

**Select Board Regular Meeting**  
**Monday, May 16, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.**  
**Longmeadow High School, Meeting Room A15**  
**535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow, MA**

**Select Board Members Present:** Chair Steven Marantz, Joshua Levine, Mark Gold, Thomas Lachiusa  
**Staff Present:** Lyn Simmons, Michael Barbieri, Jennifer Leydon, Erica Brunell.

Chair Marantz called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. 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**

**Finance Committee Openings** The Town of Longmeadow is seeking interested residents to fill three (3) vacancies on the Town's Finance Committee. Each vacancy is for a three (3) year term and would commence on July 1, 2022 and go through June 30, 2025. Interested persons must fill out an application, available on [www.longmeadow.org/CivicAlerts](http://www.longmeadow.org/CivicAlerts), and submit to the Finance Director by noon on Tuesday, May 31, 2022.

**Voter Registration Deadline** The deadline to register to vote at the Annual Town Election, for residents who are currently NOT registered to vote in Longmeadow, is Wednesday, May 25, 2022. Please contact the Town Clerk's office for more information. You can also visit the Town Clerk's page on [www.longmeadow.org](http://www.longmeadow.org).  
Reminder: The Annual Town Election will be held on Tuesday, June 14, 2022, at the Longmeadow Community House.

**Resident Comments**

Marjorie Bruns, of 39 Hazardville Road, was present to speak during the resident comment portion of the meeting. Ms. Bruns stated that she was 74 years old and has asthma. Today, Eversource submitted a plan for a gas pipeline project with the Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board, Ms. Bruns commented. Ms. Bruns stated that if their plans were approved, we would have a pipeline going through the center of town, with a 333% increase in gas supply. More infrastructure and more emissions. If the Town gets the pipeline, we get an industrial gas complex; Ms. Bruns went on to say. Ms. Bruns then stated that Eversource is euphemistically calling the complex the POD, or point of delivery. Ms. Bruns expressed her concern about the noise and the smell of gas in this area, as testing shows that metering stations emit methane 24/7. Ms. Bruns commented that this complex would be across the street from her home, and less than a third of a mile away from an elementary school. As correspondence to Ms. Bruns' comments, she submitted pictures of the two building POD complex on Shaker Road in East Longmeadow. Ms. Bruns thanked the Board for their attention to this matter.

**Select Board Comments**

Mr. Gold thanked all of the volunteers who helped at our shredding event, and thanked the residents for coming out. Mr. Gold stated that we collected somewhere in the neighborhood of ten-thousand pounds, or five tons, and that we would get the exact quantities shortly. Mr. Gold indicated that the Recycling Committee plans to do this event at least once a year. Mr. Gold also expressed his support for the Town

Manager's comments at the Town Meeting. Mr. Gold went on to say that he felt the comments were appropriate and required. Mr. Gold stated that whether the Town Manager is correcting a Select Board member who apparently thought that the MSBA covered windows that were less than 30 years old, or correcting other factual information, Mr. Gold felt it is important that the people at Town Meeting have a sense of how different articles might impact the Town Government and our ability to implement them. Mr. Gold thanked the Town Manager for weighing in when appropriate.

Mr. Marantz stated a correction to the comments made about the pipeline a few moments ago. Mr. Marantz stated that Eversource did not file with the EFSB today. Mr. Marantz went on to say that; they are going to file with the Mass Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA), which is the first step before going to the siting board. Mr. Marantz commented that the Select Board would keep the community apprised as much as possible leading up to and after the filing.

### **Town Manager's Report**

COVID-19 Update As of May 13, 2022, Health Department is currently tracking 118 cases. The positivity rate in Longmeadow is 8.99%, the positivity rate statewide is 6.35%, and Hampden County is 8.01% (May 12, 2022 data). The prior 2-week period was 5.25%. The numbers are continuing to increase and people with symptoms are strongly encouraged to rapid test and report positive results to the Board of Health. Influenza cases are on the decline from a high of 15 in April to two cases in May.

