

Select Board Special Meeting
Tuesday, February 24, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.
Longmeadow High School, Room A15, 535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow, MA

Present: Chair Marie Angelides, Richard Foster, Mark Gold and Marc Strange. Tom Lachusua was absent.
Also Present: Town Manager Lyn Simmons, Paul Pasterczyk, Debbie House, Marybeth Bergeron, David Martel, Maury Garrett, Donald Griffith, Dr. Andrew Lam, William Welch, and Peter Landon

Open Session – Ms. Angelides called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Vote to Enter into Executive Session

Mr. Foster made the motion in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) (3) to discuss strategy with regard to anticipated litigation relative to the DPW, and anticipated regulatory litigation relative to TGP 261 Upgrade Projects and Columbia Gas lateral/meter station, and petition to intervene, discussion of which in open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Town and the Chair so declares, to reconvene in open session. Mr. Gold seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Ms. Angelides-yes, Mr. Foster-yes, Mr. Strange-yes, Mr. Gold-yes, Mr. Lachusua-absent

Reconvened to Open Session at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Street Closure Request for Lacrosse Jamboree (continued)

The Select Board was scheduled to revisit the street closure request for the girls' lacrosse Jamboree which was tabled from the February 18th meeting. Ms. Simmons is requesting to table this until the March 16th meeting to give her more time to receive information from other departments. The Traffic Committee will be meeting on March 4 to discuss Long Meddowe Days and the Jamboree.

ACM Stockpile Update

The ACM stockpile project at the new DPW site went out to bid in January. Saltmarsh was the low bidder at \$48,276.98. A notice to proceed was issued last week.

Change Order

A DPW change order was listed on the agenda. Marybeth Bergeron, Chair of the Building Committee attended the meeting and announced that the DPW change order was off the table. Six change orders were reviewed earlier in the evening by the Building Committee. Ms. Bergeron presented change order PCO 018 for the new Adult Center for patio lighting in the amount of \$26,001. The patio lighting is needed for the rear of the building. The area where the grass transitions to pavers is not lit, this is a safety concern without lighting. Funds are available from the contingency. This was an oversight during the design phase.

Mr. Gold made the motion to approve PCO 018 for the Adult Center in the amount of \$26, 001. Mr. Foster seconded the motion. The vote was 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Resident Comments

1. Peter Landon, 5 Meadowbrook Road, Chair of the Audit Committee attended the meeting to express the Audit Committee's disagreement with the Charter Review Committee's recommended changes to the Town Charter's Audit Committee section. The Charter Review Committee recommends the Audit Committee continues but with its functions more fully described and limited.

Charter Changes - Financial

David Martel, Chair of the Charter Review Committee attended the meeting to discuss the recommended financial changes to the Charter. He handed out a summary of the key Charter financial revisions (Finance Committee/Capital Planning Committee/Building Committee/Audit Committee). He noted that the Charter Review Committee reviewed the Audit Committee's role quite thoroughly.

Regarding the Finance Committee, they (FC) would like to receive the proposed budget from the Town Manager at the same time the Select Board receives it. The Finance Committee would like more time to review the budget and make recommendations. The recommended Charter changes to the Finance Committee have to do with timing, not roles and responsibilities. After much discussion, this will be continued on March 16. The Finance Committee will join the Select Board meeting on March 2 when the Town Manager presents her proposed FY21 budget to the Select Board.

The bylaws should be reviewed and amended to make them coincide with the Charter.

The Finance Committee section of the Charter will not be changed this budget season.

The Charter Review Committee recommends leaving the Capital Planning Committee free standing and not combining it with the Finance Committee.

The Building Committee would be a new section in the Charter for “vertical construction projects”. Other capital improvement projects would remain under the jurisdiction of the Capital Planning Committee. Atty. Martel noted that the Building Committee is an important enough committee and deserves some stature in the Charter. Mr. Garrett reinforced the need for the Finance Committee to have more time to review the proposed budget and make a recommendation before Town Meeting.

