

**TOWN OF LAKEVILLE  
Select Board Meeting Minutes  
March 8, 2023 – 6:00 PM**

**Lakeville Police Station Meeting Room  
323 Bedford Street, Lakeville, MA**

On March 8, 2023, the Select Board held a meeting at 6:00 PM at the Lakeville Police Station Meeting Room. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Vice Chair Fabian. Members present were Vice Chair Fabian, Member LaCamera and Member Carboni. Also present was Ari Sky, Town Administrator, Todd Hassett, Town Accountant and Christina Cotsoridis, Assistant to the Town Administrator. LakeCAM was recording the meeting for broadcast.

**FY2024 Proposed Budget Overview/Update with the following Departments: Inspectional Services; Facilities; Planning; Fire; Police; Department of Public Works and Transfer Station; Capital**

Present for the discussion were Brian Day, Finance Committee Chairman; Katherine Desrosiers; Lawrence Kostant; Adam Lynch and Christopher Plonka, members of the Finance Committee. Finance Committee Chairman Day called the Finance Committee to order at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Sky said we received updated numbers on the F/L Regional School budget. They have made some cuts. Our assessment increase is now \$493,554. We have had conversations with the Business Manager regarding positions that are still being funded by ESSER which totals approximately \$380,000. Mr. Hassett said ESSER grants are federally funded and they expire in 2024. There are full times positions funded by these grants funds and it is a concern going forward for 2025 and 2026.

**Inspectional Services**

*Nathan Darling, Director of Inspectional Services, was present for the conversation.* Vice Chair Fabian said we are seeing in budgets across the board an increase for fuel and rubbish removal. Mr. Darling said hiring Paul Nee took a huge burden off of his staff. We are increasing contractual obligations for staff. In Conservation, we have kept because the Master Plan recommends a full-time agent, and we only have a part-time Agent now. Good land has been developed, so as we move forward, we will see a higher level of Conservation Agent needs. Mr. Darling said the only budget increase over 2.5% was Board of Health. We used to do a rabies clinic each year and there has always been \$1,500 in the budget for that. The public health nurse has established a vaccine clinic and a position to sign off for the administration of the vaccines. However, the vaccines are reimbursable. We are looking at staff, teachers, seniors and homebound people. Other than that, it is level with just salary increases. Member Carboni said you have a part time position that you did not fill. She is hoping that there is a plan to fill that. Mr. Darling said we used to have a full-time Clerk for Inspectional Services, who supported the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals also. She dedicated 15-18 hours per week to Inspectional Services. When that position was moved over to the Planning Department, we developed a part-

time position to make the Department whole. We have been using a floater clerk to fill those needs. Member LaCamera said there was a big discussion last year about making the Conservation Agent full-time. We have only spent a third of his salary through February. Is there a program in place to do inspections on conservation land? Mr. Darling said there is a process in place to follow through on Orders of Conditions and Notice of Intents. Currently he does not go out and monitor Town owned properties that have conservation restrictions on them. Member LaCamera said there was a conversation about the Conservation Agent not being able to monitor any conservation bought through the Community Preservation Act funds. Mr. Darling said he can reach out to the Conservation Commission to create a policy on how we will monitor those properties. We can look at putting someone on that is better suited to get around on Conservation properties. Vice Chair Fabian said we may need more work done and that person can assist with that. It would have been good to have someone active that could help explain why certain things, like acquiring a golf course, may not have been in the best interest of Town. Mr. Darling said we had an interim conservation agent that was a wetlands scientist. We have kept her on as a consultant. Our actuals in 2021 and 2022 are probably what it's going to take to maintain current services. If we can move some of that money into a consulting line, we could hire a wetland scientist or someone who knows about tree disease.

