

Hybrid- Select Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 19, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.
Longmeadow High School, Meeting Room A15
535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow, MA
Remote participation available

Select Board Members Present: Chair Steven Marantz, Mark Gold, Thomas Lachiusa. Absent- Joshua Levine

Staff Present: Lyn Simmons, Michael Barbieri, Sean Van Deusen.

Also Present: Beth Greenblatt, Vicki Deal, Tim Casey.

Chair Marantz called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Due to COVID-19 concerns and the Governor's executive order, and changes to Open Meeting Law remote participation, this meeting was a hybrid meeting at Longmeadow high school, with a remote option available for residents and participants to call in or send in their comments. LCTV was also utilized to broadcast and record the meeting.

Chair Marantz 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

Covid-19 Booster Clinic - The Town of Longmeadow Health Department has collaborated with Big Y Pharmacy to offer Covid-19 Boosters to eligible individuals, aged 18 years and older. This booster clinic will be held at the Greenwood Center, located at 231 Maple Road on Thursday, April 21, 2022 from 10am until 2pm. Please visit www.longmeadow.org/CivicAlerts to register for your booster shot.

Preliminary Town Election - The Preliminary Town Election will be held on Tuesday, April 26, 2022. Wednesday, April 20, is the last day to request an absentee ballot for the Election. For more information, including the ballot for the Preliminary Town Election, and details on the application process for requesting an absentee ballot, please visit www.longmeadow.org/CivicAlerts.

2022 Annual Town Meeting and Voter Registration Deadline - The Annual Town Meeting is scheduled to take place at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 10, 2022, at Longmeadow High School. Registered voters in Longmeadow are eligible to vote at Town Meeting. If you are NOT currently registered to vote in Longmeadow, the deadline to register to vote at Town Meeting is Wednesday, April 20, 2022. If you ARE currently registered to vote in Longmeadow, please disregard this registration deadline. To view the Warrant, and other information pertaining to Town Meeting, please visit www.longmeadow.org/TownMeeting

Hydrant Flushing - The Longmeadow Department of Public Works (DPW) began conducting its spring hydrant-flushing program on April 11. Hydrant flushing will occur between 7:30 am – 2pm and 5:30 pm – 11:30 pm Monday through Friday. Hydrant flushing will continue until April 29, 2022. For additional questions, please reach out to publicworks@longmeadow.org.

Resident Comments

Vicki Deal, of 105 Converse Street, was present to speak during the resident comment portion of the meeting. Ms. Deal expressed that she is someone who is deeply concerned about our environment, both locally and

globally, and continues to worry about the pipeline expansion project. Ms. Deal went on to say that, science has shown us that methane leaks and pressure release natural gas are toxic for our community and our planet. Ms. Deal stated that the health issues associated with these leaks, such as asthma and heart conditions, are made worse by methane. Ms. Deal commented that this project would not provide gas to any household in Longmeadow and it will not lower heating bills. Ms. Deal expressed her concern of the proposed expansion project being located on some of the most utilized streets in Longmeadow. Ms. Deal stated that she could not imagine what construction on Converse Street would look like and is worried about the possibility of construction accidents. Ms. Deal also explained that Converse and Laurel Streets are due for road projects in the next coming years, and expressed her concern for ongoing construction in this area only to have it ripped up by Eversource again. Ms. Deal expressed her appreciation for how the board has kept an eye on Eversource throughout this proposal. Ms. Deal is hopeful that the community will keep an eye on the prize of having a clean and safe environment for Longmeadow.

Tim Casey, of 741 Laurel Street, was present via zoom to speak during the resident comment portion of the meeting. Mr. Casey stated that he is a member of both the Historic District Commission and Historical Commission, as well as a potential abutter to this pipeline. Mr. Casey explained that he is both concerned from a committee member perspective and a private citizen perspective. Mr. Casey indicated that through both of these proposed “preferred” routes; it would put the pipeline under the North Longmeadow Street Historic District, as well as the Green Historic District. Mr. Casey has concerns that a high-pressure gas pipeline could threaten these historic resources, and it would be quite a shame if there were an accident that caused the Town to lose part of our heritage. Mr. Casey also stated that as an abutter to this proposed pipeline, he is concerned for his son growing up near this type of infrastructure, and as a property owner he is concerned about what the project would do to his property value. Mr. Casey thanked the Select Board for their continued support and asked the board to join him in reaching out to the advisory council on historic preservation to solicit help if Eversource decided to run the pipeline through the preferred routes.

Select Board Comments - None

Town Manager’s Report

COVID-19 Update Over the past 2 weeks there have been 64 cases. The positivity rate in Hampden County is 3.17% as of April 14. This is an increase from the 2.55% rate on April 7. The breakdown is 44% unvaccinated, 42% up-to-date, and 14% partially vaccinated.

