

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 5, 2023, AT 5:30 PM  
LEICESTER TOWN HALL, 3 WASHBURN SQ, LEICESTER, MA 01524**

Chair Rick Antanavica called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. Chair Rick Antanavica, Second Vice Chair Dianna Provencher, Selectman Herb Duggan Jr., Selectman John Bujak, Chloe Bouchard, Grants Manager, Samantha Chatterton and Town Administrator David Genereux were in attendance.

**CALL TO ORDER/OPENING**

**1. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion 060523-1a.1:** A motion was made by Mr. Duggan to enter into Executive Session, seconded by Ms. Provencher. **Motion carries 4-0-1 at 5:36 (4 in favor, 1 absent)**

- 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) – Cape Cod Builders**

**2. RESIGNATIONS & APPOINTMENTS**

*None*

**3. REPORTS**

**A. Student Liaison Reports**

Ms. Chloe Bouchard stated the Leicester elementary conducted the Special Olympics and field day. The middle school had band and chorus events. She gave an update on sports activity and the state tournament competition for state championships. she stated the track and field will have several meets for the remainder of the year. June 11<sup>th</sup> would be Leicester night for the Worcester Bravehearts.

**B. Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Genereux stated the high school campus bid for entrance ways for Borger due June 14. ADA accessibility is also due and the fire alarm system is being installed and should be complete within a week. Mr. Genereux stated he is close to meeting with the state building inspector and should have approval. He stated he is receiving clarification for railing work. He stated the 5 Victorians were voted to be put out to bid and he had emailed the auctioneer with the terms and conditions to set the schedule for the sale. Mr. Genereux covered the citizen issues that have arisen in recent weeks, a host community agreement, workshops in the future and DBA certificate guidance, departmental budget meetings and discussions of budget cuts and revenue streams, time off tracking mechanisms for hourly employees and compensatory time off.

Mr. Bujak asked about a re-structuring of the HCA agreements and potentially incorporating donation language to benefit the town.

Mr. Genereux stated new language will be inserted with new language after a ruling from the CCC.

Mr. Bujak asked about options for funding without HCA funding in the future. He stated it's been a nice pot of money he doesn't want to give up.

Mr. Genereux stated marijuana shops are closing due to fierce competition and covered several other aspects of the town administrator's office including budgetary meetings, DBA certificates and HR issues about time tracking and concerns regarding comings and goings of town employees.

Mr. Bujak asked about a policy in place and stated the time off piece for departments should be performance based as opposed to punching a time clock.

Mr. Genereux stated the policy is based on 38 hours and contracts and the town is working to put tracking mechanisms in place to boost morale.

Mr. Duggan asked about those staying outside normal business hours for meetings.

Mr. Genereux stated that unfortunately, that typically goes unnoticed and reiterated a time clock would hopefully resolve the complaints.

Mr. Genereux spoke of the onboarding process and current positions open in town, the cable access contract, locations to perform live feeds.

Mr. Duggan asked about live streaming opportunities at police and fire for ceremonies and whatever incidents may occur.

Mr. Genereux stated police already has live stream capabilities and stated they would give the contact to the attorney for review and continued on the daily operations of the office including the RFP for Auburn St bridge being complete.

Mr. Bujak inquired about the school building (Borger) and only the first floor being utilized.

Mr. Genereux stated he is working to get occupation on the first floor to be open for the school.

Mr. Bujak inquired about swan library. Mr. Genereux replied nothing is being done currently.

Mr. Bujak inquired about a school grant but Mr. Genereux did not have knowledge about a new school grant.

#### **C. Economic Development Report**

*None*

#### **D. Select Board Report**

*Skipped to Scheduled Items*

### **4. SCHEDULED ITEMS**

#### **a. 6:15pm – Farmland of Local Importance Designation (USDA NRCS)**

Mr. Al Averill explained the Agricultural program he runs to implement farmland local insurance and farmland preservation. He discussed soil types and suitability for crop production in the preservation program and NRCS and Agricultural Land Easement where a farm owner is paid the market value less the agricultural value of the land in exchange for limiting non-agricultural uses and is essentially an easement program. He stated soil mapping in Leicester has been done to preserve land and the on the land use planning tool survey, categorized by types of soils and farmland. Under farmland of local importance, the code is necessary for the production of crops. Mr. Averill explained the town values open space and farmland. He stated he codes soil and lists the qualifying conditions that makes them good for agriculture. He is asking the town to co-sign for his ability to receive landowner input for the landowners with farmland of local importance.