### **Facilities**

*Paul Nee, Facilities Director, was present for the discussion.* Vice Chair Fabian said this is a fairly new thing for the Town. There is Mr. Nee's salary, but not much else. Mr. Sky said we are giving a full review of Facilities programs at your next meeting. Member Carboni said you have three (3) part time workers. Mr. Nee said yes, one (1) has resigned, but he is trying to convince him to take a leave of absence instead. He is going to hold off on filling that position for a short time. Mr. Kostant said there is a \$10,000 decrease. Mr. Hassett said this year we introduced the line for \$30,000 before we had Mr. Nee's position. We had a number of projects that we needed professional help to get them moving. Now that we have Mr. Nee, he has been able to take over some of that work. We moved the \$10,000 into maintenance of Town facilities. That allows him the ability to bring in a professional that he may need. Finance Committee Chairman Day asked if Mr. Nee was still assessing things now. Mr. Nee said every building needs work. He doesn't see a huge increase in the budget next year. Mr. Darling said Mr. Nee will identify more projects as he goes. Mr. Sky said he has asked Mr. Nee to do a full facility assessment on each building. Member LaCamera said anything over \$10,000 goes on the Capital Plan and there is a separate line item in the budget for repair and maintenance for day to day maintenance.

### **Planning Department**

*Marc Resnick was present for the discussion.* Mr. Resnick said his budget is salaries for himself and the clerk. There is a few thousand in expenses and that is it. Member Carboni asked if someone from the Planning Board was going to be present to discuss this. Mr. Resnick said this is the Planning Department budget. Member Carboni said the Planning Board had its own budget and it looks like it got rolled in here. Mr. Sky said that is correct. Member Carboni said there are seminars that the Planning Board attended; is that built in here. Mr. Resnick said they get notified when CHAPA has seminars, as well as the Zoning Board. Vice Chair Fabian said the 6.8% in salary is a step plus COLA for the clerk. Mr. Lynch said the hourly wage increase for the clerk is

almost 7%. Mr. Sky said there are few positions that by virtue of the new contract had a step and COLA at the same time. The step is 3-4% plus COLA. Vice Chair Fabian said three (3) years ago when we did the budget, we did not have the actual rates for the unions, but these are actual.

Member LaCamera asked about the status of the Open Space plan. Mr. Resnick said it is pretty complete; it may be on the next Open Space meeting or the next meeting to be submitted to the State. Mr. Resnick said we will submit to the Select Board for comments. Member LaCamera said the Select Board needs to approve the final draft before it goes to the State. We should look at the preliminary version also. We spoke about GIS mapping and what needs to be done. There are multiple layers from the State that we are not utilizing. He wants to make sure that gets followed up on. Mr. Resnick said he is not sure the State GIS is compatible with ours. He uses the State website when he needs to use it. We could put a link on the Planning Board website directing people to the State site.

### **Fire Department**

*Michael O'Brien, Fire Chief, was present for the discussion.* Chief O'Brien said this year's proposed budget represents contractual obligations for salaries. We are more competitive with area departments now and recruitment/detention issues have become less. In 2018, a needs assessment was done on the Fire Station. We have a 112% increase in our revenue for EMS Services and we have been very successful in grant writing. Also, our fees for inspections, burn permits and property transactions for smoke detectors have increased. Connecting the expenses to the revenue, our taxpayer burden is less than in 2018. Mr. Lynch said education is up a bit over the past three (3) years. Chief O'Brien said contractually the firefighters receive incentives to go to school and they get a bonus based on their degree. Mr. Kostant said there is a 211% increase. Chief O'Brien said we have a chief and deputy who both have master's degrees. Finance Committee Chairman Day asked if the 37% change for the contracted wages for the Lieutenants was due to promotions. Chief O'Brien said that is due to not having a Captain. A Captain position was funded and the position did not survive negotiations, so the funding was transferred back into Lieutenants. Finance Committee Chairman Day said there has been a reduction of employee turnover from 125% to 25%. Chief O'Brien said we have historically been a training ground. The initiatives that the Selectmen took to temporarily improve the facilities before they get a new building helps make people want to stay. We still have people leaving, but not as often. Compensation is increasing and the health care is more competitive.

