



LANCASTER SELECT BOARD
Special Meeting Agenda
Via ZOOM ONLY
Monday, October 23, 2023
9:30 A.M.



In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, please be advised that this meeting is utilizing the Zoom platform. Accordingly, the meeting is being recorded and broadcast over Sterling-Lancaster Community TV

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stephen J. Kerrigan will call the meeting to Order at 9:30A.M.
Town of Lancaster is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: SB Meeting

Time: Oct 23, 2023 09:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89715187157?pwd=N2FqcnREdm5PWm9UQWpUaldxaFNYdz09>

Meeting ID: 897 1518 7157

Passcode: 641472

One tap mobile

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89715187157?pwd=N2FqcnREdm5PWm9UQWpUaldxaFNYdz09>

Passcode: 641472

Additional materials for Select Board meetings are available at:

<https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/administration-select-board/pages/meeting-materials>

Residents Have the Ability to Ask Questions via ZOOM.

II ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET, AND POLICY (Vote may be taken)

1. The Lancaster Select Board will meet in Executive Session pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.30A S21(a) for Purpose (3): to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, specifically to deliberate regarding the response to the Level Three grievance filed by the AFSCME Local 3720 Union regarding discipline, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Select Board and the Town.
2. Correspondence – Letter to members of the Select Board from concerned citizens regarding a verbal altercation which took place on School property between a youth sports event and an abutter.

III. ADJOURNMENT

ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET AND POLICY

Kate Hodges

From: Kristen Titus [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 7:36 PM
To: Kate Hodges
Subject: softball incident 10/11

Ms. Hodges,

I am a resident of Lancaster (53 Brian Rd) and I had the unfortunate experience of witnessing the incident on Wednesday, October 11, that took place on the softball field at the MRE/LBMS property and the adjoining private residence. I was at the soccer fields next to the softball field for my son's soccer practice, with a field full of 8, 9 and 10 year old boys when a truck came driving down Brazao Lane and slammed on the brakes. A man jumped out of the truck and immediately began yelling profanities. The volume was loud enough for parents to hear way over on the other side of the softball fields/soccer fields. I was unable to hear any responses from the coaches themselves, they kept their voices down and had completely appropriate body language from what I could see from afar. My son asked me after practice what happened and why some of his teammates heard a man yelling lots of "very bad swear words."

I watched the school committee meeting this week and listened to the public comments from the homeowners as well as the softball coach. It struck me that a school committee member would call a recreational program, run by parent volunteers, an "absolute horror." I know several of these girls, have witnessed them in academic as well as social situations, and I know that they are good students, kind children, and role models for other middle schoolers in the LBMS building. I also found it hard to believe that the language used by the homeowner was justified because "pre-teens and teens have heard it before." First, whether they have heard it before does NOT make it acceptable to shout those words aggressively to young girls, especially as an elected official on the school committee. His point could have been made in a completely calm manner. Secondly, it was not just the softball team who heard the inappropriate words but younger elementary students as well. We love living in Lancaster and want all of our children to have role models to look up to. Thank you for reading my statement.

Kristen Titus

Kate Hodges

From: Emma Mayo [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 1:31 PM
To: Kate Hodges <KHodges@lanasterma.gov>; Matthew J. Mayo [REDACTED]
Subject: School committee member concern

Good afternoon Ms. Hodges, we are writing to express our concern and sadness at the recent actions of school committee member Joseph Gleason and would like these comments entered into the public record during the public comment period at the Selectboard meeting on Monday October 16, 2023. As you may be aware, there was an unfortunate incident during a youth softball practice resulting in Mr. Gleason being verbally aggressive, using numerous swears and aggressive comments towards the group of 12 and 13 year old females practicing with their coaches at the MRE/LBMS softball field. This concern was shared with the hope being that Mr. Gleason apologizes to the girls and shows them that when adults make mistakes, they can address it, and that no one deserves to be yelled at. Mr. Gleason's reply in writing to coach Dan Gill and at the school committee on October 11, 2023 made it evident that he did not plan to apologize or address the situation in any way that would allow the girls some closure for what they experienced. Rather, when this was addressed at the school committee meeting, Mr. Gleason, supported by his wife, continued to state that ongoing issues with the public's use of the road negatively impacts his life. While that may very well be true, this is not the concern of a team of 12 and 13 year old girls.

