



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

TOWN COUNCIL

(413) 525-5400 ext. 1001

Approved: 02/11/2020

Kathleen G. Hill, President

Michael J. Kane, Vice President

Thomas C. O'Connor

Donald J. Anderson

Ralph E. Page

MINUTES

Town Council Meeting
January 14, 2020 at 6:00 pm
Council on Aging Media Room
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

Present: President Kathleen Hill, Vice President Michael Kane, Pat Henry, Ralph Page and Marilyn Richards

Absent: Donald Anderson and Tom O'Connor

Council President Hill opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a Moment of Silence. Announcements were made in accordance with Mass General Law, and it was noted that ELCAT was taping the meeting. Also taping the meeting was Monica Jorge and Zolan Connor of the New York Times.

Public Comments:

- Daniel Plotkin of 54 Capri Drive stated that he moved here in 2016. Mr. Plotkin is the past President of JFS of Western MA and currently serves on the JFS Board. Mr. Plotkin is here tonight regarding the resolution that is being proposed for refugee resettlement. Mr. Plotkin asks that East Longmeadow become a Welcoming Community to refugees. Mr. Plotkin stated that East Longmeadow has a very rich history with a lot of immigrant families that the Town is proud of. Mr. Plotkin stated his hope is that East Longmeadow review and consider the idea of becoming a Welcoming Community. Mr. Plotkin stated that Jewish Family Services is the preeminent agency in this endeavor and there is probably no one better at it. Mr. Plotkin stated that he is very proud of the work that JFS does.
- Connor O'Shea of 20 Tanglewood Drive stated that he is here tonight on two brief subjects. The first one is the budget; Mr. O'Shea stated that one of the Town Manager performance evaluation goals from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, was to start the budget process in October and have an information gathering session with Town Council. Mr. O'Shea stated that the situation was more complicated this year due to the nature of having an Acting Town Manager. Mr. O'Shea stated that given the fact that the Town Manager has to propose a budget to the Town Council by May 1ST, this only leaves a little over three months. The Charter also mandates that the Town Council hold a joint meeting with the School Committee prior to the commencement of the budget to review the financial condition of the Town. Mr. O'Shea would like to know

when this joint meeting will take place. Mr. O'Shea strongly encourages the Council to provide guidance to the Town Manager as to what overall figures the Council finds acceptable.

On the topic of goals Mr. O'Shea stated that at the September 11, 2019 meeting Bernie Lynch, the consultant hired by the Town for the Town Manager search, asked the Council if they had annual goals for themselves and for the organization. Mr. Lynch also asked do you use the budget document as a strategic plan and do you have financial policies for the manager. Mr. O'Shea stated that each of these questions elicited blank stares from members of the Council. The answer provided was that the Council sets summarized goals for the manager. Mr. O'Shea stated that during the public interview of Tom Guerino on December 18, 2019, Mr. Guerino asked the Council what their plan was to increase the level of financial reserves. Mr. O'Shea stated that this question was met with about ten seconds of silence from the Council, after which it was stated that they would rely on the upcoming quarterly report from the Director of Finance. Mr. O'Shea believes that both of these instances highlight the lack of a forecast and strategic plan for the Town. Mr. O'Connor stated that is imperative that the Town Council not only set strategic plans for the Town Manager but that they also set goals for themselves. Mr. O'Shea stated that all relevant parties should work together to make the budget easier to construct