Mr. Kostant said most of the revenue is from EMS. Was the increase in the Deputy Chief being really good at filling out paperwork or the second ambulance? Chief O'Brien said documentation has improved. We have a QHQI program that sets the standard for calls to be documented. When there are bad debts, it is attended to right away. The billing process has been streamlined. We have modified our billing for car accidents. Mr. Hassett said calls for service are up. Chief O'Brien said we rely heavily on callback, with an increase of 10% each year since he has been here. We can pay overtime or have another regular salary. Member Carboni said are mutual aid calls included in the call volume. Chief O'Brien said yes. Member Carboni said have mutual aid responses gone up since last year. Chief O'Brien said they have, but he pays attention to Middleborough. The Middleborough numbers were significant recently; we were going there often. In the last two (2) or three (3) months, they have reduced. He reached out to Middleborough

and advocated for a solution. There has been a 50% decrease in Middleborough calls for the ambulance lately. Middleborough was advocating for a 3<sup>rd</sup> ambulance in their contract with Brewster to rely less on us. We had a peak of 30 visits in a month. Member LaCamera said having one (1) mutual aid call a day that takes away our personnel is a serious problem. That needs to be addressed as we are exposed not being able to cover our calls. Chief O'Brien said Middleborough doesn't come here often, but when they do, they send every firefighter on duty for a fire.

Chief O'Brien said last year, the Department had 350 simultaneous calls. We are relying solely on off duty firefighters to cover a call. This is a 21% increase in simultaneous calls due to the lag at the hospitals. Member LaCamera said you put the chart together for the mutual aid. All were pretty much level, but Middleborough was through the roof. Why don't they call other Towns? Chief O'Brien said he believes it is because we are the closest station. Member LaCamera said why are we providing these services to other communities all the time. Vice Chair Fabian said the Chief in Middleborough is fairly new and we hope that he will be able to address some of this. Chief O'Brien said the Middleborough Chief agrees that it is a problem and promised to address their policies. Member LaCamera said overtime costs in 2022 were \$73,000. The budget we are in right now is \$83,000 and we have spent over 83% of our overtime budget, which is related a lot to mutual aid. We are going to run out of money. You are asking for a \$10,000 increase, but that is not going to do it. Chief O'Brien said it is a problem and that's why he tried to connect his revenue to the budget. The callback guys generate the revenue by staffing a second ambulance. Member LaCamera said you can't look at it that way. It goes both ways.

Mr. Kostant said there may be a time where we need assistance; that is why it is mutual aid. There is a burden on the frequency of calls and it is geographic due to the location. Chief O'Brien said we average \$1,000 per ambulance call. Mr. Kostant asked are the mutual aid calls just for ambulance? Chief O'Brien said we go there for fires. You need 15 or 16 people to run a room and contents fire. We rely on mutual aid for fires; we will have three (3) towns come into Lakeville. Withdrawing from a mutual aid contract is huge concern for the firefighters' safety. They are our rescue team and backup. Mr. Kostant said when you are at a fire and need backup, if you aren't on a mutual aid program, lives will be lost. Chief O'Brien said we need to manage the Middleborough situation. He will speak to the Chief tomorrow, but if it becomes a time that he is not making progress, he will call the Town Administrator for a higher-level talk. He wanted to make sure that everyone knew if we have one (1) ambulance committed on a call, we will not respond to Middleborough. We don't call people in to go to Middleborough. It is tough for him to do that because he knows there is someone in that we may be harming. Vice Chair Fabian said Middleborough has helped us with false alarms at the industrial park. Mr. Kostant said mutual aid is important.

