

Select Board Regular Meeting  
Monday, December 7, 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, Mario Mazza, Peter Thurber, Rebecca Townsend, Larry Starr, Jessica Guerra, Larry Rubin, Michael Zeller

Interviewees: Kimberly Berman, Michele Keane-Moore, Gregory Valania, Christine Beaumont, Thomas Meara, Graham Jesmer

This meeting was called to order at 7:08 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 reported that the Mass Department of Public Health's weekly report shows a 1.81% positivity rate. The schools are on a hybrid schedule. There is no evidence of in school spread of the virus. There was a small surge over the weekend and there were 12 new cases today. He is seeing virus spreading in families and from small gatherings. Take gathering restrictions seriously.

### **Announcements**

1. The Longmeadow Police Department will hold a "Stuff a Cruiser" event on December 12 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 34 Williams Street. New, unwrapped toys for ages newborn to 12 years can be dropped off. Gift cards to Walmart, Target, and Amazon are also welcome. Gift cards can be dropped off at the Police Department December 2-9.
2. The Coalition for Racial Justice will hold an Open Listening Session on December 10 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. virtually via Zoom.

### **Resident Comments**

1. Larry Rubin, 80 King Phillip Drive asked if the Town Manager could give some information at some point regarding the construction of a cell tower next to the tennis courts on Bliss Road.

### **Interviews**

#### **Board of Health Interviews (5)**

Kimberly Berman, 69 Canterbury Lane, has lived in town about a year, has 2 children, teaches biology at Westfield State University, is on several committees at WSU, has education and training in infectious disease, and as a biologist would like to contribute.

Michele Keane-Moore, 116 Brooks Road, has lived in town for 18 years, has a background in immunology and vaccine, teaches at Western New England University in the Biology Department, has spoken with a BOH member regarding the role of the BOH and would really like to contribute.

Gregory Valania, 67 Ely Road, has lived in town for 13 years, has children in the Longmeadow schools, is an assistant professor at UMass, is a Cardiovascular Disease Specialist at Baystate Medical Center, and sits on several boards at Baystate.

Christine Beaumont, 482 Laurel Street, has lived in town for 40 years, has two children in college, is a registered nurse, has worked in public health nursing, and is currently Director of Health Services in West Springfield Public Schools.

Thomas Meara, 47 Oakwood Drive, has lived in town 35 years, has a degree in public health sciences, has been interested in the BOH and feels the need is elevated now.

#### **Cable Advisory Committee Interview (1)**

Graham Jesmer, 97 Homestead Blvd., has lived in town for a year, was an attorney for the New York State Department of Public Services and worked on cable franchises, mergers, quality standards, and metrics for providers.

#### **Tax Classification Hearing – 7:30 p.m.**

*Mr. Gold made the motion to open the FY 2021 Tax Classification Hearing. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion.*

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

Jessica Guerra from the Assessor's Office reviewed the documentation presented. The Select Board has the option of voting for a single tax rate or a split rate. Total new growth for 7/1/19 – 6/30/20 was \$10,704.683 (value) and \$259,161 (taxes). The total valuation for all classes went up 1.4%. The excess levy capacity was \$313,377. The FY20 tax rate was \$24.21, the FY21 tax rate is \$24.74, an increase of 2.2%. A split rate with a 1% shift would lower the residential yearly tax by \$8 and raise the commercial yearly tax by \$711.

Mr. Gold prefers the split rate as he feels the commercial properties in town are undervalued. Larry Starr, a commercial property owner, does not see the undervalue and believes this is not the year to raise taxes. Mr. Gold has voted for a split rate for the past 11 years. He would like the Board to go back and take a good look at the commercial properties for the last 15-20 years.

*Mr. Marantz made the motion to adopt a single tax rate for FY 2021. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-NO, Mr. Foster-YES*

#### **Select Board Comments - none**

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

Ms. Simmons addressed the resident comment regarding the question of what is going on next to the tennis courts at Bliss Court/Bliss Road. Plans for a cell tower in this location were started in 2016. The project sat for a while, the contractor just pulled building permits within the last 2 months and plans on starting construction soon.

A mask giveaway was held on November 21 at the High School; 1,000 masks were distributed as well as information on safe gatherings and signing up for CodeRED. Masks are still available for any town resident in the lobby of the Fire Department.

The FY2022 Budget Instructions were distributed to department heads, preliminary budgets are due back to the Town Manager by December 16.

The Town Manager's FY22 Capital Improvement Plan Recommendations were submitted to the Capital Planning Committee.

The two safety projects that were submitted for MIIA grants were approved. The town will receive \$8,845 to cover the cost of a dash mounted camera for a Police cruiser and a thermal imaging camera for the DPW to help detect heat loss which will help to avoid future pipe freeze-ups and flooded buildings.

