

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**AUGUST 15, 2016 at 6:30pm**  
**TOWN HALL, SELECTMEN'S CONFERENCE ROOM**

**CALL TO ORDER/OPENING**

Chairman Belanger called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Chairman Douglas Belanger, Vice Chair Harry Brooks, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair Thomas E. Buckley, III, Selectwoman Dianna Provencher, Selectman Michael Shivick, Town Administrator Kevin Mizikar, Assistant to the Town Administrator Kristen Forsberg and Student Liaisons Jaymi-Lyn Souza and Robert Kemp were in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No members of the public provided comment

**1. SCHEDULED**

**a. 6:30pm - Pole Hearing – Mulberry at Marshall Street**

Havier Morales with National Grid presented a request to set one additional pole 150' beyond pole 64 to serve the new set of lights at the airport as part of their system upgrades.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Buckley to approve the petition for pole and wire locations on Mulberry Street at Marshall Street. The motion carried unanimously.

**b. 6:30pm - Pole Hearing – Marshall at Crystal Street**

Havier Morales with National Grid presented a request to install 4 solely owned poles on Marshall Street to upgrade lines to service the new lights that are part of the airport upgrades as marked on the map.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Shivick to approve the petition for pole and wire locations along Marshall Street at Crystal Street. The motion carried unanimously.

Residents asked if existing poles are staying. Mr. Morales stated all existing poles are staying but may be replaced with new poles and can be legally moved 3 feet in any direction without obtaining permission. Mr. Morales noted with the new poles and tree trimming outages may diminish. One resident noted National Grid came on his property and made a mess during the tree trimming. Mr. Belanger stated they should call the Town Administrator's office if this occurs and they will reach out to the company.

**2. CORRESPONDENCE**

**a. Student Liaison Reports**

Ms. Souza reported that one on one Chromebook distribution will begin at LHS on August 17<sup>th</sup> with the freshmen and schedules will also be released on the 17<sup>th</sup>. School resumes on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

**3. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Resignations - Linda Rowden – Assistant Town Clerk**

A motion was made by Mr. Brooks and seconded by Ms. Provencher to accept the resignation of Linda Rowden and to send a letter of appreciation. The motion carried unanimously.

**b. Appointments**

**i. Alternate Wiring Inspector – Matthew McCue**

A motion was made by Mr. Brooks and seconded by Ms. Provencher to appoint Matthew McCue to the position of Alternate Wiring Inspector. The motion carried unanimously.

**ii. Community Outreach Liaison – Allison Nadell**

Mr. Mizikar presented a request from Senior Center Director Rachelle Cloutier to appoint Allison Nadell to a five hour a week grant funded outreach position. Mr. Mizikar stated the Town has been fortunate to work with Ms. Nadell on a volunteer basis in the past. Ms. Nadell comes with an extensive education, great personality and is able to get out into the community and work with those in need. Mr. Mizikar supports the recommendation of the Senior Center Director.

A motion was made by Mr. Brooks and seconded by Ms. Provencher to appoint Ms. Nadell to the position of Community Outreach Liaison for the Senior Center. The motion carried unanimously.

**iii. Kurt Parliament – Arts Council Ex-Officio**

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Ms. Shivick to appoint Kurt Parliament to the position of ex-officio for the Arts Council. The motion carried unanimously.

**c. Contract – Road Salt – Cargill, Inc.**

Mr. Mizikar presented an agreement with Cargill, Inc. for road salt at a cost of \$79.34/ton which is down from last year. Cargill won the bid for high end green salt for the 12 community consortium and the Town has worked with them in the past. Mr. Mizikar recommends signing the contract as the cost for this salt was over \$90/ton just a few years ago.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Brooks to sign the contract with Cargill, Inc. for road salt.

Under discussion, Mr. Brooks asked if we had any road salt left from last year. Mr. Mizikar responded we do but also have the capacity to bring in more.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Mizikar further noted that the Municipal Modernization Act passed earlier this month shifted the authority over snow and ice deficit spending from the Board of Selectmen to Town Administrator/Managers. Mr. Mizikar stated he will keep the Board informed but a proactive vote of the Board and Finance Advisory Committee to deficit spend is no longer required.

**d. Set date, time and location of Fall Special Town Meeting**

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Buckley to set the Fall Special Town Meeting for November 1<sup>st</sup> at 7pm in the Town Hall Gym. The motion carried unanimously.

**e. Open Fall Special Town Meeting Warrant**

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Buckley to open the Fall Special Town Meeting Warrant. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Mizikar noted he is aware of approximately 12 articles at this point for the warrant. Mr. Brooks stated there is a lot going on as it is an election year and asked if the meeting was necessary. Mr. Mizikar stated it is needed to get amend the current budget due to the State Aid changes since May and put the required funding in place for the EMS Department which will enable the Town to set the tax rate at a minimum.

