

Select Board Regular Meeting
Monday, September 21, 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, Chief John Dearborn, Rebecca Townsend, Marybeth Bergeron, Saul Finestone, Beverly Hirschhorn
Interviews: Bisrat Abebe, Kathleen Allen, Mara DeMaio, Neena Grover, Martin Hernandez, Rev. Charlotte LaForest, Ryan McCollum, Lauren Rollins, Michelle Tom, Zach Verriden, Minoos Tehrani

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.

Announcements

1. Mr. Lachiusa stated that the approach the Select Board will take with the Charter Review Committee's recommendations is to discuss a section at one meeting and then vote on it at the next meeting.

Residents Comments

1. Saul Finestone, 471 Frank Smith Road commended the Select Board for declaring racism a crisis and spoke for and recommended Lauren Rollins, Martin Hernandez, Zach Verriden, Ryan McCollum, and Neena Grover for the Coalition for Racial Justice Task Force. He hoped the Select Board would consider appointing all 11 applicants.

Interviews for Coalition for Racial Justice Task Force – Eleven residents applied for a position on the Coalition for Racial Justice Task Force, ten joined the meeting and were interviewed. All applications/resumes were attached to the meeting agenda.

Residents interviewed were:

Bisrat Abebe, 267 Bliss Road

Kathleen Allen, 149 Lincoln Road

Mara DeMaio, 119 Knollwood Drive

Neena Grover, 908 Frank Smith Road

Martin Hernandez, 299 Maple Road

Rev. Charlotte LaForest, 30 Warren Terrace

Ryan McCollum, 12 Longmeadow Street

Lauren Rollins, 217 Laurel Street

Michelle Tom, 29 Ridgeway Circle

Zach Verriden, 24 Pinewood Hills

Not Interviewed:

Amanda Varteresian, 22 Highland Street

The Select Board agreed that this was a very impressive group of applicants. Mr. Gold suggested the selection process be that each Select Board member submit a list of 9 names to Debbie House for the next meeting. Mr. Strange noted that a solid group of 10 applicants attended the meeting and would advocate for all 11 applicants to be on the task force. Mr. Marantz stated that 11 is a large number for a task force but is not adverse to appointing all applicants. Mr. Foster noted that the connection with the School Committee should be figured out, possible liaison. Mr. Lachiusa would support the task force reaching out to the School Committee and would like to appoint the 10 applicants who applied. Mr. Strange added that volunteerism is low and he will always err on the side of inclusion. Mr. Marantz added that he is the Select Board liaison to the School Committee and intends to give input. Mr. Lachiusa asked the Select Board members to send their list of applicant names to Ms. House for the next meeting.

Interview for Energy and Sustainability Committee – One resident applied and was interviewed for a position on the Energy and Sustainability Committee.

Minoos Tehrani, 5 Lexington Road, has been a resident for 20 years. She is currently a professor at Roger Williams University and teaches sustainability in her courses, publications, and organized conferences on Green Cities and Sustainability. Ms. Tehrani stated that sustainability is her passion.

Select Board Comments

1. Mr. Lachiusa received a call from a resident who is disappointed with the Zoom Select Board meetings. The resident would like to be able to see all of the members and there has been some sound clarity issues.
2. Mr. Gold explained the difference between voting in “abstention” and voting “present”. With the majority of members voting, “present” is a NO vote. Voting in “abstention” is not a vote. Mr. Gold also noted that the role of advisory committees to the Select Board is to give advisory opinions. The Select Board is not bound to accept the recommendations.
3. Mr. Strange completely disagreed with Mr. Gold’s opinion of advisory committees. The advisory groups have put in the time and research and are giving their knowledgeable opinions.

Town Manager’s Report

1. Adult Center and DPW Construction Projects – The construction trailers at the Adult Center site have been moved to make way for the construction of the pickle ball courts. The surface coating will be applied in the next few weeks.
Permanent power to the new DPW facility will be set up at the site within the next few weeks. The parking lot paving, the retaining wall, and the sidewalks are being done now. Sheetrock and painting is almost done and flooring will start soon.
2. Insurance Safety Office (ISO) Rating for Fire Department – About every five years the ISO analyzes fire protection capabilities and assigns a Public Protection Classification (PPC) rating from 1 – 10 to each fire department. Class 1 represents superior property fire protection, and Class 10 indicates the worst. The information is used to establish premiums for fire insurance. In 2015, Longmeadow had a rating of 5. In 2015 LFD participated in an analysis and was then upgraded to a split rating of a 4 / 4X. During that analysis LFD identified several opportunities to improve the rating. The significant improvements included; moving to a regional dispatch, adding Ladder One, increasing water on the road capacity (Engine-2 1000 gallons from 500 gallons), certifying the Connecticut River as a reliable water source, improvements of specific trainings, increased fire prevention inspections and improved record keeping. As a result of this analysis, as of September 1, 2020, the Town now has a rating of 3. Without coming up to the NFPA suggested staffing levels, we cannot advance in this category. Also, our response time to the two eastern corners of Town currently fall just outside of the NFPA suggested response time of five minutes.
3. Police Department Retirement – Captain Gary Fontaine retired September 18, 2020 after 32 years of service to the town.

4. COVID-19 Community Impact Survey – this survey has been created by the Mass. Department of Public Health to better understand and identify health needs, concerns, inequities, and unintended consequences related to the pandemic. Mass. residents over 14 years old are encouraged to take the survey.

