

Select Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 16, 2024- 7:00 p.m.
~~LPS Central Office, Meeting Room A15~~
~~535 Bliss Rd. Longmeadow, MA 01106~~
~~Hybrid Meeting~~
VIA ZOOM ONLY
(Changed due to inclement weather)

Select Board Members Present: Chair Thomas Lachiusa, Vineeth Hemavathi, Mark Gold, Dan Zwirko.
Josh Levine – Absent
Staff Present: Lyn N. Simmons, Michael Barbieri, Ian Coddington, Erica Brunell, Martylee Caramante
Also Present:

Chair, Thomas Lachiusa, called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. LCTV was also utilized to broadcast and record the meeting.

Mr. 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 law requires such participation. Mr. Lachiusa announced that all Public Hearings were postponed for tonight's meeting due to the change to a fully virtual meeting. The Select Board agreed to reschedule these hearings to the February 5, 2024 meeting. This meeting allowed for public comment. To view the full recording of the Select Board meeting, please click [here](#).

Announcements

Lifeguard Certification Course: The Longmeadow Parks and Recreation Department is hosting a Lifeguard Certification Course from February 20-23! The certification includes First Aid, CPR and AED training. Registration closes on February 6. Class size is limited; register early! Visit LPRD.net for additional information and registration.

2024 Annual Town Meeting Citizen Petition Deadline: The Annual Town Meeting is set for Tuesday, May 14, 2024. Citizen Petition Articles are due in the Select Board's office no later than 4:30 p.m. on Monday, January 29, 2024. In order for a petition to be guaranteed placement on the Annual Town Meeting warrant, 10 names/signatures/addresses of registered Town voters are required, and must be certified by the Town Clerk. Forms and instructions are available on the Town's website, www.longmeadowma.gov.

Town Annual Election: The Annual Town Election is set for Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at the Longmeadow Community House. Nomination Papers are now available in the Town Clerk's Office, 20 Williams Street, through March 1, 2024. The deadline to submit nomination papers for certification is 5:00 p.m. on March 5. For a listing of open terms for the upcoming election, as well as a calendar for important dates and deadlines, please visit www.longmeadowma.gov/elections.

Resident Comments

Tom Shea, of 81 Greenmeadow Drive, attended via ZOOM to speak during the resident comment portion of the meeting. Mr. Shea spoke about an email he sent earlier today to members of the Select Board concerning

the Finance Committee's recent letter about Bliss Pool. Mr. Shea spoke of the letter, which can be found in the Select Board Agenda Packet, linked under "documents" at the end of these minutes. Mr. Shea stated that registered voters approved Article 8 of the last Town Meeting to fund the renovation of the pool through available cash. Mr. Shea also spoke about the Finance Committee's concern about the cost of operating Bliss Pool and the impact on the ability to fund the OPEB contribution in light of the shortfall in the first look at the Fy25 budget. Mr. Shea commented that the cost to operate the pool is immaterial to the projected deficit and believed that there is no concern about not funding the contribution. He stated that the initial budget always has a deficit and commented that the Town Manager, Select Board and other Departments find ways to make it work. Mr. Shea's written correspondence will be included in the next meeting packet.

Select Board Comments

Mr. Lachiusa commented that the Select Board always does its best to make the best decisions, and stated that in our community the legislative body is the voters of Town Meeting. As a Board, it is our duty to ensure what registered voters ask for at Town Meeting happens, Mr. Lachiusa added.

Mr. Zwirko addressed the letter from the Finance Committee and commented that he does appreciate their service to the Town and for weighing in their opinion on OPEB and the funding of Bliss Pool. Mr. Zwirko went on to say that, residents voted overwhelmingly in favor to renovate the pool and commented that he was unsure if the Select Board even has the authority to rescind the direction of voters, and he would not agree with considering that as an option. Mr. Zwirko expressed his support for the Bliss Pool project and explained the importance of enhancing parks and green spaces. Mr. Zwirko then went on to talk about the painting project at Blueberry Hill School over school vacation week in December. He stated that working with the Hampden County Sheriff's office on this project saved the Town upwards of \$50,000. Mr. Zwirko explained the project and thanked Representative Ashe, the Sheriff's office, Town Manager, and the Facilities team for their support. Mr. Gold requested that at the next meeting, the Select Board take action to direct the DPW and Police Department to not approve any future road cut permits for Eversource until Route 5 is restored. Mr. Gold stated that the conditions of Longmeadow Street in the areas both south of Maple and north of Converse Street are a mess because of where it has been cut, and not properly repaired by Eversource. He suggested that the DPW receive a more detailed construction list for the remainder of the year. Mr. Gold then mentioned that Scantic Valley Healthcare has offered at no cost to assist the Town in fulfilling ACA reporting requirements and explained that this is an example of a benefit the Town received from being part of this healthcare system. Mr. Gold also mentioned that he was asked to present on a workshop at the MMA conference this upcoming weekend on trash and recycling services. Mr. Gold spoke about a recent Building Committee meeting where they considered recommending to the Select Board and Town Manager an option of bonding for the Chiller at Wolf Swamp School to free up the capital plan for other projects.