Mr. Gleason is free to seek support on those issues through the proper channels but instead, he continues to rationalize his behavior towards the girls and their coaches through the lens of his own private issues. Mr. Gleason continued to express that he has these rights as he was on his own private property. He stated that he does not deserve to be called names or have his private property disrespected yet cannot see that he in turn violated the rights of these minor children. He also stated that his own child should not be exposed to seeing him called names, yet he did the exact same to numerous girls, two of whom also saw him verbally assault their own fathers. Additionally, Mr. Gleason, as well as his wife, indicated that simply because these girls may have heard these vulgar words before we should not be offended. This is demeaning and attempts to absolve him of his abusive behavior. No one deserves to be verbally assaulted. We do not speak this way to our children and he most definitely does not have the right to speak to our daughter and her teammates this way.

As a school committee member, Mr. Gleason took an oath "To represent the Committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support". As you most likely know, the code of ethics states a member is expected to "Realize that his/her primary responsibility is to the children" and to "Remember that he/she represents the entire community at all times." We do not believe that this is an acceptable representation of our community. We cannot hold our children to a standard that we are not willing to hold our leadership and adults to. This behavior would not be accepted by any of those girls in their academic or social lives. Those girls would have consequences for the same actions, including apologizing and loss of privilege. Furthermore, following Mr. Gleason's tirade at the school committee meeting on October 11, it is clear that he feels justified in his actions and that he may respond similarly in the future. Our children deserve to feel safe at school and in their community. To that end, the children who witnessed this incident will continue to associate their playing fields at MRE/LBMS with this frightening and grotesque behavior. We do not have faith in Mr. Gleason's ability to accurately represent our community and we respectfully request that his capacity to do so be rescinded. At the very least, the school committee should be compelled to censure Mr. Gleason for this behavior.

Regards,

Emma and Matthew Mayo
[REDACTED]

Kate Hodges

From: Melinda Baxter [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 2:36 PM
To: Kate Hodges
Subject: Softball Incident

Dear Town Administrator and Select Board,

I am writing to you today in regards to the incident that occurred with the softball team and Mr. Gleason on October 4th 2023. I cannot physically be present at tonight's meeting; therefore, please accept this email as my comment on the matter.

My son's soccer team was practicing on the field adjacent to the softball team and the incident that occurred was well heard from where we were sitting. The behavior that Mr. Gleason chose to exhibit to these girls and their coaches was irrational, obnoxious, and totally out of line. It was appalling to listen to a grown man choose to speak to young girls and their coaches in such a demeaning manner.

I am disturbed by the actions of Mr. Gleason to the core. As a member of the School Committee, he should be leading by example, exhibiting core values all the time, and treating people the way he would like to be treated.

As a volunteer member of the Board of Health for this town, we essentially vow to do the right thing for the community all the time. Mr. Gleason chose not to do the right thing in this instance by condemning young girls and their coaches for overthrown balls on his property.

In addition, I was able to watch the previous Select Board meeting online and am further appalled that Mr. Gleason and his wife refuse to take responsibility for Mr. Gleason's actions and show absolutely no remorse or empathy towards the little humans that were verbally abused.

Mr. Gleason and his wife make it clear they do not feel this is a public matter, but a personal matter. They stated that Mr. Gleason never left his property; therefore, the public should be left out of this and to mind their own business. However, I couldn't disagree more. His words traveled across the land for all to hear, regardless of where he was physically planted, his actions that he chose to exhibit effected several people, who were not on their property.

Allowing Mr. Gleason to get away with treating people so unkindly, shows the people in this town that we can treat people however we please with no consequence. If my kids were to use such language or speak to someone so unkindly and unfairly, regardless of where they were physically, there would be consequences to their negative behavior.

I feel very strongly that people need to be held accountable for their actions. They need to take responsibility when they chose to not do the right thing the first time. There need to be consequences for people who choose to make bad decisions.

Make no mistake, Mr. Gleason **CHOSE** to speak this way to young girls and their coaches. Mr. Gleason **VERBALLY ABUSED MINORS**. Mr. Gleason is choosing not to be accountable for his actions. Mr. Gleason is choosing not to take responsibility for his actions. Mr. Gleason shows **NO**

remorse. Mr. Gleason hasn't even admitted to doing anything wrong nor has he any intention of apologizing.

