

**TOWN OF LAKEVILLE**  
**Joint Meeting of Board of Selectmen**  
**And Finance Committee Minutes**  
**March 9, 2021 – 6:00 PM**  
**REMOTE LOCATION**

On March 9, 2021, the Board of Selectmen held a meeting at 6:00 PM remotely from various locations. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 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.

Also present for the budget discussions were members of the Finance Committee: Larry Kostant, George Vlahopoulos, Darren Beals, Adam Lynch; and Todd Hassett, Town Accountant. The Finance Committee opened their meeting at 6:02 PM.

In accordance with the Governor's Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c.30A, §20, relating to the 2020 novel Coronavirus outbreak emergency, the March 9, 2021 public meeting of the **Board of Selectmen** shall be physically closed to the public to avoid group congregation. **However, to view this meeting in progress, please go to [facebook.com/lakecam](https://www.facebook.com/lakecam) (you do not need a Facebook account to view the meeting). This meeting will be recorded and available to be viewed at a later date at <http://www.lakecam.tv/>**

Chairman LaCamera then read an introduction regarding the need for a remote meeting and how a remote meeting will be conducted.

**General Overview of Budget**

*Todd Hassett, Town Accountant, was present for the discussion.* Mr. Hassett provided a general summary of the budget numbers for FY22. \$600,000 will be raised for new tax revenue from the existing tax base. The preliminary estimate for new growth is just under \$400,000. We have a few final years on the borrowing for the Library and Senior Center and about \$70,000 net from State and County Revenues. In the summary section, you will see a history of State receipt and assessments. We do have a Smart Growth line item, which is distributed by the State. We are estimating some cannabis related revenue. Our excise and investments are down. We are projecting a 5% increase for local revenues. He then reviewed the non-recurring revenue.

Mr. Hassett reviewed charges for State and County services. The Board of Assessors targets statutory exemptions and abatements on property values of approximately 1%. In addition to the operating budget, we have a five (5) year capital plan. We have two (2) enterprise funds: Park and Transfer Station. We have had to subsidize these from time to time. We would like to transfer some funds into our reserve funds: OPEB, Liability and Capital Stabilization fund. We are in the middle of a three (3) year collective bargaining agreement and the amounts are in the budget, along with step increases and COLA. Non-union staff increases are not in the individual budgets. We have two (2) position reclassifications. In the Selectmen's budget there is a Town Planner, which is offset by the elimination of the Town Coordinator position. In the Fire Budget, for the last year and through this December, the Board added two (2) temporary firefighter positions to help with the Covid pandemic. The Fire Chief has made a case for these positions going forward. The Board has approved a full-time laborer in the Highway Department budget. Mr. Beals asked if the marijuana receipts are in line

with what was expected. Mr. Hassett said it is below. We do anticipate when the others are operational more revenue.

Mr. Hassett then reviewed operating expenses. There is a 7% increase in the IT Budget. Selectman Day has gone through our needs and worked with our service provider to come up with a detailed program. The audit expenses increased. The Town will be receiving Federal funds that require us to have additional audits, which is an additional \$5,000. In HR, there is an increase in the payroll system line and the Town is considering making changes to the payroll program. We have our Regional School system assessments and have put in placeholders for what the Town can afford. The Region is still working through their budget. The increase for employee health insurance looks very modest. The pension liability is an 8% increase through FY28. The goal is to fully fund the system by FY30. Our debt is down slightly. We have the Police Station and some temporary Police Station debt. Educational assessments are up 4.26% for the Region, Old Colony and Bristol Aggie. We only have 12 students that attend Bristol Aggie, but they have a major capital improvement financed on a per pupil allocation, which is close to \$6,000 per student. Employee benefits and insurance are up 1.72%. In its entirety, there is a 3.1% increase for the budget.

Mr. Hassett said this year has been challenging for the Park Department. We have an unbalanced budget from the Park Commission of \$118,000 of capital requests and an operating gap that we need to work through. The gap is about \$57,000. They have some modest retained earnings of about \$53,000. We are proposing a \$95,000 subsidy for the Transfer Station. They have \$45,000 left in their retained earnings. We needed to replace the loader last year, which came from retained earnings.