Staff Updates A new Business Manager has been hired at the DPW, Lisa Okscin joined the Town today, April 19 and brings years of contract management and data analysis experience. Interviews were held for IT Director and the schools will hopefully be able to make a hire out of the applicant pool. Both Chief Stocks and Ms. Simmons sat on the interview panel to represent the Town’s needs. Unfortunately, we continue to have no luck with the Assessor's office position. In addition, we are trying to fill four skilled laborer vacancies. In the last 3 weeks we had nine interviews scheduled and only four people showed up, three have accepted.

Annual Report The Annual Report is being printed, the best quote received was \$745 for 125 copies. Once completed copies will be available for distribution at Town Hall. An electronic copy will also be available on the Town’s website.

Annual Town Meeting Educational videos for specific warrant articles are being prepared and will be posted to the website and social media beginning this week. We have also worked a lot on engagement and awareness of Town Meeting. You will start seeing sandwich boards and lawn signs popping up around key areas of Town to create awareness of the meeting. Mike has worked hard on adding QR codes to the material that provides a direct link to the online version of the warrant. The Annual Town Meeting will return to the normal location at

the Longmeadow High School gymnasium. We are working on enhancements for sound and audio visual, however we have limitations on what can be done based on the location. To provide a Town Meeting with the features we had at the DPW garage would cost approximately \$20,000. Voters and attendees will see some slight improvements from previous Town Meetings held in the gym. The auditorium at LHS offers the best set up for Town Meeting, however it also limitations such as slanted aisles and tight seating if you are looking to speak at a microphone. Additionally, the May 10, 2022 Town Meeting will feature electronic voting www.longmeadow.org/electronicvoting.

Solid Waste Disposal The Town will be contracting with Republic Services for solid waste disposal. This change from CEP to Republic took effect on Monday, April 18. The cost per ton went from \$83.25/ton to \$94/ton, other than the cost increase there is impact to the residents. Waste Management is continuing to pick up curbside, with an increase to the Town to transport to Republic of \$7,487.49.

Coalition for Racial Justice DEI Work Internally we are having discussions to plan for DEI work, including incorporating DEI work into the upcoming MVP application. We have been exploring groups/agencies/organizations that would provide an organizational strategic plan for DEI work for the Town departments. We prefer the organization approach instead of selecting an "off-the-shelf" training that may not have applicability to the different divisions of municipal government. Lastly, we also plan to explore an HR audit of our hiring practices and outreach, this may be something that is incorporated into the organizational plan but we are still developing what the right approach is to take.

Earth Day Cleanup THANK YOU to the Earth Day volunteers! They collected an incredibly impressive amount of trash and recyclables – 1.23 tons (2,460 lbs. of trash) and 800 lbs. of recyclables. This number does not include the amount that was dropped off at the recycling Center or into the school dumpsters.

Mr. Lachiusa expressed his concern of the new Electronic Voting system specifically about the private vote. Mr. Lachiusa went on to say that, we have been voting publically by hand since the first Town Meeting, and our neighbors were always able to see how we voted. Mr. Lachiusa stated that he was surprised that the elected body did not have a discussion on this prior, being that this is a huge change. Mr. Gold stated that we do not get a say in this but the legislative body, which is Town Meeting, does. Mr. Gold explained that the Moderator, who runs Town Meeting, implemented this system and she did not have an obligation to ask the board for anything other than maybe our personal opinions. Mr. Gold stated that if Town Meeting feels otherwise, there are remedies through petitions or bylaws that could change the process. Ms. Simmons confirmed that there were forums and public input sessions that were held to give residents information on Electronic Voting, as well as a live demo in the fall at the Greenwood Center that was attended by 40 or so board and committee members. Mr. Lachiusa stated that he was informed of this process, but believed discussion with the board on this type of change would have taken place. Mr. Lachiusa went on to say that, he was unsure if a Town tradition that has been around since the beginning should be turned over by one person. Mr. Marantz commented that this could be undone, and went on to say, just because it has always been done a certain way, does not mean it always has to be done that way. Mr. Marantz stated that in terms of accuracy and efficiency, this new voting system at Town Meeting would be an improvement.

A. Department Monthly Reports

Please view the monthly reports from Town Departments for March by clicking the "Select Board Agenda Packet" linked under documents at the end of these minutes.

Mr. Marantz commented on the Finance Report detailing RFP's going out for the Water Tower property. Mr. Marantz questioned if anything were to be leased on this property, would it have any impact on future use. Ms. Simmons stated that the water tower will stay no matter what happens, and there is already a lease for cell access on the tower currently. Ms. Simmons indicated that this is a renewal of that lease.