Bliss Pool Update We received a quote from an engineering firm to design the improvements needed at the pool, prepare the bid documents, complete the permitting and oversee the construction work. The estimate for this design and engineering work is \$96,000. We have not decided how to proceed with this work as we have no funding source identified for the design work.

Annual Town Meeting There were 291 registered voters at Town Meeting. We would like to express a huge thank you to all of the volunteers and Town staff for their help in ensuring a smooth meeting.

Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) The state has provided supplemental funding for transportation networks in response to this past winter's harsh weather. The apportionment is based on our local roadway mileage. Longmeadow will be receiving \$280,823.12. Similar to Chapter 90, this is a reimbursement program. Greenwood Pool/Lifeguards We are experiencing a significant issue with hiring lifeguards. The Parks & Recreation Department interviewed 14 applicants, made 14 offers and only seven have replied so far. Two of those who replied stated that they found other employment. The Parks & Recreation Director and Assistant Director will be working on options for staffing the pool, which could possibly include reduced hours and/or a shortened weekly schedule. To run the pool for the hours and days per week we traditionally do, we need a minimum of 10 full time lifeguards with a long list of substitutes.

#### **A. Department Monthly Reports**

All Department monthly reports for April can be found in the Select Board Agenda Packet linked under "documents" at the end of these minutes.

Mr. Lachiusa stated that he was hopeful the Town could contact some local colleges to put out a call for the Town's need for lifeguards this summer. Mr. Lachiusa asked what the money for the WRAP program would be used for. Ms. Simmons responded by saying the money would be used for roadway work. Ms. Simmons indicated that the Town has to use the money by the end of the next fiscal year, and plans to map out the usage will begin soon.

Mr. Levine stated that he was fielding questions about Bliss Pool. Mr. Levine questioned if the work on Bliss Pool is on the chlorine or the storage room and drainage, and if the actual pool itself was okay. Ms. Simmons stated that original plan for funding was to figure out how to tackle the project, do the design and permitting, and oversee the construction. Mr. Levine also commented that he has heard of someone who was offered a job as a lifeguard in Town and was offered less than minimum wage because it is a seasonal job. Ms.

Simmons stated that she believes those positions for lifeguards are at least minimum wage as of right now. Ms. Simmons went on to say that, the Town did do some substantial increases in rates to try to make it more attractive. Mr. Levine questioned if the Town was actively looking for more lifeguards. Ms. Simmons commented that we are in search for more lifeguards and that it is very hard to compete with Six Flags and the State Parks, who have upped their rates last year.

Mr. Gold commented on the WRAP funding of \$280,000. Mr. Gold stated that our Chapter 90 funding is somewhere around \$460,000 and the Town appropriated through Town Meeting an additional \$400,000 for streets. Mr. Gold questioned if this would all be for street repairs rather than purchasing equipment. Ms. Simmons stated that we would not be using Chapter 90 funding to buy equipment. The funding is used to fix roads, Ms. Simmons commented. Mr. Gold questioned if we would go down the list of priority roads that we already have, or would we create a new priority list. Ms. Simmons stated that we would likely look at the list that we were already planning to put out this year and make sure those numbers are still good. Ms. Simmons went on to say that, she would be meeting with DPW and the engineering team to discuss this. Mr. Gold also questioned how the hearing to require sprinklers in a building in Town went, which was listed in the Fire Department's monthly report. Ms. Simmons commented that the Town did not prevail.

