

Town of East Longmeadow
Fiscal Year 2023
Annual Budget (Draft)





TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW
60 CENTER SQUARE
EAST LONGMEADOW, MA 01028

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(413) 525-5400 ext. 1100

DATE: March 25, 2022

Honorable Town Council Members and Citizens of East Longmeadow:

This year's budget reflects the necessary additions in staffing identified as a result of the Town's experience during and throughout the pandemic. Fortunately, the worst negative financial consequences which were anticipated during FY 21 and FY 22 were not realized, in large measure due to the infusion of Covid relief funds and other Governmental grants. Many Departments worked without a full complement of staff and the problems created by those shortages are the primary justification for requesting these additional positions. Many individuals were crucial to assembling this budget document, most notably the Director of Municipal Finance, Stephen Lonergan, Olga Bones, all Department Heads and other staff who contributed their time, insight, recommendations and ongoing cooperation during the process. A special note of thanks to the members of the Town Manager's Capital Advisory Committee, chaired by Ryan Quimby, who worked within a very restricted time frame to review, evaluate and recommend a number of capital project submissions. I am grateful to all of them for their diligent work, insight, and thoughtful evaluation of projects on behalf of the Town.

This draft budget is based on state revenue figures included in Governor Baker's submission, (January 2022), which represent a slight increase over last year. When the legislature votes on the final budget, the revenue figures will reflect the changes included in that vote. With respect to local financial revenue, we have prepared this draft using a conservative estimate of new growth of \$500,000 in FY23 as well as additional levy capacity resulting from Proposition 2.5% in the amount of \$1,153,195. We have increased anticipated meals tax revenue and motor vehicle excise tax when compared with receipts during the "Covid" years. The Town will also allocate \$100,000 to the stabilization fund and to the Other Post-Employment Benefits fund (OPEB) liability fund this year which is an increase of \$50,000 over last year's budget. There was also a recent transfer of \$1,000,000.00 from free cash to the OPEB line item.

The Department budgets which reflect increases in the salary line are explained in part by the recently settled collective bargaining agreements which include COLA's and step increases in some cases back to June 30, 2020. As was the case last year, one of the largest percentage

increases in the budget is our third party expense for the Town's portion of health, life and other insurances. Several departments in the General Government category are also seeking new positions. I have referenced these needs several times over the course of the last year. Human Resources, Treasurer/Collector, Recreation and Finance are some of the departments which would greatly benefit by additional personnel.

This draft budget includes a plan to continue to improve the Town's operational efficiency, namely in the administrative and financial areas. This year we have advanced to a decentralized payroll system, eliminating the necessity of a multitude of paper documents. Additional staff in the Departments mentioned above will accelerate this improvement. The absence of a fully staffed Human Resources Department has had and will continue to have serious consequences to the Town in general and to our employees in particular. The Recreation Department serves thousands of children throughout the year in various programs, its Director and staff working seven days a week in many weeks. I have included the supporting documents drafted by the Department Heads seeking these new positions to assist your review of these requests.

Additionally, this draft budget includes a repeated request for a new management position in the Fire Department. The Fire Department's request for a Deputy Chief position is intended to assist the Department in its long term planning and operations obligations as well as to address the lack of a true succession plan which exists. The new deputy would be a non-Union position which would eliminate potential conflicts which now exist when management decisions and disciplinary matters are of concern. The exponential growth of the Department and its municipal ambulance service over the last several years and the concomitant improvement of public safety service to the community both prompts and supports the need for this additional management position.

Aside from the above referenced positions, the FY 23 budget for Town Departments requests the necessary funding for essential operational needs and describes available revenues and sources of those revenues. All Departments continue to work diligently to seek ways to save on expenses, always looking for opportunities to improve services and minimize any increase in the tax burden.

The East Longmeadow Public Schools budget at \$32,329,640 represents approximately 50.94% of the total operating budget for the Town and is an increase of 3.9% or \$1,254,603 over last year. The District's budget is included in this draft budget as adopted by the School Committee.

Public Safety Departments, Police, Fire, and Building, totaling \$5,464,800 comprise 8.35% of the total budget and the DPW (all divisions) totaling \$5,742,855 accounts for approximately 8.76% of the total budget.

The FY 23 general fund uses for Town operations as presented in this budget represents a 9.4% spending increase in the amount of \$5,995,704. However, \$2,931,189 of that amount is for

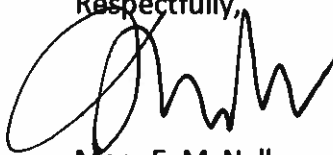
capital projects. These projects, 18 in number, can be funded with other available resources which will not impact the tax rate such as ARPA and free cash. If they are paid for in this fashion, that amount will be removed from the tax rate calculation and the overall budget increase will be significantly reduced to approximately 6%. (Anticipated revenues as of this date have increased by 4.89% over last year). In my opinion, these capital projects will benefit the community for many, many years to come. The comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan which incorporates more long term strategic planning is submitted under separate cover.

The Town's updated organizational chart (by Department) will be an attachment to the final budget.

I am hopeful that the taxpaying public is aware that every Town department continues to work diligently on your behalf to provide the best possible public service response to your needs. The budget attempts to reach a fair balance between identification and achievement of Town goals for education, public safety, other core services and the taxpayers' ability and willingness to fund these services. We want to make progress on Town projects and improve our municipal operations while remaining mindful of the financial burden such initiatives impose on the taxpaying public.

Thank you for your patience, attention and support. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding the budget or other municipal matters, please contact me at Mary.McNally@eastlongmeadowma.gov or (413) 525-5400 extension 1101.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary E. McNally', written in a cursive style.

Mary E. McNally
Town Manager