- Mohamoud Abdirahman stated that he has been a resident of East Longmeadow for about two and half years. Mr. Abdirahman stated that this is a great Town with a lot to offer. Mr. Abdirahman is here tonight speaking on behalf of the refugee resettlement. Mr. Abdirahman stated that when he came here as a refugee he did not speak any English and worked his way up, he recently received his second Master's Degree and is currently a physician. Mr. Abdirahman stated when he graduated he wanted to work in an agency that bridged the gap with refugees. Mr. Abdirahman also stated that there is a big difference from being a refugee and being forced to leave your country. Mr. Abdirahman is asking that East Longmeadow become a Welcoming Refugee Community.
- Mr. Saad Abduljabbar spoke on behalf of the refugee resettlement. Mr. Abduljabbar stated that his story is very similar to his colleagues; he came to this Country as a refugee and learned to speak English. He has been a resident of East Longmeadow since 2016 and has worked with Jewish Family Services for about 10 years. Both he and his wife work locally. Mr. Abduljabbar holds a Master's degree in Mental Health and his wife is a teacher. Mr. Abduljabbar stated that he loves the East Longmeadow Community and would very much like this Town to become a Welcoming Community.
- Ellen Hatzakis of 15 Tamarack Drive is here tonight to support refugee resettlement in East Longmeadow and having East Longmeadow become a Welcoming Community. Ms. Hatzakis stated that she has dedicated her entire career to non-profit, the past four years at JFS where she currently serves as the COO. Ms. Hatzakis stated that she has been fortunate to work side by side with her colleagues, many of which are refugees. Ms. Hatzakis stated that she has observed their hard work and determination first hand. Ms. Hatzakis feels that all refugees deserve a chance to start over, to find a home and to have new opportunities for a better life. Ms. Hatzakis stated that when her parents emigrated from Greece there was not a question as to whether they would be welcome, they were welcome and supported by their community. Ms. Hatzakis is very proud of East Longmeadow and feels that East Longmeadow is a very neighborly community. Ms. Hatzakis hopes that she can continue to be proud of the community and asks that East Longmeadow become a Welcoming Community.

*Councilor Kane made a motion to move out order on the Agenda and move to Section 9 Orders of the Day/ Old Business/ C-1. Councilor Henry seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor).***

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Old Business: C1. Maxine J. Stein, President and CEO, Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts Executive Order on Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Refugee Resettlement -

Maxine Stein President and CEO of the JFS presented the Council with some background on the Executive Order that President Donald Trump signed on September 26, 2019 as shown in **Attachment A.**

Ms. Stein stated that the Executive Order requires public written consent prior to the resettlement of refugees. Ms. Stein stated she is here tonight to ask that East Longmeadow join the list of welcoming communities in Western Massachusetts. Jewish Family Service is 110 years old; they serve the older adults, the new American community, including refugees and the general community at large stated Ms. Stein. Ms. Stein stated JFS is a social service provider with great resources.

Ms. Stein stated that there are over 200 refugee resettlements in the Country. And together they implement the requirements of the State Departments Cooperative Agreement, which details the services will be provided over an initial 90 day period. Ms. Stein stated that not only does JFS participate in the refugee program; they directly support other programming that sets clients on a path to social and economic integration. The JFS directly supports ESL, Citizenship classes, community navigation and in home counseling. Ms. Stein stated that many of the JFS clients have opened up their own businesses and JFS volunteers come from all over Western Massachusetts. This work embraces the entire community.

Councilor Richards asked if East Longmeadow became a welcome community, how long does the support last from JFS, and what happens after that? Ms. Stein stated that before a family arrives they take responsibility to find housing, to set up that home, and to make sure that they have everything that they need from the very first hour they arrive. Then they hold them very tightly for the first three months. Ms. Stein stated that they provide every bit of organization that they need; they help get their children enrolled in school, help with employment services and help get them into English classes, Ms. Stein stated that after the three months ends is when heavier lifting comes into place by JFS. This is where we have our entire wrap around services. The people they work with are always JFS family stated Ms. Stein. Ms. Stein stated JFS is invested in them doing well.

Ms. Stein stated that what we need from the community is for the community to be friendly and welcoming; if you want to get involved you can get involved. The most important thing is that people know East Longmeadow is welcoming. Ms. Stein stated that she does not know that they would be settling many people in East Longmeadow but they are trying to establish East Longmeadow as a Welcoming Community.

