

Select Board Regular Meeting
Monday, March 6, 2023- 7:00 p.m.
Longmeadow High School, Meeting Room A15
535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow, MA
Hybrid Meeting

Select Board Members Present: Chair Josh Levine, Mark Gold via ZOOM, Dan Zwirko, Thomas Lachiusa.

Staff Present: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, Michael Barbieri, Paul Pasterczyk.

Also, Present Marty O’Shea, Tom Mazza, Nora Mackay, Erica Weida, John Dineen, Nicole Choiniere, Jamie Hensch.

Chair, Joshua Levine, called this meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. LCTV was also utilized to broadcast and record the meeting.

Chair Levine 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. This meeting allowed for public comment. To view the full recording of the Select Board meeting, please click [here](#). Roll call vote was utilized during this meeting due to a member attending via ZOOM.

Announcements

Special Town Election: The Special Town Election will be held on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at the Longmeadow Community House. Polls open at 7:00 a.m. and close at 8:00 p.m. For more information on the special election, please visit www.longmeadowma.gov/elections.

Cooley Brook: The Town is hiring the Conway School of Landscape Design to develop conceptual designs for the ecological enhancement of Cooley Brook in Bliss and Laurel Parks. The Select Board is accepting applications for a Resident Advisor to serve on the Core Team that will advise the student group. If you are interested in providing your perspective on the restoring Cooley Brook, please submit your application online via the form linked on the Planning Department's webpage. No technical expertise is required. Applications are due March 10, and candidates should expect to be interviewed at the March 20 Select Board meeting. To apply, visit www.longmeadowma.gov/CooleyBrook.

Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee

A. School Department FY2024 Budget Presentation

Superintendent Marty O’Shea attended to present the School Department FY2024 Budget that was voted on and approved by the School Committee at their last meeting. To view the full presentation, please click [here \(5:00 – 40:20\)](#). You can also view the presentation slides in the Select Board agenda packet linked under “documents” at the end of these minutes. Dr. O’Shea gave an outline of the budget recommendation and noted that the total budget request including special revenue totaled \$41,943,038. This would be an increase of \$1.75 million over FY2023. Dr. O’Shea summarized some of the external fiscal influences, which included, cost of living increases, out of district tuition rate, utilities, implementation of revisions to the Chapter 70 funding formula, the fiscal position of the Town, and state budget development. Dr. O’Shea

explained that Chapter 70 aid for FY2024 is \$7,099,369, which is a total increase of around \$600,000 over FY2023. Dr. O'Shea also spoke about the shifting educational landscape and explained meeting the social-emotional needs and behavioral and mental health needs of students along with staff well-being. Dr. O'Shea then went on describe expanding capacity to support student health and wellness, which include, professional development, community engagement, specialized in-district programs, and implementation of the "Vision of the Graduate." Dr. O'Shea summarized that the increase of the budget request this year reflects the shifting of the educational landscape. Tom Mazza then gave a brief summary about historical FTE's of prior fiscal years in comparison to this year's request. Mr. Mazza explained that during the course of the year, there are changes that occur, and one change could be adding new positions to support certain situations that are going on in the district at the time. There is a total net decrease of FTE's over last fiscal year due to some positions that were covered through COVID relief grants being removed. Some of these positions will be supplemented elsewhere. Dr. O'Shea gave an overview of the reductions and increases for FY2024 as well as spoke about the out of districts rates increasing. The projected cost increase for out of district rates has an additional financial impact to LPS of around \$300,000, Dr. O'Shea explained. Mr. Levine thanked Dr. O'Shea, Mr. Mazza, and the entire School Committee for the work they put in for the budget this year. Mr. Levine questioned if the out of district tuition costs are factored into Chapter 70 funding as well, or only circuit breaker. Dr. O'Shea stated that this is only circuit breaker and the amount of money received for Chapter 70 is based on the number of high needs students. Mr. Mazza stated that in the formula there is a rate that is set and that does not change, and those were some of the modifications through the Student Opportunity Act that were revised and being implemented over the course of these past six years. It is not driven by actual enrollment and programs as circuit breaker is, Mr. Mazza summarized. Mr. Lachiusa asked if there is any data on how the position of Director of Student and Family Support would work in this community. Dr. O'Shea stated that there is no specific data, but given the increasing number of students that we are seeing who are English Language Learners, or that need tiered behavioral supports or mental health supports, certainly leads to the needs growing. Dr. O'Shea explained that we see this position as one that would help with educational stabilization for families that need assistance and support, and would help build out and align mental health supports across the district. Mr. Lachiusa also questioned if the possibility of bringing a new middle school online would affect or increase enrollment, subsequently affecting the budget. Dr. O'Shea explained that we are in the middle of building out a design enrollment with the Mass School Building Authority (MSBA), and there have been some preliminary discussions on this. Mr. Gold asked Dr. O'Shea to explain on slide 14 where the \$7.1 million dollars of Chapter 70 money fits into the revenue portion. Mr. Gold also questioned if there has been any continued discussions about bringing the training needed in-house so that the requirements could be fulfilled in Town rather than having to pay for people to go elsewhere. Dr. O'Shea explained that Chapter 70 funding is aid received directly by the Town of Longmeadow and the \$7.1 million would be reflected in the general fund contribution to LPS. Dr. O'Shea stated that the Schools are regularly committed to looking into capacity, training, and exploring these opportunities in district. The Board thanked the School Department for the presentation.