**f. Memorandum of Agreement – Local 168A (Dispatchers)**

Mr. Mizikar stated the dispatchers have been working without an agreement since January and have agreed to a wage increase of 2.25% retroactive to July 1, 2016 and a monthly incentive pay of \$150 for this short term agreement in effect until the new regional dispatch center opens in Worcester this fall. Mr. Mizikar feels this is a fair agreement to keep the dispatchers with the Town as they have been in limbo for years.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Brooks to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Local 168A (Dispatchers).

Under discussion, Mr. Shivick asked if anyone from the Town will be transitioning to the regional dispatch center. Mr. Mizikar stated all four full time dispatchers have received conditional offers and have the right to accept positions at their choosing. The City has requested and the Town has provided a list of part time dispatchers as well. Cross training will be much easier if Leicester officers sign on but it is a personal employment decision. Mr. Belanger noted this has been a process years in the making and that it will be helpful to have folks familiar with local terminology such as "Moose Hill". Mr. Belanger further noted the police station is not closing and the Town is taking the revenues saved to re-staff our police department which we desperately need to do.

**g. Vote to Sign Warrant for 2016 State Primary**

A motion was made by Mr. Brooks and seconded by Ms. Provencher to sign the warrant for the 2016 State Primary. The motion carried unanimously.

**h. Easement – National Grid – 3 Paxton Street**

Mr. Mizikar presented an easement with National Grid to place a pole and both underground and overhead electric systems for the new Fire Station at 3 Paxton Street.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Shivick to approve the easement with National Grid for 3 Paxton Street. The motion carried unanimously.

**i. Certificates of Donation of Easements – Paxton Street (Rt56) Roadway Improvement Project**

Mr. Mizikar noted that obtaining easements is required as part of the Paxton Street resurfacing project which runs from the intersection of Main Street and Rt. 56 to Hyland Ave and includes various levels of repairs and improvements to the roadway and sidewalks including drainage. The design was paid for using Chapter 90 funds and all construction will be paid for using federal TIP funding. The majority of easements are temporary for things like standing on land, repairing sidewalks, driveways, loam, seeding and cleaning up after ourselves but we can't complete the project without resident assistance. As of today, 9 out of 28 residents have agreed to donate these easements to the Town and not seek compensation. Mr. Mizikar noted it is in the public interest to make donations and residents are encouraged to do so but do have the right to compensation. Mr. Mizikar presented 9 certificates of donation for Board review and signature.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Shivick to authorize the Chair to sign the certificates of donation for the Paxton Street roadway improvement project easements.

Under discussion Mr. Mizikar noted all existing sidewalks will be replaced and a short section of sidewalk will be added across from the schools in addition to improving pedestrian notification at the Winslow Ave intersection and increasing drainage capacity on the hill headed up to the High School. Mr. Buckley noted the project is a win-win for all residents because they get improved drainage, better sidewalks and the Town is tying in driveways neatly into the new roadway. He encouraged residents to contact Ms. Forsberg in the office so the Town can get this project underway.

The motion carried unanimously.

**j. Wetlands Protection Fund Spending**

The Conservation Commission has employed a senior environmental scientist to review rare complicated projects. Mr. Mizikar is seeking approval to pay two invoices using the wetlands project fund which is funded through the collection of conservation application fees. Further appropriation is not required by Town Meeting but using these

funds does require Board of Selectmen approval. The invoices are in the amounts of \$552.76 and \$467.70. Mr. Mizikar also asked the Board to authorize spending of up to an additional \$1000 for the use of a wetlands scientist as needed for FY'17.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Buckley. The motion carried unanimously.

**k. Amendment to Use and Occupancy Agreement – 1 Paxton Street**

The Town has a 6-month use and occupancy with the seller of 1 Paxton Street which expires on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Board has authorized 1 Paxton Street to be used as a temporary library in early 2017. The seller has said she would like to stay through the end of November and as the Town has no current use for the property plus this is helpful for utilities and maintenance costs, Mr. Mizikar recommends the Board authorize and extension of the agreement through November 30<sup>th</sup>.

A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Shivick to extend the use and occupancy agreement for 1 Paxton Street through November 30, 2016. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Brooks asked what the winter protocol is. Mr. Mizikar responded the Town won't winterize the building but will fill the tanks and keep it at a moderate temperate and will be working on some structural improvements to make it a temporary home for a library. Mr. Brooks asked if the building will be inspected once or twice a week. Mr. Mizikar responded that the Town will have to do this.

