

Meeting materials and information which accompanies Board topics and voted subjects may be found on the Town's website under the Administration tab, meeting materials or by clicking on the link below: <https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/administration-select-board/pages/meeting-materials>



LANCASTER SELECT BOARD
Regular Meeting Minutes
of Monday, March 6, 2023, 6:00 P.M.
Meeting held via ZOOM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Stephen J. Kerrigan called the meeting to order at 5:30PM via ZOOM. He advised that the meeting was being recorded via ZOOM and is being broadcast by Sterling Lancaster Community Television. *Additional materials for Select Board meetings are available at <https://www.ci.lancaster.ma.us/administration-select-board> > Meeting Materials.*

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88240558095>
 Meeting ID: 882 4055 8095

Roll call vote taken, Jason A. Allison, present, Alexandra W. Turner, present, Stephen J. Kerrigan, present. Also present, Kate Hodges, Town Administrator.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Turner moved to approve the minutes of February 27, 2023. Mr. Allison seconded the motion *Vote taken; Alexandra W. Turner, Aye; Jason A. Allison, Aye; Stephen J. Kerrigan, Aye; Motion passed. [3-0-0]*

III. SCHEDULED APPEARANCES & PUBLIC HEARINGS - NONE

IV. BOARDS, COMMITTEES, AND DEPARTMENT REPORTS - NONE

V. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Opportunity for the public to address their concerns, make comments, and offer suggestions on operations or programs, except personnel matters. Complaints or criticism directed at staff, volunteers, or other officials shall not be tolerated.

Mr. Kerrigan recognized Rebecca Young-Jones, 94 Barnes Court. She thanked the Finance Committee and Ms. Hodges for their work on the budget. She would like the Select Board to give residents more time to consider the budget before an override vote. She questioned a Fire Department line item of \$840,000 and one for \$120,000 for the Memorial School. Mr. Kerrigan explained that residents would have until Town Meeting in May to consider the budget. Ms.

Hodges noted that there have been some changes. Ms. Hodges verified that Ms. Young-Jones questions are not line items in the budget but are part of the Capital Plan, and potentially will be funded using ARPA funds. The items in question are for a fire engine and an environmental assessment.

Mr. Kerrigan recognized Joseph Gleason, 126 Brazo Lane, speaking as Lancaster's representative to the District School Committee and to the District School Building Committee. Standing in for the School Superintendent, Mr. Gleason gave a quick update on the high school building project. They are targeting mid-April for completion of the first draft of the schematic drawing. They are looking at around mid-May to have the total cost of the project. March 27 will be the next public forum. Social media has more information on walk-throughs scheduled.

Mr. Kerrigan recognized George Frantz, 13 Highfield Drive, Mr. Frantz would like to see a "Plan B" for what happens if the override vote fails, and to explain different options to residents. Additionally, as he has mentioned before, he would like a PILOT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) letter sent to all tax-exempt entities in town. Mr. Frantz suggested that one source might be taxes due from AUC (Atlantic Union College); Ms. Hodges verified that this has been paid. Mr. Kerrigan noted that while 50% of the land in Lancaster is non-taxable, much of it is State or Federally owned land, which will not result in PILOT contributions. Ms. Turner would like to work with the town's legislators to make sure PILOT is funded at a state level.

Mr. Kerrigan recognized Susan Munyon, 96 Grant Way. Ms. Munyon would like to see scenarios that lay out what reductions would be if the override does not pass. She is concerned with making sure that this does not wait so that taxpayers have a choice.

VI. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT - NONE

VII. ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET, AND POLICY

1. Finalize FY2024 Budget Figures for Annual Town Meeting Warrant

- a. Updated figures post Select Board & Finance Committee Budget Meeting
- b. Updated figures post Nashoba Regional School District Meeting
- c. Schedule dates for public forums

Ms. Hodges reviewed changes and corrections that have been made to the budget this week. Corrected totals are now available online. The School Department came in slightly lower than anticipated which will help lower the deficit a little bit.

2. Presentation by Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Dawson, with FY24 Budget Recommendations

Superintendent Dr. Kathleen A. Dawson and Business Manager Nicki Andrade gave a PowerPoint presentation (*attached*). Budget recommendations are 4.5% higher than Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23).

Mr. Allison asked about the total assessment for the last five years (enrollment x cost per student.) Dr. Dawson will provide this after the meeting. Mr. Allison had additional questions about the Capital Plan, and how Capital Improvements would attract additional towns, thereby reducing the cost for participating towns.

Ms. Turner asked about increases in Operating Requests; Ms. Turner asked if it was true that Minuteman has the highest paid teachers in the state. Negotiations happen this year; Dr. Dawson stated that she cannot comment on negotiations, but that salary information is available at the Department of Education website. It was confirmed that Capital Requests are typically consistent year-over-year. Ms. Turner also asked questions about rental revenue received by Minuteman. Ms. Turner asked why, for example, the Town of Dover shows additional students, but their assessment increase is lower than Lancaster's. Dr. Dawson will be back to the Board with additional information.

3. Review Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch District Agreement

Mr. Kerrigan explained that the Agreement has been received for review and will be discussed and voted upon at the next meeting. Ms. Hodges asked the Board that, when possible, if they would send questions to her prior to the next meeting on March 20 so that she has the opportunity to research them in advance. Ms. Turner asked for a cost-benefit analysis of the space at the police station that was built for use by Dispatch.

4. Discussion to hire an investigator for a Human Resource matter (Kerrigan)

Mr. Kerrigan explained that the Town has received an HR (Human Resources) complaint. Ms. Hodges has recused herself from the matter, but an investigation is needed. Only the Select Board is authorized to engage the services of an investigator; Town Counsel cannot contract independently without a vote of the Board. Mr. Allison moved to approve the hiring of an investigator for a Human Resources matter. Ms. Turner seconded the motion. Ms. Turner asked about financing for this item; Mr. Kerrigan explained that this will need to come from the Legal Budget. Ms. Turner asked questions about the legal budget and where it stands year-to-date. Ms. Hodges answered that year to date, the Town has spent \$117,655 in Legal costs. *Vote taken; Alexandra W. Turner, Aye; Jason A. Allison, Aye; Stephen J. Kerrigan, Aye; Motion passed. [3-0-0]*

VIII. APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS - NONE

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

- Select Board's next Regular Meeting will be held on Monday, March 20, 2023 at 6:00pm.
- Miscellaneous Correspondence and Memoranda

XII. ONGOING PROJECTS & OLD BUSINESS - NONE

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Turner mentioned that the Town this week lost “a great member of our Conservation Commission and our CPA Committee, and a great advocate for all things of the Town.” (Greg Jackson) She continued, thanking that on behalf of the Town, she thanked him and his family. Mr. Kerrigan joined in, thanking Mr. Jackson and his family for the sacrifice of his service, wishing him eternal rest, and wishing his wife, Carol Jackson, comfort and support.

Mr. Allison moved to adjourn the meeting of the Select Board. Ms. Turner seconded the motion. *Vote taken; Alexandra W. Turner, Aye; Jason A. Allison, Aye; Stephen J. Kerrigan, Aye; Motion passed. [3-0-0]*

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Rocco
Executive Assistant

APPROVED

Jason A. Allison, Member
Date: 3/20/23