B. Town Manager FY2024 Budget Presentation

Town Manager Simmons began by highlighting the FY2024 budget. To view the full presentation, please click [here \(42:00 – 1:21:00\)](#). You can also view additional supporting budget material in the Select Board agenda packet linked under "documents" at the end of these minutes. Ms. Simmons summarized that the FY204 Budget recommendation is balanced without the use of reserves and currently uses the full allowable levy limit of 2.5% property tax increase under Proposition 2 ½. Ms. Simmons stated that we are confident that new growth, state aid and estimated receipt numbers will continue in a positive direction, allowing us to meet

the Finance Committee's recommendation of 2.44%. Ms. Simmons explained that the FY2024 budget funds the FY24 Capital Plan recommendations and provides funding to the DPW in various line items to further implement the items identified in the Collins Center report. Ms. Simmons explained that State Aid increased 6.85% over FY2023. Local receipts also saw a 14.2% increase over FY2023. Ms. Simons went on to summarize the expense highlights for FY2024. There is a decrease in General Government that largely attributes to the decrease of legal expenses that were supplemented at the Fall Town Meeting in 2022 to fund the gas related work along with the DPW lawsuit. Ms. Simmons explained that we are not carrying the amount of \$340,000 over into the FY2024 budget. Public Safety increased by 6.3%, or \$364,717, which is primarily attributed to the settling of collective bargaining agreements. We should not be seeing those big increases in the out years of that contract, Ms. Simmons explained. Planning and Community Development increased by \$44,239, which is related to funding a ten hour/week Conservation Agent, and a reclassification of the clerical unit position in that office. Schools are a \$1.5 million dollar increase as you saw in the previous presentation; Ms. Simmons went on to say. Ms. Simmons was pleased to say that we are able to fully fund the school request and that is a 4.01% increase. DPW numbers include all funds and the enterprise funds, Ms. Simmons explained. The total for FY2024 is a 5.87% or \$680,742 increase over past fiscal year. Ms. Simmons stated that she would go over the DPW numbers as we get down the slide presentation. Community Services is showing a decrease of around \$34,000. This was attributed to the shifting of some positions to some grant opportunities, and the Assistant Director of Parks and Rec is being cost shared between the general fund and revolving fund to better reflect the duties of that position, Ms. Simmons commented. Debt Service has increased due to the MSBA feasibility study and the air handlers at LHS. This is an increase of 4.89%, or roughly \$303,000 over FY2023. Ms. Simmons went on to explain that employee benefits and insurance increased by almost 4%, or \$483,000 over past fiscal year. Lastly, there was an increase in capital by approximately \$121,000. This was a 5.53% increase over FY2023, Ms. Simmons stated. Ms. Simmons then went on to summarize some notable items in the FY2024 budget. Some of the items included, addition of part-time Conservation Agent, addition of .75FTE Tree Warden Position, covering 50% of WESTCOMM Assessment after three years of 100% coverage by WESTCOMM, and first year debt service payments for Middle School Feasibility Study and LHS Air Handlers, and more. Ms. Simmons explained that the challenges in FY2024 are not as obvious as they have been in prior years. Some of the challenges included outstanding Wage and Classification study results for DPW and Clerical bargaining units and non-union positions, continuation of inflationary challenges, portfolio of town and school properties that require maintenance, and aging infrastructure (streets, water/sewer, stormwater) and the growing cost to maintain is outpacing revenues. A discussion ensued about the balance of the Operational Stabilization Fund and Mr. Lachiusa questioned if the balance in that account would improve the Towns interest rates when going out to borrow. Mr. Pasterczyk stated that this could be a factor when going out to borrow. Mr. Levine questioned if moving Town offices to Greenwood would improve maintenance or make it more difficult. Ms. Simmons stated that goal would be for it to help improve everything because we are reducing our footprint and the facilities that DPW maintains would decrease. Before this, we need to have a conversation about what is the next life and best use for the buildings we are vacating, Ms. Simmons remarked. Ms. Simmons explained the next steps and look ahead for the FY2024 Budget. The Select Board will hold Department Budget Meetings on March 13, and will vote on the final budge at the March 20 meeting. The Finance Committee will hold their budget hearing on March 22. All of this information is available on www.longmeadowma.gov as well. Mr. Levine questioned the recommendation to not fund the food pantry. Ms. Simmons stated that this was a department request for a Food Pantry Manager and it is folded into administration costs rather than a separate line. Mr. Gold questioned if we are fully covering the future OPEB contributions of the Tree