Mr. Hassett spoke of the five (5) year plan for capital, which is \$1.24 million for FY22. There is \$118,000 for renovations at the existing Fire Station and Town Hall and renovations to the Historic Library and the Park Commission has \$118,000 for facility related repairs and needs. \$667,000 is for vehicles, equipment and technology. We are trying to advocate for annual support for roadway improvements. We do participate in the State's roadway improvements program, but that is not enough. We want to put a line in the Capital Plan for \$150,000 for next year. Ideally it would be \$300,000. \$30,000 is for the Historic Preservation Plan. He is recommending \$100,000 be transferred from Free Cash to the OPEB Trust. It has been suggested that the Town should be contributing \$300,000 per year. We have \$1,000 in the General Stabilization fund. Debt stabilization has \$1,125,000. He would like to add \$250,000 to the fund. We have about \$395,000 from the sale of the water operation to the City of Taunton for future capital needs. We are anticipating \$105,000 being needed for the Special Town Meeting to cover prior year bills and the possibility of supplementing snow removal and a few other expense areas. Some can be handled with the Reserve Fund.

**Board of Selectmen (including Town Accountant, Treasurer/Collector, Animal Control, Legal Services, Information Technology, Town Office/Fire Station, Town Reports, Other General Government and Cable TV Advisory Committee**

Chairman LaCamera said in the Board of Selectmen budget, the Town Planner salary has been added of approximately \$80,000. The Town Coordinator position has been eliminated and we have hired a part time clerk. Selectman Day asked if the Board had voted on removing the Town Coordinator position? With the new Town Administrator coming in, should we hold on to Town Coordinator that may turn into an Assistant Town Administrator? Chairman LaCamera said we decided to replace the Town Coordinator with a part time clerk. Discussion occurred about the Town Planner position.

Chairman LaCamera reviewed the Capital Budget. He spoke of a feasibility study for public safety and renovations of the Town Office Building. Things have changed with the construction of a new Police Station. The short-term solution is to provide additional space needed for the Town Offices and Fire Station. The Fire Station has a lot of issues that need to be addressed. We will do some renovations to make it a workable environment. We decided to redo the feasibility study. We can do a stand-alone Fire Station or building a new Town Hall and the Fire Station will take over the current Town Hall. Discussion occurred regarding the renovations to the current Fire Station and Town Hall. Selectman Fabian said she feels we will need a new fire station. The fire apparatus that are sold now are wider and our door opening barely fit some of the equipment. There is not much we can do to increase the door openings. Selectman Day noted if we extend the building to make the doors larger, then the sprinkler requirement will be triggered. Further discussion occurred regarding the Fire Department.

Chairman LaCamera said the Town Accountant budget is up 1.6%, which consists of a contractual increase for the administrative assistant and an increase for training.

Angela Chandler, Interim Treasurer/Tax Collector, said there are regular step increases for the Assistant Tax Collector and the Clerk. Mr. Hassett said the salary for Treasurer/Tax Collector is \$85,000. Computer expenses were increased \$2,000 and postage and printing were increased. Selectman Fabian asked about training of \$7,500. Mr. Hassett said that was suggested to allow an overlap with Ms. Chandler and the permanent position. However, we may not need those funds.

Mr. Hassett said the Animal Control Budget is up about 1.5%. The COLA for the Animal Control Officer is still pending and will be supplemented in the next version of the budget. Expenses are level funded. The shelter relies on a lot of donations outside of the budget and are able to do a lot of things for the animals with that. We have a number of communities that participate in the shelter and we receive revenue from that. Selectman Fabian said the Selectmen will be reviewing the 2022 contracts for the boarding.

Mr. Hassett said that Legal Services generally averages \$60,000 is an average. Mr. Beals asked if \$60,000 is in the ballpark for FY21. Chairman LaCamera said it will be about \$20,000 higher. Mr. Beals asked if this should be increased for FY22. Selectman LaCamera said we won't know the total until after June 30<sup>th</sup> but we could increase it. Mr. Hassett said as of the end of February we have expended \$43,000 with \$17,000 remaining. We may be short up to \$20,000 to get through the year.