### **Presentations / Guest Speakers**

A. Discussion with Longmeadow Anti-Racism Coalition (To view the full discussion, please click [here](#) 18:00 – 45:00)

Ryan McCullum, of 12 Longmeadow Street, was present to speak at the meeting. Mr. McCullum stated that the Select Board was the entity to proclaim racism a public health crisis, and to appoint a task force. Mr. McCullum went on to say that, clearly the acts we just witnessed in Buffalo shows that the Select Board was correct in doing so. Mr. McCullum stated that he had the honor of serving on the Longmeadow Racial Justice Task Force as a volunteer, and there were countless nights of meetings, research and public hearings. In addition to the meetings, the task force solicited the public for input and wrote a report, Mr. McCullum commented. Ironically, the task force even endured a racist zoom bomb complete with the use of the n-word in one of their meetings. Mr. McCullum stated that the ball has been in the Select Board's court ever since the task force submitted the report in May of 2021. Mr. McCullum commented; if it is truly a health crisis, then we need to act. Mr. McCullum understands that budget concerns are an issue, but questioned if it is truly a public health crisis if we are not willing to make it a priority. Intentional and deliberate are two words Mr. McCullum says he uses when talking about anti-racism. If people truly care about eradicating racism, they must be intentional and deliberate, Mr. McCullum stated. Mr. McCullum stated that he was proud of the Town and Select Board for taking the intentional and deliberate steps it did in proclaiming racism a public health crisis. Mr. McCullum urged the board to follow it all the way through to the end. Zachary Verriden, of 24 Pinewood Hills, who served as chair for the Longmeadow Racial Justice Task Force, was also present to discuss next steps with the board. Mr. Verriden stated that he would like to call our attention to three of the recommendations that the task force made in their report. The first recommendation is for the Select Board to interview and select a firm that can help the Town conduct an equity audit that will highlight and call attention to racial discrepancies across different data points that the Town tracks. The second is to interview and select a firm that can help conduct a diversity and racial justice training for members of the Select Board to help further deepen their understanding and awareness of those discrepancies and how they play out in real time. The third recommendation is potentially create a standing committee that can inform and offer advice to the Select Board on actions moving forward as they move through the recommendations offered by the task force. Mr. Gold thanked the speakers for bringing these items to the attention of the Select Board. Mr. Gold believes that these goals are important and actionable. Mr. Gold went on to say that, we are going to have to come back to the task force for advice on where to go about selecting a firm for an equity audit or diversity

and racial training. Mr. Gold agreed that this is something that needs to be done. Mr. Gold welcomed any ideas from anyone on the task force. Mr. McCullum stated that there are several firms in the area that do some of this work. Mr. McCullum and the group can work on submitting recommendations of firms to the Town Manager's Office or to the Select Board chair. Mr. Levine agreed to everything that has been said. Mr. Levine stated that it is crucial to not lose track of what is important, and this is very important. Mr. Levine was happy that Mr. McCullum and Mr. Verriden brought this back to the board's attention. Mr. Levine questioned how much this audit work would typically cost. Mr. McCullum stated that it would depend on the size of the Town and how much information the Town has ready to hand over to the firm that is selected. Mr. Verriden stated that the recommendations provided are on the more feasible end of costs to implement. Mr. Lachiusa stated that diversity training would be important for the board to take on. Mr. Lachiusa went on to say that having a permanent committee would affect the community in a positive way. This committee would be able to look into zoning bylaws and other town procedures that may influence the community from a diversity perspective. Mr. Lachiusa questioned what the next steps should be in creating an advisory board or stand along committee. Mr. McCullum stated that there might be people from the schools or from the task force that could potentially be interested. A suggestion was made to put out a call to residents who would be interested in serving on this advisory committee. Mr. McCullum stated that he would be interested in serving on the advisory board. There were some concerns from the task force on whether or not the Town was serious about the work on implementing the recommendations from the report. Mr. Lachiusa questioned if there was training through MMA. Ms. Simmons commented about a DEI strategic plan that the Town has applied for funding for through a grant. Ms. Simmons explained that we have submitted for that and the cost estimate was \$25,000, and it was broken out over several different quarters over the next two years. This would include a deep dive into Town Department Operations, Ms. Simmons commented. Ms. Simmons spoke about internally looking into HR practices and our policies with the firm selected. This application also looks into zoning bylaws Ms. Simmons stated. Ms. Simmons questioned what the group felt for an appropriate size of a committee would be. Mr. McCullum explained that it depends on the quality of the group. A suggestion was made for roughly 7-9 members. Mr. Verriden also made the suggestion of adding a DEI Officer, but realizes this may be two or three budget cycles out. Mr. Marantz believes it is very powerful for members of the community to hear other residents input on this topic. Mr. Marantz believes that what the Schools are doing should also be coordinated with the Town so we are all going down the same track. The rest of the Town can learn from what the Schools are doing, Mr. Marantz commented. Mr. McCullum agreed that the Schools and Town could work together on certain things, but believes that as separate entities, both have a different abilities and timeframe for diversity and equity trainings. Mr. Marantz thanked the group for attending the meeting to present, and is hopeful that great progress will be made this year.

