

**CALL TO ORDER/OPENING  
VETERANS POEM**

Chair Allen Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Chair Allen Phillips, Vice Chair Rick Antanavica, Second Vice Chair Dianna Provencher, Selectman Herb Duggan Jr, Selectman John Bujak, Town Administrator David Genereux, and Executive Assistant Maria Cataloni were in attendance.

**1. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(2) – Interim EMS Director

**Motion 022123-1a.1:** A motion was made by Mr. Duggan to go into executive session, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0 (Roll Call Vote) at 6:03PM.**

**Motion 022123-1a.2:** A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to exit executive session, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0 (Roll Call Vote) at 6:17PM.**

**2. REPORTS**

a. **Student Liaison Reports**

Student Liaisons were not in attendance due to school vacation week.

*No action was taken by the Select Board on this agenda item.*

b. **Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Genereux read from the written report, addressing questions and concerns from Ms. Provencher and Mr. Antanavica regarding the corrections necessary at the Waite Pond dam. Mr. Bujak would like the builders, Fuss & O'Neill, to drain the pond all the way down and rebuild the dam instead of extending it. Mr. Genereux stated he would reach out to Fuss & O'Neill for other possible solutions.

*No action was taken by the Select Board on this agenda item.*

c. **Economic Development Report**

Mr. Genereux read from the written report, answering Ms. Provencher's question about the responsibilities of the new Grant Writer. He confirmed that the Grant Writer would take over all grant-related responsibilities.

*No action was taken by the Select Board on this agenda item.*

d. **Select Board Reports**

Ms. Provencher stated that the Moose Hill Water Commission would not deviate from the two questions they have regarding the body of water:

1. Will it be drinking water?
2. What is the daily recharge rate to supply the Town?

She also mentioned the Valentine's Day luncheon at the Senior Center. Though Fire, Police, and EMS were missing that day, the Senior Center greatly appreciates anytime those departments can make it to the Senior Center events.

Mr. Bujak discussed a meeting he had with Superintendent Kustigian, Nate Hagglund, Bob Pingeton, Paul Fontaine, and Donna McCance. Mr. Bujak believes that there is a good fee system in place at the School Department. He believes that if the Town and Schools merged their processes, there could be a move to utilize one scheduler instead of two.

Mr. Duggan expressed appreciation for the Police, Fire, and EMS Departments. He also recognized the work done by the DPW in removing trees. He believes that there could be something put down, like stone, at the Bark Park for added traction at the entrance.

Mr. Antanavica would like there to be a meeting regarding fire hydrants to discuss and move ahead with repairs of the hydrants.

Mr. Phillips stated he would wait until later in the meeting to make remarks.

*No action was taken by the Select Board on this agenda item.*

### **3. RESIGNATIONS & APPOINTMENTS**

#### **a. Appointment - William Allen – Paramedic (Part-Time Non-Benefited)**

Mr. Allen has 26 years experience as a medic, including time spent as a combat medic. He would like to work in a town closer to his home.

**Motion 022123-3a:** A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Antanavica to appoint Mr. Allen as a part-time paramedic. **Motion carries 5:0:0.**

#### **b. Appointment – Cheryl Cooney – ARPA Grant Fund Review Committee**

Ms. Cooney was not in attendance at this meeting but had made remarks in the previous meeting regarding her desire to join the ARPA Grant Fund Review Committee.

**Motion 022123-3b:** A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica and seconded by Ms. Provencher to appoint Ms. Cooney to the ARPA Grant Fund Review Committee. **Motion carries 5:0:0.**

#### **c. Appointment - Maureen Whitney – ARPA Grant Fund Review Committee**

Ms. Whitney stated that she is a second-generation volunteer for this town, from the age of 17. She has been involved with the Leicester Food Pantry and the Nazareth Home for Boys and now would like to join the ARPA Grant Fund Review Committee.

**Motion 022123-3c:** A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Antanavica to appoint Ms. Whitney to the ARPA Grant Fund Review Committee. **Motion carries 5:0:0.**

### **4. SCHEDULED ITEMS**

#### **a. 6:30pm – MSBA Statement of Intent (SOI) – 9 Washburn Square**

Mr. Genereux explained that the first step to get into the MSBA program is to have a positive vote from both the School Committee and the Select Board. Ms. Provencher asked if this will take at least a year to receive funds. Dr. Kustigian stated that we will know by December of this year. Mr. Genereux stated that there are both short-term and long-term plans.

**Motion 022123-4a:** The following motion was made by Mr. Antanavica and seconded by Mr. Duggan.

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Leicester Board of Selectmen of the Town of Leicester, Massachusetts, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 13, 2023 for the New Leicester High School (former Becker College) located at 9 Washburn Square which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

**Priority 2: Elimination of existing severe overcrowding.** Currently grades 5-10 are housed at the new Leicester Middle School. Grades 11-12 have transitioned to the new Leicester High School former Becker College, but there is not room for grades 9-12. Grades K-4 are also tightly packed into the Leicester Elementary School.

**Priority 3: Prevention of the loss of accreditation.** Leicester High School submitted a substantive change form to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) as our high school has been divided into two buildings. Grades 9 and 10 are with grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 at the middle school, while grades 11 and 12 are at the new Leicester High School (former Becker College).