President Hill asked if it is fair to say that if JFS were to settle a family into affordable housing here in Town there is no financial obligation or burden to the municipality. Ms. Stein stated that was correct JFS bears the responsibility.

President Hill explained that the Council had already voted on this subject at our December 10, 2019 Town Council Meeting and that the Council rules state that we may not reconsider within 6 months. President Hill will review this with the Town Attorney.

*Councilor Richards made a motion to table this matter until a future meeting. Councilor Henry seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor).***

Council Comments:

Councilor Henry commented about one of the Town Manager applicants who stated that he came to Town Hall and indicated that he was surprised to see that all the doors were closed; the applicant also noticed the sign upstairs that said out to lunch. Councilor Henry stated that he feels that we could be more

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welcoming at the Town Hall. Mary McNally inquired about the comments that were made from the applicant. Ms. McNally stated that she spoke to the Department that had the closed for lunch sign and this was an exceptional circumstance that happened that day. The reason the office was closed for lunch is that the office was having its Christmas party and everyone wanted to be together that day. With respect to doors being closed Ms. McNally stated that the hallways in Town Hall are very cold, so this is for preservation of climate control in respective offices.

Town Managers Report:

Town Manager Mary McNally gave her Town Manager Report as shown in **Attachment B**.

Councilor Henry stated that one of the Town Manager applicants indicated that our free cash was low. Councilor Henry wanted to know if it was low. Sara Menard, Finance Director was asked to clarify; Ms. Menard stated that her understanding was that the applicant was asking about the reserves and the percentage of the reserves. Ms. Menard stated that our plan is to continue to contribute to the OPEB trust so that is why we kept the reserve at the 9%. Ms. Menard stated that any extra in free cash is put into OPEB, because we are building for future liabilities.

Councilor Page asked Mary McNally about the Health Department with Longmeadow. Councilor Page stated that if we merge with another Town under the Charter that would be considered a reorganization plan. Councilor Page wanted to know if they would get a full breakdown before anything happens. Ms. McNally stated yes they would. Councilor Page also asked if they would be saving money. Ms. McNally stated that based on the rough draft of the budget that the Health Director showed her the savings could be roughly \$54,000.00 a year and we would also have better services noted Ms. McNally.

Approval of Minutes:

November 26, 2019 Executive Session Minutes – *Councilor Henry made motion to approve the November 26, 2019 Executive Session minutes. Councilor Kane seconded the motion. **The vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention (Councilor Richards) 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O’Connor).***

December 10 2019 Open Session Minutes - *Councilor Kane made motion to approve the December 10, 2019 Open Session Minutes. Councilor Page seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O’Connor).***

Communications, Correspondence and Announcements:

- A. Email proposing ordinance against feeding predatory animals – Sarah Marble
Sara Marble of Pease Rd. stated that when they moved in they kept finding raw chicken in their yard and coyotes at their front door. Ms. Marble stated that it turns out her neighbor has been feeding the coyotes. Ms. Marble has horses and dogs and the coyotes are a danger to them. Ms. Marble stated she informed her neighbor that it is not a safe thing to do. Ms. Marble reached out to the neighbor one more time and also contacted the Town. Ms. Marble stated that the Town has been really responsive but the Town’s hands are tied. Ms. Marble also contacted the State Wildlife who asked if the neighbor was baiting the coyotes and Ms. Marble informed them no she is just feeding them large amounts of raw chicken. Because she is not baiting them for hunting there is nothing the state can do. Ms. Marble feels that unless there was a Town Ordinance she feels as if her hands are tied. President Hill stated that she has had conversations with Councilor O’Connor who was the Animal Control Officer for a number of years, and his take on it is that the Town is not able to take any action and the view at the state level is that the wildlife in the Commonwealth belong to the Commonwealth and not to any Town or Municipality. President Hill stated this is difficult to regulate. Councilor Page stated that his concern about creating an ordinance like this is how you enforce it. Ms. Marble stated that her hope would be that the Town would take a position that this behavior is not appropriate, because there is a real danger when you start habituating wild animals to come in close proximity to humans. Councilor Richards told Ms. Marble that she appreciates what she has been dealing with but she has a

