

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2023, AT 6:00 PM
TOWN HALL, SELECT BOARD CONFERENCE ROOM**

**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 Assistant Town Administrator Chris Vitale were in attendance.

1. RESIGNATIONS & APPOINTMENTS

a. Appointment – Sandra Martin – Bark Park Committee

This agenda item was moved to the 3/20/2023 Select Board meeting.

b. Appointment – Nancy Chase – Bark Park Committee

Ms. Chase introduced herself to the Select Board. Ms. Chase stated that she loves the Bark Park and wants to give back to the community.

Motion 031323-1b: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to appoint, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0 at 6:03pm.**

c. Appointment – Shelby Murphy – Bark Park Committee

Ms. Murphy stated she also loves the Bark Park. Ms. Murphy helped raised funds for the Bark Park Committee in the past and wants to get involved.

Motion 031323-1c: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to appoint, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0 at 6:05pm.**

d. Appointment – Debra Friedman – Architectural Conservation District

Mr. Antanavica stated Ms. Friedman has years of experience serving on town boards. Mr. Phillips stated he would like to have Ms. Friedman come before the board. Mr. Genereux stated he will have Ms. Friedman at the next meeting (3/20/23).

Motion 031323-1d: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to appoint contingent upon Ms. Friedman introducing herself to the Select Board, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0 at 6:06pm.**

e. Resignation – Alaa Abusalah – Town Planner/Director of Inspectional Services

Mr. Genereux began the discussion by stating Ms. Abusalah is leaving at the end of the month and she will be greatly missed.

Mr. Phillips stated he met with Alaa, and stated she is set on moving on. Resident Janice Parke stated Alaa is a valuable employee and felt Alaa didn't have adequate support.

Mr. Duggan stated with the next DIS Director/Town Planner, the Town will need to work on communication and workflow improvements.

Mr. Bujak stated he appreciated the work Alaa did for the town. Mr. Bujak stated he wants to do a deeper dive into this matter and review the work environment. Mr. Bujak stated the resignation was the result of burnout. Mr. Bujak would like to schedule a work session to discuss. Mr. Phillips agreed this may be a future discussion.

Motion 031323-1e: A motion was made by Mr. Duggan to accept the resignation with regret, seconded by Mr. Antanavica. **Motion carries 3-2-0 at 6:10pm (Ms. Provencher and Mr. Bujak opposed).**

f. **Resignation – Matthew Soojian – Police Officer**

Mr. Genereux stated the resignation letter was provided in the Select Board packet. Officer Soojian is going to the State Police. Select Board members wished Mr. Soojian the best.

Motion 031323-1f: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to accept the resignation with regret, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

g. **Resignation – Paul Messier – Chair, Advisory Committee**

Mr. Genereux stated Mr. Messier's email resignation is included in the Select Board packet.

Motion 031323-3a: A motion was made by Mr. Duggan to accept the resignation with regret, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

2. REPORTS

a. **Student Liaison Reports**

Leicester High School freshman and sophomores are planning a semi-formal for March. The Middle-High School is holding a movie night in the auditorium on March 16th. At the middle school, a student is holding a clothing drive. The student is a Project 351 Ambassador, and donations will be going to local shelters. At the elementary school, Wednesday is the Community Reading Day.

b. **Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Genereux provided an overview of the Town Administrator's Report, which was provided in the Select Board meeting packet. Mr. Bujak asked if they could compare the cost of doing it in house versus hiring a contractor. Mr. Phillips asked if this can be discussed at the 3/20/23 meeting with the DPW Director. Mr. Phillips asked if the town can follow-up with a resident regarding an energy aggregation sign-up issue.

c. **Economic Development Report**

Mr. Vitale provided an overview of the Economic Development Report, which was provided in the Select Board packet.

Mr. Phillips stated he would like to get a monthly report to know which grants were applied for, received, and denied. Mr. Bujak asked if the town is going to set up a work plan for the Grants Manager. Mr. Genereux stated once the Grants Manager is acclimated, he will set realistic goals.

d. **Select Board Reports**

Ms. Provencher attended the Burncoat Park Sports Committee meeting, where they finished the master plan and compiled estimated costs. Attended Cable Advisory Committee meeting. The Senior Center Senior Breakfast is Thursday, March 16th at 9:00am. A teatime with speaking guest will be Monday, March 27th, at 1:00pm. Attendees must RSVP. Ms. Provencher attended a CMRPC meeting, where attendees did an Economic Development SWOT analysis. Ms. Provencher stated Leicester's strengths are low taxes and rental rates, while weaknesses were lack of infrastructure and restrictive zoning.

