

Select Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, April 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 the meeting was done remotely via Zoom.

Select Board Present via Zoom: Marie Angelides, Chair, Mark Gold, Richard Foster, and Tom Lachiusa
Absent: Mark Strange

Also Present via Zoom: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, Paul Pasterczyk, Debbie House, Chief John Dearborn, Tracy Durant (IT), Bryon Kozaczka (IT), and Edward Slyszea (Eversource)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Marie Angelides. Due to COVID-19 concerns and the Governor's executive order 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 Angelides confirmed that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda were present and could hear. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. The meeting allowed for public comment.

Ms. Simmons announced that an arrest was made by the LPD on April 15 of an individual accused of leaving a suspicious item at Ruth's House on April 2. This act was considered a hate crime. The item left at Ruth's House was an explosive device that, fortunately did not work. DNA analysis and evidence left at the scene led the Police to the suspect. The Town of Longmeadow and the Longmeadow Police Department condemn acts of hate. The LPD issued a statement on their website on April 16 regarding this incident.

COVID-19 Update – Chief John Dearborn gave an update to the Select Board on the COVID-19 situation in town. There are currently 13 active cases, not including the nursing home. There is 1 case at Genesis House, 1 case at Ruth's House, and 1 case at Glenmeadow. The LFD has received donations of personal protection equipment (PPE) and now have a good supply. Reopening plans continue to be discussed. The Governor has now closed schools and daycare facilities through June. The Chief will have masks available for employees. The Chief thanked residents for their efforts with social distancing and noted that we cannot let up yet, we are at the top of the surge. The ambulances are safe and cleaned after every call. If non COVID medical help is needed, don't hesitate to call.

Residents Comments – none

Eversource Petitions #4886 and #4887 – *Mr. Gold made the motion to open the hearing at 7:15 p.m. for both Eversource petitions #4886 and #4887. Mr. Foster seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes*

Edward Slyszea, Eversource Senior Project Specialist called in to the meeting. Petition #4886 is to install a loop scheme and replace poles and cables on Dwight Road. Petition #4887 is to install a manhole system and replace old direct buried cables and improve on loop scheme system on West Chestnut Street. Mr. Slyszea stated that there would be no road cutting, work would be done in the grass next to the road. They will direct boar down 80' and go under the road. Mr. Slyszea did see the memo of requirements from DPW Director Mario Mazza and noted that there would not be a problem following them. There were no resident comments.

Mr. Gold made the motion to close the Eversource hearing at 7:20 p.m. Mr. Foster seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve Eversource petition #4886 contingent upon following the requirements of the DPW memo dated 4/14/2020. Mr. Foster seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve Eversource petition #4887 contingent upon following the requirements of the DPW memo dated 4/14/2020. Mr. Foster seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes

Announcements

1. The Annual Town Meeting date has been changed to Tuesday, June 23, 2020. The location and time TBD.
2. Remember to complete your Federal Census online or mail in.
3. While the Town Offices are closed to the public, many services are available online at the virtual Town Hall on the town website, longmeadow.org.

Select Board Comments

1. Mr. Gold asked if the Board of Health Director or a Board of Health member can give a report to the Select Board and the town regarding the COVID-19 health emergency.

Town Manager's Report

1. COVID-19 updates are available at www.longmeadow.org/coronavirus
2. Phase 1 of the LED streetlight installation is just about done. Most of the cobra head fixtures have been installed. Installation work can be followed on the town's website. Email the DPW with any issues or concerns about a streetlight. Tanko Lighting is submitting rate change applications to Eversource for adjustments to our utility bill. The decorative fixtures order is still in process; they should be ready for installation by early June.
3. The landfill cap (phase 1) was installed last week. Vegetation clearing, grading, and contouring (phase 2) continues.
4. The Bliss and Laurel Parks Master Planning community meeting with The Conway School will be on May 7 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. The meeting will be live on LCTV.
5. Waste Management was awarded the trash and recycling hauling contract for the town. After negotiations, we were able to reduce the five year total estimated expenses by \$103,655.93 from the original RFP pricing.

