

Remote- Select Board Regular Meeting
Monday, February 7, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.
Remote

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

Staff Present via Zoom: Lyn Simmons, Corrin Meise-Munns, Michael Barbieri, 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. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless law requires such participation. This meeting allowed for public comment.

Announcements

Recycling Center Stickers: Stickers for the Longmeadow Recycling Center went on sale at the DPW on Tuesday, February 1, 2022. If purchasing in person, please bring your vehicle registration and driver's license. Stickers can be purchased through the following options: - In person at the Longmeadow DPW: Tuesday-Friday 9 am - 3pm - Mailing in the Recycling Center Sticker Application to the Department of Public Works at 170 Dwight Road, Longmeadow, MA, 01106 - Purchased online at Longmeadow.org

COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic: The Eastern Hampden Shared Public Health Services has collaborated with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Cataldo Ambulance to offer Covid-19 Vaccinations for eligible individuals, ages 5 and up. Our clinic will be held at the Greenwood Center, located at 231 Maple Road in Longmeadow, MA, on Sunday, February 13, from 1pm until 5pm. Primary vaccination series as well as boosters will be offered. Registration is required. Please visit the homepage on Longmeadow.org for more information on how to register. ([Registration Link](#)).

2022 Annual Census: The 2022 Annual Town Census forms were mailed out to all households at the end of January. When filling out the census form, please remember to include all residents living in your household and their birth dates. After reviewing the form and making any necessary changes, please sign and date the bottom of the form before returning it to the Town Clerk. The Annual Town Census is used for school registration, grant-funding opportunities for the town and helps maintain an accurate, up to date voters list for elections. Filling out the census form does not register you to vote or change your political affiliation. Signed forms should be returned within ten days by either mailing it back in the envelope that was provided to you, via the drop box to the right of the front door of Town Hall, or by dropping it off in person at the Town Hall, 20 Williams Street Monday - Thursday 8:15 am - 4:30 and Fridays 8:15 am - noon. If you did not receive a form or if you have questions or concerns, please contact the Town Clerk directly at 413-565-4103 or via email at kingram@longmeadow.org.

Presentation – MVP Action Grant Proposal ([link to presentation](#))

Assistant Town Manager and Director of Planning and Community Development, Corrin Meise-Munns was present to give a presentation on the MVP Action Grant proposal process for the Town. Ms. Meise-Munns

explained that the overall idea of the MVP action grant is to apply to update Longmeadow's long-range plan. The presentation today is intended to go over the basics of master planning. Following the presentation, members of the board were able to ask follow up questions regarding the MVP action grant process. Mr. Gold asked Ms. Meise-Munns if we have identified community groups to get involved with this process and how do we go about doing so. Mr. Gold also questioned how we prevent this document from becoming a collection of special interest group requirements. Ms. Meise-Munns explained that during the planning process, town staff would be heavily involved. The Select Board and Planning Board will be working together to identify a steering committee that would include participation from various boards and committees. From there, community organizations could be asked to attend forums and fill out surveys to better engage community participation. Ms. Meise-Munns stated that our community participation should be robust. Mr. Lachiusa asked about outside compliance groups for instance, looking into ADA compliance, etc. Ms. Meise-Munns explained that one of the purposes of the plan is to reference these compliance documents to identify strategies to include into the master plan. Mr. Lachiusa also spoke about the potential of consolidating buildings in Town and that it would be important to outline this in the plan. Ms. Meise-Munns explained that to her knowledge there are not any requirements as to who participates on the steering committee. Town staff will serve an influential role in the planning process. Mr. Strange thanked Ms. Meise-Munns for the presentation and looks forward to hearing more about it in the future.

Resident Comments

Walter Gunn stated on behalf of the Planning Board that they are on board with this project. Mr. Gunn stated that the Select Board and Planning Board should have discussions as to what the scope of this Master Plan is. Mr. Gunn suggested reviewing the long-range plan with the goals of the new master plan to determine the scope. Mr. Gunn also suggested meeting in a small group with members of the conservation commission, community preservation, zoning board to review the goals of this project. The Planning Board voted to move forward with this project. Mr. Lachiusa requested a copy of the current long-range plan to begin reviewing this process further.