Mr. Hemavathi also commented about the Finance Committee's letter. Mr. Hemavathi commented that although he appreciated the committee thinking through this issue, he stated that the voters of Town Meeting made the decision to fund this project. He went on to explain that as the Town Manager and Finance Director presented the initial budget projections, it is very common to see a deficit to start, and that as we go through the process we are able to end up at level service. Mr. Hemavathi commented that he trusts this process and wanted to ensure the residents that the option of not funding the pool project was not something we are considering.

Town Managers Report

Legal Expense Update – Full report on legal expenses for the previous quarter can be found in the Town Manager's January 16 report, in the Select Board Agenda Packet, linked under "documents" at the end of these

minutes.

Real Estate Tax Abatement 2024 With the Select Board increasing the number of available spaces for the Real Estate Tax Abatement program, we have seen 29 applications come in. The Adult Center Director is working on placement for the volunteers.

EV Chargers Since the announcement of the EV chargers going live, we have been monitoring the feedback. There are quite a few comments about the price of charging. Working with Lisa at the DPW, we will be preparing an update for a future Select Board meeting to review this. The next Eversource bill closes January 18/19. We will use that to review the use and fees collected.

Fire Department Ambulance Ambulance Medic 1 suffered a breakdown. This breakdown is related to a longer issue the Fire Department has been having with diesel fuel seeping into the engine oil. The DPW mechanic has been assisting the Fire Department with this issue but the decision was made, in consultation with the DPW mechanic, to send the vehicle to Marcotte Ford for an official diagnosis. This is all related to the pollution control system and is an issue with the fuel injectors and a sensor. Initially it was thought to be a \$7K- \$9K repair. However, after review by Marcotte the problem is more complex and costly than originally thought. The new estimate is \$17K with the potential for an additional \$7K if additional damage is found in the fuel system. This has been a very tough fiscal year for Fire Department vehicle breakdowns. The vehicle maintenance account is 97% spent, even after the \$11,000 appropriation at the fall Town Meeting. This latest issue is classified as an unforeseen mechanical failure. Medic One is a 2018 Ford F 150 diesel Ambulance. It currently has 83,000 miles, 170,000 hours. As far as service life it is at 50% in the fleet plan. The vehicle is out of warranty. Failing to make the repair will mean the engine oil will continue to be diluted with fuel that could cause permanent and catastrophic damage to the engine, a \$60 to \$70K expense. Taking this ambulance out of service for the remainder of the fiscal year impairs the public safety response to the residents and reduces revenue. To cover the cost of this repair, a request has been made to the Finance Committee for the use of the Finance Committee Reserve Fund.

Lifeguard Course The Parks & Recreation Department recently announced a Lifeguard Certification Course to be held over February break at the Longmeadow High School pool. Hosting this course locally is one more attempt to make sure we are fully staffed for the 2024 season. Within 24 hours of announcing the course, it has filled up. Ten spots have been claimed and there are six more people on the waiting list. If we can reach a total number of 20 participants and we can secure another instructor, we will be able to expand the course. We are also evaluating ways to entice lifeguards to work for the Town of Longmeadow this summer, ideas we are considering are a partial reimbursement of the lifeguard certification class after successful completion of the summer season, and a return bonus for those returning to work for the Town, in addition to reviewing the hourly rates as part of the Wage & Classification study

A. Department Monthly Reports – December (*All Department reports for December can be found in the Select Board Agenda Packet, linked under “documents” at the end of these minutes*)

Mr. Lachiusa spoke about the record number of calls that was reported in the Fire Department’s monthly report. He commented that 72% of these calls were for emergency medical services for residents. He went on to explain that in the Police Department’s report, they suggested using gel pens to sign checks to try to avoid check washing frauds. Mr. Lachiusa also mentioned the shared mental health clinician between Longmeadow and East Longmeadow and commented that he was excited about this program and is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Gold questioned if there was a target date to get back to the Select Board on EV charging rates. Ms. Simmons stated that the plan is to gather data from the initial billing cycle that closes this week and from there compare it to what we have taken in for the first three weeks since the chargers have been active. Depending on how much data we receive, the plan will be to bring the topic back at some point in February, Ms. Simmons

added.

