

Select Board Regular Meeting
Monday, July 20, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.
REMOTE

Arrangements for remote participation by Select Board members and members of the public were made in accordance with Governor Baker's Emergency Order Modifying the State's Open Meeting Law. Participation in this meeting was done remotely via Zoom.

Select Board Present via Zoom: Chair Thomas Lachiusa, Marc Strange, Steven Marantz, Mark Gold, Richard Foster

Also Present via Zoom: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, CFO Paul Pasterczyk, Debbie House, David Marinelli, Joe McCarthy (Eversource),

Residents: Jonathan David, Martin Hernandez, Michael Baick, Marcello Federico, Bill Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Thomas 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.

COVID-19 Update – The update was given by Ms. Simmons.

There are currently 5 community cases. The Town has hired a Compliance Officer who has been helping the town and schools with reopening plans. The Compliance Officer is also working with Parks and Recreation on the athletic fields and the basketball courts. Signage and guidelines are being considered and reviewed. The School Department continues to monitor and develop their three plans for reopening.

Announcements

1. Residents were asked to remove all signs placed on the town treebelts by August 1. Signs remaining after August 1 will be removed and disposed of.
2. The Treasurer/Collector and Town Clerk have opened two satellite offices in the Community House for walk in customers. The hours are Mondays and Wednesdays 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Fridays 9 a.m. to noon. Each office has a separate entrance; exit is from the main doors. Cash is not accepted at this time. Appointments can be set up at the Community House to meet with other depart if need be. Other town buildings will remain closed to the public.

Residents Comments

1. Jonathan David, 194 Bliss Road, has been a resident in town since 1985 and believes there is selective bylaw enforcement going on in town. There are many bylaw violations in plain sight all over town. He submitted many pictures of violations just in his neighborhood. He has a neighbor who has complained about his property for years.
2. Martin Hernandez, 299 Maple Road, has been a resident since 2013 and has 2 children. His son is bullied at the high school (LHS). Mr. Hernandez and his sisters were bullied when they were young at Blueberry Hill School. He would like the town to recognize the problem of racism and provide a safe and hate free environment and pass the Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution.
3. Michael Baick, 491 Laurel Street helped Mr. Strange with the language for the Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution. He believes this is a step forward and just a beginning. He is grateful to have been part of the process.

4. Marcello Federico, currently lives in Ashfield, is a 2011 graduate of Longmeadow High School and his parents live in town at 186 Meadowlark Drive. Mr. Federico read an article – I can't breathe - to the Board. Mr. Federico stated that he experienced racism in the Longmeadow public schools.
5. Bill Johnson, 209 Laurel Street has lived in town for 11 years and has never felt welcomed in Longmeadow in 11 years. He knows people of color who have left town because of their experience at the high school (LHS), there is a lack of administrative support. He believes there is systemic racism, no people of color in the Police or Fire Departments. Mr. Johnson has spent his life being attentive to racism.

7:30 Continuation of Hearing for Verizon Petition #1A4RN3D

Eversource contract engineer Joe McCarthy attended the meeting. There was no representative from Verizon at this meeting. This Verizon petition, continued from the July 6 meeting, is for one pole to be placed on Williams Street near the Redfern/Williams/Frank Smith intersection to add support to an area with a long span between poles. The pole would be in front of the former church property which will be redeveloped. The Select Board concern was that the pole may be in the way of a future curb cut. Mr. Gold wanted to hear of other options besides adding more poles. Mr. McCarthy is an engineer and was instructed to design as overhead by Eversource. There is a significant cost to go underground. Mr. McCarthy cannot speak about other options as he is not an Eversource planner. Taller poles will hold heavier wires and circuits coming from the new substation at the intersection of Williams and Chestnut.

David Marinelli, former Tree Warden spoke about the taller poles and the significant impact on the trees. Eversource has been a good partner to the town, Mr. Marinelli was disturbed that the taller poles could be installed without notice. Limbs will have to be trimmed. Two public shade trees and two private trees will be removed. We lost some trees in the same area a year or two ago when the sidewalks were installed. Mr. Marinelli suggested future discussions of plans with Eversource, the DPW Director, and the Tree Warden so the planning can incorporate the trees.

Mr. Strange would like a "decision maker" from Eversource to answer some questions. Mr. Gold would like to put restraints on the petition approval.

