

Select Board Regular Meeting
Monday, November 2, 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 Members Present via Zoom: Chair Thomas Lachiusa, Marc Strange, Steven Marantz, Mark Gold, and Richard Foster

Also Present via Zoom: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, CFO Paul Pasterczyk, Debbie House, Chief John Dearborn, Cheryl Messer-Lusty, Moderator Rebecca Townsend, Michael Madsen

Interviews: Dr. Anastasios Angelides, Evelyn Pratt, David Russell, Louis Kornet

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

Update on COVID-19

Chief Dearborn gave the update. The town is now in "yellow" status. As of today, there are 15 active cases in the community. Between October 18 and October 31 there were 24 new cases. Longmeadow will probably move to "red" status on Thursday when the state updates the map. Public gatherings seem to be the common causation of the uptick. The Chief asked that people continue to wear masks, social distance and wash hands often. The Governor issued Order #53 today which will go into effect on Friday, November 6: indoor gatherings are limited to 10, outdoor gatherings are limited to 25, restaurants, package stores and other businesses are to close to the public at 9:30 p.m. A "stay home advisory" will be in effect from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.

There is a health and safety plan in place for tomorrow's general election as well as a security plan. More lighting has been added and there will be a Police presence.

Electronic signboards around town will be used again for COVID information as well as public service announcements.

Ms. Simmons added that CARES Act funding has allowed the town to create a COVID-19 Public Health Coordinator. Ms. Cheryl Messer-Lusty was hired to fill this position. She will be working on complaints, signage, employee questions, assisting residents, providing information, and will be working closely with the COVID-19 Compliance Officer Andy Fraser. Ms. Messer-Lusty attended the meeting and explained that she was the Director of Nurses for the Ludlow Board of Health and has a nursing background.

Mr. Gold asked what the plan is for college students coming home for the holidays. Ms. Simmons noted that they will have to quarantine for 14 days if coming from a high risk state.

Announcements

Tomorrow, November 3 is the General Election. Voting will take place at Greenwood Center on Maple Road from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Masks and social distancing are required.

There is currently a Housing Authority vacancy. The Select Board will make an appointment until the next town election in June. Interested residents can apply on the town website by November 11. Brief virtual interviews will be held by the Select Board on November 16.

Resident Comments

Michael Madsen, 141 Avondale Road asked the Select Board to consider allowing a secondary water meter for lawn irrigation. Many surrounding towns allow this option. It is an accurate way to measure water that does not go into the sewer system. Mr. Madsen has a citizen petition with enough signatures to put this issue on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. He asked the Select Board to authorize the installation of a secondary water meter for irrigation before the 2021 season. This should be the residents' choice whether they want to have a secondary meter and bear the cost for it.

Interview for Board of Health Position – Dr. Anastasios Angelides, 199 Tanglewood Drive, is currently an Associate non-voting member of the Board of Health and is applying for a full voting position. He has enjoyed being on the Board and feels it is a great experience. There is a course held in Boston for Board of Health members that he would like to take to bring him up to speed. Mr. Foster asked if Dr. Angelides was to become the Chair of the BOH, how often would it be appropriate to hold meetings. Dr. Angelides would like to hold monthly meetings, and more frequent meetings depending on events going on.

Interview for Cultural Council Position – Ms. Evelyn Pratt, 70 Warren Terrace, has been a resident for 7 years, runs a Girl Scout troop in town, has 3 children, and is part of a quilting group. Ms. Pratt is interested in the Cultural Council and would like to be more involved in town and help out.

Interviews (2) for the Local Community Mitigation Advisory Committee (LCMAC)

David Russell, 74 Herbert Street, has done some Gaming Council research. Mr. Gold asked if Mr. Russell was familiar with this group. Mr. Russell is familiar with the Gaming Committee as a whole. Longmeadow has received one grant and he is interested in looking for more grants for the town.

Louis Kornet, 110 Briarcliff Road, has served on the Planning Board for 5 years and the Recycling Commission briefly. He spoke with Mr. Marantz to get an understanding of the LCMAC position and is interested in it. Mr. Kornet has worked in government criminal justice, he has a MBA, he has worked in management consulting, and was part of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

Select Board Comments

Mr. Lachiusa brought up the topic of liquor license fees for restaurants/clubs and package stores. Liquor licenses will be renewing in December. Some towns and cities are waiving or adjusting their liquor license fees for 2021 for restaurants that were affected by the closing down and limited capacities brought on by the COVID-19 restrictions. Package stores were considered “essential” and were not shut down. Mr. Lachiusa would like to discuss the license fees at a future meeting.