**4. DISCUSSION/OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Strategic Planning**

Mr. Mizikar lead a discussion on strategic planning for the Town of Leicester. He noted that this is a starting point for conversations with the Board and the public to come to consensus around what we want the Town of Leicester to look like. The Town will have to look at bylaws, policies and guiding documents that we live under. The Master Plan and decisions made in the early 2000's created significant challenges to growth in the community and these documents are still valid and must be followed until we decide to change them. From 2009-2013 the Town saw a cut in state aid as well. The public has expressed a desire for improved parks and recreation, better roads and public safety, keeping the police lobby open, and better schools and capital investments that create economic development will enable expended services. The Town would need to increase the commercial tax base and which would also provide jobs for residents to improve their quality of life. Services can't be expanded without new revenue. The Town receives \$16M in real estate tax plus excise tax which can only be multiplied by 2.5% annually so the Town is stuck in neutral at best. The residential tax base is the biggest challenge the community is facing right now as real estate taxes represent 90% of all taxes coming in. Changes made primarily in 2002 increased minimum lot sizes in R1 and suburban agricultural areas by nearly two times which reduced the number of homes able to be built in this community by nearly 50% which reduced our revenues by nearly 50% and in combination with a failing economy really hurt the Town. Mr. Mizikar noted he is not advocating for the Town to grow with reckless abandon and believes in preserving the historic and rural nature of the Town but believes some new growth is important. The Assessor is concerned about the lack of new growth as approved condo developments are all reaching buildout, the current zoning bylaws are limiting growth and large lots are less attractive to buyers. We need to work together to have smarter zoning bylaws. State laws allow for 40B housing by right and there are many changes recently passed and under consideration at that level. The more the Town defines where it will go the better off we will be. The general trend in school population has been downward in Town and not every residential housing development means school costs are going to increase exponentially. Some influx into the schools and some vibrancy is a good thing. Every new home requires new services but if we build the zoning properly it is easier to service a higher density population in a certain area of Town then to have a mile upon mile of road between houses.

Mr. Shivick asked if it is safe to say the old Master Plan will hurt us economically. Mr. Mizikar responded yes as revenues lost have put us in the situation we are in right now where there is not a lot of interest in building homes in

Town. New home starts in many other communities are up and they aren't here. We are missing out on millennials who want apartments and starter homes. Mr. Belanger asked where are our kids going to live and how do we take care of the next generation as they can't afford to stay here anymore?

Mr. Mizikar noted we must invest in infrastructure and look at state funding like the recently awarded community compact grant for economic development. Mr. Mizikar noted he recently spoke with Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash and he does recognize that central mass and the western parts of the state have different needs than the Gateway Cities and could use particular help with creating industrial parks. If the Town wants service expansion then we need additional revenues, the right partnerships (Becker, water and sewer districts, utilities, private), staff leadership and citizen engagement.

**b. FY'17 Budget**

Mr. Mizikar noted Town Meeting passed a balanced budget in May but the State budget came in different from what we were working from and there is the need to make some reasonable changes. Mr. Mizikar has worked with staff and the Superintendent of Schools to come up with a new plan. School revenue decreased by \$26, 195 and vocational tuition increased by \$65,000 as more students than anticipated are going to Assabet or Tantasqua. Cherry sheet offsets and charges increased significant. However, 8 employees opted out of our health insurance at a savings of \$46,911. The Superintendent continues to be a strong partner and has made changes to offset the impact of the State Aid reduction. Mr. Mizikar has made changes to balance the budget and it will go to Fall Special Town Meeting for approval.

Mr. Brooks asked if there are any other options for vocational tuition such as buying into Baypath as the cost keeps increasing every year. Mr. Belanger noted this is ultimately the School Department's decision then it would go to Town Meeting.

**c. School Administration Office Relocation**

Mr. Mizikar has developed a plan with staff and the Superintendent to move the school administration to the Town Hall for next summer. Funds have been appropriated by Town Meeting to fit out the space. This discussion started 15 years ago when Town Hall was initially renovated and would turn it into a total municipal building. The School Administration Building would be sold and added to the tax rolls. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is currently vacant at Town Hall and the Town and Schools would enter into an MOA for its use as they are distinct entities.

**5. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

The Town Administrator provided highlights from his written report

**6. BOARD OF SELECTMEN REPORTS**

Mr. Shivick noted he has reached out to DOT and they are going to prioritize State crosswalks, especially the one by Bottomly Ave and the one at the center of Town by the end of August. Mr. Shivick noted there are water issues in Town and that water notices did not go out on time. Mr. Shivick noted the consolidation of water districts seems reasonable and logical and asked what the cost would be. Mr. Mizikar stated that is unknown but something the Town is working on with the districts as a result of the WPI/DEP study which identified challenges and gave us a model to pursue. Mr. Mizikar will be on the next Hillcrest and Leicester Water District agendas and will be seeking support for the creation of a Water Prioritization Committee which is the next step recommended by the study.

Ms. Provencher noted the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Regional Emergency Communications Center was very nice. She requested drivers slow down for people in crosswalks, especially the one by Giguere's.

Mr. Brooks congratulated Linda Rowden on her retirement and wished her well. Mr. Brooks mentioned the Pawtucket Red Sox trip where the Tarentino family threw out the first pitch. He also thanked the Highway Department for the street paving and cleanup.

**7. MINUTES**

**a. June 20, 2016 workshop and regular meeting**

Passed over

**b. July 11, 2016**

Passed over

**8. EXECUTIVE SESSION, MGL CHAPTER 30A, SECTION 21A**

None

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Belanger and seconded by Ms. Provencher at 8:15pm. The motion carried unanimously.