Mr. Bujak asked Mr. Genereux for an update on Memorial School. Mr. Genereux stated the town has to draft the RFP to sell the property. Mr. Bujak asked if the town could reestablish a Personnel Board. Mr. Phillips stated the Select Board currently serves as the Personnel Board but was open to the possibility of discussing it at a future meeting.

Mr. Duggan wished residents good luck and to be safe in the snow.

Mr. Antanavica encouraged residents to check their smoke detectors as they turn clocks ahead. Mr. Antanavica asked if the compactor at the Recycling Center was fixed. Resident Janice Parke stated it was fixed and thanked the DPW Director.

Mr. Phillips stated that later in the agenda the board would be voting on approving articles for inclusion on the warrant. There will be no discussion, this is just to place them on. The full discussion will take place at the 03/20/2023 Select Board meeting.

3. SCHEDULED ITEMS

a. **6:30pm – WRTA Update – Doug Belanger**

This agenda item has been postponed to a future Select Board meeting.

b. **6:40pm – Class II License Hearing – G&L Auto Sales Move to 803 Main Street**

Mr. Genereux read the public notice for the Class II License hearing.

Motion 031323-3b: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to approve the Class II License, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0 at 6:53pm.**

c. **6:50pm – Harvest Fair – Request to waive fees**

The Chair of Harvest Fair is requesting that the Town waive the facility use fee, as it is a town entity.

Motion 031323-3c: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to waive the use fees, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 4-0-1 (Mr. Duggan stepped out temporarily) at 6:56pm.**

d. **7:00pm – Designer Selection RFQ Discussion**

Mr. Genereux stated this is a follow-up from the prior Select Board meeting. Committee members are available to answer the Select Board's questions.

Committee Mark Armington and Jim Reinke stated the town received two proposals. After review, the committee members felt there were non-advantageous aspects to both proposals. Mr. Reinke stated the lack of capacity of both firms resonated with the committee.

Mr. Armington stated the quick RFQ deadline and scope of work may have been a factor as to why there were limited proposal submission. Mr. Armington stated the timetables in the proposal were unrealistic.

Mr. Bujak thanked the committee members for being involved in the process. Mr. Bujak stated the town needs to do a better job of soliciting interest in the project. Mr. Bujak asked how the town moves forward from here.

Mr. Phillips stated town needs to fine tune the proposal and put the RFQ back out. Committee members stated with Borger out of the scope, it should help the town.

Select Board members thanked the committee members.

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Resident Janice Parke stated Earth Day is April 22nd, and the town has not held a street cleanup event in nearly three years. Ms. Parke wanted to put the word out to get volunteers and find someone to manage the event. The Select Board encourage Ms. Parke to send information to the town and they would share it on social media. Mr. Duggan stated he can help Ms. Parke create an event page on Facebook. Ms. Provencher stated it could be combined with Burncoat Park event on Earth Day.

5. CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Phillips stated that Leicester's Town Hall offices will be closed March 14, 2023, due to expected inclement weather.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. **USDA Presentation**

Mr. Vitale began the discussion by reviewing the information provided in the Select Board packet. Mr. Vitale introduced Mr. Al Averill of USDA. Mr. Averill provided an overview of the program and stated his determination would be based on GIS evaluation. Mr. Vitale stated the Mr. Averill is looking for the Select Board's approval to conduct an evaluation with the goal of the Select Board designating the properties as locally significant. By doing that, the properties would be eligible for federal funding.

Mr. Phillips stated he wants an informational session or workshop so farmers can ask questions prior to the Select Board acting. Mr. Averill stated he can work with Mr. Vitale to schedule an information

session. Mr. Averill stated he can provide a list of eligible properties so the town can send out notifications.

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

b. Energy Consultant Service Presentation

Mr. Larry Pignataro of Competitive Energy presented his company's service offerings and proposed scope of work to assist the Town of Leicester. Mr. Genereux stated this service will assist the town on the backend of managing energy across town facilities. Mr. Genereux stated this consulting service is exempt from 30B procurement requires. Mr. Pignataro stated the proposal is a flat fee per month. After the first year, it is his hope the Town will continue utilizing their services.

Resident Janice Parke asked if their services included evaluating the former landfill for solar. Mr. Pignataro stated they can look at proposals and provide feedback, but the development of an RFP would be a separate project. Mr. Pignataro stated he would want to get a handle on the billing situation first then review that concept.

