

7.19.21 Select Board Regular Meeting
Approved- Pending

Remote- Select Board Regular Meeting
Monday, July 19, 2021 - 7:00 p.m
Remote

Select Board Members Present via Zoom: Chair Marc Strange, Steve Marantz, Joshua Levine, Mark Gold, Thomas Lachiusa.

Present via Zoom: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, Michael Barbieri, CFO Jennifer Leydon, Erica Brunell.

Chair Strange called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. 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 Strange confirmed that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda were present and could hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Mr. Levine joined the meeting shortly after the call to order. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting allowed for public comment.

Announcements

Tree Debris from Recent Storms: In rare, town-wide storm events, the town has retained tree crews working alongside DPW staff to assist with debris cleanup from the tree belt. This has been done as a safety measure and is not a regular process. These are costly, multi-day cleanup events usually partnered with an emergency declaration. When a town cleanup is going to be done the town will provide notice and instructions to the residents with a timeline to have debris at the tree belt. It is not an automatic response to a weather event. The recent strong storms we have experienced this summer did not trigger an emergency declaration or a town sponsored cleanup. Any debris that has accumulated on the tree belt, abutting a resident's property, needs to be removed and properly disposed of by the resident. Failure to do so can result in fines. The Recycling Center offers a debris collection area on Pondside Road. For more information, please visit the recycling center homepage located on the town website. In addition, illegal dumping of debris can also result in fines, again please use the available resources for proper disposal.

Vacancy- Planning Board: A member has resigned from the Planning Board effective immediately. Notice of the vacancy will be posted on the website and Facebook. Applications are being accepted until August 9, 2021. A joint meeting of the Planning Board and Select Board will be scheduled to interview applicants. This person will serve until the next Annual Town Election. Please apply on the town website on the Boards and Commissions page. Please reach out to adminassistant@longmeadow.org for more information.

Select Board Meetings: The Select Board plans to go back to regular in person meetings at Longmeadow High School for the beginning of August. This timeframe is subject to change. Remote participation may not be available come August.

Resident Comments

Betsy Sokol, of 88 Westmoreland Avenue, spoke during the resident comment portion of the meeting. Ms. Sokol expressed her concern over Eversource's proposal for their gas pipeline project. Ms. Sokol is concerned that we still do not know of the proposed route of this project. She expressed that there is the monetary impacts that would be passed along to residents as ratepayers. There are also health and safety concerns for residents, Ms. Sokol explained. With the high-pressure gas line there is a possibility of explosion and that the Town By-Laws call for appropriate training for first responders and monitoring of emissions. Ms. Sokol urges the board

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to protect the health of the citizens and the environment and to be part of the solution to climate change and global warming.

Board and Committee Interviews

Patrick Carnahan has applied for reappointment to the Tree Committee. Mr. Carnahan also applied for a new appointment to the Conservation Commission. Mr. Carnahan was made aware that in addition to the associate term on the Conservation Commission, there is also a 3-year term available as well. The board asked Mr. Carnahan various questions concerning these two positions.

Steven Weiss has applied for reappointment to the Historical Commission. Mr. Weiss has served on the Historical Commission for several terms. The board asked Mr. Weiss questions about this role.

Board and Committee Appointments

The Annual Town Board and Committee appointments are made based on the interviews conducted at the July 6 meeting.

Mr. Marantz made the motion to appoint Margaret Cohn to the Historical Commission for a three-year term expiring on June 30, 2024. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Gold made the motion to appoint Peter Landon to the Audit Committee for a three-year term expiring on June 30, 2024. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion.

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

Select Board Comments

Mr. Lachiusa stated that he attended a training for the National League of Cities and MMA. They spoke of racial equity in towns and suggested that Towns look into their respective by-laws to check for potential equity issues. Looking at the findings and suggestions from the Town's task force will be important to implement this year, Mr. Lachiusa expressed.

Mr. Marantz echoed and thanked Mr. Lachiusa for his remarks. Mr. Marantz agreed that implementing the report of the Task Force for Racial Justice is important to accomplish. Secondly, Mr. Marantz spoke about natural gas. Mr. Marantz touched upon Frank Smith's resident comment from the last meeting. Mr. Smith stated that the Longmeadow Pipeline awareness group was told by Eversource that they were going to submit the site plan to the siting board of the state by August 15th. Mr. Marantz expressed that it is important to know how the board will communicate and keep the town informed concerning this. He asked Ms. Simmons if the town has heard anything to this point, and if this timeframe was still applicable. Ms. Simmons stated that she has had conversations with Eversource. Ms. Simmons stated that Eversource would not meet the timeline of August 15 for filing their site plan with the EFSB and that they could submit in the fall. Ms. Simmons also expressed to Eversource that the public hearing with the town will need to be in person. Mr. Marantz questioned if the Town was able to hold their own hearing as well.

Town Manager's Report

COVID-19 Update: COVID-19 cases in town continue to remain at the same number we have seen the last few weeks, as of today's writing there are 4 cases.

Converse Street Sewer Improvements: During the week of Jun 28 when the Converse Street sewer improvement started, the town had issues with the contractor adhering to the work hour restrictions. These necessary hour restrictions were put in place to assist with traffic flow, resident and neighbor access and road detail work scheduling. Despite repeated conversations with the contractor, work continued past the 4:00pm closure time daily. The contractor and the contractor's performance bond surety company were put on notice that this was not acceptable and that no further work shall take place until a conference with the Contractor and Employers

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Mutual Casualty Company took place to discuss the failure to adhere to the work hour restriction. The meeting is being scheduled for July 20 or 21. No further work on the project will take place until after that meeting.