Selectman Day said there is a 7% increase, but we should be more stable year to year. Subscription services should be level year to year. The largest delta is the IT director salary. We lost him last year and transitioned to a service provider. In FY22 we will most likely continue with a service provider; we need to go out for a Request for Proposals as the contract expires June 30<sup>th</sup>. Under Maintenance Agreements, we had some older hardware removed. 84% of the number goes to bigger ticket items for MUNIS and the Police Station. Software licensing – 50% goes to Open Gov and Cloud services. Under the Capital Budget, there is \$50,000 for a number of devices that can no longer be supported. The IT Strategic Plan that was created a few years ago outlines some of these things.

## **Cemetery Commission**

*Kenneth Upham and Joan Morton from the Cemetery Commission were present for the discussion.* Mr. Upham called the Cemetery Commission to order at 7:05 PM. Mr. Upham summarized the accomplishments for the Cemetery Commission for 2020. Mr. Upham gave an update on available plots, which he estimated will last for 40 years.

## **Board of Assessors**

*John Olivieri, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Assessors, was present for the discussion.* Mr. Olivieri said there are increases in the salary lines, but most everything else has remained the same. There is a 1.58% increase. Selectman LaCamera said we are looking to integrate with the Building Department for GIS mapping and the Highway Department for identifying catch basins, etc. Are we going to put together a plan to address that? Mr. Olivieri said they would be happy to do that, but we have not discussed how to fund this.

## **Human Resources**

*Clorinda Dunphy, Human Resources Director, was present.* Ms. Dunphy said this is the second year Human Resources has had its own budget. We have used the same provider for a long time and have been researching replacing the payroll system. The salaries are the same and the part time floater was adjusted downward. A line item for advertising was added. Unemployment was volatile over the past year due to the pandemic. It seems to have calmed down over the past few months. Under Health Insurance, we have not received the rates yet, but she doesn't expect much change. Selectman Fabian asked about vacation buyback. Ms. Dunphy said we did a one-time buyback due to Covid last year.

## **Town Clerk**

*Lillian Drane, Town Clerk was present for the discussion.* Ms. Drane noted that there is an increase of 2.23% for Town Clerk salaries. Other increases included 4.43% for increases in dog tags, forms, and binding of vital records; maintenance of data bases for \$505; increase of 1.90% to increase hourly pay from \$11 to \$12.00 per hour for election workers and an increase of 2.76% in registration due to outsourcing of the Town census, including a second mailing.

Ms. Drane said the vote by mail was hard. She had to hire extra help for daily data entry for the September primary and presidential election that was hard to keep up with. Early voting was 14 days for the Presidential Election and 7 days for the State Primary which needed to be entered manually. In FY23 she will be looking to hire a part time person. We have a lot of new residents, over 8,500 registered voters and over 12,000 residents. We have a lot of dogs in Town and dog licensing is difficult. Selectman Fabian thanked Ms. Drane her Ms. Berry for all their work.

## **Finance Committee Reorganization and vote to approve Minutes**

While waiting for the next budget item, the Finance Committee completed some business.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Vlahopoulos and seconded by Larry Kostant, it was:

VOTED: To appoint Darren Beals as Finance Committee Chairman.

Roll call vote: Mr. Vlahopoulos – aye; Mr. Kostant – aye; Mr. Lynch – aye and Mr. Beals – aye.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beals and seconded by Mr. Vlahopoulos, it was:

VOTED: To appoint Adam Lynch to the Capital Expenditures Committee.

Roll call vote: Mr. Vlahopoulos – aye; Mr. Kostant – aye; Mr. Lynch – aye and Mr. Beals – aye.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beals and seconded by Mr. Vlahopoulos, it was:

VOTED: To approve the January 25, 2021 Finance Committee Minutes.

Roll call vote: Mr. Kostant – aye; Mr. Vlahopoulos – aye; Mr. Lynch – aye and Mr. Beals – aye.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beals and seconded by Mr. Vlahopoulos, it was:

VOTED: To approve the November 16, 2020 Finance Committee Minutes.

Roll call vote: Mr. Kostant – aye; Mr. Lynch – aye; Mr. Vlahopoulos – aye; and Mr. Beals – aye.

### **Council on Aging**

*Kelly Howley, Council on Aging Director, was present for the discussion.* Ms. Howley summarized some of the efforts to help the seniors during Covid. Her building budget is the same from last year. She is proposing an increase in a position from Clerk to Administrative Assistant.

