



**TOWN OF FREETOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
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MINUTES OF MEETING OF THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 2013

**COUNCIL ON AGING
227 CHACE ROAD, EAST FREETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS**

6:35 P.M. Call to Order Meeting called to order by Selectman Paul G. Sadeck. Those present: Selectman Lisa A. Pacheco, Selectman Lee J. Baumgartner, Town Administrator Richard Brown, Lakeville Selectmen John Powderly, Lakeville Selectmen Aaron Burke, Lakeville Selectmen Scott Belliveau, Lakeville Town Administrator Rita Garbitt, Lakeville Recording Secretary Christine Weston, Freetown Finance Committee Members – Brad Paiva, Paul Denault, Robert Alderson and Kathleen Paiva

Cindy Dowd recording meeting as well as this is being videotaping by LakeCam. Our new Selectmen Lee J. Baumgartner introduces himself.

Lakeville Selectman Scott Belliveau states we are here to discuss the school funds due to us being short in Lakeville. He says even a base budget would require an override for them. We are \$191,000 in the hole. This was a tough winter. We always pay off our snow and ice. Selectman Pacheco asks if they always do it this way. Selectman Belliveau says yes we do. Selectman Belliveau says we will go over the idea of an override ballot questions. This will be done prior to Town meeting. Selectman Sadeck asks how much of an override. Bellevieu says we don't want to go for an override to meet base budget however he does not want to fund Tier 2. He is trying to make sure that we don't pit the towns against each other. He wants to know where Freetown stands. Finance Committee member Bob Alderson asks if Lakeville has calculated what the override would be. Selectman Belliveau says they would like 33.5 million to base it on which would require Lakeville to come up with 1.5 million. Selectman Belliveau proposes Tier 1 is somewhere between there. Mr. Alderson asks if you think you have a chance of the override. Selectman Belliveau says the town should decide not him. Selectman Sadeck states then you are basing everything on this override? Selectman Belliveau says he will propose at Monday's meeting the idea of a million dollar override. This means the schools will live with a 2.5% increase for 5 years. Selectman Belliveau wants to make the schools happy for 5 years. He will make a proposal to vote on a number to give the schools a million for the override. Selectman Pacheco clarifies that this will not go all to the schools. Selectmen Belliveau asks if this will this be acceptable to Freetown. Freetown's share would be \$825,000.00. They would like to go for the vote on May 18th. Then they know before their Town meeting. If it does not go through then Lakeville will lose a lot of things. Selectman Sadeck thinks we should wait and

see what you do. Selectman Pacheco says that is not necessarily true. She says we are \$170,000.00 short of Tier 2. Selectman Sadeck disagrees he thinks we are more with the Articles included at about \$275,000.00 short if we allow the full 2.5% tax increase. Selectman Sadeck says that what we have now is a base budget with contractual increases. Selectman Belliveau asks if that would leave Freetown scrambling to find funds. From what he understands he thinks that \$33.5 million would be ok for the schools. Selectman Pacheco thinks going over Tier 1 is pushing it. Selectman Baumgartner says that the message in Freetown is to get the school system in control. Tier 2 is out in space. He wants between Base and Tier 1. Selectman Sadeck thinks that there was no talking before the school committee does their budget. He doesn't think that Tier 2 is an option at all. In any case then you have to go for an override in Lakeville. If that doesn't pass then we will have to go for a Joint Town meeting. Selectman Pacheco wants to avoid a joint town meeting. Selectman Belleveau says if that happened they will have to make major cuts. Selectman Pacheco says that Freetown will as well. She says we need to go in united. Selectman Belleveau asks what Freetown's numbers are. Selectman Sadeck asks the Finance Committee. Chairman Pavia says Base is their only recommendation. Mr. Alderson cautions that the override is forever. What happens in year 2 and 3. Selectman Belleveau says he wouldn't go back to tax payers, in those years the schools need to decrease their spending. Selectman Sadeck asks why they shouldn't do that now. Mr. Alderson thinks an override will be met with a lot of resistance. Selectman Pacheco says she would hate to see the school systems have to spend money on unemployment. Mrs. Garbitt says it isn't as bad as what the Town's would have to do for unemployment. Selectman Sadeck says after our tax bills went out last year many residents were upset and couldn't take an increase. He doubts that an override would pass. This would hurt Freetown. Selectman Belleveau thinks that it isn't his position to decide this. It should be the Townspeople who should. It needs to be done properly to fund for 4 or 5 years. Selectman Sadeck asks how they would control the funds. You can't control the schools budget. He thinks the school committee will not manage it the way Belleveau will want it to. What happens if they don't? Selectman Pacheco says we are not comfortable with Tier 2. Selectman Sadeck says I am not comfortable with Tier 1. Chairman Paiva says we just had an election and people want change. Selectman Sadeck says we haven't been able to put up new buildings like Lakeville has done. Selectman Belleveau agrees with Selectman Pacheco he doesn't want to have a joint town meeting. He doesn't want to force Freetown into this. Selectman Sadeck says once you put the override on the books then it never goes away and it puts a bigger burden on the taxpayers. Mr. Alderson says we need infrastructure in Freetown and Lakeville is hurting for money. Why can't we compromise between Base and Tier 1? Selectman Belleveau says Tier 2 is a 14.4% increase above net school spending for Freetown and 14.2% above net school spending for Lakeville; it is like the schools think they are entitled to this. Selectman Sadeck says the override of 2 million, what is the impact on the average home? Selectman Belleveau says it will be \$350 and \$410 for the average taxpayer. Selectman Sadeck says when we started the school it started with \$1.5 million and they never exercised any management of reducing it. They even sent notes home with kids. Selectman Sadeck says they can adjust their classes to accommodate AP classes. Selectman Belleveau says he even had his son come home who is in the 8th grade. His teacher told him that Apponequet was a horrible school system and he should go to a private school. Selectman Burke says he blames the schools if the student population goes down. He thinks that Lakeville should do 2 different overrides. Two separate issues. Don't confuse the issues. He would support putting the override in front of the taxpayers. He would support the Tier 1 area. He completely agrees with the Freetown