WestCOMM Update: This is a modified excerpt from the Fire Department's monthly report and contains information that Ms. Simmons would like to specifically mention in her report. WestComm is moving toward the Priority Dispatch Platform. This June, significant progress was made with the response matrices and dispatcher training is taking place. When this system is deployed, there is a quality control aspect to ensure it is meeting the community needs. This effort will eventually result in full accreditation for WestComm, making WestComm one of only a few accredited dispatch centers in New England. WestComm has a Community Engagement team that will be doing a public information program to educate our residents on this new system. The education will include information on why our residents are being asked for more information when they call 911, gathering this additional information does not delay the response of police, fire or EMS, it actually helps improve the response and the timing. More information on the public education will be shared as soon as it is available.

Car Break-Ins and Thefts: Our town and area in general is seeing a rash of car break-ins and motor vehicle thefts. The Longmeadow Police Department has put out notices to remind people to lock their cars at night and to draw attention to the increased instances in our area. Chief Stocks notes that "residents are becoming uneasy (rightfully so) and her has augmented patrol shifts in an effort to address this growing concern." Area police departments are sharing information as the string of break-ins and thefts may be by the same groups.

Mr. Lachiusa asked if it is normal for 911 calls to be transferred to a different Town's Fire/Police Department. Ms. Simmons stated that this has to do with the cellular pings on the towers based on the caller's specific location.

Mr. Levine asked Ms. Simmons if she knew of the questions that dispatchers for WESTCOM would ask to callers. Ms. Simmons stated that the community education component would provide this information. Ms. Simmons expressed that the dispatcher is transcribing information in real time to the first responder while they are in route to the 911 call. Mr. Levine has also expressed that he has heard of many residents who have been impacted by the car break-ins. Mr. Levine asked if LPD has requested any ring doorbell camera footage from residents to help investigate these thefts. Ms. Simmons stated that LPD has put out a request to residents to share the footage and information concerning these break-ins to best support investigation efforts.

Mr. Gold expressed that he supports the decision by the DPW Director and Town Manager in enforcing the work terms in the Converse Street Sewer Improvement Project. Mr. Gold stated that it can be difficult for traffic control and matching police detail if construction companies do not follow the hour restrictions. Mr. Gold stated that it was the right decision to make.

Mr. Marantz asked for clarification on Coronavirus relief money through the CARES Act and ARPA, and where the relief money will be allocated. Ms. Simmons stated that she would have a breakdown for the allocation of funds at a future meeting in August.

Old Business

1. Approve Minutes

Mr. Marantz made the motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 21, 2021 meeting subject to the amendment of salutations suggested by Mr. Gold. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

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

2. Investment Policy

Mr. Marantz opened up this topic by describing the proposal suggested at a prior meeting concerning investment limitations. Mr. Marantz expressed that due to the low interest rates, this would be an important policy amendment. CFO, Jennifer Leydon, was present to speak on and answer questions about the proposed policy. Given the interest rates being so low, the Town is looking to increase the deposit limits from five to

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eight million with bond proceeds increasing from eight to eleven million, Ms. Leydon stated. Town Treasurer, Erica Brunell, stated that this is a crucial update to the policy in order to receive interest income. The highest interest rate is roughly 0.6 percent currently. Mr. Levine asked if there was any risk for reliability purposes in concentrating more money into certain banks. Ms. Brunell stated that within the policy if the Bank would move into the “yellow” or “red” category that the Town would know before verified on the risk rating scale.

Mr. Gold made the motion to adopt the revised investment policy to allow investment of up to eight to eleven million dollars for excess bonds up to a 45% limit. Mr. Marantz seconded this motion.

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

3. Select Board / Town Manager FY22 Goals

Ms. Simmons stated that based on the additions of goals suggested at a prior meeting, we have revised the list to include those goals. Ms. Simmons asked the board for feedback on how the board wants to handle monitoring and achieving these goals. Mr. Gold stated that the Town has a great amount of resources and that he looks for the next steps to be developing a plan for the “who, what and when” for delegations of tasks to departments and committees. Mr. Gold requested that Ms. Simmons create an administrative list of the delegation of tasks to achieve the goals to share with the board throughout the year. Mr. Lachiusa mentioned the charter review in section six, pertaining to the school department, and requested that this be added to the goals list as well. Mr. Marantz asked for specification on the PILOT agreement with Bay Path University. Ms. Simmons expressed that renewing the agreement is important goal for FY22 to account for the properties in the agreement.

New Business

1. Public Property Naming- Warren Cowles Way

Ms. Simmons received a request from staff members at the DPW to name the entrance to the new facility “Warren Cowles Way.” Ms. Simmons agrees with the request and the sentiment of staff that it would be a great way to memorialize Mr. Cowles’ presence and emphasize safety for all staff. Ms. Simmons supports this request wholeheartedly. This falls under the Public Property Naming section of the Select Board Policies. Mr. Lachiusa supported this request and gave his insight as to how important this would be for everyone involved.

2. Fall Special Town Meeting Article Submission

Mr. Marantz questioned why there was a big gap in the timeframe between when article submissions are due, to when the Town Meeting is held. Mr. Gold answered by stating that the reason for the deadline is due to the board potentially only having two meetings to review the warrant and public submissions between the closing and signing of the warrant, and the Town Meeting.

Mr. Lachiusa made the motion to approve the article submission memo detailing that submissions are due to the Select Board’s office no later than 12:00 p.m. noon on September 14, 2021. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Strange- YES, Mr. Marantz- NO, Mr. Levine- YES, Mr. Gold- YES, Mr. Lachiusa- YES.

Adjourn

Mr. Gold made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m. Mr. Lachiusa seconded this motion.

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

Correspondence

Documents

Select Board July 19, 2021 Agenda Packet.

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Respectfully submitted,

Michael Barbieri