## **Old Business**

### **A. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

*Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the April 19, 2022 Select Board meeting minutes. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0. Abstain – Levine.*

### **B. Town Manager Evaluation Process**

A discussion ensued about the process of the Town Manager's evaluation, and how to submit the paperwork. The evaluations will be compiled into one public document and will be presented at the June 6, 2022 meeting. Mr. Marantz requested that all members send him their evaluations of the Town Manager by June 1, 2022. The Evaluation of the Town Manager will be on the June 6 agenda for review and discussion.

### **C. Annual Town Meeting Debrief**

Mr. Gold stated that there are always things that we could do better concerning Town Meeting, although he believes it did run relatively smooth. Mr. Gold commented that he rather focus on the areas that we could do

better in rather than just pat ourselves on the back for all of the things that went well. Mr. Gold went on to say that, the proceedings were a little bit tough to follow because of the consent agendas. Mr. Gold explained that he did not have a problem with the consent agendas but there may have been some confusion to attendees when following along because of taking articles out of order. Mr. Gold indicated that he believes it is important to have discussion and debate at Town Meeting, but was concerned that the articles that have caused the most concern and discussion over the last few years were the Community Preservation Articles. Mr. Gold stated that controversy to some degree is good, but he is concerned if it goes repeatedly in the issues. Mr. Gold also was bothered that the Town withdrew many articles at the last minute. Mr. Gold suggested thinking the articles through a little bit better before putting them through so that residents are not questioning the articles. Mr. Lachiusa commented that he was pleased to be back to a normal Town Meeting for the first time in a few years. Mr. Lachiusa commented that the Town Manager and CFO did an excellent job in answering questions in a knowledgeable way to help inform the public. Mr. Lachiusa agreed with Mr. Gold that it was a bit confusing jumping around the articles. Mr. Lachiusa also suggested that the School Committee return to their normal section on Town Meeting stage next to the Select Board for next time. Mr. Marantz commented that we would learn from how we did consent agendas this year and does not believe that it will happen again. Mr. Marantz suggested having a conversation with the Town Moderator beforehand to ensure everyone is on the same page. Mr. Marantz believes that the meeting went smooth and agrees that as long as the Town Officials can answer the questions that are asked, everything will be in order. Mr. Marantz also stated that the Electronic Voting System was very interesting to see live. Ms. Simmons explained that the one difference in consent agendas at this Town Meeting was that we grouped all of them at the beginning of the meeting, which is generally how a consent agenda is handled. Ms. Simmons went on to say that when an article was pulled out of a consent agenda, it was moved to its normal spot in the warrant and there may have been some confusion with this. Mr. Gold suggested that if we like this process, than this is the way we should designate the articles on the Town Warrant to reflect consent agendas. Ms. Simmons agreed that we would set it this way moving forward. Mr. Levine stated that Covid unfortunately kept him away from Town Meeting. Mr. Levine questioned if people were okay with Articles 36 and 39 being motioned to advance. The group commented that most people voted to move these articles up in order. Mr. Levine asked if this might have also led to some of the confusion with consent agendas. Ms. Simmons stated that it probably did lead to some confusion especially since we had agendas for everyone to follow along. If an article was pulled out of order, it might have been difficult to catch up if arriving late to the meeting. Ms. Simmons also explained that we have been having internet issues the last few weeks, which also prevented Town Meeting from being aired, live. Mr. Lachiusa questioned why a Citizen of the Year award was not given out this year, Ms. Simmons commented that we did not receive any nominations.

