

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

FEBRAURY 5, 2024 AT 6:00PM

LEICESTER TOWN HALL, LEICESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01524

Chair Rick Antanavica, Vice Chair Dianna Provencher, Selectman John Bujak, Selectman Kevin Menard, Town Administrator David Genereux, and Executive Assistant to the Town Administrator Maria Cataloni were in attendance.

ATTENDANCE:

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

ADMINISTRATORS:

David Genereux, Town Administrator Present

CALL TO ORDER/OPENING VETERANS POEM

Chairman Antanavica opened the meeting at 6:07 PM.

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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 G.L. c. 30A, § 21 (2).

- A. Police Chief Employment Contract
- B. Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer Employment Contract
- C. Town Administrator Office Staff

**Ms. Provencher made a motion to enter into executive session. Mr. Bujak seconded at. 6:11pm.
Motion passes 4-0-0 (roll call vote)**

At 7:26pm, a motion was made by Mr. Bujak to exit executive session. Mr. Menard seconded. Motion passes 3-1-0. Ms. Provencher abstain.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD – None.

3. RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

- a. Appointments:
 - i) Kaitlyn Gilman, EMT Basic – pass over
 - ii) Ethan Santiago, EMT Paramedic – pass over
- b. Resignations (EMS): Jeremy Parkinson, Megan Cooney

Mr. Bujak made a motion to accept. Ms. Provencher seconded to accept Motion passes 4-0-0.

- c. Resignation: Justine Caggiano (Assistant Town Administrator)

Ms. Provencher made a motion to accept. Mr. Bujak seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

- d. Appointment, Planning Board: Christopher Clark

Mr. Bujak made a motion to appoint. Ms. Provencher seconded to accept Motion passes 4-0-0.

- e. Appointment, Bark Park: Britnie Cournoyer – not present this evening – pass over
- f. Appointment, Arts Council: Dorothy Dudley

Ms. Provencher made a motion to appoint. Mr. Bujak seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

- g. Appointment, Assistant Assessor: John Stencel

Mr. Stencel stated he had lived in Leicester since 2018 and that it was a great town to live in. He saw the opportunity and thought it would be a great fit.

Ms. Provencher asked what he had done before?

Mr. Stencel stated he had worked for the State doing audits, worked at Worcester State doing most of accounts payable, most recently at a railroad in Barre.

Mr. Bujak made a motion to appoint. Ms. Provencher seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

4. REPORTS

- a. Select Board

Ms. Provencher stated on 2/15 breakfast will be served at 9 am at the senior center and Mr. Peter Durant should be there.

Mr. Bujak stated he didn't know who put the lights on the town of Leicester sign but it was visually appealing. The one thing is maybe we could turn off the overhead light. He asked what are we doing with memorial?

Mr. Genereux stated they have had interest from a non-profit and a builder. He is trying to come up with a better distribution method.

Mr. Bujak asked if it was worth entertaining a broker to get a good candidate?

Mr. Genereux stated they need someone to market it, but they have to submit a bid, not a straight sale.

Ms. Provencher asked if they could lease it?

Mr. Bujak stated it is a big space.

Mr. Antanavica said they could lease it out with them paying towards repairs.

Ms. Provencher wished everyone a happy Valentine's day.

5. CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS - none

6. OTHER BUSINESS

a. License Renewals:

Valley Gas, Motor Vehicle Repair, 200 Main Street

The WorcShop, General Entertainment, 11 Hankey Street

b. Authorization for Town Counsel to commence litigation against Eternity Worc Shop re: Event Scheduled for February 10, 2024

Public marijuana consumption was discussed and made clear was not allowed. It was not clear.

Ms. Jessica Farineau from Grafton, MA stated she was a former education director for the group. She said they are closing on 4/1 and moving the facility. When Randal decided in December to let the WorcShop go, they decided going to move. This is a fundraiser. There will be no consumption or sale of marijuana. They have a lot of people who are in recovery and they wanted people to know that related items may be sold.

Ms. Kroshka stated she was the event coordinator at the Workshop, and will be community relations for the new group. The pot leaf on the flyer was just to let people know that marijuana-related items will be sold. It is for folks 21+ and she thought it was just a misunderstanding.

Mr. Antanavica asked where they planned to park all these cars?

Ms. Kroshka stated most of the events are pretty self-contained. It was discussed the for-profit makers space is closing and they are opening a non-profit and they would be taking all the educational classes from the Workshop to the new location. They were looking for start-up cash to make the move, since they are waiting on grant money.

It was said many neighbors spend time at the Workshop and they performed noise tests and they had the police department come in for other events, and the loudest thing was police tires coming in.