Old Business

1. Approved Minutes – *Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the meeting minutes from September 8, 2020 as presented. Mr. Strange seconded the motion.*
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
2. Cultural Council Appointment – *Mr. Gold made the motion to appoint Katherine McGonigle to the Cultural Council for a three-year term expiring June 2023. Mr. Strange seconded the motion.*
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
3. LED Streetlight Conversion Financial Summary Discussion – Mr. Gold explained that the streetlight project closed on September 22, 2020. There were two projects: the purchase of LED lights, and the conversion from the old style to the LED lights. Two Town Meeting appropriations of \$870,000 and \$25,000, plus Green Communities funds of \$123,621.60, and Eversource incentives for cobra conversion \$47,871.70 and decorative conversions \$58,928.30 were utilized. The savings for the first year, FY2021, is \$115,563.02. Please call the DPW office if a light is not working. They are under warranty.
4. DPW Site 21E Mitigation Update – not discussed, tabled
5. Discussion Continued on Charter Review Committee’s Recommendations for the Capital Planning Committee (CPC) – Mr. Gold submitted his recommendations. Mr. Marantz is in favor of a 5-member committee and believes it is not necessary for a Finance Committee member to be a voting member of the CPC. He would like the committees to talk to each other and have some coordination. Mr. Strange agrees with Mr. Gold and Mr. Marantz and would like to keep membership at 5. Mr. Foster agrees with 5 members on the CPC and no Finance Committee voting member, just a liaison.
Mr. Pasterczyk and Ms. Simmons will create a red-lined version for clarity.
Mr. Strange made the motion to table the Capital Planning Committee Charter Review Committee recommendation discussion to the next regular meeting. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-NO, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES

New Business

1. Review/Close Fall Town Meeting Warrant and Discussion of Fall Town Meeting Plans – Moderator Rebecca Townsend and Chief John Dearborn attended the meeting to discuss preliminary plans for the Fall Town Meeting which will be indoors at the high school on October 27 in the gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium (in that order). The three locations will be tied together electronically by the IT Department. The cap on the capacity is 365 people. Contracted cleaning of the building will be done overnight so that it is ready for the next day’s classes as hybrid learning will be going on. Ms. Townsend noted that it is the law that residents cannot be denied entry to a town meeting. Other room options could be the school library, Business Technology Center, and other rooms. Warrants with a lot of articles and/or controversial articles bring out more residents.
Mr. Pasterczyk read through the draft warrant articles and explained each one. Mr. Foster submitted two articles regarding crumbling concrete foundations, these have the potential of much discussion and many people. Mr. Gold noted that he was not comfortable with the crumbling foundation article referring to a disclosure form.
2. Halloween Discussion – Board of Health Director Beverly Hirschhorn attended the meeting and noted some general guidelines that should be followed by children and adults who plan on going out trick or treating. A private school is organizing an event for their students and families. Springfield announced it will not have Halloween this year due to the on-going pandemic. Mr. Lachiusa put together a list of guidelines for residents who will be going out on Halloween which includes: all social distance

protocols should be adhered to, protective masks should be worn in addition to costume masks, parents should observe children's behavior and promote responsible behavior, and packaged candies should be distributed using a serving implement. Residents have a right to not open doors and compromise their own health. The state has set limits on the size of gatherings and penalties if not adhered to. Ms. Hirschhorn suggested leaving packaged candies in individual bags outside. Educational information could be sent out to residents, educate or regulate. Mr. Gold stated that he cannot imagine why the town is taking responsibility in a global pandemic. The state guidelines and CDC guidelines should be followed. Mr. Strange noted that large gatherings do not make sense but does not think it is an issue with individual families making decisions on their own. Do not go to homes that have the lights off. Mr. Foster added that children from other towns will be in Longmeadow trick or treating if we do not shut it down. Mr. Marantz is not opposed to no Halloween this year. Halloween was cancelled the year we had the October storm. Lots of people should not be gathering. Ms. Hirschhorn stated that the Mass Department of Public Health has not advised cancelling Halloween yet. If it does, the Board of Health would endorse it. There has been no state guidance as of yet. Mr. Lachiusa would like to make a recommendation as a board.

3. Tax Bill Insert Regarding Election Information – An insert will be mailed out with the tax bills to remind voters of the new location (Greenwood Center) for early voting and voting in the general election.

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the mailing of the voting informational insert with the next tax bills. Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.

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

4. Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee (LCMAC) Vacancy – Mr. Marantz resigned as the representative to the LCMAC since being an elected official disqualifies him. A notice will be advertised and applications accepted to appoint a replacement.
5. WESTCOMM Notice to Incur Debt – WESTCOMM (regional dispatch) has a purchase and sale agreement to buy Salter College in Chicopee. There is no obligation of the communities that are part of WESTCOMM, it is the district's responsibility. Grant funding from State 911 was received for renovations to the building and some equipment.

Ms. Simmons asked for some clarification and feedback on the Fall Town Meeting planning and Halloween. Mr. Gold noted that the crumbing foundation articles will draw people. Mr. Lachiusa and Ms. Hirschhorn will forward information on Halloween to Ms. Simmons.

Mr. Gold made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 p.m. Mr. Strange seconded the motion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie House

Documents:

Agenda

Interview Schedule and applications

Town Manager's Report 9/21/20

Department Reports for August

Draft Minutes 9/8/20

Appointment Memo to Cultural Council

Street Light Sources and Uses of Funds/Annual Savings

Recommendations by Mark Gold on the Charter Review Committees Recommendations

Draft FTM Warrant

Insert for Tax Bills

09/21/2020 Regular Meeting

10/05/2020 Approved

LCMAC Description

WESTCOMM Notice of Intent to Incur Debt