

**TOWN OF LAKEVILLE
Select Board Meeting Minutes
August 29, 2023 – 5:00 PM**

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

On August 29, 2023, the Select Board held a meeting at 5:00 PM at the Lakeville Police Station Meeting Room. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chairman Day. Members present were Chairman Day, Member Fabian and Member Carboni. Also present were Ari Sky, Town Administrator, Tracie Craig-McGee, Executive Assistant to the Select Board and Town Administrator and Christina Cotsoridis, Assistant to the Town Administrator. LakeCAM was recording the meeting for broadcast.

At 5:00 PM, upon a motion made by Member Carboni and seconded by Member Fabian, it was:

VOTED: To enter into Executive Session pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. c.30A, s.21(a)(6) to consider the purchase, exchange lease or value of real estate, if the Chairman declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect of the negotiating position of the public body; and pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, s.21(a)(7) to comply with the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A, s.22(f): approval of Executive Session Minutes for June 26, 2023 and for August 21, 2023. Roll call vote: Member Fabian – aye; Member Carboni – aye and Chairman Day – aye.

The Board returned to open session at 5:40 PM.

Discuss August 23, 2023, Open Meeting Law complaint (recording of public meetings)

Chairman Day noted that in Massachusetts General Law, it speaks to notifying the public that a meeting is being recorded. We will be more diligent about mentioning that at the beginning of the meeting. Member Carboni asked that the Town Clerk send out a notice to the Board/Committee/Commissions reminding them that they need to announce this at the meetings.

Discuss operational and resource considerations for transition to 5 member Select Board.

Lillian Drane, Town Clerk, was present for the discussion. Mr. Sky said he prepared a memo to address operating issues regarding expanding to a five-member Board. We need to formulate a process on how the Board members will address staff. We can have a policy that describes the governance role and clarifies protocol for guidance and direction.

Mr. Sky said the Board asked him to look at staffing issues for the Clerk's office for next year's budget. We have a physical limitation for space for which we have some proposals. With the Board increasing, it would be helpful to have resources available for backup. He spoke to Ms. Drane who thought it would be a good idea to have a shared position. We don't have any space left in the building, so the only possibility is to take the conference room behind the Select Board

Offices and use it for office space. We would have to take the upstairs space training room area and enclose it to be shared space. We do use that space for Department Head meetings.

Mr. Sky said he looked at agenda production and the way we handle them. It is a paper intensive process. Photocopying at Town Hall is about \$7,000 per year. He noted that is not all for Select Board items. There are hosting services that allow for production of agendas. We would make that a standard and save a lot of money on paper. Then there are stipend costs for an additional \$9,000 per year and insurance costs for the two (2) additional members. He reviewed the expense chart he prepared in his memo.

Ms. Drane said this position would only work for her if it is dedicated to her for election years. Mr. Sky said the hours would vary between the timing of the two (2) offices. Member Carboni asked how many times have we used a floater in the Select Board's office. Mr. Sky said we haven't used them much because the only floater we had was detailed to the Inspectional Services Office. We have hired another floater, but have not used her much. There have been issues with back-up staffing. Member Carboni asked Ms. Drane during the budget cycle if she was looking at a part time person. Ms. Drane replied yes. Member Carboni said if the position is not needed in the Select Board's Office, she doesn't want to budget a position that we don't need. Ms. Craig-McGee spoke of some of the clerical work that is needed as she had not filed anything in the office for two (2) years. Member Carboni said we have used an outside agency to scan and organize files. Mr. Sky said there are times that there is only one (1) person in the office and that is not the ideal. It would be helpful to the organization to have someone start to learn what is going on in our office. There are times when he has had to manage the agenda himself and do the job of Town Administrator. Chairman Day said there is very little cross training and very little direct assistants to step in when someone leaves.

Ms. Drane said all the Clerks in the surrounding area are getting ready for 2024. Before she retires, she wants to make sure the office runs efficiently, especially for elections. She can't do it by herself anymore with early voting. Clerks in the area have a part time person just to help with elections. We need to figure this out. Chairman Day asked is there an opportunity to do this as a contract role. Ms. Drane said she wouldn't feel comfortable with that. Member Carboni said we left our budget cycle with a fully funded position not filled in the Building Department. There was a floating position available that we had said would be directed to the Town Clerk's Office. Mr. Sky said we feel it would be better to have a dedicated position. Member Carboni said a new floater was brought in. Member Fabian said it is for 20 hours per week. Chairman Day said there was a thought that the building position would be filled freeing up the floater position. Mr. Sky said that person applied and got the job so we have a new floater. Member Fabian asked where is this floater right now that was supposed to help the Clerk's Office. Ms. Drane said she is going between the Assessors Office, Treasurer's Office and Council on Aging. Member Carboni said the intent for the new floater was for the Town Clerk's Office. Member Fabian asked how long has she been working. Ms. Drane said about six (6) weeks. Member Fabian said she is nowhere near hiring a full time person until we figure out what the floater can do. Ms. Drane said she believes that the floater is only working 10 AM to 2 PM and has transportation issues. Until the issue is resolved, that doesn't help. Mr. Sky said we need someone that can get into the election piece. Chairman Day said if she is assigned to the Town Clerk's Office, then what are the other offices missing. Mr. Sky said we need coverage. Ms. Drane said we do have two (2) floaters.