Old Business

1. Approval of Minutes – *Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from April 6, 2020 as presented. Mr. Lachiusa seconded the motion.*
Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes
2. Town Election Discussion – The Annual Town Elections are scheduled for June 16. Ms. Simmons noted that there are no changes yet. She has been talking to Town Counsel. There may be something coming from the State soon regarding elections. Right now Ms. Simmons is monitoring the situation and waiting for legislation. Mr. Gold questioned being able to vote by mail. Ms. Simmons will research this and also find out when absentee ballots are due. There are no contested races this year.
3. Town Budget Recommendations – Mr. Pasterczyk stated that he has more of a town budget concern the longer this situation lingers. There has been discussion of state cuts to unrestricted local aid. This could possibly be a \$250,000 loss to the FY21 budget. The meals tax projection for FY20 has been reached, but there will be some reduction to FY21. The Motor Vehicle excise tax is \$2.5 million for FY20; commitments 1 and 2 are \$20,000 less than a year ago. Mr. Pasterczyk believes we may need to revisit the budget. We need \$.5 million, options are: budget cuts, tax levy, utilize free cash, and MGM money. The operating and capital budgets will need to be looked at. Mr. Pasterczyk and Ms. Simmons will be reviewing the budget. Mr. Gold asked what the School Committee would be doing to help the budget (hiring freezes, discretionary spending...) Mr. Pasterczyk will be talking to Tom Mazza. The School is hoping to minimize their cuts as the next school year (Sept.) plans are already in place. School spending has been curtailed. Mr. Foster asked about school transportation and meal programs and if there were rebates for lack of service. Mr. Pasterczyk will have to talk to Mr. Mazza about the transportation, meals revenue has stopped. Mr. Foster asked about the financial needs for the new DPW and new Adult Center. We will have custodial service costs for the Adult Center. Ms. Angelides asked about using the MGM monies. Scantic Valley numbers may be out May/June.
This discussion will continue at the next meeting on May 4. Budget changes would have to be decided on by the next meeting as the warrant will be going to the printer soon. The Finance Committee can make recommendations from the floor of Town Meeting.
4. Warrant Presentation Recommendations – The Annual Town Meeting warrant is quite lengthy right now. Consent agendas are being considered to shorten the Town Meeting. Mr. Gold suggested holding the meeting over a few nights. Mr. Foster would like to trim the warrant to the bare minimum noting that extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. Mr. Lachiusa suggested maybe two meetings, could postpone the second. Ms. Simmons will continue to discuss this with the Moderator. They have been discussing Town Meeting logistics and exploring an outdoor meeting, considering all options.

New Business – State legislation passed on April 2 allows for leniencies on monies owed the Town by taxpayers and those assessed user charges. Mr. Pasterczyk and Ms. Simmons submitted a memo recommending the Select Board: vote to change the due date of the property tax, betterments and community Preservation surcharge commitment from May 1 to June 1; vote to extend the due date for exemption and deferral applications from the original deadline of April 1 to June 1; and waive payment of interest and other penalty on late payments for the excise commitment originally due May 6 and the water/sewer/stormwater commitment originally due April 6. The memo was not on the agenda. The Select Board will hold a special meeting on April 24 at 9:00 a.m. to vote on these recommendations.

Many Town Board and Committee members have terms expiring June 2020. The Select Board discussed options for interviewing and appointing applicants. Some options were to: waive interviews for reappointments (Charter requirement), or form a subcommittee of two Select Board members to interview applicants. Mr. Gold suggested having applicants call in to the Zoom meeting at assigned times. Mr. Foster and Mr. Lachiusa would like to make the process as simple as possible. Ms. Simmons will check on the legality of a subcommittee.

Subcommittee Reports

Tax Ceiling Task Force – Mr. Gold will have a tax ceiling warrant article for the next regular meeting.

*Mr. Lachiusa made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:25 p.m. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.
Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Lachiusa-yes*

Documents:

Agenda
Eversource Petitions #4886 and #4887
DPW memo dtd 4/14/20
Announcements sheet
Town Manager Report
Finance Dept. March report
Draft Minutes 4/6/20
Comcast Correspondence dtd 4/10/20
Cultural Council resignation