



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

May 12, 2020

Good Evening:

The primary focus of the last two weeks has been budget preparation, employee staffing levels and emergency management. The Financial Oversight Committee has been meeting weekly and its Chair, Christine Saulnier, and Co-Chair, Jim Broderick, are here this evening with a report on their progress. The Department Heads will continue to attend the meetings of this subcommittee to answer any questions regarding their operations. The Finance Department employees are working diligently to resolve a number of payroll issues which remain from recent administrative projects and are taking responsibility for additional functions to assist operations in the absence of a Director. That position has been advertised and I hope to have a Finance Director in place soon. In the meanwhile, I have written to the Director of Accounts at the Department of Revenue to seek approval for deficit emergency spending as authorized by the Governor's Declaration of Emergency of March 10, 2020. (Mass. General Laws Ch. 44, section 31).

Budget and revenue concerns are compounded by the social distancing requirements which continue to create difficulties in staffing our offices and other workplaces. We continue to plan for the eventual re-opening of our public buildings at some time on or after May 18, 2020, depending on the Governor's directives. Plans are underway to provide essential "sneeze" guard protections in all customer-facing departments to help ensure a safe environment for the employees and members of the public. On May 6, 2020, the Governor's mask order went into effect. Enforcement of this order falls to local Boards of Health and Police Departments. The Town's policy on enforcement of this directive is to educate and encourage the public to cooperate and comply, reserving warnings and fines as a last resort. Despite these additional responsibilities and the stress on the public and the employees, we continue to work toward our goal of mature, reasonable and responsible management of the Town's services.

The Capital Planning Committee met the last two Mondays and began its rating of the various projects suggested by Departments. A report will be forthcoming in the near future for review. Covid-19 related expenses continue to be tracked for reimbursement. The weekly and/or daily conference calls and webinars continue the constant flow of information from a variety of sources, all of which attempt to provide guidance and support. This guidance is evaluated and passed through to the community.

Eight weeks into this emergency, the toll is beginning to show. Some offices are falling a bit behind in their workflow and many are anxious for an end to this seemingly perpetual crisis. We remind ourselves often of the underlying reason for it all and the countless lives lost, and the grief and mourning of our neighbors. I thank our employees at every opportunity for their patience, understanding, acceptance and diligence throughout this period. I will repeat here that the Town can be rightfully proud of the extraordinary contributions made by many of its employees working together to manage the taxpayers' needs and expectations.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. McNally
Town Manager