### **Police Department**

*Matthew Perkins, Police Chief, was present for the discussion.* Vice Chair Fabian said the estimate for the contractual obligations is in the last line in the salary section. Chief Perkins said the salaries increase of 1.3% represents contractual obligations and step increases. He has asked for enhancements: funding of an additional sergeant position as he envisions a current sergeant in the role of Detective is \$9,776. The shift differential line for dispatchers to incentivize dispatchers and part time dispatchers to take the 3-11 and 11-7 shifts. It would be \$7,200. There is an increase

in fuel on the expenses. Mr. Kostant asked how many dispatchers each shift. Chief Perkins said one (1), but if there is training or a storm, there may be more. Mr. Kostant said is dispatching for both Fire and Police. Chief Perkins said yes. Finance Committee Chairman Day said is there no change in electricity costs? Chief Perkins said when we first moved in the new building, we estimated it and it has been right on.

### **Department of Public Works and Transfer Station**

*Franklin Moniz, DPW Director, was present for the discussion.* Mr. Moniz said under DPW, the salaries, there is one enhancement which is the hourly wages for the clerk. After her contractual obligations, there is a \$1,300 increase from moving from a Level 2, Step 6 to a Grade B Step 2. Other increases are contractual obligations. Most of his staff is at the top step and the CDL stipend is new this year. Expenses are level funded except for gasoline and diesel. Snow and ice and street lighting and cemeteries are all level funded. We used a lot of salt, but did not need to call contractors in. Finance Committee Chairman Day asked what roads will be paved this year. Mr. Moniz said this Fiscal Year Pickens Street with a resurfacing. After July, South Pickens and South Kingman for resurfacing and a few preservation projects: Perhaps Kingman Street and a seal on a few other roads. Finance Committee Chairman Day said DPW took over a lot of work with the Parks. Is that working out well? Mr. Moniz said he has enough staff but at some point, we need some work done. Vice Chair Fabian said there are a few things to be worked out, but we have worked out a lot. Member LaCamera said the last few years the State has said they will redo Route 18. They patched it this year. He asked Mr. Moniz if he could follow up to see if they are going to pave the road. They are supposed to do Route 79 through Route 105 light. County Road was paved up from 79 to the Lakeville line. Mr. Moniz said they did the Berkley side also. Member LaCamera asked Mr. Moniz to speak to the State about cleaning up the trash.

### **Transfer Station**

Mr. Moniz said the increase in salaries are contractual obligations and there are some stipends in the new Laborer's Agreement. Mr. Moniz said there is a big increase in the cost to dispose of bulky waste, which covers construction materials. We are seeing no revenue in glass, cardboard, and some plastics recycling; we are paying to get rid of it. Also there is an increase in vehicle diesel and property and liability insurance increase. Mr. Moniz said we purchased the new loader last year. Mr. Hassett said we are looking to replace the roll off truck in FY25. Mr. Hassett said a lot of the lines this year are underbudgeted. We will have lines that are overbudget. We only have a \$55,000 budget for bulky waste, but we will exceed that. The FY23 budget will need a supplement before we get out of this year.

Finance Committee Chairman Day asked about the hazardous waste disposal. Mr. Moniz said in the past we have done it as a capital item. After discussion, it was decided that it is more of an operational thing and we added it to the budget. We do a cut-off with the companies for a certain number. Member LaCamera said this is an enterprise fund. Mr. Moniz is at 78% of his budget through February. Numbers have been stable over the past few years. Mr. Moniz said the last time we increased prices at the Transfer Station was in 2019, so we are going to be looking for fee increases. The increase will offset the increased costs for disposal. Vice Chair Fabian said we don't want to overcharge either. We don't want people dumping things. Mr. Hassett said we

subsidize this program annually \$100,000. Mr. Moniz said the free mattress program has expired. The cost for non-recyclable mattresses is increasing. We are hoping that they will bring that back.

