

Select Board Special Meeting
Friday, March 27, 2020 - 12:00 p.m.
Remote Zoom Meeting

Select Board Present Remotely: Marie Angelides, Chair, Mark Gold, Richard Foster, Marc Strange, and Tom Lachiusa

Also Present Remotely: Lyn Simmons, Paul Pasterczyk, Debbie House, Fire Chief John Dearborn, Marybeth Bergeron, Rebecca Townsend, LCTV staff Bryon Kozacka and Tracey Durant

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm by Select Board Chair Marie Angelides. Ms. Angelides confirmed that all Select Board members were present and could hear each other. She also confirmed that anticipated speakers were present and could hear. This Open Meeting of the Select Board was conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the "COVID-19 Virus". All members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will not feature public comment. For this meeting, the Longmeadow Select Board convened by telephone conference/video conference via Zoom, as posted on the Town's website identifying how the public could join. For effective and clear conduct of business and to ensure accurate meeting minutes, the Chair introduced each speaker on the agenda. After they concluded their remarks, the Chair went down the line of Select Board members and invited each by name to provide any comment, questions, or motions. Each vote taken in this meeting was conducted by roll call vote.

Announcements – The LED street light installations have started. Residents can view an interactive map on the DPW website to see the progress and what streets have been done.

Select Board Comments

1. Mr. Gold reminded residents to complete the US Census. He also acknowledged the work that is being done by the Town Manager and Town staff.
2. Mr. Lachiusa added that he is satisfied with the Town's response to the emergency.
3. Mr. Strange wished all good health and to stay strong.

COVID-19 Update – Emergency Management/Fire Chief Dearborn called in to the meeting. He thanked the task force team, department heads, and the Town Manager for a remarkable job. Chief Dearborn personally thanked the Police and Fire personnel and DPW staff for their work during this incredible stressful time. There are several new cases expected today. There are limits in testing and delays in test results. EMS is seeing a spike in services. People need to social distance. Call your primary care if you are showing symptoms. Not every case requires hospitalization. Residents are asked to not call 911 with general questions. Staff are utilizing separation in departments. Right now Fire Department personnel are at 100% staffed. It is not like this in other communities, Police/Fire/EMS are taking hits. The National Guard is around moving stockpiles of supplies. The Town has enhanced rules for social distancing in the parks. We need to flatten the curve; social distancing is the primary weapon. Longmeadow EMS run volumes are manageable right now. The third ambulance is being used for potential COVID cases. People can dial 211 or visit the state website for information on COVID-19.

No Select Board comments/questions

Vote on DPW New Facility Delay Claim and Update on 21E Notice – Marybeth Bergeron, Chair of the Building Committee called in to the meeting. PCO-042 in the amount of \$701,594.72 was received from W.J. Mountford for delay costs (9 months) due to asbestos soils. Ms. Bergeron believes this is the best we are going to negotiate. Ms. Simmons believes it would be in the best interest of the town to settle this and move on. Mr. Gold questioned the sub-contractor numbers. Ms. Bergeron added that there has been an increase in material costs; the bid was a year and a half ago. This is outside of our control. Ms. Simmons has 209 pages of backup information which she will forward to Mr. Gold. Mr. Foster thanked Ms. Simmons and the Building Committee for all of the work put into this negotiation. Mr. Lachiusa also expressed his thanks. Mr. Strange questioned how the town would pay the delay claim. Funds were allocated at the October Town Meeting and it would be coming out of the contingency funds. Ms. Angelides also thanked the Building Committee and Ms. Simmons. Mr. Gold thought the markups on the change order seemed strange and would like to know more. Ms. Bergeron noted that the town was not charged for a certain period of time and this was a bargain.