Joint Meeting with Finance Committee

Ms. Angelides invited the Finance Committee to join the Select Board in brainstorming financial goals for the future. There was a lengthy discussion on measurable goals vs tasks vs strategic plans vs long term affordable plans vs sustainability. Ms. Angelides goal suggestions were:

“Provide high level of services to all residents while maintaining a tax and fee schedule that is sustainable to all residents. Preserve and protect our financial assets. Develop and implement plans and policies to manage unfunded liabilities of pension, retiree health benefits, and asset management. Develop and implement plan to address tax ceiling crisis. Monitor and manage debt levels. Monitor and manage property values. Develop and implement plan to pay for increase in emergency management costs due to climate change. Analyze any new programs or assets for their long-term costs and budgetary requirements. Cooperatively develop an annual budget that supports long term goals while addressing current problems”.

Ms. Angelides asked other Select Board members and Finance Committee members to add their financial goal ideas. Mr. Gold feels that the first few sentences are the Select Board’s jobs, and added that the Select Board may not be able to do anything about managing the property values. Mr. Garrett believes that increasing or protecting the property values would be something we could do. Mr. Gold suggested the wording, “support policies that protect property values”. Mr. Gold added “quality of life, or character of the town” or why people move to Longmeadow. Mr. Garrett felt that the wording “historic” character of the town or the aesthetics and beauty of the town would be better. Mr. Foster felt that goals and tasks were being confused, an action item is usually a task. Ms. Simmons questioned where this document to be created would live. Ms. Angelides stated that tasks were voted on in the past and given to the Town Manager to accomplish. Mr. Gold noted that goals should be measurable, achievable, and timely. Mr. Gold suggested a financial goal to develop a long term affordable and sustainable OPEB policy, pension payment system, and medical benefits plan. Tasks, when it comes to OPEB, could be to develop methods to fund OPEB in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years. Ms. Simmons would then be asked to develop options for a strategic plan for OPEB. Ms. Simmons suggested “preserve, protect, and maintain our assets” and then identify tasks.

Mr. Garrett likes Mr. Gold’s language for a long term, sustainable plan for our annual tax increases. He would like to see the Select Board adopt a long term sustainable policy with respect to tax increases, not to run afoul of the levy limit, and only increase taxes a certain amount. Some things that have been done to avoid hitting the levy limit are the stormwater utility and expanding the tax base. A fee for garbage could be set up. Mr. Gold’s suggestions for additional revenue and decreasing operational costs are to install town wide wifi, and put in solar fields for rental income. Ms. Angelides wants to create a set of financial goals to give to the Town Manager that are measurable and that the Select Board agrees on. Mr. Gold noted that pensions are going up 8%, the Select Board has some authority over pensions. Mr. Garrett would like to see the Select Board adopt as a goal the Finance Committee’s recommendation of keeping the tax ceiling perpetually 10 years away. He will

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resend the 10 year plan to the Select Board. Mr. Welch believes goals should be sufficient and live on year after year. He suggested that a financial goal should be that the Select Board develop, execute, and implement a long term strategic financial plan for the town. The Town Manager could then create options for the Select Board. Mr. Griffith feels the Select Board's obligation is to set medium term goals as well. The Select Board should prioritize policies. The Town Manager would then bring strategic plans to the Select Board. Mr. Gold believes the goals are too open ended and need to be narrowed down and focused to give the Town Manager more guidance. Ms. Angelides will revise her financial goals list with all of the suggestions received at this meeting. Mr. Strange questioned whether the responsibilities of a position of someone retiring can be consolidated with other employees' responsibilities so that the position would not have to be filled, or could we outsource. Mr. Gold noted that we do not measure well the cost of new employees and asked if the CFO could change the way we account for employees and benefits.

Ms. Simmons received a call last week from the Mayor of North Adams asking about our Tax Ceiling issues. They are projected to hit the tax ceiling in 2 years. North Adams has a lot of land to develop but no one wants to be there. There will be a Western Mass/Berkshire County regional approach to avoiding the tax ceiling.

Mr. Foster made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. Mr. Strange seconded the motion. The vote was 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

The next regular Select Board meeting will be on Monday, March 2.

Respectfully submitted,
Debbie House

Documents:

Agenda
Street Closure for Jamboree information
ACM stockpile memo from Town Manager
Article 7 Charter Review Committee Final Report
Proposed Key Charter Revisions/Financial – D. Martel handout
Marked up Charter version – P. Landon handout
Select Board Goals/Finance – M. Angelides