Laurie Robinson, of 53 Warren Terrace, was present to speak during the resident comment portion of the meeting. Ms. Robinson objected to the Eversource pipeline project and stated that the project is a direct safety concern for the town and its residents. Ms. Robinson stated that gas is a serious threat to our climate specifically with how much rapidly the climate is changing in New England currently. For these reasons, Ms. Robinson is opposed to the pipeline project and believes that it is not time to expand gas pipelines, but instead time to reduce them.

Select Board Comments

Mr. Gold attended the latest building committee meeting. While they are wrapping up the Adult Center project, they are now looking at their next action steps and are remaining engaged with possible building projects on the capital plan and other buildings around Town. Mr. Gold also attended the Metropolitan Planning Committee meeting of the PVPC. Most of the projects that the committee is working on will not affect Longmeadow currently according to Mr. Gold. Mr. Gold also attended the PVTA meeting. Mr. Gold explained that they are applying for grants currently and we will stay engaged to identify if there are some resources these grants would provide to the Town. Mr. Gold stated that he attended a recent meeting of the Hampden County Regional Retirement Board. Mr. Gold explained that the Board continues to try to make some changes. Paul Pasterczyk is the chair of their audit committee who made a report. There is a potential for items being implemented at the board, for instance, internal audits. The board seems to be doing well with their external investments, but the board's internal expenses remain high. Lastly, Mr. Gold stated that on Thursday, there would be a meeting of

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the SVRHT (Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust). The preliminary documents indicate that they will be reviewing the system-wide health care charges for the next fiscal year. Mr. Gold stated that he would continue to monitor this, as it will influence the Town's budget process.

Mr. Marantz stated that he would like to see traffic studies being conducted by Eversource concerning the proposed route of their pipeline project. Where they would put this pipe will have a significant impact on traffic around Town. Secondly, Mr. Marantz discussed the intervening process for the Eversource proceedings recently filed with the DPU. Mr. Marantz suggested talking to the Town's attorney to discuss this process further.

Mr. Lachiusa stated that he heard positive feedback from residents about the correction on the water bills in response to the error that was identified last quarter.

Mr. Levine thanked Mr. Gold for pointing out the error on the water bills. Mr. Levine stated that he happy to see Covid-19 numbers going down. Mr. Levine is hoping to get back to in person meetings soon. Mr. Levine suggested that keeping the accessibility of the zoom option for residents would be a beneficial possibility as well.

Town Manager's Report ([link to report](#))

COVID-19 Update As of Friday, February 3, 2022 there are 72 cases in town. This is a significant decline compared to the numbers we had been seeing. The chart linked above is a breakdown of the cases in January 2022, totaling 810 cases, according to Ms. Simmons.

Veterans Services Mediation Certification The Town's Veterans Services Officer, Lena Vellturo, recently completed coursework to achieve a Veterans Services Mediation Certification. Completing this program now provides Lena another tool to help the veterans in our community. Many times, Lena has worked with veterans who may be struggling and sometimes includes areas of conflict. The skills she has learned at this training have already helped with de-escalating situations, and enhanced listening skills based on what is being said and help the veteran feel empowered to make the best decisions for themselves.

Adult Center A pause in on site meal service remains in effect until the end of February. At that time, resuming on site meals will be reviewed for a possible restart in March. Two Program Assistants have been hired to provide night and weekend hours at the Adult Center. The goal is to expand these hours in March. This ability to offer these expanding hours was made possible through a generous donation from the Longmeadow Adult Center Community Fund.

Town Moderator's Electronic Voting Task Force A final report on electronic voting has been prepared by the Electronic Voting Task Force and can be viewed [here](#). A purchase order will be prepared and we will move ahead with the purchase using ARPA funds to hopefully have the clickers for the Annual Town Meeting in May.

Old Business

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Marantz made the motion to approve the Select Board Regular Meeting Minutes from the January 18, 2022 meeting. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

Mr. Lachiusa stated that it is important to include comments made by Select Board minutes concerning agenda topics into the meetings. Mr. Gold also stated that for historical recording purposes this is also important. Mike will go back to revise these minutes to include any missing comments and will resubmit for the boards February 22 meeting. *Mr. Marantz withdrew the motion.*

B. Update – Eversource Western Mass Natural Gas Reliability Project

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Mr. Strange gave an update on the Eversource Western Mass Natural Gas Reliability Project proposal and explained that Mr. Marantz touched on some of the update in Select Board comments. Mr. Strange explained that Eversource was originally planning on filing with the EFSB in January. The Town has since received notification that Eversource is postponing their filing date. Mr. Marantz stated that the Town should follow up with the attorney general's office to see what they are saying about Eversource's five year/ten year plans.