Warden/Conservation Agent position. Mr. Pasterczyk stated that in order to fully fund this we would have to get into an actuarial study that would put us on a funding schedule and the answer would be that we are not fully funding what the Town's liability is on a year-to-year basis. Mr. Pasterczyk went on to say that, we are funding the OPEB amount right now on a policy of the Select Board that is roughly taking a little over 1% of the tax levy, which is going into the OPEB. This has not been adjusted to add X amount of dollars per new employee or subtract anything if an employee is coming off. Mr. Gold followed up by asking if there is any way to estimate what this might be. Mr. Gold commented that it seems like even though we are putting money into OPEB, if we hire a new person we are falling behind because we are not accounting for this new person. Mr. Pasterczyk stated we would need to reach out to an actuary to get an estimate on what would be funded on a per-person basis. A discussion ensued about funding Capital requests and the needs always exceeding the budget allowance. Mr. Levine spoke about the line item for elections and questioned how much extra tomorrow's special election is costing. When the future Fiscal Year budgets are made, we project them based on what we know, Ms. Simmons explained. She went on to say that, we know there will be a local election and a presidential primary next year, so those are what are estimated out. Mr. Levine questioned the cut to grounds maintenance utilities and why the original request was \$100,000. Ms. Simmons stated that this was based on an estimate of what the plan to replace the pool liner at Greenwood would cost. Mr. Levine questioned if the Town is seeing a similar increase in utilities as folks at home on the residential side are facing. Ms. Simmons stated that fuel prices are locked in and are steady, and for electricity, the supply is locked in but the distribution we are at the mercy for. Mr. Gold stated we have money in the budget for the borrowing of money for the pool cover and liner, and yet we have a potential warrant article for paying for this out of available cash. Mr. Gold questioned if Town Meeting should approve spending that money out of available funds would that then give some relief to this budget in the line item for interest. Ms. Simmons responded by saying that it would give relief in the Debt Service payment that is scheduled. A discussion also ensued about the possibility of adding solar to Town buildings to help offset some of the utility costs. Mr. Zwirko questioned if the town offices relocated to one area, have we discussed doing bulk purchasing in an effort to help drive down some of the costs. Ms. Simmons stated that we have not formally come up with a plan for this, but with the consolidation, a combined purchasing program would be of interest. The Select Board and Finance Committee thanked Ms. Simmons and Mr. Pasterczyk for the work on this budget. The Finance Committee reminded everyone that the budget hearing would take place on March 22 in meeting room A15.