Mr. Foster made the motion to approve delay claim PCO-042 in the amount of \$701,594.72. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes, and Mr. Strange-yes

Town Meeting Postponement Discussion and Vote – Moderator Rebecca Townsend called in to the meeting. The Annual Town Meeting is currently scheduled for May 12, 2020. Ms. Townsend explained that as Moderator she is allowed to move to postpone the town meeting for weather emergencies and public health emergencies. If the Town Meeting warrant is NOT posted, the Select Board can change the date of the meeting (the warrant is not posted). Ms. Townsend recommended delaying the Annual Town Meeting to June (as long as possible). Traditionally, the Annual Town Meeting has been held on a Tuesday evening. The Select Board can hold a town meeting on any day and any time. Ms. Townsend suggested three options for locations of a town meeting if there is still a health emergency in June:

1. Hold the Town Meeting in the LHS gymnasium with breakout rooms in the auditorium and cafeteria. This should allow for social distancing. The Town Clerk believes there will still be an issue with the check in process.
2. Utilize the football field and bleachers
3. Utilize the LHS parking lot, set up chairs or stay in cars (tune in audio)

Ms. Townsend recommends the use of consent agendas to condense votes. Ms. Simmons supports Ms. Townsends recommendation of a June Annual Town Meeting. The suggestion is June 23 or later.

Mr. Gold would like to set a date now so residents are aware of the change. His concern is people leaving town for the summer, if the schools don't open people may leave sooner. Mr. Foster questioned whether there were any other options to hold the town meeting later than June. Ms. Townsend replied that if June is not safe to hold a meeting, the Moderator can move to issue a declaration of continuance to move the meeting out 30 days at a time. Mr. Foster would like to set the date now. Mr. Lachiusa would like to set the date as late as possible and adjust it later if needed. He like the idea of holding the town meeting inside the LHS with breakout rooms. His second choice would be the football field. Mr. Lachiusa would vote to set a town meeting date now. Mr. Strange would vote now to set the town meeting date for June 23. Ms. Townsend reminded the Select Board that they can choose any day and any time for the Annual Town Meeting. *Mr. Gold made the motion to postpone the Annual Town Meeting to June 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at Longmeadow High School to be adjusted as needed. Mr. Foster seconded the motion.*

Ms. Townsend will look into the legalities of moving the town meeting to an earlier time. Mr. Pasterczyk added that the warrant would need to be sent to the printer about May 1 for a June 23 meeting to meet the Charter warrant distribution requirements. Mr. Lachiusa would like to keep the 7:00 p.m. meeting time as residents are used to this. Mr. Strange agreed. Mr. Gold questioned how payroll would be met on July 1 if there was not a town meeting on June 23. Mr. Pasterczyk feels Mr. Gold is correct that there would be a payroll concern as well as other issues if we don't hold a June meeting.

Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes, and Mr. Strange-yes

Town Election Discussion – The Annual Town Election is currently scheduled for June 16 and is held after the Annual Town Meeting. The Annual Town Meeting is now moved to June 23. Should the elections be moved to June 30? Mr. Gold noted that the time between the Annual Town Meeting and the Town Elections is for appeals of referendums. The Town Clerk's input would be needed before changing the election date. Ms. Townsend added that she spoke with the Town Clerk and according to the Secretary of State, the Select Board would be allowed to move the election date IF it was set for May. Our date is in June and cannot be changed as of our current legislation. Ms. Simmons added that if the Town Elections were held before the Annual Town Meeting, there would be a new Select Board member at the Town Meeting. Mr. Lachiusa believes it would be a mistake to hold the Town Elections and change the Select Board before the Annual Town Meeting. Ms. Simmons and Ms. Townsend will check into the legislation on this again. This topic will be continued to the April 6 meeting agenda.