A resident asked if they were unable to build if they were to sign on to this program.

Mr. Averill stated if he intended to subdivide his lot he would be locked in as agricultural and would be unable to build however he would be able to designate a portion of his land to be deemed agricultural. He stated this program gives landowners the potential to have their land preserved.

Mr. Averill stated his program intends to benefit interested homeowners if they so choose to participate in the program and the Select Board acknowledging the program by signing an agreement is a formality that allows the programs to designate properties suitable for crop production. He clarified by the board signing; it has no impact on landowners or homeowners and doesn't require homeowners to participate.

Mr. Antanavica said individual landowners could then choose to pursue the program to receive market value for their land.

Ms. Ashlyn Coyle asked if homeowners were to sell that land if the program would provide agricultural or crop insurance to the landowners.

Mr. Averill stated there are resources for that but not through the program.

Ms. Provencher stated she could answer questions about the program to anyone who had further questions.

Mr. Duggan stated he understood the program and wanted to avoid more solar farms.

Ms. Ashlyn Coyle asked if the town could utilize the program for town owned properties.

Mr. Averill stated no they would not be eligible as it's only for privately owned land.

**Motion to move forward with the agricultural program made by Mr. Duggan. Seconded by Mr. Bujak.**

Ms. Provencher clarified the details of the program and the land criteria. She explained its only the parcels in which money is accepted that are affected by the regulations.

Mr. Averill stated he would supply the town with the documents to sign to move forward.

**(Motion passes, 4-0-1/4 in favor, 1 absent)**

**a. 6:30pm – Use of Cannon at Al Southwick tribute**

Mr. Antanavica passed over the cannon article.

**b. 6:40pm – Request of School Committee for appointment of School Committee member until the next Town Election.**

Mr. Antanavica inquired about the school committee appointment until the next town election.

Mr. Genereux stated he would speak to the school committee to determine the process for a replacement.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Ms. Ashlyn Coyle asked if Burger King decided not to build in Leicester. Mr. Genereux stated it was just a rumor. Ms. Coyle stated it takes three months to establish a special permit with the red tape and suggested a streamlined process to make things faster and smoother for business owners.

Mr. Genereux stated zoning and bylaws would have to be revisited to make things easier.

Mr. Coyle stated she had to get a special permit in Worcester and it only took 31 days and to be mindful of who is being appointed to zoning boards to help attract local business.

Mr. Bujak inquired on who is working to resolve the issues and present zoning changes to the next town meeting.

Mr. Antanavica and Mr. Genereux stated the planning board and the planner work together to present and approve the zoning board changes.

Mr. Bujak discussed a working group to create a deliverable to accomplish change to attract local businesses.

Ms. Ashlyn Coyle stated she was impressed with the town planer.

Mr. Duggan stated a business owner from Ziggy Bombs reached out to him with issues experience din the town. He stated investors get nervous when towns take extended periods to approve a special permit and establish businesses. Mr. Duggan clarified parking was the issue in this particular situation.

Mr. Antanavica discussed the history of the building in that situation and prior businesses and Mr. Duggan suggested the town be more flexible in the regulations put on business owners.

## **6. CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a. Annual Town Election - Tuesday June 13<sup>th</sup>, Town Hall 12pm-8pm
- b. Town Offices closed Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup> (Juneteenth)

Mr. Antanavica discussed the annual town election and town office holiday closure.

## **7. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **a. Sign Annual Town Meeting Election Warrant**

Mr. Antanavica asked for a motion to sign the annual town meeting warrant. Motion made by Mr. Bujak, Seconded by Ms. Provencher. **(Motion passes, 4-0-1/4 in favor, 1 absent)**

### **b. Wrestling Event Discussion**

Mr. Genereux provided a history of the background of the wrestling with parks and rec meetings.