Motion 031323-6b: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to authorize Mr. Genereux to sign the service contract in the amount of \$2,500 per month for a period of one year, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

c. Senior Center Donation Acceptance

Mr. Vitale stated the town received donation in the amount of \$3,000.00.

Motion 031323-6c: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to accept the donation with thanks, seconded by Mr. Antanavica. **Motion carries 5-0-0 at 7:55pm.**

d. Approve Articles for Inclusion on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Mr. Phillips stated that the Select Board is only voting on whether or not to place the articles on the warrant. The Select Board will make their recommendations at a future Select Board meeting.

ARTICLE 1 – PRIOR YEAR'S BILLS

Motion 031323-6d.1: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 1 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 2 – DEPARTMENT AND/OR WARRANT ARTICLE TRANSFERS - FY2023

Motion 031323-6d.2: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 2 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 3 – ELECTED OFFICIALS SALARIES

Motion 031323-6d.3: A motion was made by Mr. Bujak to place Article 3 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 4 – FY 2024 OPERATING BUDGET

Motion 031323-6d.4: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 4 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 5 – CONTINGENT APPROPRIATION BASED ON PROPOSITION 2 ½ OVERRIDE VOTE

Motion 031323-6d.5: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 5 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 6 – VOCATIONAL TUITION

Motion 031323-6d.6: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 6 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 7 – CENTRAL MASS REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

Motion 031323-6d.7: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 7 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 8 – FUNDING OPERATIONAL COSTS OF THE LEICESTER HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS AND ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Motion 031323-6d.8: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 8 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 9 – FY 2024 EMS (AMBULANCE) ENTERPRISE ACCOUNT APPROPRIATION

Motion 031323-6d.9: A motion was made by Mr. Bujak to place Article 9 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 10 – FY 2024 CABLE PEG ACCESS ENTERPRISE ACCOUNT APPROPRIATION

Motion 031323-6d.10: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 10 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 11 – STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Mr. Bujak asked why this is its own article and not incorporated into the budget. Mr. Genereux stated because the town cannot pay for it through what it raises in taxes, it gets paid out of Free Cash. Mr. Phillips requested in the future, to have it factored into the DPW budget to reduce the number of warrant articles.

Motion 031323-6d.11: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 11 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 12 – GROUNDWATER STUDIES AT LANDFILL

Motion 031323-6d.12: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 12 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 13 – TOWN-OWNED DAMS

Motion 031323-6d.13: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 13 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 14 – FY 2024 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Motion 031323-6d.14: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 14 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 15 – POLICE CRUISERS

Motion 031323-6d.15: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 15 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 16 – ESTABLISH REVOLVING FUND ANNUAL SPENDING LIMITS

Motion 031323-6d.16: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 16 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Antanavica. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 17 – AMEND THE REVOLVING FUND BYLAW

Motion 031323-6d.17: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 17 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 18 – AMEND THE REVOLVING FUND BYLAW

Motion 031323-6d.18: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 18 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Duggan. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 19 – ADOPTION OF NEW BYLAW – BUSINESS REGISTRATION

Motion 031323-6d.19: A motion was made by Mr. Duggan to place Article 19 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 20 – AMEND THE PERSONNEL BYLAW IN RELATION TO THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD AND THE USE OF LEAVE

Motion 031323-6d.20: A motion was made by Ms. Provencher to place Article 20 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Antanavica. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

ARTICLE 21 – AMEND THE ADVISORY AND BYLAW COMMITTEES' BYLAW IN RELATION TO THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr. Duggan asked what this article entails. Mr. Phillips stated that the Advisory Committee wants to control the town budget. The Select Board will need to make its recommendation at the next meeting.

Motion 031323-6d.21: A motion was made by Mr. Bujak to place Article 21 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Antanavica. **Motion carries 4-1-0 (Mr. Duggan opposed).**

ARTICLE 22 – BYLAW FOR THE RECALL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mr. Phillips stated this is another bylaw recommendation from the Advisory Committee. The Select Board will have further discussions at the next meeting.

Motion 031323-6d.22: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to place Article 22 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, seconded by Mr. Bujak. **Motion carries 3-2-0 (Mr. Phillips and Mr. Duggan opposed).**

Mr. Genereux stated other articles can be submitted up until the warrant closes on Thursday, March 16th, 2023.

7. MINUTES

a. February 21, 2023

Motion 031323-7a: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0.**

Motion 031323-8: A motion was made by Mr. Antanavica to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 5-0-0 at 8:10pm.**

ADJOURN