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concern about anything escalating between Ms. Marble and her neighbor. Councilor Richards stated she understands why Ms. Marble has come to the Council and this is a very difficult issue to enforce. Councilor Richards would like to see if the Council can do some kind of Public Service Announcement. President Hill deferred to Councilor Kane, who has a law enforcement background, to ask if there is something on the civil side relative to law enforcement that can be done. Councilor Kane stated that it would flow to the civil side because if the police were involved it would have to be criminal. Councilor Kane also stated that the neighbor could be trespassing because of the fact that the chicken is being found on Ms. Marble's property. Councilor Henry agrees that an ordinance would be very difficult to put together and almost impossible to enforce.

*Councilor Henry made a motion to have the Town Council write a friendly letter signed by the seven Councilors' requesting that the person cease and desist. Councilor Richards seconded the motion. Discussion: Councilor Page stated that he would rather the Council put an article in the Reminder so that the whole Town can see because this may be happening in other locations. **The vote was 4 in favor, 1 opposed (Councilor Page) and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor).***

*Councilor Richards made a motion that the Council provides some information to the Reminder addressing this issue. Councilor Page seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor).***

- B. Letter supporting funding for a new high school – Jennifer Fonseca
Resident Jennifer Fonseca of 31 Van Dyke Rd. wrote the following letter to the Council:

As a resident of East Longmeadow and a former graduate of East Longmeadow High School, I want to bring your attention to the current decision made by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Recently East Longmeadow has been accepted into the eligibility period for getting a new high school. At this moment, the town needs the funding to support the new school.

Funding a new school will give upcoming students the opportunity to compete with the surrounding schools. Competing with other schools means that students will have equal and/or better educational opportunities. The funding will also help expand the STEM and technology programs; students will be better prepared when they go to college. Although this project will raise taxes it will also raise property values which will benefit the town. Raising property values could bring in more residents which could produce more revenue for the town. This project will benefit both the students and the town.

I already know you support this project. The funding is the most important part to get this process rolling; the next step is having the town vote on the money. The citizens of the town need your assistance to find the money to move this project forward. This is important to not only me but to the town and upcoming students as well. It is time for a change in East Longmeadow, and this is it.

Public Hearings:

- A. Proposed Bylaw addressing liquor license rules and regulations, first reading– 6:30 p.m.
President Hill opened the hearing at 7:25 pm. Jeanne Quaglietti Town Clerk/Clerk of the Council read the legal notice into record. President Hill stated the petitioner is the Council. President Hill read the proposed bylaw into record. Councilor Henry stated they received suggested edits and modification's from the Town Attorney today January 14, 2020, the Town Attorney asked if they

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would like to take this into advisement and meet again or would they like to look at the changes that were made. Councilor Henry stated that he is the Bylaw Committee Chair and as he sees it the Bylaw Committee would not object to any of the changes. Attorney Maynard stated that he was trying to make the language more consistent with the language used in the current bylaws. Attorney Maynard feels it is appropriate to move forward to a second reading as amended. Councilor Page asked if they should read it again with the changes if this is what is going to be accepted. *Councilor Henry made a motion to accept it as written and not read it again. Councilor Kane seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor)***

Public Comments on the Bylaw – None. The public portion will stay open until the second reading stated President Hill.

*Councilor Henry made a motion to continue the public hearing for the proposed bylaw addressing liquor license rules and regulations, to January 28, 2020, at 7:00 p.m., for a second reading. Councilor Richards seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor).***

- B. Proposed bylaw to establish a Charter Review Committee, per Article 9, Section 2 of the Charter, Second reading – 6:45 pm. President Hill opened the hearing at 7:39 pm. Jeanne Quaglietti Town Clerk/Clerk of the Council read the legal notice into record. President Hill read the proposed bylaw into record.

