



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

July 13, 2021

Good evening:

Tonight is a significant night for East Longmeadow's future, in that the year-long effort to update the Master Plan authored in 1976 is in the process of being reviewed and potentially adopted by the Planning Board at their meeting this evening. This new Plan is the result of extensive work by the members of the Master Plan committee, shepherded by our Planning and Community Development Director, Bethany Yeo. Bethany applied for and obtained a grant to finance the work in conjunction with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and its consultant, Barrett Planning Group. The Plan will serve to provide guidance and will reflect the current issues of importance and concern to the community, helping to provide advice and direction for future planning. The updated Plan will also provide access and eligibility for additional funding opportunities to achieve various Town goals.

The Town has also been awarded the sum of \$38,500 additional grant funding from the Shared Streets and Spaces program. This award is the result of a competitive grant application and the award letter indicated that the Town's application stood out. These funds will be used to implement the Town's desire to improve upon pedestrian safety and accessibility by providing improvements in the northwest quadrant of Town, such as painted curb extensions, new crosswalks, curb ramps and bus landing areas along North Main Street from Dorset St. to Wood Ave. and Thompson St.

ARPA funding of \$847,396 was received in late June and I have been advised after inquiry and consultation with DEP and A&F that our water infrastructure projects are eligible uses and may proceed. The first priority for use of these funds on the DPW project list is the Cooley and Avery Water Main replacement of 2260 feet of existing 6" AC main with 8" ductile iron and all related services and hydrants. This main is the source of repeated breaks and significant repairs due to its age. The estimate for this project is \$658,499. No bid documents have been released for this project although they are in draft status. No funds for our county allocation have been received as yet by the Town.

By way of background, the ARPA legislation authorized four (4) categories of eligible uses which are described in great detail in the Interim Final Rule promulgated by the Treasury. They are a) Public Health and Economic Impacts, b) Premium Pay, c) Revenue Loss and d) Investments in Infrastructure. Within these uses are seven (7) expenditure categories and within those seven are an additional sixty-six (66) sub-expenditure categories. I have copied the Department Heads who have the greatest involvement with the subject matter and demographic groups involved in these uses and sought their input for potential expenditures. I have asked that they read the relevant sections of the Act which correlate to their subject matter and advise me of potential uses for consideration. Recipients of these funds have the option, and are encouraged in the guidance, to make these funds available to individuals and businesses which have suffered significant hardship due to Covid. My office would have to establish an application process for any grant which is made for the benefit of the private sector as described in the Act. This process would provide a fair opportunity for everyone seeking assistance through this legislation. Much more detail remains to be worked out before any final decisions are reached or implemented.

The Westcomm Board meeting of July 2 was postponed to August. The District continues to move forward on renovations to the newly acquired site in Chicopee as well as hiring additional dispatchers and adding communities. The District has requested full payment of East Longmeadow's share of the FY22 Westcomm budget from the Commonwealth.

The Fire Dept. hosted an open house on June 19, 2021. This event also involved the participation of the Health Department in the person of our ubiquitous Health Inspector, Donna Bowman, who installed an additional 21 free car seats, obtained on a grant. Also, on June 23, 2021, the Fire Chief chaired the quarterly meeting of the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

Labor Union negotiations continue with the Clerical and Professional Units of the Municipal Union as well as the Police Union. Considerable time and effort has been spent in an attempt to clarify contract language and eliminate ambiguities.

I forwarded information under separate cover regarding the appointment of Cassandra Cerasuolo to the Planning Board. Many other appointments or reappointments were made to Community Preservation, Conservation, Council on Aging, Cultural Council, Historical Commission and Recreation Commission. These appointments were made after interviews in some cases and with the input of the Department Heads and committee chairs involved.

I previously reported that John Comerford would retire from his position as Veterans Service Officer with the Eastern Hampden District effective June 30, 2021. However, he has agreed to continue until a successor is appointed. The District has received resumes from several interested candidates and the Board members will be interviewing those individuals on July 21, 2021. The plan is to have a new VSO on site at the Senior Center for at least 15 hours per week.

Interviews were conducted recently for the COA Director position. I have appointed Erin Koebler as the new Director. She will begin her service here on August 16, 2021. Erin is currently employed at Glenmeadow Retirement Community and has an extensive background in Elder Care services. She has an MSW in Social Work and a commitment to community outreach and engagement. She is also familiar with many of the staff at the Senior Center as the result of her prior employment at the Longmeadow Senior Center. I have scheduled monthly, agenda free coffee hours at the Senior Center beginning later this month (July 21, 10:00 a.m. and every third Wednesday) so that residents can offer their thoughts and opinions on Town matters in an informal setting.

The PACE program for financing of energy projects is before the Council tonight for a vote. This matter was referenced in the May 11, 2021 meeting and all questions that the Town Finance offices had have been satisfactorily answered. Also on the topic of energy, I am soliciting input regarding installation of electric vehicle charging stations as a follow up to a proposal from National Grid.

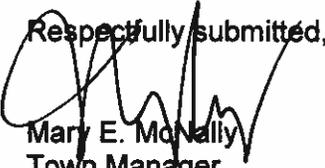
As a follow up to the May 11, 2021 meeting request, I have forwarded a zip file containing all of the fees currently charged by Town Departments to you for your review.

I have reviewed the proposals received for Town trash collection and reviewed the comparative analysis of the review committee. A decision will be made soon regarding the contract period beginning July 1, 2022. Proposals for valuation services of real and personal property were also received and vetted. Upon review, Bishop Associates of Agawam, Ma. has been awarded the contract.

Efforts are underway to decentralize our payroll processing. Under this plan, each Department would submit payroll and approve time off requests electronically rather than by paper submission. The intent of this effort is to modernize our payroll processes and time and attendance tracking processes as well as facilitate our HR functions of recruitment, onboarding and other employee personnel changes.

Year-end procedures are underway to close the fiscal year 2021 accounting records; Department turn-backs will be calculated and approval of any necessary inter departmental transfers will be requested as detailed in Steve Lonergan's Finance Department report.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary E. McNally
Town Manager