Mr. Hemavathi thanked Ms. Simmons for addressing these issues of interest in her report. Mr. Hemavathi stated that we are in this position with EV chargers because Eversource did not give the Town any kind of clarity on the rates that they could possibly offer. He commented that we need to be in a data-gathering phase right now before deciding on a rate that makes sense for the Town. Mr. Hemavathi commented about the senior/veteran abatement program having extreme success again, as well as the high level of interest in the lifeguard certification course. He went on to talk about the DPW report and commented that the bid for the water main "L" project came in lower than was projected and gave credit to the Town Manager and DPW Director for presenting the idea of going out to bid early in hope of receiving favorable bids. Ms. Simmons commented that once we go through the full contract cycle she would have more information on that project.

Public Hearings

- A. Dog As Nuisance Hearing 7:30 PM – CANCELED
- B. Liquor License Violation Hearings
 - a. Fletcher's Barbecue Shop and Steakhouse 7:45 PM – CANCELED
 - b. Twin Hills Country Club 8:00 PM – CANCELED

Old Business

- A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the Select Board Regular Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2023, and December 18, 2023. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

- B. Dog as Nuisance (August 7, 2023) Waiver Request

Animal Control Officer, Martlee Caramante, attended to speak on the waiver request concerning the Dog as Nuisance hearing decision from the complaint dated August 7, 2023. Ms. Caramante stated that at the hearing on September 18, the Select Board voted on remedies for the dog owners to take on as part of the final decision. She commented that the owners have met all requirements on the list thus far, and are requesting a waiver for the screen on the fence due to the implementation of another gate on the porch that has been fully inspected.

Mr. Gold made the motion to suspend the requirement for screened in fencing on the front porch and review in another year to see if further action is needed. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

- C. 2024 Common Victuller Applications Continued

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve the 2024 Common Victualler license application for Batch Ice Cream. Mr. Hemavathi seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

New Business

- A. General Obligation Bond Select Board Approval

Finance Director, Ian Coddington, began by explaining the true interest cost of the bond as well as who the Town went with for the bond. Raymond James and Associates was chosen and the total interest cost of the bond is 3.69%. He explained that it would be at 5% for five years and then go down to 4% for the life of the bond. Mr. Brunell explained that there are seven projects included in this bond: Water Main "L" Project, Sewer Main "L" Project, Water Quality Flow Enhancements, Sewer Capacity Management, Stormwater Asset Management, Emerson Road Water Mains, and Cooley Drive Water Mains. Mr. Gold questioned if the proceeds are coming entirely or partially out of the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds. Mr. Coddington explained that the plan in place is to use the bond proceeds to reduce the overall impact on the Water and Sewer

rates in tandem with reducing the retained earnings as we collect interest on the bond. He confirmed that proceeds are coming out of the enterprise funds. After further discussion, Mr. Gold made the following motion: Voted: that the sale of the \$11,620,000 General Obligation Municipal Purpose Loan of 2024 Bonds of the Town dated January 25, 2024 (the "Bonds"), to Raymond James & Associates, Inc. at the price of \$12,184,168.05 and accrued interest, if any, is hereby approved and confirmed. The Bonds shall be payable on January 15 of the years and in the principal amounts and bear interest at the respective rates in the "Select Board Votes" document

Further Voted: that the Bonds maturing on January 15, 2054 (a "Term Bond") shall be subject to mandatory redemption or mature as follows: 2052, \$575,000 2053, 550,000 2054, 540,000.

Further Voted: that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Bonds, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated January 4, 2024, and a final Official Statement dated January 11, 2024 (the "Official 136019648v.1 2 Statement"), each in such form as may be approved by the Town Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Further Voted: that the Bonds shall be subject to redemption, at the option of the Town, upon such terms and conditions as are set forth in the Official Statement.

Further Voted: that the Town Treasurer and the Select Board be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a continuing disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the Town, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Bonds, as applicable, for the benefit of the holders of the Bonds from time to time.

Further Voted: that we authorize and direct the Town Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures and continuing disclosure procedures in such forms as the Town Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to monitor and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Bonds and to comply with relevant securities laws.