Town Manager's Report

Dwight Road Slope Stabilization – Tighe and Bond will be working on the engineering and permitting for the development and evaluation of alternatives for slope stabilization to prevent further erosion and failure at the new DPW facility. This will be a multi-step process that will require a review of funding options.

Tax Abatement Program – the FY 2022 Senior Tax Abatement Program will be postponed as we cannot have additional people in town buildings due to COVID-19.

Auction - Purchasing Agent, Chad Thompson recently held another online auction of surplus goods and equipment, including iPads, decommissioned Police vehicles, and DPW equipment. The total amount collected was \$36,585.

General Election – The Town Clerk's Office has been extremely busy processing vote by mail applications, mailing ballots, processing ballots that have been returned and early voting. As of October 29, a total of 1,229 absentee ballots (out of 1341) have been returned, 3,000 in-person votes as of October 28 have been cast and 3,517 (out of 4274) early vote by mail ballots have been returned. The total number of registered voters in town is 12,305. The processing of ballots has started and will be finished on Saturday.

Health Department – Health Director Beverly Hirschhorn will be retiring on December 31, 2020. This position will be posted in the upcoming weeks.

A temporary position of COVID-19 Public Health Coordinator has been created to respond to all COVID-19 related matters, complaints, questions, public education... Cheryl Messer-Lusty was hired to fill this position

with funding from the CARES Act and will work closely with the COVID-19 Compliance Officer and the Human Resources Department, as well as with residents and town businesses.

Old Business

1. Approved Minutes – *Mr. Strange made the motion to accept the meeting minutes from October 19, 2020 as presented. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.*
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
2. Road Surface Incursion Repair Policy – This policy was discussed at the last meeting on October 19. Mr. Gold explained that this policy is intended to put a minimum size on road repairs.
Mr. Gold made the motion to accept the policy on Road Surface Incursion Repair and direct the DPW to put it into effect. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
3. Fall Town Meeting Postponement – Moderator Rebecca Townsend joined the meeting. The Fall Town Meeting was scheduled for October 27, 2020. After discussion with emergency management and town and health officials about the rising COVID-19 cases and the town’s status of moving to “yellow”, Ms. Townsend declared a Recess and Continuance of the Town Meeting, which is good for 30 days. She intends to issue consecutive declarations until it is safe to hold an indoor Town Meeting. The Select Board agreed with Ms. Townsend’s postponement of the Town Meeting. Mr. Pasterczyk noted that there are a few minor concerns with some accounts not receiving supplemental funds due to the postponement of Town Meeting, but he will be watching them. Mr. Gold suggested an outdoor meeting on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. Ms. Townsend noted that we can hold a Town Meeting on a weekend, but public health is first and foremost, weather is second. Ms. Simmons added that there is a requirement to send the declaration, signed by the Public Safety Official, to the Attorney General’s Office.
Mr. Gold made the motion to designate Chief John Dearborn as Longmeadow’s Public Safety Official. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
4. Rescind Vote on Health Services Inter-Municipal Agreement – Ms. Simmons asked the Select Board to rescind the vote that was taken in June 2020 to enter into an Inter-Municipal Agreement for Health Services with the Town of East Longmeadow. East Longmeadow postponed their discussion on the agreement and it never came back up. Longmeadow’s Health Director is retiring at the end of 2020. Ms. Simmons would like to rescind the vote and rebuild our Health Department internally. The Department of Public Health has funding for shared health agreements and this is the way to go in the future. Ms. Simmons feels this is just not the right time, and/or maybe not the right partner.
Mr. Gold made the motion to rescind the Select Board vote on forming an inter-municipal agreement with East Longmeadow’s Health Department and direct the Town Manager to start hiring a replacement Health Director and rebuild our Health Department. Mr. Strange seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES
5. Update on Letter to Eversource CEO – Ms. Simmons informed the Select Board that our attorney advised not to sign the open letter to Eversource’s CEO James Judge.
Mr. Lachiusa reviewed Open Meeting Law requirements with the Board. Mr. Gold added information he learned from former Town Counsel Dave Martel who suggested not using the words “I believe, I think, and it’s my opinion” outside of a meeting with multiple members of the Board.