## **New Business**

### **A. Updated Investment Policy**

Town CFO, Jennifer Leydon, and Treasurer / Collector, Erica Brunell, were present to bring forward an update to the investment policy, section 3 c1. The update was to increase our amount of money in one particular bank from eight million without bonds, eleven million with bonds, to 20 million dollars regardless of the funding source. Ms. Leydon indicated that we would like to keep the 45% limit at no one institution and we also want to reduce our risk exposure by limiting the banks that do not have DIF insurance to only \$250,000, which was a recommendation of the Finance Committee. The Finance Dept. is requesting this increase because of low interest rates. Ms. Leydon explained that rates currently range from 0.1% - 0.5%. Right now, five banks fall between 0.3% - 0.5% and this will allow us to have some variability with the banks with the highest amount of leverage. Ms. Leydon stated that the Finance Committee made a unanimous recommendation to vote to the 20 million dollar mark. Mr. Lachiusa questioned if this change would affect

our standard and poor's rating, and are we Triple A or Double A now. Ms. Leydon commented that the Town is double a plus. Mr. Gold stated that there is element of convenience in addition to everything else and dealing with fewer banks. Interest rate differences has been one of the driving forces, Mr. Gold stated. When there is no interest differences, the difference between 0.1 – 0.3% is around 300 percent, Mr. Gold commented. Mr. Gold stated that the application of this policy is as important as the policy itself. Mr. Gold questioned how the Finance Department sees this moving as we potentially get to where there may be no difference in interest rates at the top. Ms. Brunell agreed on the convenience of multiple bank accounts and additional bank accounts. This also lends itself to when we go out to borrow, we will have more access to different bank accounts so that we can diversify those funds, Ms. Brunell explained. Ms. Brunell stated that even if the interest rates do tend to be similar in the near future, allowing us to spread those funds and not necessarily having to jump on transferring them would be helpful. This also allows for a reduction in human error, Ms. Brunell went on to say. Mr. Gold also questioned where 45% came from as a maximum percentage. Ms. Brunell stated that this was the percentage that the Finance Committee recommended last year when raising the limit. Mr. Levine questioned why updating 45% maximum percentage was not implemented last year when raising the investment limit. Mr. Gold explained that the Finance Committee and Audit Committee put an original limit of 5 million on investments back when there were many issues with banks in Massachusetts and a lot of consolidation going on.

*Mr. Gold made a motion to adopt the revised investment policy. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

#### B. Bond Anticipation Notes

Ms. Leydon explained that these bans went out to bid on May 12, and the lowest bid was 1.6% from Adams Community Savings Bank. The Finance Dept. is looking for a vote to award Adams Community Savings Bank a 359 day, \$60,000 ban at the rate of 1.6%. Ms. Leydon also verified that this would pay off this last round of notes. Mr. Gold questioned if we continue to consider which ones we should ban and which we should bond. Ms. Leydon confirmed that the department works with an advisor to determine this and are always considering both. Mr. Marantz questioned if it was conceivable that we would get a better ban rate by having more money in any of these banks.

*Mr. Gold made the motion to award Adams Community Savings Bank a 359 day, \$60,000 bond anticipation note at a rate of 1.60%. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

#### C. Tax Title Custodian Appointment

*Mr. Gold made the motion to appoint Town Treasurer / Collector, Erica Brunell, to Tax Title Custodian through June 30, 2023, pursuant to MGL Ch. 60 s. 77b. Mr. Levine seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