### **Historical Commission (including Historic Town House and Historic Library)**

*Nancy LaFave, Joan Morton, Brian Reynolds and Geri Taylor were present from the Historical Commission.* Ms. LaFave said the Historical Commission's budget is only \$500. She summarized work that has been done at the Historic Town House and Steam Roller Building. The roof replacement has been appropriated already and capping the chimney are still outstanding. Chairman LaCamera said the Archeological Survey and Preservation Plan is on the Capital Plan this year. Ms. LaFave said that the survey must be comprehensive; we have to have enough houses and structures covered in the Town. Mass Historical felt the survey was not comprehensive. We are trying to get information from Mass Historical to see if there are people to help with the inventory.

Chairman LaCamera said the Selectmen decided we are not going to lease the Historic Library anymore and use it for the Inspectional Services staff to give space to the Fire Department. We are not removing any shelving and will try to maintain it as it is. Everything has been removed that belonged to Somethins' Brewin. We are painting the interior. We will refinish the floors and are putting in a handicapped restroom and a handicapped ramp, which will be reviewed by the Historical Commission. The front stairs will be repaired and the windows will be replaced over time. Ms. LaFave said we want the building to be placed on the National Historic Register. The exterior must retain the same historical aspects to allow that to happen. Chairman LaCamera said we will do that, except for

the handicapped accessibility ramp. The renovation costs are estimated at \$150,000. Mr. Reynolds spoke about the exterior artwork on the building at Lakeville Hospital. We would like to remove that and there may be an expense for the artwork. Chairman LaCamera said the developer has agreed to remove it and will work with the Town. It is in cement and will have to be done carefully. Ms. Taylor asked Laurie Hunter if she would like the nursery rhyme characters for the back of the gymnasium at Assawompset School. Chairman LaCamera said we need to determine what is there. The buildings have deteriorated and some have caved in. We have to see if it is practical. Discussion occurred regarding preservation of the figures.

### **Planning Board**

*Mark Knox, Barbara Mancovsky, Michelle MacEachern and Jack Lynch from the Planning Board were present for the discussion.* Chairman LaCamera said we have a draft job description for a Town Planner. Mr. Knox said the Planning Board has a general consensus but we have not voted on it. It would be beneficial to have an employee to bring things back to the Planning Board. Chairman LaCamera said the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals are very reliant on Nate Darling. This position would make sure that everything gets coordinated for Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals and be presented to the Boards. Mr. Lynch said this position is much needed. Ms. MacEachern said the Planning Board has spoken about using outside peer review. We have used Environmental Partners. We would like to be proactive rather than reactive. This is a good time for this position. Selectman Day said a Town Planner is needed. Is the salary adequate? Who would the planner report to? Does the new Town Administrator want to chime in on the job description? He is not sure who the position would fall under. Selectman Fabian said all six (6) semi-finalists for the Town Administrator interviews noted that the Town is at a crossroads and couldn't believe we did not have a planner. She is not sure where we start the salary at. The new Town Administrator could help with this. She wants to see the money in the budget, but have Mr. Sky in for the search. Chairman LaCamera said the posting can't be filled until after July 1<sup>st</sup>. We need Planning Board and Board of Appeals input as well. We will not finalize the job description until the Town Administrator can make suggestions. Selectman Day said he did not remember talking about this salary.

Ms. Mancovsky spoke of the need for a planner. Selectman Day asked if the Planning Board expects the planner to report to the Board. The draft description is reporting to the Town Administrator. Do you expect them to report to you? Mr. Knox said he feels that is reasonable to report to the Town Administrator. Would there be a gap where the Town Administrator have a different directive differently than the Planning Board would? Mr. Knox said the Planning Board would not be the Planner's employer. You would need to define the duties so that the Planner would have control over the actions in accordance with the Master Plan and what the Planning Board votes on. This is asking for the Planner to work with the Board of Appeals and all other Boards to generate communication required. Ms. Mancovsky said she said has no problem with the Planner reporting to the Town Administrator. As a Board, she doesn't feel they are in a position to supervise an employee. Selectman Day said by MGL the Planning Board can employ the planner. Are you saying that the Board as is isn't in a position to do that? Ms. Mancovsky said that the day by day operations would be hard. The Planning Board Chairman changes. Mr. Knox said that happens every year with the Board of Selectmen. The job description has them working for multiple boards. Would the Town administrator send them to a ZBA meeting? Mr. Lynch would report to the Town Administrator but interact with other Boards. Chairman LaCamera spoke of the other duties the Town Planner could fill. The Town Administrator would oversee the things the Town Planner would do.