Finance Committee. He thinks the schools dug their own hole. Selectman Sadeck says he agrees with going to the taxpayers to look for the answer. The video he would like to comment on is that the kids were being used in that video. This is wrong. Selectman Baumgartner says he thinks the school system has trained the Selectmen to come up with the money. They make you come up with the money. The school systems keeps getting the raises. They aren't managing it correctly. It is broken. We should ask them for a 5 year plan. Selectman Powderly agrees with Selectman Baumgartner. Selectman Baumgartner says if the override fails then he will want to fund it at net school spending. Selectman Belleveau says he asked very specific questions regarding this and he got shut down repeatedly. Mr. Paul Denault says if this would cost the average taxpayers \$250.00 this year then go up 2.5% per year. Freetown would go up \$350 on a \$250,000.00 house then it would go up from there. Selectman Powderly says the change needs to come from the school committee. Selectman Powderly says the school committee says you would just do layoffs and fund it. Bob Nogueira Chairman of School Committee says the teachers got a 1% raise and the steps are what the problems are. Beacon Hill in Boston is what the problem is. They keep cutting us and then we have to do more things. At a base budget we will have to lay off 70 staff members and go to pre regionalization numbers. He plans to ask for a 3-5 year plan. He thinks we need to have a plan. We need to bring in revenue. They are trying to reduce costs. He says they are trying to do this. He applauds Lakeville. Mr. Alderson asks then the difference between Base and Tier 1, the difference is 70 staff members? Mr. Nogueira says yes, that is correct. Mr. Alderson says that small percentages are life and death. 78% is salary of your budget. There are no other options? Mr. Nogueira says we are in a bubble now and more than 50% of the teaching staff has been there for a long time. Mr. Alderson says when we look at the whole picture we need to look at this. Selectmans Belleveau and Sadeck both say yes they agree however they were not able to be heard on this committee. Selectman Pacheco says that the Selectmen were supposed to write a letter to the school committee stating that we need to make this affordable. We need to do this next time. Selectman Belleveau says that they could have worked with the 1% raise and not given it to the people who have been here for awhile. Nogueira says he cannot fix what has happened in the past. Going forward they will work with you. We need to change Chapter 70 funding. It is unfair to the kids. Kids in the city get more funding than the kids in the towns. He wants to contact Sen. Rodrigues. Selectman Belleveau says that Sen. Rodrigues knows there are issues. Selectman Powderly says the inference is let's go back to Beacon Hill. Wouldn't the school committee have voted on this? In Lakeville if you're a beginning teacher then you get 5.92% increase each year. That is set by the school committee not Beacon Hill. The blame is for raises and steps. That is the school committees doing. Mr. Nogueira says they are being pushed by Beacon Hill for unfunded mandates. Selectman Belleveau says we need to come back to why we are here. Mr. Denault says it is scary that Lakeville would have to lay off all their Firefighters. That would cripple them. Mr. Alderson says if he was in Lakeville he would be very cautious. Chairman Paiva says the schools spend their money wrong. Selectman Sadeck says this is getting to be to long. We know what Lakeville is going to do. The vote will be May 18th and we will have to meet again. Selectman Sadeck says we aren't going to give you a figure tonight. Selectman Pacheco says we agreed on a number last year. Selectman Belleveau says we want between \$1-2 million there is a reason behind asking for it. Selectman Pacheco says after Monday's meeting we will know more. Selectman Sadeck says his point is why they don't renegotiate contracts instead of laying off people. Selectman Burke stated that the Finance Committee did a great job with articulating what Freetown wants.