Resident Comments – NONE

Select Board Comments

Mr. Levine stated that we are desperately looking for lifeguards in Town and encouraged people to attend lifeguard training in an effort to get Greenwood Pool fully staffed.

Town Manager's Report

Greenwood Pool At the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting, funding was approved for a pool liner and cover for Greenwood Pool. Both of these were put out to bid and we are on schedule for the end of April- beginning of May for the liner install. The cover will be installed when we close the pool at the end of the 2023 season. Greenwood pool is expected to open on time for weekend use at the end of May/early June and seven days a week at the end of June. The design and construction work for Bliss/Reynolds pool will not be done in time for the pool to open this 2023 summer season. We have been advertising for lifeguard openings for

Greenwood pool and have received five applications of the needed 12 positions. We have also promoted the lifeguard certification course that will be held in East Longmeadow.

Hazard Mitigation Plan In October 2022, I announced that the Town had been awarded a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding to update our Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Beta Engineering has been selected as the Town's consultant to facilitate our process and consult on the plan update. Beta will work with the Town's Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee, which includes the Emergency Management Director/Fire Chief, the Town Manager, Director of Planning and Community Development, Director of the Department of Public Works, the Town Engineer and Assistant Town Engineer, Director of Public Health, Police Chief, Director of Adult Services, and School Superintendent. Beta will develop a project schedule, including robust community engagement.

Old Business

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lachiusa made the motion to approve the February 21, 2023 Select Board Regular Meeting Minutes. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Levine – YES, Mr. Gold – YES, Mr. Zwirko- YES, Mr. Lachiusa- YES. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

B. FY2024 Capital Plan Vote

Mr. Gold commented about the request for additional funding for engineering studies, which he felt was appropriate. Mr. Gold also requested adding additional funding for guardrail replacements into the Capital budget. Mr. Gold suggested that if we do vote on this tonight, that we vote subject to tweaking it when we approve the overall budget if we can find additional funds. Mr. Levine agreed with this approach. A discussion ensued about consolidating engineering funding with project development. The Board agreed to put this under one umbrella. Ms. Simmons stated that this does not need to be voted on tonight, and she will bring the comments about guardrails to the DPW for further review. Further, the Select Board could vote on the Capital Plan at the March 20 meeting as part of the approval of the FY2024 Budget.

C. Eversource Western Mass Natural Gas Pipeline Project Update

Mr. Levine stated that we are going to table this discussion. Mr. Levine summarized that he was told about a meeting with the new Climate Czar under Governor Healy and he was planning on attending and wanted to discuss this with the Board first. Mr. Levine stated that the Springfield Climate Justice Coalition put the meeting together, and at this point they did not want any local officials in attendance. Mr. Levine stated that he would continue to monitor the project and report back when information is available.

New Business

A. One Day Liquor License Applications

a. Oksana Salon and Spa – One-Day Liquor License Application

Mr. Lachiusa made the motion to approve the One-Day Liquor License for April 2, 2023 for Oksana Salon and Spa. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Levine – YES, Mr. Gold – YES, Mr. Zwirko- YES, Mr. Lachiusa- YES. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

B. Zoning Bylaw Change Petition – Code Enforcement Officers

Ms. Simmons explained that with the addition of the Code Enforcement Officers, we have discovered that the Town Bylaw for enforcement was limited to the Building Commissioner for ticketing. The request is to amend this bylaw to allow the Code Enforcement Officers to write the ticket. This would streamline the process and make things more efficient, Ms. Simmons added. The next step would be for the Select Board to refer this to the Planning Board for further action. Mr. Lachiusa questioned if there are any identifying badges

that these Officers wear when out in the field. Ms. Simmons stated that they would have Building Department apparel as well as badges that identify them as Town officers. They also use Town vehicles that will be marked with code enforcement magnets.