Mr. Chris Setaro from Powerhouse Wrestling stated they are WWE guys and the event would be on Pay-Per-View and gave an overview of the wrestlers that were scheduled to attend.

Mr. Genereux stated there were complaints with damaged floors and damaged chairs from previous events and there was a bounced check for a previous event here and parks and rec were not in favor of the event yet again.

Mr. Setaro stated he was out 10,000 for the event as he had already publicized the events.

Mr. Bujak stated he had concerns with parks and recs unfavorable recommendations of Power House wrestling.

Mr. Duggan inquired about the documentation of previous incidents to not be unfair to the vendor.

Ms. Coyle asked for proof the check had cleared.

Mr. Duggan stated asked for further protections and have parks and rec clarify.

Mr. Lucky Margadonna stated parks and rec voted to address the Select Board over a chair and table broken previously where enough compensation was received for the broken items. He stated the gym is too small for a wrestling event. Mr. Margadonna asked the Select Board to decide if they want to pursue the event.

Mr. Setaro stated he would pursue legal action for lost proceeds if he had to change his event since he had already started promoting it.

Mr. Antanavica stated the board has not voted and to not threaten legal action.

Mr. Bujak stated further discussions have to take place with several people for the board to decide. Mr. Bujak suggested maybe an additional security deposit could alleviate some of the concerns and protect the town. He mentioned capacity in the building.

Mr. Setaro said he would need a decision within a week.

Mr. Antanavica stated he needs to know capacity, security that is vetted through the police chief and fire chief, and he could supply the information to Mr. Genereux for the board to decide on June 20<sup>th</sup> and maybe suggest a different locale on town owned property.

Mr. Genereux stated the town administrator's office would reach out for further information.

Memorial school RFP – Mr. Genereux stated he was providing the RFP for comments and inform the public they were moving forward with surplus property.

Ms. Provencher praised Mr. Genereux for the RFP notating all of the uses of the property.

Mr. Bujak inquired about a pilot agreement in the event a non-profit were to utilize the property. He inquired about a review committee to make recommendations to the Select Board.

He inquired about DCHD utilizing the building for future housing.

Ms. Provencher stated the 90<sup>th</sup> celebration of the Boys Scouts and congratulated the group on their anniversary. She praised the memorial day parade and the cherry valley legion club for its Memorial Day festivities.

Mr. Bujak inquired about Fios and fiber optic cables, as someone reached out to him to explore the opportunity of fiber optic in town and give people another option if a company was willing to invest in the infrastructure. He inquired about establishing a personnel board again. He asked if the budget proposals could be posted online so people could see before the budget meeting. He thanked Mr. Duggan for his 3 year of service.

Mr. Duggan stated it had been a rough three years and he would still be involved but in a different capacity. He gave his thoughts and prays to the Congressional Church in Spencer and gave praise to the fire departments and mutual aid and asked about ARPA funding to ensure first responders were taken care of from the funding. He asked for a ceremony for Mike Dupuis' dad who was on the CERT team. He asked for a working group to watch over fire and EMS in the future. He stated he attended a fundraiser with Mr. Antanavica for a firefighter who was hurt. He asked for people to get involved if they thought they could do better.

Mr. Antanavica spoke of the fundraiser for the firefighter and stated it was a heartwarming ceremony. He stated he attended the school graduation which was the first time since he graduated.

## **8. MINUTES**

- b. **April 3, 2023**
- c. **April 25, 2023 – Joint Meeting**
- d. **May 1, 2023**
- e. **May 2, 2023**
- f. **May 11, 2023**
- g. **May 18, 2023**

Mr. Antanavica read the meeting dates for minutes. Motion to approve made by Mr. Duggan. Seconded by Ms. Provencher. **(Motion passes, 4-0-1/4 in favor, 1 absent)**

Motion to Adjourn made by Mr. Duggan. Seconded by Ms. Provencher. **(Motion passes, 4-0-1/4 in favor, 1 absent)**

**ADJOURN**