Member Fabian said that Member Carboni had suggested during the budget season that there was a position funded that was not hired. New Select Board Members coming in will need more time to get up and running. She would like to work out the floater position before hiring someone else. She doesn't want to spend a lot of money to reconfigure offices when we spent \$50,000 between 2019 and 2020 to reconfigure everything. Could we move the Planning Office to the other building? Mr. Sky said there is no other space available there. Member Fabian said she doesn't know that we need a full-time person. We have hired multiple positions so she wants to put on the brakes now. We don't like where new growth is looking. She was not in favor of going from three (3) to five (5) Board Members because of these factors. The residents of Lakeville want more control over Town government, not less control. We should not discuss a policy of deciding the Select Board's governance role because these positions will be filled at the next election. Maybe we should give the new members the ability to create these policies. Mr. Sky said we can stick a pin in this and see how this goes. We do need to include the money for laptops and stipends. Chairman Day said the governance role has been defined in the Town Administrator Act. The question is how not to overrun the office, but we need to help the Town Clerk's Office. Mr. Sky said we can discuss this during the budget process. Member Fabian asked Ms. Drane if she needs a 20 hour a week employee every week. Ms. Drane said yes. Mr. Sky said we will look at this in the budget process. Chairman Day asked what is the reason the floaters are floating. Mr. Sky said we have offices staffed by one (1) or two (2) people. Chairman Day said if we are operating with a skeleton crew we can say no to positions, but we have to help the Town Clerk. Member Fabian asked can we evaluate the floating positions. Do we want staff that is staffed by part timers? Mr. Sky said floaters tend to be retired and part time employees are hard to attract with no benefits. Member Carboni said the part time person was going to be in the Clerk's Office. Ms. Drane said the floater is in there when someone is out, but she needs a part time worker in her office, but there is no space. Member Fabian asked are there no other unfilled approved positions. Mr. Sky said there are none. Member Carboni said if there is a need for a project in the Department, there is no reason why the Board's Office wouldn't engage the floater as you do now. We use the floater if we need to. Member Fabian said if we find this new position that we have filled and we are still struggling with the Clerk's Office, then we look at it in the budget process. Chairman Day said the Town Clerk needs someone now. Mr. Sky said we could do something in May 2024. Mr. Sky said so for Fall Town Meeting, he will put the funding on the warrant and the Board approved that. The opt out for insurance is \$5,000 and the expense is \$12-15,000 each for insurance.

Chairman Day asked if we should ask the platform that hosts our website about agenda production software. A system like this allows staff to build it so we can look at it as its being created. This would give us time to ask questions. Member Carboni said she is all for having the Town Administrator look at that and the cost associated with it. Member Fabian expressed her concerns about other Board, Committee and Commission members using agenda software as they didn't want to use Zoom for meetings. Mr. Sky said this would make it more accessible for the public. It would have to be required for all committees. Chairman Day said it is hard for the public to go look at votes without going to minutes. Discussion occurred on various platforms. Member Carboni said we should see about using a tablet versus a laptop. A tablet would be easier to use a stylus.

Chairman Day asked if Mr. Sky would be able to work something out. Mr. Sky said he will stick a pin in it and we can discuss it in the next budget cycle. Chairman Day said maybe we should have a meeting to discuss the utilization of existing floaters.

Discuss the HR Director transition plan

Member Carboni said when Mr. Viarella announced his resignation, having that office vulnerable, what are we doing for services during that time. Mr. Sky said he has spoken to Todd Hassett who will oversee payroll and day to day functions and Mr. Holt will keep on with his position. We have the classification and compensation study going on, which is going on by itself. If we don't have a Human Resources Director when we want to develop the policy, that could be an issue. We have 48 applications with six (6) that are worth interviewing. He is looking for someone that understands policy and keeps the office running day to day. He will pursue those candidates and have a panel of Department Heads interview them sometime in September. He would like the Police Chief; Fire Chief; Town Clerk; Town Accountant; himself and the DPW Director. Chairman Day asked if the former Human Resources Director would be on the panel. Mr. Sky will ask Ms. Dunphy. He hopes to have a recommendation to the Board by the end of September. Member Carboni asked is there an opportunity to take a step back and look at our infrastructure. The Human Resources Director is also an Assistant Town Administrator in other municipalities. We could consider that at some point if the Board is interested. Member Fabian said we recently reviewed the job description, so unless there is a major change, it doesn't need fine tuning. Member Carboni said we could realign resources and it would be an extra person in our office. Chairman Day asked Mr. Sky if he would be bringing one (1) person forward. Mr. Sky said we will see. If there is no one worth bringing, he will not advance it to the Board.

Adjournment

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Select Board Meeting at 6:23 PM.
Unanimous in favor.

List of documents provided at the Select Board Meeting of August 29, 2023

1. Executive Session material
2. Open Meeting Law Complaint
3. Memo from the Town Administrator