Mr. Gold made the motion to close the hearing. Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve Verizon Petition #1A4RN3D contingent upon all requirements set forth by the DPW in their memo are met, should the future development of the First Church require the repositioning of this pole that such repositioning be done at the expense of Verizon / Eversource and not the owner / developer of the First Church property, that any trees on Williams Street to the East of Redfern Drive / Frank Smith Road that have been marked for removal be replaced with trees that meet the specification of the Longmeadow Tree Warden, and that any trees on Williams Street to the East of Redfern Drive / Frank Smith Road that have had their upper limbs trimmed to accommodate the taller poles and new wires be reviewed by the Longmeadow Tree Warden. Trimming of those trees is to be approved and supervised by the Tree Warden, and if deemed necessary by the Tree Warden, those trees shall be replaced with trees that meet the Tree Warden's specifications. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion.

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

Select Board Comments

1. Mr. Gold stated that its important to enforce our bylaws in a consistent and uniform manner.

Town Manager's Report

1. Covid-19 updates can be found on the town's website.
2. The Treasurer/Collector and the Town Clerk now have satellite offices in the Community House for walk-in service. Hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 10am to 3pm and Fridays 9am to noon. Cash

is not accepted. All town offices remain closed to the public, but appointments can be set up to meet with a resident, if need be, at the Community House to limit exposure to other buildings and offices.

3. Payments for property taxes, excise taxes, water and sewer bills will now be processed through a lockbox service in Reading, MA. The service cost is approximately \$7,000/year.
4. The Building Department is using a new permit software program called PermitLink which will allow residents to request inspections, apply for a permit, and pay for permits online. Parcel information is linked to the Assessor's database. All permit applications in the prior program will be moved over to PermitLink and be available for viewing.
5. The Knollwood sidewalk project is expected to start next week and take about 3-4 weeks to finish. Gomes Construction is the contractor.
6. The Wolf Swamp Fields project is expected to go out to bid at the end of the month.
7. The second phase of the LED streetlight conversion project started, installation work should conclude by the end of August. Progress can be followed on an interactive map on the town's website. Streetlight issues should be reported to the DPW office.
8. The Town submitted a \$1.5 million project request to Senator Eric Lesser for inclusion in the 2020 Transportation Bond Bill for improvements to Grassy Gutter Road. The improvements would include widening for bike lanes, sidewalk installation, intersection realignment, crosswalks with signals, and a queuing lane in front of the high school to decrease congestion.
9. There will be a virtual public forum on the Open Space and Recreation Plan updates on July 29 at 7pm. Information is available on the town's website.
10. Richard Mastroianni was hired as the new Tree Warden. The position is budgeted for 10 hours/week.

The Town Manager will be reviewing modifications to the tree program and the Tree Warden position.

The departments submitted their June 2020 monthly reports to the Select Board.

Old Business

1. Approved Minutes

Mr. Strange made the motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from July 6, 2020 as presented.

Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.

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

2. Tree Committee Appointment

Mr. Gold made the motion to appoint David Marinelli to the Tree Committee for a three year term expiring June 2023. Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.

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

3. Tree Manual Update by the Tree Committee

Mr. Strange made the motion to approve the updated Tree Manual. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

Mr. Pasterczyk reported that there were no liability issues with the insurance company as long as whoever goes on private property is insured. Mr. Marantz noted that the manual does not address the effects of natural gas on trees and urged the Tree Committee to look into this issue.

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

4. Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution – Mr. Strange explained that this was a collaborative effort. Unnecessary language was removed. Another change was requested; the removal of “men” in the sixth paragraph and replaced with “people”. Mr. Gold and Mr. Marantz had questions on the set up of the “working group”, details will have to be specified. Mr. Strange suggested that the group be populated by a person of color. Ms. Simmons will research setting up a task force, for more clarity.

Mr. Marantz made the motion to accept the resolution, Racism as a Public Health Crisis as modified and with the directive that the Town Manager provide the Select Board, within the next couple of meetings, with what the task force will be composed of. Mr. Strange Seconded the motion.

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

5. Select Board Liaison Assignments for FY 2021 – The Select Board finished up the assignments. Mr. Lachiusa will cover the Board of Health, Building Committee, and Cultural Council. Mr. Gold will take

the Recycling Commission. Mr. Strange will cover the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Senior Housing Task Force. Mr. Lachiusa is interested in finding a college student interested in local government to act as a liaison for the boards and committees.