Mr. Bujak stated the flyer design is one thing, but the event invitation is a bit vulgar. So he was unsure what the event is.

It was clarified there are no children, that IDs would be checked and give out wristbands. Since they have patrons 21+ it seemed okay to use that language.

Mr. Bujak asked if the event would be contained to the building.

The group confirmed they are not even using the entirety of the building.

Mr. Bujak stated the way it was phrased, he just wanted to know what the event was.

It was stated 30 local artists would be selling items, 2 food vendors and 7 drag queens from Worcester and that they knew that drag queens have a stigma to them, and that is why it was geared for adults and the dress code was not iron-clad as it was more a art market not adult entertainment.

Mr. Bujak stated the language sends the wrong message.

The group said they took a risk to get people in the younger crowd of 21+ with the wording of the flyer.

Mr. Bujak asked if it was a one-and done because they are leaving in April?

They confirmed yes as it was their last chance to raise funds.

Ms. Provencher asked if the whole Workshop was shutting down?

The group responded there would be one maker staying behind. The previous company should not have been for-profit and said they still wanted to be a good neighbor.

Mr. Bujak asked how many people they were expecting.

The group responded they had a Halloween event and had 97 people and were expecting about the same.

Mr. Menard asked if they had security for the event.

The group stated they were looking into it and pointed out they were not selling any alcohol. Someone would be bringing ice cream, but there would not be any alcohol or cannabis in that.

Mr. Menard stated back to the security question – is that a definite?

They responded they did not.

Mr. Menard stated he knew they were tight on funds and asked if they had considered a police detail.

Mr. Ken Antanavica stated the cost was \$82 per hour.

Mr. Antanavica stated he would like to hear from the police department if there were any incidents back at Halloween.

Mr. Ken Antanavica stated they had been down there a number of times over the years. The ad was very risqué and there was a lot of talk about it. Their duty was to protect the neighborhood. If there is a security person to call them, that would be nice. Just the publicity with the flyer has put everyone's antenna up. You have been put on notice, so any money you earn would be going toward fines. He asked if the trucks they have hired have been cleared with our BOH.

They said they would find out.

Mr. Genereux stated if they could get him the vendors, he could work with the BOH tomorrow.

Mr. Bujak asked if they were asking for an entertainment license.

Mr. Genereux stated yes, they need the license for the year, but this is separate from the event.

Mr. Menard asked the chief was satisfied with the security.

Mr. Ken Antanavica stated if they have someone at the door, that would be fine. Cannabis events trigger things like people eating gummies when they are not used to it. He also stated if the event is going to be more than 100, there would need to be a plan filed with the fire dept.

The group responded they had a similar guest list as last time and people came and went. They were not all there at the same time.

Mr. Ken Antanavica stated just keep all vehicles off the street and if they need help, please call the police.

They responded they would have someone manning the parking and making sure a fire lane is clear.

Mr. Menard made the motion to approve the license. Mr. Bujak seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

Mr. Ken Antanavica thanked everyone for their help.

Valley gas – Mr. Bujak made the motion to approve. Ms. Provencher seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0

c. Police Chief Employment Contract

Mr. Bujak made the motion to approve. Ms. Provencher seconded. Motion passes 3-1-0. Mr. Antanavica abstained.

d. Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer Employment Contract

e.

Mr. Bujak made the motion to approve. Ms. Provencher seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0

f. Red Cross Shelter MOU and Facility Use Agreement discussion and vote

Mr. Genereux stated the facility use agreement was in the packet. The 3 separate MOU's along with it – written by emergency management officer.

Ms. Provencher asked does the red cross now support having animals at the shelters?

Mr. Genereux stated they would have to check into that but he knew that service animals would be.

Mr. Bujak stated it says cots and animal cages and was this only for emergencies in town? Or is it for Worcester if they had a fire there?

Mr. Genereux stated it would be available if there is no other place for them.

Mr. Bujak asked how much money was involved.

Mr. Genereux stated there is no payment.

Mr. Bujak stated this is good in our town. He thought about if there is a fire in Worcester and 15 people get displaced and they are opening our shelter for free.

Mr. Genereux stated he would see that there is a section on reimbursement and said if both sides agree, this would be the cost per the event.

Mr. Bujak stated he believed they had space occupied for the Winslow Ave. school now. He just didn't see how this would work except for the summer. It's one thing to sign this for our own people, but to displace our residents when it impacts our operations, he didn't understand why they were doing it.