Public Comments on the Bylaw – Connor O'Shea of 20 Tanglewood Drive stated that he would recommend that the Council wouldn't opt to have a particular member decide which hat they want to wear if they fall into both Town employee and something else. Mr. O'Shea stated they should count in both buckets, not just one or the other, in order to afford most people in the community an opportunity to serve.

President Hill closed the public portion of the hearing at 7:43 pm.

*Councilor Richards made a motion to accept the proposed bylaw to establish a Charter Review Committee, per Article 9, Section 2 of the Charter. Councilor Page seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor).***

Orders of the Day

- A. Licensing Matters:

*I. One Day Liquor License for St. Michael's Parish for February 8, 2020, 5:00-10:00 p.m. for a Sweetheart Dinner/Fellowship. Councilor Kane made a motion to approve the one day liquor license for St. Michael's Parish for February 8, 2020, 5:00-10:00 p.m. for a Sweetheart Dinner/Fellowship. Councilor Page seconded the motion. **The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 absent (Councilors Anderson and O'Connor).***

Financial Matters- None

Old Business:

Update of Town Council Bylaw Review Committee – Councilor Henry stated that the Council should have in their packet a two page bylaw subcommittee update. Councilor Henry gave some background on the Town Council Bylaw Review Committee. Councilor Henry stated that the Council voted last year to proceed with General Code's assistance to update their bylaws; they are midway through that project. They are reviewing 250 pages with some 300 questions and clarifications from General Code which are due to them on January 31, 2020; this will allow them to prepare the first draft for review later in the spring. Councilor Henry stated this project has proven to be much more complex than originally anticipated.

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Many of the Departments have updated the bylaws with significant changes stated Councilor Henry. Councilor Henry stated that since Charter suspension must be approved by the voters they should arrange to get this on to the June ballot, which will need to be done by the end of March.

Councilor Henry is looking to get a sense of the Council on the following issues:

1. Should they go back to the Department Heads for a recheck?
2. Should they create a table of fees or just leave fees in the bylaws.
3. Approval to suspend the Charter provision regarding updating the bylaws on the June ballot.
4. Approval to present significant changes in executive summary form at the January 28, 2020 Town Council meeting.

Councilor Henry stated that he does not know if they have any other option other than to go ahead and make the changes as they see fit (the Subcommittee) and deliver them to the Council at a later time

New Business:

1. Summary: Action Items for Next Meeting-
President Hill stated they should try and have a position and some thought ready with regard to the Bylaw Subcommittee review. President Hill also stated that Council goals will also be on the January 28, 2020 agenda.

*Councilor Henry made a motion to adjourn the open session meeting at 8:05 p.m. and enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing potential litigation with Spark Energy and to discuss strategy with respect to litigation regarding PLH, LCC. Reenter Open Session for the sole purpose of adjournment. Councilor Kane seconded the motion **Roll Call Vote – Councilor Henry – Yes. Councilor Kane – Yes, President Hill – Yes, Councilor Page- Yes and Councilor Richards – Yes. Absent: Councilor Anderson and Councilor O’Connor.***

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. The next Town Council Meeting is January 28, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Sullivan
Assistant Town Clerk

Documents: Agenda, Town Managers Report, Proposed bylaw liquor license rules, Proposed bylaw Charter Review Committee, Liquor licensing offenses and violations, Letter to all liquor license holders, One day liquor license application St. Michaels, E-mail from JFS refugee resettlement, Public Hearing protocol Charter Review Committee bylaw 2nd reading, Open Session Meeting Minutes, Liquor license rules and regulations, Liquor license rules and regulations from Attorney Maynard, Letter from Jennifer Fonseca, November 26, 2019 executive session minutes, E-mail from Sara Marble for a proposed ordinance on feeding predatory animals, Charter review bylaw, Charter review bylaw from Attorney Maynard and e-mail from Councilor Henry Bylaw Committee update.



