

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 27, 2023 AT 6:00PM
LEICESTER TOWN HALL, LEICESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01524**

Chair Rick Antanavica, Vice Chair Dianna Provencher, Selectman Kevin Menard, Selectman John Bujak, Town Administrator David Genereux, and Grants Manager, Samantha Chatterton were in attendance.

ATTENDANCE:

Rick Antanavica	Present
Dianna Provencher	Present
Kevin Menard	Present
John Bujak	Present

1. SCHEDULED ITEMS

- a. 6:00 PM - FY2024 Tax Rate Public Hearing

Mr. Antanavica cited the veteran's prayer.

He introduced Alyce Johns from the assessor's office. Ms. Johns thanked the finance department and the town clerk's office for their assistance in the process. She stated the purpose of public hearing is legally required to adopt a residential factor to determine the local tax levy of real and personal property. Ms. Johns explained the terminology including new growth, levy and debt exclusion to help further explain the process.

She stated they are required to change values and assess property to adjust for changing market values to be in compliance with state laws. Ms. Johns covered the prior year levy figures and new growth numbers.

She informed the board may adopt a residential and business exemption. She also discussed the options of a split tax rate versus a single tax rate. She explained the open space discount which has a maximum allowable discount of up to 25 percent which protects open land and deters development.

She stated the proposed tax rate for 2024 would be 12.55 for a single-family home with a median value of 360,819 which is \$248.47 increase in taxes from 2023. She stated Leicester's CIP does not support a split tax rate and stated Leicester Select Board has historically votes for a single tax rate. She stated local small businesses would not benefit from a split tax rate and keeping it a single tax rate would continue attract local businesses.

Ms. Provencher made a motion to approve the single tax rate. Seconded by Mr. Bujak.

Mr. Arthur Paquette stated the Board of Assessors was in favor of the single tax rate.

Mr. Bujak inquired about relief options for those who are struggling to pay their taxes.

Ms. Johns and Mr. Genereux covered various relief options for those who are elderly or are experiencing financial hardships.

Mr. Bujak inquired how to promote those opportunities.

Ms. Johns stated the towns cannot afford to sponsor the needs of someone who cannot pay their taxes and the state programs are targeted to those who are 70 and older.

Mr. Genereux stated the options are listed on the website.

Ms. Johns suggested when full time staff are present, they can promote the programs in partnership through the senior center.

Mr. Genereux urged residents to check their bill and property record card and that abatements were sometimes offered if valuations were too high.

Ms. Johns covered the laws relating to allowing an assessor on your property.

Mr. Antanavica stressed the benefits of the senior work-off program for both the town and the residents looking for relief on their taxes.

Ms. Johns stressed the importance of residents attending town meeting, as people don't realize the tax rate is impacted by certain items voted on at town meeting.

Motion passes 4-0-0.

Ms. Johns brought the form to the board for signature.

Mr. Antanavica suggested working with the school department to develop photo IDs for when the assessor is out on inspections.

Mr. Antanavica stated he was bothered by a citizens' comments from the prior meeting. He discussed comments made regarding the town administrator's job performance including the school budget, communication with the board, capital planning methods and procurement, public employee morale and strongly encouraged the public to stop by and witness what the TA's office does on a day-to-day basis. He expressed his support of the Town Administrator and the staff and encouraged the public to reach out to him with concerns.

Mr. Menard made a motion to enter into executive session. Seconded by Ms. Provencher. Roll call (4-0-0)

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body pursuant to. c.30A, § 21(a)(6) – Lease agreement WCAC Winslow Ave
- b. M.G.L. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(a)(2) – Town Administrator
- c. M.G.L. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel pursuant to M.G.L. c.30A, § 21(a)(2) – Town Administrator

Motion to go out of executive made by Ms. Provencher. Seconded by Mr. Bujak. (Roll Call – 4-0-0)

OTHER BUSINESS

- d. Vote to accept revised WCAC lease agreement for Winslow Avenue

Mr. Antanavica announced they were back in open session.

Mr. Bujak made a motion to approve the 7-month lease for Winslow Ave for WCAC. Seconded by Ms. Provencher. Motion passes 4-0-0.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Bujak. Seconded by Ms. Provencher. Motion passes 4-0-0.