New Business

1. Quarterly Investment Report – Mr. Pasterczyk reviewed Treasurer/Collector Cheryl Cudnik’s quarterly investment report for July through September 2020 with the Select Board. The VERIBANC update showed Peoples Bank with a yellow rating due to the bank being required to increase loan reserves due to changes in the local and national economic indicators. The rating is expected to return to where it has always been in the third quarter of 2020. Interest rates are holding at a steady low. The new lockbox service with Century Bank processed \$2,784,118 in revenue this quarter. Interest earned this quarter on all bond proceeds was \$38,285.77. Investment income earned on the OPEB Pension Reserves

Investment Fund was \$198,797.57. The balance in the State Retiree Benefits Trust Fund, started in December 2019, is currently \$3,458,069.79. The net decrease of \$6,079,789 in cash and investments was a result of the Hampden County Regional Retirement Board appropriations payment paid in full of \$4,058,190 and the MIIA Property & Causality Group, paid in full of \$606,370. Paying in full gave the Town a discounted payment amount and saved \$49,211 from HCRRB and \$21,032 from MIIA. Commitments issued to collect for motor vehicle excise, real estate, personal property and Bond Proceeds received, the DPW Facility, COA Facility expenditures and debt payments alone totaled just over eight million dollars.

2. FY2022 Budget Calendar – Mr. Pasterczyk presented the draft budget calendar for review. The calendar along with the budget assumptions and directives will be discussed at next week’s joint meeting with the Finance Committee and School Committee.
3. FY2022 Budget Assumptions – Mr. Pasterczyk presented the budget assumptions. He has a goal of not raising the levy limit more than 1.75% of the allowable 2.50%, and is anticipating some Chapter 70 state aid. Local receipts are stagnant, the stormwater enterprise fund will go up along with the ambulance fund. New growth is estimated at \$125,000, FY21 new growth is not yet completed. Revenue assumptions are not using any reserves to balance out the budget. The schools are not anticipating any major upticks or declines in special revenue funds. With regards to the uses, a 3% increase has been put in for cost of living and step increases. Employee benefits and retirement have increased. Mr. Pasterczyk does not think the FY21 budget target of \$311,000 can be reached. The shortfall is mainly from the drop in interest rates. We are in the vicinity of \$250,000. Re-evaluations have been postponed due to the pandemic as it is very difficult to enter residents’ homes at this time. Town Meeting vote (Legislative Branch) is the only way to raise and appropriate, except during the last two months of the fiscal year.
4. Revised Select Board Policies (4) – The Capital Improvement Policy, Capital Improvement Budget Policy, OPEB Funding Policy, and Capital Stabilization Fund Policy were presented with minor updates. These policies will be discussed further at a future meeting.
5. Policy on Board and Committee Resignations – Mr. Lachiusa would like to come up with a way of thanking board and committee members for their service to the town when they leave a board or committee. Names of former employees along with names of former board and committee members are read annually at the Annual Town Meeting. Pins are given out to volunteers at the Senior Center and Library. This conversation will continue at a future meeting.
6. Irrigation Meters – Some emails have been received from residents asking the Select Board to consider allowing secondary water meters for irrigation. Mr. Gold and Mr. Foster have submitted information which is attached to this meeting agenda. Mr. Gold noted that the DPW had a well-developed proposal done in 2012 based on a second meter. A subtractive system would be used to measure irrigation and subtract sewer. This system would measure all the water without estimating. There would be zero cost to the town. It would be up to the resident to purchase the second meter.
Mr. Foster stated that the sewage costs are currently subsidized by water costs. He likes the idea of winter averaging of sewage which measures sewage without actually measuring. Mr. Foster recommended reviewing the 2017 Water and Sewer Rate Study and applying some of the assumptions to see how they work out. He also added that a second meter would be a significant cost to the resident. Over time it would have to be replaced and/or calibrated. Mr. Marantz believes water is a precious commodity and he is not sure how he feels about this yet. Mr. Gold added that if we want to use social engineering, a tiered water rate system drives conservation. Sewer is subsidizing water; how do we reduce the subsidizing? We need to come to a solution. The 2017 Preliminary Project Update Water and Sewer Rate Study power point and memo will be distributed to the Select Board members and this conversation will be continued at a future meeting.

Mr. Foster made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

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

11/02/2020 Regular Meeting
11/16/2020 Approved

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie House

Documents:

Agenda

Announcement sheet

Interview Schedule, 4 Applications, LCMAC description

Town Manager's Report 11/2/20

Draft Minutes 10/19/2020

Draft Policy Road Surface Incursion Repair

Email Chain re: Eversource Letter to CEO

Investment Report and Cover Letter

Budget Calendar

Budget Assumptions

Amended Policies: Capital Improvement Budget Policy, Capital Improvements Policy, Capital Stabilization
Fund Policy, and OPEB Funding Policy

Irrigation Meter documents

Correspondence: BOH Resignations-Dr. Rappaport and Dr. Izenstein

Comcast Letter

Email-S. Metz

Email-C. Zeller

Email-D. Rogeness

Email-M. Madsen

Email-J. Jean