A Municipal Energy Technical Assistance Grant (META) was submitted to the Green Communities division of Mass Department of Energy Resources. The grant will fund a feasibility analysis, conceptual level clean energy plan and a high-level business case for a contemplated community shared solar project at the Pondsides Road DPW location. The grant was awarded in the amount of \$12,500 and the work has started. The town will

prepare for the demolition of the old DPW facility so a solar array can be constructed. We may be able to take advantage of the federal tax incentives in CY2021 (22%); they will drop drastically in CY2022 (10%).

## Old Business

1. Approved Minutes – *Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from November 16, 2020 as presented. Mr. Foster 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 approve the special meeting minutes from November 23, 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. Appointments – Interviews were done at the November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.  
*Mr. Gold made the motion to appoint Andre Greco to the Audit Committee for a term expiring 6/30/22. Mr. Foster 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 appoint Andre Greco to the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term expiring 6/30/23. Mr. Foster 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 appoint Erin Koebler to the Housing Authority until the next Annual Town Election in June 2021. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.*  
Mr. Gold noted that two residents applied to the Housing Authority and both were well qualified for the position. He believed the Housing Authority was lacking someone connected to the elder community and felt Ms. Koebler could fill this.  
*Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-YES, Mr. Foster-YES*
3. Reduction in Town Meeting Quorum – Moderator Rebecca Townsend has been postponing the Fall Town Meeting monthly since October due to the increases in COVID cases in the last couple of months. The Department of Revenue will not certify the town's tax rate when there are financial articles on an open warrant. The Town Meeting will have to be held to dismiss the articles and dissolve the meeting. The Planning Board continued their hearings for the Zoning articles so no discussion can be held on these. Chapter 92, Section 7 of the Acts of 2020 allows the Select Board to vote to reduce the quorum required at town meeting to 10% of the number that would otherwise be required with the approval of the Moderator.  
*Mr. Lachiusa made the motion, pursuant to section 7 of Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2020, that the Town of Longmeadow, in consultation with and with the approval of the Town Moderator, reduce the number of voters necessary to constitute a quorum at the December 9, 2020 special town meeting held during the governor's March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency. The reduction in quorum shall be to 5 registered voters (10% of the number that would otherwise be required). Mr. Marantz seconded the motion.*  
*Roll Call Vote: Mr. Lachiusa-YES, Mr. Strange-YES, Mr. Marantz-YES, Mr. Gold-ABSTAINED, Mr. Foster-PRESENT*  
Mr. Marantz believed that residents would understand that by postponing these articles has no effect, they will be taken up at the Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Gold was concerned about disenfranchising residents by setting up a situation where 5 people could vote on articles.
4. Irrigation Meter Discussion – DPW Director Mario Mazza and Superintendent of Water and Wastewater Peter Thurber joined the meeting. Mr. Gold did an analysis showing the changes in sewer charges resulting from a second meter installation. Mr. Foster suggested forming a task force to research this topic. He likes the winter averaging approach to determine sewage flow. Mr. Mazza explained that there are four options: do nothing and continue doing what we are doing now, allow residents to purchase secondary meters, use the winter averaging system, or lower the cut off limit. All options will result in the sewer rate going up. Mr. Thurber is not a fan of a secondary meter; it does not promote water conservation. The DEP is not a fan either. The DEP can mandate water restrictions on a town due to the

numbers being too high. In 2007 a tiered rate structure was suggested. Mr. Foster noted that a sewage rate limit would favor heavy users, not low users. Ms. Simmons was asked to pull some information together on this for January.

### **New Business**

1. Annual Liquor License Renewals for 2021 – There were 14 liquor license renewal applications presented. All required documentation was submitted on time. One restaurant still has payments due with the Collector’s office.

*Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the liquor license renewal applications for the Grapevine Restaurant, contingent upon submission of Tips proof, Iron Chef, Li’s Brothers Inn, Longmeadow Country Club, Max Burger, Posto, The Kitchen, The Meeting House, Twin Hills Country Club and Ume Asian Bistro, contingent upon their payment of back fees. Mr. Foster 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 approve the liquor license renewal applications for Longmeadow Package Store, The Bottle Shop, contingent upon submission of Tips proof, Delaney’s Market, and Four Seasons Wines/Liquors. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.

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

2. Town Wireless Internet System – Mr. Gold would like to charge the Cable Advisory Committee with coming up with recommendations for a town wireless internet system. This would be a revenue source for the town. The directive to the Cable Advisory Committee would come from the Town Manager. Recommendations or a status report would be due by the end of the fiscal year (June 2021).

*Mr. Marantz made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m. Mr. Foster 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

Announcement sheet

Interview Schedule and applications

Tax Classification Documents

Town Managers Report

Draft Minutes 11/16/2020 and 11/23/20

Appointments memo

Mark Gold memo-Changes in Sewer Charges Resulting from Secondary Meter Installation

2021 Liquor License Renewal Applications (14) and Documentation

Correspondence: Comcast Letter 11/18/20