Tax Ceiling Legislation, Discussion, and Vote on Warrant Article – Ms. Angelides drafted a warrant article to allow the Select Board to pursue legislation that will allow for the property tax levy to not be capped by the \$25 per \$1,000 limit, while maintaining the 2.5% annual cap. The Select Board and Tax Ceiling Task Force continue to address the potential of the town hitting the tax ceiling cap. Mr. Pasterczyk agrees that it is a good idea to get something going sooner than later. Ms. Simmons believes we should move forward now. Mr. Gold thought this had to go to Town Meeting and then the election for a non-binding referendum before going for a Home Rule Petition. Mr. Foster has been opposed to this from the beginning. He is disappointed that other options have not been looked at. Mr. Lachiusa believes time limits would have to be spelled out. Mr. Strange feels this is necessary and timely and without some sort of legislative relief we will be stuck. Ms. Angelides will forward the attorney's letter received by the Tax Ceiling Task Force to the Select Board. Adoption has to be by ballot, we will need to find out the sequencing of events. Mr. Lachiusa stated that yearly overrides

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are much more appealing to him. Mr. Pasterczyk added that we currently have yearly overrides but when we get to the \$25 limit we will have to stop. This topic will be continued to the April 6 meeting agenda. Mr. Gold noted that recent legislation on school funding created a task force on Proposition 2.5. He will look into this and to through Rep. Ashe's office.

Financial Forecast Discussion – Mr. Pasterczyk stated that no directives have been given by the DOR. He feels the FY21 state aid numbers may be adjusted down, this is 10% of our revenue. There will be no impact on valuations used for FY21 from the COVID-19 emergency. There may possibly be some impact in FY22. We will see some drops in meals tax and state allotment for FY20/early FY21. Our meals tax annual revenue is normally about \$130,000. Building permits have slowed a bit, may see a small drop there. Proposition 2% is a double edged sword; 2% increase allowed annually but \$25 tax rate limit. Ms. Simmons added that right now there are so many unknowns; the Finance Committee is considering options. Mr. Gold believes it is premature to make any budget changes now. Mr. Lachiusa questioned if school funding would be effected. Mr. Pasterczyk noted that the majority of state aid received is for the schools. Chapter 70 will not have a direct impact on the schools. There might be a hit on the circuit breaker (special education costs), it is too early to tell. Hopefully by the June Annual Town Meeting the state will have this straightened out; adjustments can be made then.

Town Meeting Warrant May 12, 2020 – The Annual Town Meeting has been moved to June 23, 2020. The Moderator suggested using consent agendas to consolidate votes. We have time to do this now with a June Annual Town Meeting date.

Resident Request on Trash Amnesty During Coronavirus Emergency – Ms. Simmons stated that she has received a growing number of requests for a trash amnesty during this emergency. People are concerned they cannot get to the store to buy blue bags for extra trash. Ms. Simmons noted that there is home delivery of groceries, the bags which are sold at Big Y can be included in the grocery order. Residents can call DPW for arrangements if they truly cannot get to a store. Ms. Simmons does not recommend a trash amnesty at this time. Mr. Gold supports the Town Manger. Mr. Foster does not believe this is a big issue, it is for a short period of time, under special circumstances, and is in favor of a trash amnesty. Mr. Lachiusa sees lots of recyclable items out in the trash and is not in favor of a trash amnesty. He would like to see the recycling center open soon as a lot of people are home and cleaning out their homes and yards. Ms. Simmons may open the recycling center in early April to some capacity but not the swap shop. The trash amnesty can be evaluated at the next meeting. There are financial concerns as well. Mr. Strange agrees not to offer a trash amnesty right now. Ms. Angelides feels this could be an expensive amnesty. This topic will be continued to the April 6 meeting agenda. Ms. Angelides added that the Recycling Commission does not recommend an amnesty.

Ms. Angelides noted that the Governor lifted the ban on plastic bags. Mr. Gold noted that Long Meddowe Days has been cancelled and suggested that the Select Board think about establishing a policy or permit process for gatherings of a certain size in town. Ms. Simmons stated that she spoke with Mr. Rice regarding the Lacrosse Jamboree, they will make the decision as to canceling or not in mid-April.

*Mr. Strange made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:35 p.m. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.
Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes, and Mr. Strange-yes*

The next regular Select Board meeting will be remotely on April 6, 2020.

Documents:

Agenda
Change order PCO-042
Governor's Order 3/12/2020
Draft warrant article re: tax ceiling
Draft ATM Warrant
Trash Amnesty memo