Continuation of Public Hearing – Petition for Verizon Job #1A5FS6S

Mr. Gold made the motion to reopen the hearing. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The vote passed by a vote of 3-0.

Steve Klaubert, of Pike Telecom, who was representing Verizon, attended for the continuation of the hearing from March 21, 2022. Mr. Klaubert explained that where we left off, the Town was going to check into the site plan of the Cell Tower to see if the poles were included in that. Mr. Klaubert stated that he received a response from Verizon that he requested to read to the board. Mr. Marantz questioned if the Cell Tower could go into operation without this petition happening first. Mr. Klaubert detailed that this petition is for power to the Cell Tower and communication fiber optics from whatever the providers are going to be leasing space on that tower. Mr. Klaubert indicated that the wires are currently run across the road between the roads and it looks like there is power to the site. Mr. Klaubert read the statement written by Albert Bessette who submitted the petition for Verizon. “This job was partially released to allow for work to be done on private property. A note was placed to our construction department that they were not to place the street poles until after the Town approved it at a Public Hearing, pursuant to the grant of location legislation in MA GL c. 166 s. 22. The construction department inadvertently placed the street poles in error. Given that this occurred, Verizon is ready to remove or relocate the poles in direction of the Town.” Mr. Gold explained that he was annoyed that Verizon did this without permission and are now asking forgiveness in saying that they will move the poles if the Town wants them to. Mr. Gold proposed that the Town fine Verizon for this dependent upon what is in the purview of the board. Mr. Gold went on to say that; he was prepared to approve the petition a month ago, but for Verizon to have the mentality of “do things now, ask permission later” is lousy management control. Mr. Gold stated that in his opinion, this a slap in the face to the Town of Longmeadow

Old Business

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the March 21, 2022 regular meeting minutes subject to the corrections indicated. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

B. Update – Eversource Western Mass Natural Gas Reliability Project

New Business

A. Appointment of the Department of Public Works Director

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the Town Manager’s recommendation for appointment of Sean Van Deusen as Director of the Department of Public Works. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

B. Presentations – Beth S. Greenblatt, Beacon Integrated Solutions

C. Updated WESTCOMM District Agreement

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the revised WESTCOMM District Agreement. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

D. 2022 Arbor Day Proclamation

Mr. Marantz read the 2022 Arbor Day Proclamation – “WHEREAS, in 1872, J. Sterling Morton proposed to the Nebraska Board of Agriculture that a special day be set aside for the planting of trees; and WHEREAS, this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than one million trees in Nebraska; and WHEREAS, Arbor Day is now observed in Massachusetts under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 6, Section 15, that declares “The governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart the last Friday in April as Arbor and Bird Day”; and WHEREAS, “recommending its observance by the public in the planting of trees,

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shrubs and vines, particularly those attractive to birds, in the promotion of forest growth and culture, in the adornment of public and private grounds, places and ways, and in such other efforts and undertakings as shall harmonize with the general character of the day. He/She shall further recommend that such day be observed in rural and suburban schools by exercises appropriate to Arbor and Bird Day”; and WHEREAS, trees reduce the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cut heating and cooling costs, moderate the temperature, clean the air, produce life-giving oxygen, and provide habitat for wildlife; and WHEREAS, trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, and beauty to our community; and WHEREAS, trees wherever they are planted, are a source of joy and spiritual renewal; NOW, THEREFORE, we the Select Board of the Town of Longmeadow, Massachusetts, do hereby proclaim Friday, April 29, 2022 as ARBOR DAY in the Town of Longmeadow, Massachusetts, and we urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands; and Further, we urge all citizens to plant trees to encourage and promote the well-being of this and future generations.”

Mr. Gold made the motion to proclaim April 29, 2022 as Arbor Day in Longmeadow. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

E. Set Fall Town Meeting Date

Mr. Gold made the motion to set the Fall Special Town Meeting date as Tuesday, October 25, 2022. Mr. Marantz seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Correspondence

All correspondence material can be found in the Select Board Agenda Packet linked under “documents” at the end of these minutes.

[TOWN OF LONGMEADOW MAIL - RE_CABLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.PDF](#)

[TOWN OF LONGMEADOW MAIL - CONCERN 012222A 780 LONGMEADOW STREET.PDF](#)

[BOY SCOUTS LETTER.PDF](#)

Adjourn

Mr. Gold made the motion to adjourn the Select Board Regular Meeting at 9:24 p.m. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0 and the meeting adjourned.

Documents:

[April 19, 2022 Select Board Agenda Packet](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Barbieri