How this situation is handled by the Select Board will be very telling for behavior allowances by people in trusted positions in this town. I encourage the Select Board to take this matter very seriously and take actionable measures to hold Mr. Gleason responsible and accountable for his negative actions.

Thank you for allowing me to share my perspective on the situation. I have confidence that the Select Board will do the right thing as this situation will continue to most definitely be dissected by the people of the town. Always remember the old adage; Fool me once, shame on you; Fool me twice, shame on me.

Best,
Melinda Apgar

Kate Hodges

From: Jonathan Babineau [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 7:47 AM
To: Kate Hodges
Subject: Incident involving Mr. Gleason and Girls Softball Team

Mrs. Hodges,

I write to you this morning, October 13, 2023, almost a week after an incident took place at the Luther Burbank Middle School softball field between Mr. Joe Gleason and the Lancaster Girls Softball Team. By now I am sure you are aware of this incident. I believe this information has been relayed from town member to town member due to its obscene, offensive, and verbally assaultive actions towards 12 and 13yr old girls, from a participant and voted member of the Nashoba Regional School board, and our Lancaster children's representative. You may have also seen the school board meeting from this week where Mr. Gleason took zero ownership of his actions and doubled down on his version of the incident where he states he is a victim, and even went as far as to prepare a written statement for his wife that almost was even more egregious than his original actions. If you have not watched the meeting and witnessed Mr. Gleason and Ms. Gleason's ignorant, arrogant, and at times outright lies and untrue recount of the encounter, please do so.

I felt the responsibility to write to you as an extremely concerned parent, the parent of the daughter who was verbally assaulted, and the assistant coach of the girls' softball team that was also verbally accosted. The most important fact of this disheartening situation is that a grown male adult felt he was privileged to speak to young women in a manner that was most inappropriate and then when non-aggressively confronted by adults, us the coaches, he continued to berate the young girls as well as become an "adult bully" and at one point calling myself, a disabled Marine Corps War Veteran, a "fat ass", as I defended our young girls.

Between his bullying actions, and his extremely aggressive verbal assault at our children, it was made obviously aware that Mr. Joe Gleason, said board member, does not have the ethical personal standards that we would expect of a voted representative, and quite frankly a dishonorable member of our community. I would expect that other voted and non-voted town representatives would hold Mr. Gleason, accountable for his actions, set a precedent that we will always defend our children against any physical or in this case, verbal assaults, and strive to provide town representation that represents the good people of Lancaster, and not the "bad apple", disguised as such.

I am available at your convenience to further discuss this incident or provide any additional clarity.

Respectfully,
Jonathan Babineau

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Kate Hodges

From: Dan Gill [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 10:05 PM
To: Kate Hodges
Subject: Softball Incident

Good evening Mrs. Hodges,

I want to thank you for looking into this matter on behalf of our children. I know that you have been provided copies of my firsthand account of what occurred at the LBMS softball field as well as Mr. Gleason's response. My hope is that at a minimum, Mr. Gleason will be held to the same standard that any teacher, fireman or police officer would be held to if they behaved in this manner, even while off-duty, on their own property. In all likelihood these members of our community would be immediately suspended as they are held to a higher standard and so should Mr. Gleason. In addition to state ethics violations, I believe that Mr. Gleason's actions that evening even amounted to Disturbing the Peace and Disorderly Conduct. If you would like to discuss this incident further, either on the phone or in person, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Daniel Gill

Kate Hodges

From: Kenneth Pagington [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 8:37 PM
To: Kate Hodges
Subject: School Committee Member Mr. Gleason
Attachments: Letter to TA Kate Hodges.pdf

Hello Ms. Hodges,

Thank you for your service to the town. Please take note of the attached letter regarding concerns about Mr. Gleason and thank you in advance for your attention to this incident.

Best regards,

Ken Pagington

From: michelle currier
To: Kate Hodges
Subject: Softball incident on 10/4/2023 re: SC Member Gleason
Date: Friday, October 13, 2023 4:41:13 PM

Good afternoon Kate,

I just wanted to write to you about the incident between Mr. Gleason and two 12 year old girls on the LYBS (Lancaster Youth Baseball and Softball) 14u Fall Softball team.

This is the incident report from the Head Coach of the team, Dan Gill.

