staff meetings and identify strength and weaknesses. It is incumbent upon the Town Administrator to actualize the goals set by the Selectmen. Selectman Day asked what level of autonomy do you expect Department Heads to have after Town Meeting. Mr. Sky said once the budget is adopted, he would meet with Department Heads on a regular basis individually and as a group. He doesn't micro manage, but he would visit occasionally in their Departments. Chairman LaCamera asked for Mr. Sky to speak about his management style of new and longtime employees. Mr. Sky said he would respect staff and understand what they bring to the table; encourage confidence and dedication. If something is not working, make it clear with progressive discipline. He is cognoscente of legal liabilities with personnel management and build a framework for team cohesion and to manage staff performance. He spoke of how this is handled in New Bedford.

Mr. Sky said you have been without a Town Administrator for a while and have things out there needing to be done. What are your philosophies on needs and what type of approach for a Town Administrator. Chairman LaCamera said we have budgeted for a town planner and are putting together a job description. Overall Departments from a staffing standpoint, we are in pretty good shape. We added two (2) full time firefighters due to Covid 19. We did receive CARES reimbursement as they are temporary. Beginning in 2022, we will have to address that. Selectman Fabian said we have some newer volunteers on Committees and Board and we need

some good leadership on land use and planning. Department Heads want to know that they can go to the Town Administrator for resources. She wants to give the Town someone that is looking out for Lakeville. We need to address the staying rural with development sooner than later. We need to have some feedback to Department Heads on their position. Selectman Day said when you ask residents how we do things, to be able to do a review on how to improve things or update things. We have had a lot of Selectmen rotation and be able to understand the boundaries of the Selectmen and Town Administrator. We will get information out to residents; we need to get good information out and the reasons why to educate the public. Mr. Sky said this is why you need a planner and Town Administrator to help out on policy and communication.

Discuss finalist candidates and possible vote to appoint new Town Administrator

Chairman LaCamera asked if the Board ready to vote to appoint a new Town Administrator. He is ready. Selectman Fabian said she is ready also. Selectman Day said he can vote tonight or wait 24 hours for Department Head input. Selectman Fabian said bumping the salary up gave us really qualified candidates. Chairman LaCamera said some of the Department Heads have reached out, so there is no need to wait.

A motion was made by Selectman Fabian and seconded by Selectman Day to authorize Municipal Resources, Inc. to make a conditional offer of employment to Ari Skye for the position of Lakeville Town Administrator. This offer is conditioned upon the satisfactory background review and investigation conducted by Municipal Resources, Inc. and the successful negotiation of the terms of appointment by the Board of Selectmen.

Discussion: Selectman Fabian said in the six (6) semi-final interviews, it was a difficult choice to narrow it down.

Roll call vote on the previous motion: Selectman Fabian – aye; Selectman Day – aye; and Chairman LaCamera – aye.

Chairman LaCamera said he would like to meet with Mr. Sky and discuss a draft contract as soon as possible.

Upon a motion made by Selectman Fabian and seconded by Selectman Day, it was:

VOTED: To nominate Chairman LaCamera to work on the contract negotiation with Mr. Sky.

Roll call vote: Selectman Fabian – aye; Selectman Day – aye; and Chairman LaCamera – aye.

Adjournment

Upon a motion made by Selectman Fabian and seconded by Selectman Day, it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Board of Selectmen's Meeting at 6:53 PM. Roll call vote:
Selectman Fabian – aye; Selectman Day – aye; and Chairman LaCamera – aye.

List of documents provided at the Board of Selectmen Meeting of March 1, 2021

1. Resumes for Town Administrator candidates