

Remote- Select Board Regular Meeting (Draft)
Monday, May 3, 2021 - 7:00 p.m
Remote

Select Board Members Present via Zoom: Chair Thomas Lachiusa, Steve Marantz, Mark Gold, and Richard Foster.

Present via Zoom: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, CFO Paul Pasterczyk, Michael Barbieri, Town Moderator Rebecca Townsend, Geoffrey McAlmond, Jennifer Leydon, Marybeth Bergeron, Eversource Gas Representatives- Amos Barnes and Richard Salvarezza.

Coalition for Racial Justice Task Force Present via Zoom: Zach Verriden, Charlotte LaForest, Michelle Tom, Bisrat Abebe, Neena Grover, Lauren Rollins, Mara de Maio, Kathleen Allen, Ryan McCollum.

This meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Lachiusa. Due to COVID-19 concerns, and the Governor's executive order, and changes to Open Meeting Law remote participation, this meeting was held remotely with residents having the option of calling in or sending in their comments. All votes were taken by roll call. LCTV was also utilized to broadcast and record the meeting.

Chair Lachiusa confirmed that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda were present and could hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting allowed for public comment.

Update on Covid-19- Ms. Simmons gave the update on Covid-19. Ms. Simmons was happy to report that there are only 9 active community cases as of today. The town will continue to monitor the cases that come in this week and are optimistic that we are moving in the right direction, Ms. Simmons stated.

Mr. Gold asked if there was a way of tracking the percentage of residents vaccinated in town. Ms. Simmons followed up by stating that these percentages are organized by county and that the town is working to gather data from the town as a whole.

Announcements

Annual Town Meeting Reminder- The Annual Town Meeting will be held outside of Longmeadow High School on Sunday, May 16 at 1:00 p.m. For more information on the meeting and to view the warrant, please visit the town website at longmeadow.org.

Longmeadow's Annual Shredding Event- The Annual Shredding Event will take place on May 8th from 9 am - 11 am at the Longmeadow High School student parking lot. Place your unwanted private documents in a bin in the trunk of your car, and the bin will be emptied into a Valley Green shredding machine for safe and confidential destruction of documents. The shredded paper will be recycled! There is a 2 blue bin limit and no pre-registration required! For more information call the DPW at 567-3400.

Resident Comments- None

Select Board Comments- None

Town Manager's Report

Hampden County Regional Retirement Board- Ms. Simmons stated that we have inquired with Town Counsel on the two matters discussed at the April 20, 2021 Select Board meeting. The first is the mechanism to remove the Town of Longmeadow from the Hampden County Regional Retirement System and the second is investigating whether the Town can grandfather current employees and put employees hired after a certain date on a defined contribution plan as opposed to the current defined benefits plan. Town Counsel has assigned this

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topic to an attorney who specializes in employment law and benefits systems, as soon as an update is received it will be shared with the Select Board.

Sewer Winter Averaging -Town staff continues to explore the use of Munis utility billing to accomplish winter averaging for sewer bills. Ms. Simmons stated that we are scheduled to convene again with Munis staff the middle of May. In reaching out to other communities we have only found the Town of Acton using Munis for utility billing and applying an winter average for sewer bills, the billing in Acton is done monthly as they have not been successful in quarterly billing even though Munis has instructed them that it is possible. Ms. Simmons hopes to offer a more detailed update at the May 17 or June 7 meeting.

Treasurer/Collector-A new Treasurer/Collector was hired and has started in the position, Erica Brunell joins the town after previously working for the Town of Ware as the Treasurer/Collector. Erica bring years of experience working in the banking industry, prior to working for the Town of Ware she was the eServices Manager for Country Bank for Savings. Staff have welcomed Erica to town hall and are glad to have full staffing back in the office.

Middle Schools Statement of Interest-We received word from the Massachusetts School Building Authority that the Statement of Interest submitted for Williams and Glenbrook Middle Schools was not invited into MSBA's Eligibility Period at this time. The MSBA just began accepting SOIs for consideration in 2021. At an upcoming Select Board meeting we will hear directly from Superintendent O'Shea on this topic.

Mr. Marantz commented on water and sewer billing. Mr. Marantz stated that he hopes quarterly billing could be implemented as soon as possible. Mr. Marantz stated that 5 month winter averaging in coordination with MUNIS is actively being pursued and hopes that the town could begin billing quarterly as voted by the Select Board.

Old Business

1. Approve Minutes from the April 20th Regular Meeting

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the minutes from the April 20 Select Board Regular Meeting as presented. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa- Abstain, Mr. Strange- YES, Mr. Marantz- YES, Mr. Gold- YES, Mr. Foster- YES.

2. Town Meeting Update

Town Moderator, Rebecca Townsend was present to answer questions regarding the Annual Town Meeting on May, 16. Ms. Townsend reassured the board that the traditions of the opening ceremony and board, committee, and employee recognitions would be back this year. A draft agenda for the Annual Town Meeting was presented to the Board along with a copy of the warrant that included a "key" demonstrating which board member would be reading each motion. This copy also included a draft consent agenda for the grouping of particular articles to be reviewed. Mr. Pasterczyk stated that there would be an amended motion for Article 10 and 20.

New Business

1. Approval of Appointment- DPW Director

Mr. Gold made the motion to endorse the appointment of Geoffrey McAlmond to the position of Director of Public Works. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa- YES, Mr. Strange- YES, Mr. Marantz- YES, Mr. Gold- YES, Mr. Foster- YES.

2. Approval of Appointment- Finance Director

Mr. Marantz made the motion to endorse the appointment of Jennifer Leydon to the position of Director of Finance and Administration. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa- YES, Mr. Strange- YES, Mr. Marantz- YES, Mr. Gold- YES, Mr. Foster- YES.