Mr. Genereux stated the MOU looks at when the red cross is opening a local or regional shelter. Most of the time regional shelters has to do with regional events like weather. It would be an interesting event that would have just people from other communities coming in and using this facility.

Mr. Bujak asked so then why are they pursuing us that entitles them to opportunity for residents outside of our town? There must be a need?

Mr. Genereux stated it is based on emergency preparedness, but it depends on the emergency.

Mr. Menard asked this is probably part of our hazard mitigation plan anyways?

Mr. Genereux stated not necessarily, but this has the right to get the Red Cross involved. They work with us and we work with them.

Mr. Antanavica stated use of facility was to conduct disaster-related activities. But where are the people coming from? The food, the custodial service, it seems the town provided that. But the reimbursement section does not have much there.

Mr. Genereux stated when they have an event, Red Cross opens a shelter, they would submit to the Red Cross at the end of the event.

Mr. Antanavica said the shelters are managed by the partners, so that would be the town. They run it but they would have their support.

Mr. Genereux stated it will be for whoever needs it.

Mr. Bujak stated partners include the town and other agencies like CMHA. They don't know who it is going to be in charge of the facility. There is not any benefit to us. I am not trying to sound crude or mean, but for a cost, we are opening our doors. One gym is used frequently, the senior center is used by the town residents.

Ms. Provencher stated her concern is if there is an emergency and the Red Cross is involved.

Mr. Genereux stated his recommendation for the board – the Red Cross managed shelters (which this is not), would not be run by a third party, it would be by the town.

No action taken.

g. FY25 Budget presentation and discussion

Mr. Genereux stated the use of all money they were getting for the shelter program helped fund the budget. The vocational school tuition has gone down by \$132k. When it was put together, the receipts look good, but the assessments went up. Municipal growth factor is 8.33% which is the 3rd highest in the state. The state has not published the 2025 analysis. I have all but 4 numbers that have no formulas. Brett is reaching back out to see if we can get those numbers.

Mr. Bujak stated he did not see Chapter 74.

Mr. Genereux stated it is buried in Chapter 70, but they were still losing regular kids. School choice was not bad.

Mr. Bujak asked where are the charter schools? He said it was a government-funded school, but run privately.

Mr. Genereux stated they were trying to figure out this municipal growth factor. This budget does not have any outside moneys coming in for the maintenance of the campus. It is now built into the budget. 4 warrant articles and the original 950-budget line. One thing that is not included is that insurance for the campus is not under the insurance line, not the campus line.

Mr. Bujak asked if he backed out the costs of the Victorians that were sold? Marsh hall was expensive, but I also want to be cognizant of the fact that we are not spending an extra dollar in one place and pinching in another.

Mr. Genereux stated his goal is not going back to town meeting, needing \$150k. The health insurance is not going up that much.

Mr. Bujak stated we are now using all of the HCA money. That never got refunded. We said that was what we were going to do last year. The difference is that now the HCA money is committed to a budget.

Mr. Genereux stated if they were to fund the HCA account, we would owe it \$650k. probably the biggest discussion is that the town budget increases \$279k, school goes down by \$275k. It is

not a 1-for-1. We came up with Town and intergovernmental budget first. What was left over was \$275k. I would like to have level-funded them, but there is no room.

Mr. Bujak stated his personal opinion on the sessions we had at the senior center were almost pointless. Part of this is just town government I guess. He didn't know what the right forum is.

Mr. Antanavica asked on a Saturday morning, 9-12?

Mr. Bujak stated to save the directors from having to do this multiple times, maybe partner with the advisory board so the directors are not coming out multiple times.

Mr. Genereux stated there is a 0-based analysis for each section, that each department ran with accounting. He suggested setting up the meeting with Advisory, if anyone has a question for a department head, advisory can request they be there. Fire, PD, EMS, DPW, Schools – everyone will want to hear from them.

Mr. Antanavica stated he thought they should be able to do it in one session.

No action taken.

- h. Set Warrant close date for Spring Annual Town Meeting (March 21, 2024)

Town meeting is late this year on 4/7. 45 days prior would be 3/21

Mr. Bujak made a motion, to set the warrant close date. Ms. Provencher seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

- i. Accept Senior Center Donation

Ms. Provencher made a motion to accept. Mr. Bujak seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

7. MEETING MINUTES

- a. November 20, 2023

Ms. Provencher made a motion to approve. Mr. Bujak seconded. Motion passes 4-0-0.

They discussed having flags flown half-staff in honor of Mr. Dennison.

Mr. Menard made a motion to adjourn at 9:21pm. Seconded by Mr. Bujak. Motion passes 4-0-0.

ADJOURN