Background

On Thursday, September 26th, President Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) entitled, *Executive Order on Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Refugee Resettlement (EO 13888)*. The EO requires that state and local officials provide public written consent prior to the resettlement of refugees, an additional process beyond the robust existing coordination between refugee resettlement agencies, the federal government, and state and local officials.

What is a Refugee?

Refugees are people who have been forced to flee their homelands due to persecution – harassment, threats, abduction, or torture, because of their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group such as LGBT persons, or political opinion. In the United States, a “refugee” is someone who has been provided with legal status by the U.S. government overseas, and then brought to this country to reside permanently.¹

How do refugees arrive to Western Massachusetts?

- Resettlement is the most difficult way to enter the U.S., and refugees are the most thoroughly vetted individuals in the U.S., going through all screenings before they arrive.
- Vetting includes biometric and biographic checks; interagency intelligence sharing; screenings against multiple domestic and international terrorist and criminal databases; background investigations by the FBI, Department of Defense, State Department, and National Counterterrorism Center; and in-person interviews by Homeland Security officers.

What communities in Western Massachusetts have consented to resettlement?

Cities/Towns with Mayors/Councils that have consented to allow refugees to resettle: Holyoke, Northampton, Easthampton, West Springfield, Chicopee, Amherst, Pittsfield

Other cities/towns that have been contacted to request consent to resettle: Springfield, Westfield, Greenfield, Longmeadow, E. Longmeadow

What will happen if a city/town does not consent?

- *A lack of consent does not mean that refugees will cease to live in a community or cease to arrive to a community.* Citizens, immigrants, refugees, and visitors alike are allowed to move freely between cities and states. If a city/town does not provide consent, resettlement agencies like JFS would be prohibited from spending federal resettlement funds to help refugees get settled in that town. Refugees may choose to move on their own without any restriction.

¹ <https://www.hias.org/FAQ/HIAS>



How many refugees arrive to Western Massachusetts?

- In the last year, JFS resettled **96 refugees** in Western Massachusetts. Most resettled individuals are women, children and families. Refugees pay market rate rent, begin work shortly after their arrival, and add to the cultural and linguistic diversity within towns where they are resettled.
- Since 1980, the U.S. has safely welcomed more than 3 million refugees fleeing violence, political and religious persecution. However, refugee resettlement drastically declined in recent years. In 2017, the U.S. resettled fewer refugees than the rest of the world for the first time since the start of the formal resettlement program.²

Why should state and local officials consent for refugee resettlement to continue?

- **Resettlement saves lives:** it is the option of last resort for the world's most vulnerable refugees.
- **Refugees strengthen our economy:** resettled refugees in the United States contribute \$21,000 more in taxes than they receive in benefits over a twenty year period.³
- **Refugees become homeowners:** Of the apartments rented for refugees in the past year, 58% of landlords were refugee and immigrant homeowners.
- **Refugees revitalize cities:** they fill gaps in the workforce in critical industries, like hospitality. The JFS employment program regularly fields calls from employers who are eager for a refugee work force. JFS helped 97 refugees find jobs in the last year alone.
- **Refugees are job creators:** refugee entrepreneurship rates are nearly 30% higher than in the U.S.-born population.⁴
- **Refugees are supported after initial resettlement:** JFS is a trusted partner and sticks by the refugees it resettles, from arrival through its program to help refugees apply for US citizenship.