Selectman Day said we need a planner, but we have had very little advance notice. There was a decision made to get rid of the Town Coordinator position. We have no evidence that the salary is right, like a salary survey like we usually do. Chairman LaCamera said we are starting to review the job description. We will do an analysis. Selectman Day said he has a problem with the process and communication. Chairman LaCamera said it was discussed with the Master Plan Implementation Committee and the Planning Board last year. Selectman Day said we have gone through different positions. Selectman Fabian said we are talking about it with a budget review with a draft of a job description. She just received this and needs a bit more. The Chairman and Clorinda may be discussing this, but she hasn't. There needs to be better communication. She was expecting to see the Town Coordinator line in the budget. Discussion occurred regarding the Town Coordinator position.

Chairman LaCamera said we need to decide in the next few weeks. Selectman Fabian said she would like to have the input of a Town Administrator. She doesn't want to vote on a job description in the next few weeks. Chairman LaCamera said he wanted everyone to just look at the job description. Ms. Mancovsky said when the master plan was finished, it was known that we need a planner. That has been carried over with the new plan. We need that professional support right now. Our community is going to change a lot if we don't do something. It's not new to people in town that we need it. In practice we need someone to have ongoing conversations to have a long-term strategy. She would like someone with experience to deal with real life problems. Selectman Fabian said neither she or Selectman Day disagree that this position is needed. Chairman LaCamera is at Town Hall a lot and we are trying to keep up with some of this information. It is a communication issue. She would like some input on the salary. It should have been an agenda item. Selectman Day said this is needed, but he doesn't want to set the Town up for failure. We usually get an analysis on salaries and qualifications. Selectman Fabian said the Selectmen should have discussed this with the Planning Board prior to the budget meeting. Selectman Fabian had to leave the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Mr. Knox said the Planning Board is ready to work with the Selectmen to keep the process moving along. Ms. Mancovsky said the \$80,000 was a benchmark. Ms. Dunphy would be a help in figuring out the salary. We need someone with experience. Selectman Day said we increased the salary change on the Town Administrator to get someone with experience. Ms. Mancovsky said if the positing calls for more money, can we adjust that. Mr. Hassett agreed and said it can be amended at the Fall Town Meeting or get a transfer from the Finance Committee. Chairman LaCamera said there are no salary range on the job description because it has not been determined. The \$80,000 is a placeholder in the budget. He doesn't understand the hang-up. Selectman Day said it's the number, the process, its removing another position, etc. Mr. Beals said the Board of Selectmen should talk about this.

### **Town Accountant**

Mr. Hassett said that to date the Town has submitted to Plymouth County CARES \$855,000. About \$548,000 is education for Old Colony and Freetown/Lakeville Regional Schools. WE anticipate another \$500,000 to support the Region. There is a portion of that we are waiting to see if Freetown can contribute their share. These funds are also paying for the two (2) temporary firefighter positions and we plan to continue funding it this way through December 31<sup>st</sup>. We have received \$415,000 to date and \$310,000 was for Regional Schools. We have six (6) applications for review right now. Chairman LaCamera said that includes all the PPE supplies needed for the Town buildings and employees. The stimulus package will hopefully be approved tomorrow, but we don't know about the amounts. Mr. Hassett said there is some indication that this next round may include some revenue relief.

## **Adjournment**

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Board of Selectmen's Meeting at 8:57 PM.

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

Upon a motion made by Mr. Beals and seconded by Mr. Kostant, it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 8:57 PM.

Roll call vote: Mr. Lynch – aye; Mr. Vlahopoulos – aye; Mr. Kostant – aye and Chairman Beals – aye.

## **List of documents provided at the Board of Selectmen Meeting of March 9, 2021**

1. Agenda page
2. FY22 Budget