Further Voted: that any certificates or documents relating to the Bonds (collectively, the "Documents"), may be executed in several counterparts, each of which shall be regarded as an original and all of which shall constitute one and the same document; delivery of an executed counterpart of a signature page to a Document by electronic mail in a ".pdf" file or by other electronic transmission shall be as effective as delivery of a manually executed counterpart signature page to such Document; and electronic signatures on any of the Documents shall be deemed original signatures for the purposes of the Documents and all matters relating thereto, having the same legal effect as original signatures.

Further Voted: that each member of the Select Board, the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

B. Utility Bill Insert Requests

Ms. Simmons explained that MGL requires the Select Board to approve utility bill insert requests. Ms. Simmons commented that we could talk about changing procedures in the future for specific department requests, but wanted to draw the Board's attention to this. It was explained that the plan would be to only include these in water/sewer bills. The DPW request is for promotional material on the rain barrel program, and the Energy and Sustainability request is for material on home energy assessments.

a. DPW Request for Utility Bill Insert

Mr. Hemavathi made the motion to approve the DPW request for a utility bill insert. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

b. Energy and Sustainability Committee Request for Utility Bill Insert

Doug Taylor, of the Energy and Sustainability Committee, spoke of the request to insert material about home energy assessments to be included in the upcoming water/sewer bills. Mr. Taylor stated that there is a grant the Town received and the printing of these inserts would come out of that grant account. Mr. Taylor stated that this resource is a great way to get these options out to the public.

Mr. Hemavathi made the motion to approve the Energy and Sustainability request for a utility bill insert. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

C. Complete Streets Bylaw Update

Mr. Lachiusa spoke of the original Complete Streets bylaw that was approved and explained the importance of this plan. Ms. Simmons commented that we discovered that the first prioritization plan did not include public participation when the bylaw was first adopted in 2015. Ms. Simmons stated that it is best practice to do so and suggested convening a group primarily made up of the Traffic and Rods Advisory Group, as well as two members of the public to weigh in on developing an update to the prioritization plan. She indicated that it would come back to the Select Board for review, and once approved it would be sent to MassDOT for registration of our new plan that we would use to move forward on other Complete Street funding opportunities. After further discussion, it was agreed that the Town Manager would put out a call for interested residents to express interest in joining this group. Ms. Simmons also suggested that a Select Board member also join this group. The group would meet mostly during the day via zoom and should take about four to five meetings, Ms. Simmons added.

D. WESTCOMM – Notice of Intent to Incur Debt

Ms. Simmons explained that the original cost estimates have increased over the last year, as the final designs were prepared. Ms. Simmons commented that the Board does not have to take any action on this unless the action is to disapprove the bond request. The board made no objection after further discussion.

E. 2024 Animal Control Officer Annual Appointment

Mr. Gold made the motion to designate Martylee Caramante as Animal Control Officer for 2024. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

Correspondence

EARLY VOTING FOR PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES.PDF

LETTER (SELECT BOARD) (011124) (1) FINANCE COMMITTEE.PDF

LONGMEADOW, MA 298386 GL23-FINAL.PDF

TOWN OF LONGMEADOW MAIL – ELECTRIC CHARGER PRICING CONCERN.PDF

TOWN OF LONGMEADOW MAIL – EV CHARGING RATES/PDF

TOWN OF LONGMEADOW MAIL – FWD_ELECTRIC CAR CHARGERS.PDF

TOWN OF LONGMEADOW MAIL – MAPLE CENTER SHOPPING PLAZA.PDF

Mr. Gold thanked the Finance Committee for their comments in their letter but we are not going to defer the funding of the pool at this time. Mr. Gold agreed that Town Meeting triumphs the opinion of appointed groups. Mr. Gold also commented about the letters on EV charging. He stated that the critical thinking point is figuring out what we are trying to achieve with this initiative and then have an understanding of what our approach would be. Mr. Lachiusa commented that he looks forward to a robust discussion about EV charging.

01.16.2024 Select Board Regular Meeting Minutes
Approved: 02.05.2024

Adjourn and reconvene into Executive Session

Mr. Gold made the motion to adjourn and reconvene in executive session for the purposes of discussing collective bargaining agreements (MGL Ch 30A, section 21(a,3), not to return to open session. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 4-0 by roll call vote.

Documents

Select Board Agenda Packet 01/16/2024

<https://www.longmeadowma.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/01162024-4396?packet=true>

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Barbieri