**Priority 4: Prevention of severe overcrowding expected to result from increased enrollments.** The Town of Leicester is in conversation with the Department Housing Community Development (DHCD) to bring 60 families to Leicester. This will have a significant impact on the schools. Additionally, there are multiple housing developments (30 apartments & 60 duplexes) planned to increase enrollment.

**Priority 5: Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility.** As the school department acquired several building from the former Becker College Campus, operating costs have skyrocketed. There is an enormous need to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs.

**Priority 6: Short term enrollment growth.** The Town of Leicester is in conversation with the Department Housing Community Development (DHCD) to bring 60 families to Leicester. This will have a significant impact on the schools. Additionally, there are multiple housing developments (30 apartments & 60 duplexes) planned to increase enrollment.

**Priority 7: Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.** The new Leicester High School does not have science labs on site at LHS. Former Becker College science labs need to be upgraded to allow for a full range of science curriculum. LHS is also in the process of establishing vocational Ch. 74 approved programs, but we need space.

; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Leicester to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Resident Jay Giggey inquired about the 60 families mentioned in the motion. Mr. Phillips stated that at this time there is no agreement in place, just a discussion.

**Motion carries 5:0:0.**

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

There were no public comments.

## **6. CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no civic announcements.

## 7. OTHER BUSINESS

### a. Town Hall Library Box

High School Senior Nikita, who is also the National Honor Society Secretary, listed reasons why she would like to create a free Library box. She loves book and wants to share them free-of-charge among town residents. Nikita has experience in the past doing book drives. She said that materials would be upcycled to make a nice-looking cabinet which would ideally be placed near the Common or near the schools.

Ms. Provencher asked if there were still any old Becker items available that could be useful? Peter Cusolito stated that there are some cases, plexiglass, and other materials remaining. Mr. Antanavica has seen them in other towns and is glad to hear such a proposal for Leicester. Mr. Duggan thinks it is a great idea and suggests that Nikita could also work with Mr. Fontaine of the ARPA Grant Fund Review Committee to source materials.

**Motion 022123-7a:** A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Bujak to approve the construction of the Library Box, pending approvals from the Town Administrator's Office and the Historical Commission if necessary. **Motion carries 5:0:0.**

### b. Interim EMS Director Contract

This item was moved to the next meeting.

### c. Designer Selection RFQ Discussion

Mr. Genereux explained that only 2 quotes were received and not the usual 3 or more. After calling the State Inspector General, Mr. Genereux was told that it would be ok to proceed with picking 1 of the 2 firms, but that there is not precedent for it. Mr. Bujak raised concerns over the plans if a firm was not chosen and what the timeframe would be to re-do the RFQ. Mr. Genereux stated the RFQ would need to be re-tooled before putting it back out and that would take 5-6 weeks. Mr. Phillips suggested a workshop with the working group to further discuss the matter. Mr. Antanavica is part of the working group, and he relayed that one group member thought there should be more than 2 options and another member was concerned that 1 of the 2 firms does not have experience working on schools. A discussion with the working group is to be scheduled.

*No action was taken by the Select Board on this agenda item.*

### d. Request for State Assistance – 9 Washburn Square Code Compliance

Mr. Genereux explained that the State Building Inspector can grant waivers in certain cases and the letter in the packet addressed to Mr. Richard Baldacci is a request for such waiver. Mr. Phillips believes there is no harm in going through this process.

**Motion 022123-7d:** A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica and seconded by Mr. Bujak for Mr. Genereux to sign and send the letter once grammatical corrections are made. **Motion carries 5:0:0.**

### e. High School Camera Bid Vote

Northeast Cabling will do the wiring for Signet to complete the installation of the cameras in the High School. The cost of the wiring will be \$19,500 in addition to the \$71,880 for the cameras.

**Motion 022123-7d:** A motion was made by Ms. Provencher and seconded by Mr. Bujak to approve the camera contract for Signet. **Motion carries 5:0:0.**

f. **Barrett Hall Reuse Discussion**

There was discussion about possible uses for Barrett Hall. There has been a request to use it as a soccer camp facility. It may also be possible to use it for senior housing. Mr. Bujak and Mr. Phillips would like to wait and see what answers the state provides before moving ahead with any other deals.

*No action was taken by the Select Board on this agenda item.*

g. **FY2024 Budget**

Mr. Genereux stated that a couple of formula corrections are necessary, but overall, the budget is as listed. The municipal side is stressed and in need of \$30,000 - \$40,000. The \$850,000 spent on the upkeep of the former Becker campus is crippling Free Cash. If the money is not raised, there is a list of cuts that will need to be made. Vocational bills may need to be raised. The Town currently owes \$500,000 to the cannabis HCA fund. Another \$450,000 is needed for the schools.

Mr. Bujak believes the Town should be cutting, not Public Safety. He feels the budget should have been discussed prior to being published. A budget meeting between the Select Board, Advisory Committee, and School Committee will likely be scheduled for Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup>.

*No action was taken by the Select Board on this agenda item.*

**8. MINUTES**

- a. January 26, 2023 (Workshop)
- b. January 28, 2023 (Workshop)
- c. February 6, 2023
- d. February 7, 2023 (Select Board/School Committee Joint Meeting)

**Motion 022123-8:** A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica and seconded by Duggan to approve all Meeting Minutes. **Motion carries 5:0:0.**

**Motion 022123-9:** A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0 at 7:48pm.**

**ADJOURN**