3. Coalition for Racial Justice Presentation

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Chair of the Coalition for Racial Justice Task Force, Zach Verriden, along with other members of the coalition (see top of first page for names) were in attendance to present their final report to the Select Board. Mr. Verriden started off by detailing exactly what this report included and how the coalition came to reaching these results through their work. You can view the full report at <https://www.longmeadow.org/1203/Longmeadow-Coalition-for-Racial-Justice>. You can also view the full detailed conversation by viewing the meeting recording at the 55 minute mark into the meeting. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WK-m4iYzY40&list=PLDEmFQOMKpX7DAn_FmzNHMqZig_vNfa1Q. Mr. Lachiusa stated that the Select Board appreciates the efforts that the Coalition put towards this endeavor. Mr. Verriden thanked the Select Board, Ms. Simmons, and the entire task force for the opportunity to partake in this extremely important research and study which lead to the findings of this final report. Mr. Verriden presented a few slides on what the report details and also described some data that the research shows as well. On July 6, 2020 the Select Board declared racism as a public health crisis. In October, a task force was convened to study this crisis. The task force has spent the last several months hearing from members of the community and working on a commitment to investing resources to eradicating this public health crisis. Mr. Gold thanked the whole coalition for their hard work during this process. He asked if there was any discussion by the task force in going in front of the schools and school committee to present this research as well. Mr. Verriden suggested a formal liaison to discuss the opportunities of going in front of the schools and presenting this study more widely. Mr. Marantz also thanked the task force for the incredible amount of work that they did and was impressed by the work that they submitted. Mr. Marantz said that the board should focus on what areas of recommendations that the town could adopt immediately, for instance town-wide training programs or through the hiring process. Mr. Marantz also stated that there needs to be consequences for racist behavior in town that should be defined. Ms. Rollins described some of the actions that could be taken in the schools to prevent racism from occurring and some suggestions on how to gain more participation in community question and answer sessions. Mr. Strange stated that the report of the coalition was outstanding, well-researched, and clear on specific actions for the town to take. Mr. Strange also recommended that this task force be created into a permanent committee for diversity and inclusion that has a constant presence today and in the foreseeable future. Mr. Foster asked Mr. Verriden of what the optimal vision would be for the task force in reporting research to the board and its goal for the future. Mr. Verriden responded by stating that the first step would be enhancing the education on diversity, equity, inclusion, and the history is extremely critical. Other members of the coalition also provided some feedback and input on ways to improve diversity in the town as well as strategies moving forward to put an end to this public health crisis in the near future. Mr. Lachiusa and the entire Board thanked the coalition for presenting this report and for their continued diligence and effort towards this endeavor.

4. Set Election Location

Mr. Marantz made the motion to set the Election date and location for Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at the Longmeadow Community House. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa- YES, Mr. Strange- YES, Mr. Marantz- YES, Mr. Gold- YES, Mr. Foster- YES.

5. Approve Project Change Order #136 for Adult Center Facility

Chair of the Building Committee, Marybeth Bergeron, was present to discuss a project change order for the Adult Center Facility. Ms. Bergeron explained that the change order was precipitated by a change in code. The code change entails installing an oil separator. This is necessary so that the oil separates from the water running through the sump pump underneath the elevator to avoid contamination in the sewer system. Mr. Gold asked Ms. Bergeron if it was the elevator sub-contractor who noticed this issue. Ms. Bergeron stated that it was the elevator subcontractor who first brought this up at a prior building meeting and that the money to pay for this PCO was in contingency.

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve Project Change Order #136 for the Adult Center Facility for the amount of \$29,628. Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa- YES, Mr. Strange- YES, Mr. Marantz- YES, Mr. Gold- YES, Mr. Foster- YES.

6. Eversource Work- Town right of way

Mr. Barnes and Mr. Salvarezza were present on behalf of Eversource Gas to explain the projects and to answer questions from the Board on two work projects on the Town right of way. Mr. Marantz had a question on the

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clarification of the projects and asked for specification on what location in the state would the meter be monitored through. Mr. Gold asked Mr. Salvarezza of what assurances, mechanisms, and processes does Eversource have in place to ensure that there are no leaks or safety issues when completing this project. Mr. Salvarezza stated that these safety measures are in response to the gas leak in the Merimack Valley a few years back. Mr. Gold questioned if this process should have to go in front of the Planning Board as a hearing as done in the past for certain polls. Ms. Simmons stated that DPW reviewed these projects and that there is a memo included in the packet. This does not follow the same public hearing notification criteria that poll petitions do. Ms. Simmons stated that this is work in the right of way, and that is why the projects were presented today. Mr. Foster asked if this was something that would be precluded from going to the Planning Board. Ms. Simmons said she would look into if there is a section for utility petitions going in front of the Planning Board.

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the two petitions by Eversource Gas subject to having a week's prior notification of when they begin the project, a notification of the abutters, and following the recommendations and requirements of the DPW. Mr. Lachiusa seconded this motion. (This motion was withdrawn by Mr. Gold and was never voted on).

Mr. Marantz suggested that the Board not vote on this agenda topic due to the fact that it was the first time being presented in front of the Board. Mr. Foster agreed and stated that pushing this topic back to the next meeting would be appropriate until questions are answered from the Town Manager regarding the process of authorizing this approval of work.

Correspondence

Comcast Letter 1

Comcast Letter 2

Adjourn

Mr. Gold made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m. Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa- YES, Mr. Strange- YES, Mr. Marantz- YES, Mr. Gold- YES, Mr. Foster- YES.

Documents

SB Agenda Packet -



5_3_21 SB Agenda
Packet.pdf

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Barbieri