#### D. Review Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Rates

Ms. Leydon presented the FY23 water, sewer and stormwater requests. Ms. Leydon explained that we are requesting to increase water by 2.51% from \$3.59 per hundred cubic feet to \$3.68, or a nine-cent increase. This is mainly due to an overall four percent increase in the budget related to the Springfield Water purchase for a projected increase of 11.17%. The increase is due to increases in operation and material expenses such as chemicals, electricity, and lab testing, as well as capital costs that they are experiencing with the expansion and upgrades at the water and sewer plant. The retained earnings for water at the start of FY22 was about \$721,000. Wit capital costs and other expensed approved at Town Meeting, which reduced it by \$400,000. Ms. Leydon stated that we are looking at projected revenue excess of \$250,000, and projected appropriation excess of \$55,000. Mr. Lachiusa questioned if since implementing winter averaging, if this has been calculated into the projections. Ms. Leydon stated that it has not to this point. Ms. Leydon went on to say that, she has met with the consultant and we are mainly collecting data for the June usage. At a meeting in July, Ms. Leydon will present what the bill would look like with the five-month average, and what it would be

without it. Mr. Gold stated that we are working off the same distribution charge for water and sewer that we have for the past several years, and is not looking to make a change now. Mr. Gold commented that we ought to be looking at \$15.42 rate that we charge for a meter fee. Mr. Gold stated that the intent was that it reflected much of the capital investment, so that people, who use no water, still contributed to the capital portion of the bill. Mr. Gold supports the recommendation brought forward by Finance today, but wanted to comment on looking to make changes in the meter rate in the future. Mr. Gold reiterated Ms. Leydons comments about the increase from Springfield. Mr. Gold stated that we are increasing our rate by nine cents, while Springfield is increasing their rate to us by 16 cents a unit. Mr. Levine questioned why our sewer rate is so much lower than the average in other towns. Ms. Leydon stated that the cap has a lot to do with this and the usage. Mr. Gold commented that our sewer rate is projected to increase when we move to winter averaging. Mr. Gold went on to say that, irrigation is subsidizing our water rates that we are not seeing in other towns. Ms. Simmons commented that the winter averaging is in a test environment currently. The full presentation on how winter averaging will look will come to a future meeting this summer. Ms. Leydon stated that the sewer rate request is to increase 1.85% from \$2.70 to \$2.75, or a five-cent increase. Ms. Leydon explained that sewer retained earnings was \$710,000 and after capital costs of \$237,000, we have excess revenue projected at \$100,000 and excess appropriation of about \$50,000. Mr. Gold questioned if the sewer bonds were coming out of this revenue. Ms. Leydon confirmed yes. Ms. Leydon requested that stormwater fees be increased by 15.5% from \$5.55 to \$6.41, or an 86-cent increase. This is mainly due to the Select Board policy set in January of 2020 to increase the amount that the taxpayer pays by 4.11% each year. Expenses increased mainly due to the MS4 requirement for outfall testing and catch basin cleaning. The board will vote on these rates at their June 6 meeting.

#### E. WESTCOMM – Notice of intent to Incur Debt

Ms. Simmons stated that the board does not have to take a vote on this unless they disapprove it. There is a sixty-day window that each community has to respond if not in support of this, Ms. Simmons explained. This is coming back to the board again after it was sent to bond council because the district agreement was out of date. The WESTCOMM Board of Directors voted to authorize the bond after updating the district agreement in April. Mr. Marantz asked for an estimated timeframe that this project would be completed. Ms. Simmons stated that the completion of the renovation is about two years out.

#### F. Set Annual Town Election Warrant

*Mr. Lachiusa made the motion to set the June Annual Town Election for Tuesday, June 14, 2022, as presented. Mr. Gold seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

#### G. One Day Liquor License Applications – St. Mary's Parish

*Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the One –Day Liquor License applications submitted by St. Mary's Parish, for events on May 24, 2022, from 6-9 pm and June 3, 2022 from 5:30-9 pm. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

### **Correspondence**

*Arbor Day Foundation Letter.PDF*

*Town of Longmeadow Email – Federal Cares Grant and Economic Development Planning For Small Towns and Rural Communities.PDF*

To view all correspondence material, please view the Select Board agenda packet linked under “documents” at the end of these minutes.

### **Adjourn**

*Mr. Levine made the motion to adjourn the Select Board regular meeting at 8:38 p.m. Mr. Gold seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0 and the meeting was adjourned.*

5.16.22 Select Board Regular Meeting Minutes  
Approved: 7.5.22

**Documents**

[\*May 16 2022 Select Board Agenda Packet\*](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Barbieri