## **Capital**

Mr. Sky said the Capital Expenditures Committee met last week and recommended the capital plan as presented. Mr. Hassett said most of the articles in the FY24 column will be brought to the Annual Town Meeting. There are a few footnotes: #1 are items to fund at the Special Town Meeting in May from existing available funds and a few items that may come before the Town later in the year, either in the fall or next spring, depending on how plans for those project progress. Mr. Hassett said we are not asking for any borrowing authorization in May, but it may come up later in the year for design of the Fire Station. We put estimated numbers in for the Fire Station. We have an annual line for road improvements and technology. We were able to obtain a grant this past year to help with disaster recovery and infrastructure needs. The security improvements are for the Town Buildings; this is a supplement from a previous article. We are \$41,000 short on the previous article. Finance Committee Chairman Day said wasn't that originally appropriated in 2021. Mr. Hassett said yes. Finance Committee Chairman Day said we had gotten quotes and staged the work in a number of phases with camera and card access or Phase 1, but he doesn't believe any of the work has been done. Mr. Sky said the camera work at Town Hall was done. Card access has been deferred, but we are looking at it again. This would allow for coverage of all Town Buildings with cameras. Member LaCamera said we did discuss the security plans, but there was one specific area that is not included in this budget. Mr. Sky said he has reached out to Ryan Maltais for a quote. We may have to amend this. Mr. Hassett said under DPW, there is a replacement sander for \$35,000; \$70,000 for a 4x4 pickup with equipment and a \$60,000 storage shed. There is a to be determined number regarding their facility. It may make sense to fold the shed and parking lot/drainage next year into the overall project. Mr. Moniz said the paving it to repave the lot and put a retention area and basins to the front of the property near the street. Mr. Moniz said the shed he is looking for is to keep equipment out of the weather.

For vehicles, Mr. Sky said soon we will be required to get hybrids. Chief Perkins said he received a quote for a hybrid cruiser with equipment is \$63,000. If we order now, we won't get them until FY25. If we have to wait that long, that is a deal breaker. A regular cruiser equipped is \$60,000. Mr. Kostant said you are looking at a cruiser and 2/3's of a cruiser per year. Chief Perkins said we will trade in old cruisers to reduce the cost. Ford says 150,000 police use miles are equivalent to 400,000 regular miles. Mr. Hassett said the first lease payment for the ladder truck ordered last June is delayed until June of 2024. The Fire Department has two (2) other pieces of equipment: thermal imaging and firefighter tracking and pump operations equipment for \$20,000, which will be funded through previous funding not used. Mr. Hassett said we will continue to look at the Senior Center, but it will not go before Town Meeting in May. That may not happen until next spring and we have targeted FY25 for possible construction of an addition to the Senior Center. Member LaCamera said \$500,000 is not going to do it; it is not even close. Mr. Sky said it will be a challenge. He wants to see how the feasibility study goes and get an estimate. Mr. Hassett said there was a request in the five-year plan from the Cemetery Commission for granite posts, but they have asked to defer it to FY25. This may be able to be funded through Community Preservation Act monies. Finance Committee Chairman Day said they need to get posts that meet a certain criterion. If a vendor finds them, is there a means to fund them. Mr.

Hassett said a Reserve Fund Transfer. He advocated to get the funding in FY24, but they spoke to the vendor and were assured that there was nothing to be done the next year or so. Mr. Sky said we always have the Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Hassett said Parks will be discussed next week. All projects will be funded through their Enterprise Funds. Finance Committee Chairman Day asked about any new projects. Mr. Sky said there is a project under development to make the new Bedford Street field accessible. They are intending to ask for ARPA funding around \$100,000 to \$115,000.

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Desrosiers and seconded by Mr. Lynch, it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 7:47 PM.  
Unanimous in favor.

Upon a motion made by Member Carboni and seconded by Member LaCamera, it was:

VOTED: To adjourn the Select Board Meeting at 7:47 PM.  
Unanimous in favor.

### **List of documents provided at the Select Board Meeting of March 8, 2023**

1. FY24 budget
2. Capital Plan