C. Streetlight Policy and Agreement

The Select Board reviewed a draft of an updated policy for streetlights at their meeting on January 18, 2022. Mr. Levine questioned if the DPW has a system with what they do with the lights after replacements. Mr. Gold stated that there is a service contract for handing streetlights and old lights recycled by this vendor.

Mr. Gold made the motion to adopt the updated Streetlight Policy into the Select Board / Town Manager Policy Book. Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.

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

D. Updated FY2022 Select Board / Town Manager Goals

Ms. Simmons provided an updated spreadsheet for FY22 goals and accomplishments for the Select Board and Town Manager. The spreadsheet has been updated and most of the projects either are fully on their way or are in a good place right now. Mr. Levine stated he was glad to see the progress on here. Mr. Levine asked how much the PILOT agreement with Baypath University is. Ms. Simmons stated that is no more than \$80,000 but did not have the exact number on hand. Mr. Gold thanked Ms. Simmons for this phenomenal document. Mr. Gold stated that it would be good to publish this on the Town's website to show what has been completed and to track the progress for residents. Mr. Lachiusa questioned how residents would pay for the EV charging station use. Ms. Simmons stated that a policy is being worked on concerning the EV chargers. Mr. Marantz asked if these chargers were universal. Ms. Simmons stated that the system we are looking at is universal.

New Business

A. Quarterly Investment Report

Town Treasurer, Erica Brunell, was present to update the Select Board on the latest quarterly investment report for the Town. Ms. Brunell explained that interest rates have stayed consistent but there has been a noteworthy drop with Westfield Bank going from .40% to .22%. Adams saving bank will also be dropping as well from .60%-.50%. Ms. Brunell stated that the investment in our OPEB reserves. The Town has doubled their interest since last quarter with an ending balance of around \$5.7 million. Mr. Gold questioned what the \$500,000 in exchanges in the OPEB report meant. Ms. Brunell explained that she transferred in this money from an authorization voted on by the Town at the Special Fall Town Meeting. Mr. Lachiusa questioned if there is a point in the year if loans should be refinanced at a lower rate. Ms. Brunell stated that this usually occurs during our bonding period. Mr. Lachiusa asked if it looked like the Town could save some money with the interest rates. Ms. Brunell stated that it is early to tell because of the changes in the market.

B. Updated projections of FY23 revenue / expenditure budget

Ms. Jennifer Leydon was present to discuss the updated projections of FY23 revenue and expenditures in the budget. Ms. Leydon stated that projections were presented using the FY22 budget back in November for a gap of around \$500,000. There is a 3% increase in our expenses and the Town kept our state aid and local receipts stable. The departments have submitted their budgets to the Town Manager, which brought the gap up to roughly 1 million dollars according to Ms. Leydon. There was a major increase in chapter 70 money and the gap was then reduced to \$642,000. Mr. Gold questioned where our current fiscal year revenue comes in relative to that budget, and relative to FY23 budget projections. Ms. Leydon explained by referencing the chart shared

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with the board how our current projections relate to our current fiscal year numbers. Ms. Simmons explained that this was a brief update on the status of projections for the upcoming FY23 budget presentation.

C. District Improvement Financing Procedures

Mr. Gold made the motion that the Select Board utilize 86.4 percent of the Dwight Road Improvement District's incremental tax revenues in establishing the FY2023 DIF budget. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion.

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

D. FY20 Audit Findings Update

Ms. Leydon explained that any findings pre FY2020 have been cleared. The only remaining findings are from FY2020 audit and are mostly procedures. There were two findings in the Parks and Recreation Dept., and two in the Treasurer and Collector's office. Ms. Leydon explained the new processes that are being put in place currently to correct the findings of the FY20 audit. Mr. Gold asked if these corrections are being tracked into an audit correction report. Mr. Gold stated that it was a good record book for the auditors and the Select Board. Ms. Leydon stated that she could provide this document to the board at a future meeting.

Correspondence

MelansonLetter.pdf

All correspondence documents can be found in the Select Board agenda packet linked under "documents" at the end of these minutes.

Adjourn

Mr. Marantz made the motion to adjourn the Select Board Regular Meeting at 8:37 p.m. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion.

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

Documents:



2_7_22 Agenda
Packet.pdf

[Select Board 2_7_22 Agenda Packet](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Barbieri