"My name is Daniel Gill and I am the Softball Coordinator as well as the Head Coach of the Lancaster 14U softball team and the Assistant Coach of the Lancaster 10U softball team. Last evening at approximately 5pm on Wednesday, October 4th, I was holding practice for the 14U girls on the Luther Burbank Middle School softball field. The girls started practice by throwing in left field to warm up. Half of the girls were on the left field foul line and their throwing partners were in between left field and center field. One of the girls in center field threw a ball that was not caught by her partner on the foul line and the ball rolled across the end of the driveway of 126 Brazao Ln. Just before this, I heard a car coming down the road and looked to see if it was one of the girls who had not arrived at practice yet. It was an older model, white Ford F150 pick-up that I thought was driving a little too fast for the road conditions, given that there were multiple soccer practices going on with lots of children. The softball crossed the driveway just prior to the truck getting to that driveway. The operator of the truck, later identified as Joe Gleason, slammed on his brakes as if it were a child that he almost hit and not a softball. He then stepped on the gas, rapidly accelerating down the driveway of 126 Brazao, squealing his tires. After the truck went by, one of the girls went to retrieve the ball from the edge of the driveway. As Mr Gleason of the truck got out, he slammed the driver's side door of the truck and began screaming obscenities at my team. These included, "Get the Fuck out of my yard!" "I don't ever want to see any of you fucking ass-holes in my yard ever again!" "This is my Fucking property. You stay the fuck out!" I started walking toward him to stay between him and my team. I told him to "Relax, there're are kids over here!", and to, "Watch his mouth." He screamed back that he didn't, "give a shit who was around and that we had better stay out of his fucking yard or he was going to call the fucking police." My assistant coach, Jon Babineau, then told him that, "He had a serious attitude problem." The man then responded back, "Shut your mouth you fat fucking piece of shit!" I then said, "Just go inside!" and he responded that, "You don't tell me what the fuck to do in my fucking yard!" At that I turned around and walked back to my team. They were all visibly distressed at what had just transpired. I had them

stretch out and play a couple practice games to get their minds off of what had just happened as it was all they wanted to talk about. Approximately five minutes after he went inside, he came back out with his son, who is classmates with some of the girls on the team. They both got into the truck and he, again drove down the street at a speed that I thought was improper for the environment. Fortunately, it was an older group of girls and not the kindergarteners or elementary school girls who had to hear the obscenity-laced tirade from this man. During our practice, a group of parents from the soccer fields, on the opposite side of the softball field, came over to ask what had happened earlier so his shouting was clearly loud enough to be heard all of the way over there. My guess is that the kids on that field are third and fourth graders because I know some of the parents. This behavior is completely unacceptable by anyone, especially in the face of children, never mind a person of his standing.”

Mr. Gleason’s response to this email not only took no responsibility for his actions, but in fact blamed the two girls, who should have apologized for being on his property. He only barely acknowledged he was “ungentlemanly” towards the two coaches who approached the situation to protect their players. He took no ownership for his tirade of profanities leveled at the girls, then at the two coaches after they approached the situation once they heard his screaming.

This situation was presented at the School Committee Meeting during the public comment portion on Wednesday, October 10. Mrs. Gleason spoke and it is only she who acknowledged that Mr. Gleason swore profanities at the girls but that, and I paraphrase here, “they shouldn’t be upset about it because they all know swear words by now.” Knowing profanities and having them screamed at you by an adult male and two very different things. Mr. Gleason spoke at the meeting where he continued to deflect responsibility and lay blame on the girls, the girls, town softball as a whole, and also middle school softball as a whole. I’m closing, Amanda Cannon spoke and reminded everyone that this incident was over two poorly thrown softballs and the girls who went to collect them. Mr. Gleason’s reaction was completely inappropriate, but all anyone was looking for was an apology. This should have been a teachable moment for these girls to see that an adult can overreact, can act inappropriately, but can also take responsibility for his actions and apologize.

This is not a “he said, she said” situation. This incident was witnessed by the two girls, the coaches, the rest of the team, the parents of the team, and countless numbers of 3rd and 4th grade parents and children who could hear Mr. Gleason’s tirade from across the fields.

The School Committee is not able to take action against Mr. Gleason. My hope is that Lancaster, with its stronger Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics for elected officials will be able to take some type of action regarding this matter. A man who can so smugly aim profanities at children should not be responsible for decisions regarding children.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this.

Michelle Currier



ADJOURNMENT