Mr. Lachiusa made the motion to refer this Zoning Bylaw change request to the Planning Board. Mr. Gold seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Levine – YES, Mr. Gold – YES, Mr. Zwirko- YES, Mr. Lachiusa- YES. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

Mr. Levine also mentioned that we have on the agenda look ahead a possible policy for referrals that the Board can look at in the future to address these types of requests.

C. Draft 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Ms. Simmons started by going through the draft warrant and the details of each specific article. To view the full review of the first draft of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant please click [here \(1:30:00 – 2:00:00\)](#). You can also view the draft warrant in the Select Board agenda packet, linked under “documents” at the end of these minutes. The Select Board reviewed the warrant and had the opportunity during this meeting to make comments and suggestions for further revisions. A discussion ensued about the borrowing articles for LFD apparatus. Ms. Simmons explained that due to inflationary reasons as well as the delay in getting these new vehicle orders, the intent is to authorize borrowing of the Ambulance and Fire Truck to lock in the price and to start the ordering process. The full intent is to not borrow to pay for this, and the Fire Truck Fund will fully fund this in the next few fiscal years when the replacement occurs. Mr. Lachiusa questioned if having commitments to loans, even though we actually have not taking money out, can hurt the Town when being evaluated. Mr. Pasterczyk stated that if they were still on our books when the Middle School project potentially comes to fruition, it would potentially make an impact. Mr. Pasterczyk explained that the borrowing authorization for Fire apparatus should already be rescinded by the time this comes about. Mr. Gold suggested adding into the description when applicable, that the Capital Planning Committee and the Finance Committee endorse these articles. Mr. Gold questioned what happens if these become available in the next six months, what we would do. Mr. Pasterczyk stated that we would use the funds in the Ambulance and Fire Accounts and then reduce the borrowing authorization if this were to occur. A discussion then ensued about Community Preservation Articles. Mr. Gold commented that there is an article for the renovation of Glenbrook Fields. Mr. Gold explained that he is likely to vote against this and speak against at Town Meeting, the reason being that until we know what we are doing with Glenbrook School, Mr. Gold feels it would be a shame to put more money into the fields. Mr. Gold went on to say that, he is not against the improvement of the fields, but cautioned spending money on buildings or facilities, and then turn around and make them obsolete. A discussion ensued about arranging the articles into a sequence that would make consent agendas make sense. Mr. Zwirko questioned if the intent for the Glenbrook Fields Community Preservation Article was to redo the whole fields or just the playing surface. Ms. Simmons stated that since this was a project from a resident, the DPW would not necessarily have this information now because it is not Town-sponsored. The Select Board will review the warrant at their March 13 special meeting with the changes suggested tonight, as well as at their regular meeting on March 20 where a vote to set the warrant will take place.

D. Discussion on Allowance of Public Meeting Remote Participation

Mr. Levine suggested a Town Select Board policy for hybrid meeting allowance, which would require the Chair to be in-person and a quorum of members present in person. In the event that legislation does not extend these emergency provisions, the Select Board can develop a policy to offer hybrid meetings for the public to attend remotely, but not the entire board. Mr. Gold stated that we could allow presenters and authorize other guests and speakers to attend the meetings virtually. The Board agreed that this flexibility for

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staff has also made a positive impact. Mr. Lachiusa mentioned that he would like people to attend in-person for public hearings and other items of similarity. Mr. Gold offered to draft a policy for a future meeting for implementation of achieving what we want to do.

Correspondence *(All Correspondence material can be found in the SB agenda packet linked under “documents” at the end of these minutes)*

COMCAST LETTER.PDF

TOWN OF LONGMEADOW MAIL – FOLOCA BULK MAIL PERMIT.PDF

Adjourn

Mr. Lachiusa made the motion to adjourn the Select Board Regular Meeting at 9:10 p.m. Mr. Zwirko seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Levine – YES, Mr. Gold – YES, Mr. Zwirko- YES, Mr. Lachiusa- YES. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0 and the meeting was adjourned.

Documents

[**SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING PACKET MARCH 6 2023**](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Barbieri