6. Tax Ceiling Discussion (Annual Town Meeting Article 14 follow up) – The tax ceiling article did not pass at the Annual Town Meeting in June. Mr. Marantz asked the Board if they should bring this back for the Fall Town Meeting in October. The other members felt the next Annual Town Meeting in May would be better. Mr. Gold suggested also thinking about what else we can do to prepare to hit the tax ceiling. Mr. Pasterczyk stated that IF there was NO market value growth, we would hit the ceiling in 2025. Our debt exclusion, which is now about \$2.20 does not count towards the \$25 limit.
7. Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Capital Projects Letter Stating Select Board Concerns – Mr. Lachiusa drafted a letter to the Springfield Water and Sewer Commissioners for the Board's review and comment. A minor change will be made and the letter will be mailed to Springfield and other towns that are also water customers.

New Business

1. Election Worker Appointments for FY 2021
Mr. Gold made the motion to accept the Election Worker recommendations of the Democratic Committee. Mr. Strange seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
Mr. Gold made the motion to accept the Election Worker recommendations of the Republican Committee. Mr. Strange seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
2. Auditor Engagement Letter – Auditors Melanson Heath submitted an engagement letter for the FY20 Audit. This is a standard letter highlighting the responsibilities of the town and guidelines. The town goes out to bid every 5 years per the bylaws. The audit costs approximately \$44,000.
Mr. Gold made the motion to engage Melanson Heath to conduct the FY20 audit for the Town of Longmeadow. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
3. Department Activity Fees – The Parks and Recreation Department sets their programming fees. The Adult Center currently has some small fees. When the new Adult Center building opens more activities will be planned. A discussion on setting fees for the activities and resident vs. non-resident. The fees collected from Parks and Recreation and the Adult Center go to support the program, not the General Fund. Parks and Recreation has an additional program charge for non-residents. The Adult Center will be encouraged to do the same to help cover program costs.
4. Polling Location Change – Greenwood Center will be considered for use as a polling location for the primary election in September and the presidential election in November. Ms. Simmons explained that the building will allow for better social distancing than the Community House. Residents would enter the middle of the building then go to either the right or left wing depending on which precinct they live in. There would be one-way pedestrian traffic with voters exiting from the doors in their wing of the building. The Select Board was asked to evaluate this and report on whether the change of location would have a disparate adverse impact on the basis of race, national origin, disability, income, or age. The location is handicap accessible. A CodeRED call will be sent out to residents to notify of the polling location change along with signage and social media. Early voting will be held at Greenwood Center. Mr. Gold asked about a location for people who set up tents and hold signs outside. An area will be reserved for them 150' away from the polling location. Mr. Marantz was concerned with the short timeframe to notify residents of the change.
Mr. Foster made the motion to accept the recommendation of the Town Manager regarding the change in polling locations to Greenwood Center. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES

5. Select Board Policy on Overhead Utility Wires – Mr. Gold drafted a Select Board Policy regarding overhead utility wires being strung across certain main roads in town. He asked that the other Board members review it, Mr. Gold would like to bring it back to another meeting for a vote. The other Board members were supportive of this.
6. Discussion on Forming a Charter Commission – Mr. Foster asked the Select Board to research and consider the five different types of government that would suit our town better. When the Charter Review Committee was working on their recommendations, no Select Board members who worked under the Charter were interviewed or asked for comments. A Charter Committee is appointed and makes recommendations to the Select Board. A Charter Commission is elected and its recommendations go to the voters. Mr. Foster would like to place a motion in a few weeks after the Select Board has time to research.

*Mr. Marantz made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:12 p.m. Mr. Strange seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachususa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES*

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie House

Documents:

Agenda
Announcements Sheet
Verizon Petition 1A4RN3D and DPW Comment on Petition
Town Manager's Report and Departments' June Reports
Draft Minutes July 6, 2020
Appointments memo Tree Committee
Tree manual-updated
Racism as a Public Health Crisis Resolution
SB Liaison Assignments FY20 and FY21
Draft Letter to Springfield Water and Sewer Commission
Democratic Election Worker Letter
Republican Election Worker Letter
Melanson Heath Auditor Engagement Letter
Election Polls Change memo
Draft SB Policy on Overhead Utility Wires
Charter Review Committee Final Report