² <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/05/for-the-first-time-u-s-resettles-fewer-refugees-than-the-rest-of-the-world/>

³ <https://www.nber.org/papers/w2349>

⁴ <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/from-struggle-to-resilience-the-economic-impact-of-refugees-in-america/>



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EAST LONGMEADOW, MA 01028

Mary E. McNally, Town Manager

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January 14, 2020

Town Manager Report

Good evening and Happy New Year to all:

We are off to a busy start in this new year; Town Departments have submitted their operational budgets for review and I have begun discussing them with the respective Dept. Heads and Finance Dept. this week. Our January Department Heads meeting is scheduled for tomorrow. My remarks to the group will cover my philosophy and expectations about professional conduct by and between departments and communication and cooperation among all employees regardless of their status. I have asked our HR Director pro tem to work with me to characterize the existing Town employment culture, identify areas to improve and establish a working environment that is positive, inclusive, respectful and cooperative at all times.

Preliminary negotiations are underway with two labor Unions regarding upcoming contracts, Civil Dispatch and UMEEL

The ADP payroll project rolled out with the Dec. 22, 2019 payroll which was paid on January 8, 2020. The various issues identified by Departments are being reported to ADP for resolution. Information on any and all requests from Departments for progress on these matters will be the subject of a weekly email from our Finance office until the glitches are resolved. There are many varied schedules among our Town Departments as well as a systemic inability (with this platform) to recognize work anniversary dates or step increase dates which have caused concern among employees.

Progress continues in our HR department. FMLA and COBRA training modules were conducted on Jan. 9, 2020, by a trainer from the Employers Association of the Northeast. Unemployment Claims training was held on Jan 2, and an ACA compliance training been scheduled to assist in updating our procedures and well as to centralize these functions uniformly in the HR Department.

My office has begun an effort to review vacancies on Town Boards and Commissions. I appointed Erin Lynch to the Conservation Commission in early January and I intend to conduct interviews with other interested parties regarding vacancies on other Boards and Commissions. Notice of open seats will be advertised as required by the Charter.

The Health Department received a Massachusetts Municipal Public Health Shared Services Grant in an annualized amount of \$50,000 pending negotiation of a final work plan. This grant is renewable for a five year period. On last Friday, the Health Department Director and I met with our colleagues from Longmeadow as well as with a representative of the DPH and representatives from the consulting firm (Health Resources in Action, HRIA) which will conduct a very specific scope of services in the nature of Project Management, data collection and general oversight. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the health needs assessment work plan referenced above. A prior Community Compact grant awarded in May of 2019 in the amount of \$55,500 provided the seed money for this initiative. I would just add that these grants are evidence of the Commonwealth's view that shared services create better efficiencies for local Boards of Health.

The Aimee Petrosky and I also met last week with Longmeadow's Town Manager and DPW Superintendent to hear a presentation by a potential vendor regarding waste disposal, waste collection and recycling collection and disposal. As you know, the contracts for these services expire in June and there is a significant increase in recycling fees, which will increase our costs in the next fiscal year.

Conversation continues regarding opportunities for dispatch consolidation. The ribbon cutting ceremony at the Chicopee site, known as Westcomm took place on December 20, 2019. Chiefs Morrissette and Dalessio and I attended the ceremony and briefly toured the dispatch operations center after remarks from City and State officials. We subsequently met with Springfield's Fire Commissioner to discuss the opportunity of a merger with the City of Springfield. Various practical issues exist in both situations and must be resolved before any decisions can be made. However both sites present a significant opportunity for fiscal savings to East Longmeadow based on incentives and available grant funding. Any future operational assessments must also be quantified for a thorough evaluation to take place. Another meeting was held on January 8, 2020 with the Director of Westmass, the respective EMS Chiefs and Town Managers from EL and Longmeadow to further vet the operation and opportunity. The Emergency Management staff and I also continue our discussions with Christine Wingfield, Regional PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) Coordinator for EOPSS 911 Department in this regard.

The Fire Department reports that it answered 3600 calls for service in 2019, 78% of which (2799 calls) were for Emergency Medical service.

Building Dept. still seeking an electrical inspector, and is interviewing candidates for its newly created admin position.

Police Dept. reports the retirement of Scott Skala in late December, 2019. Scott was a 26 year veteran of the PD.

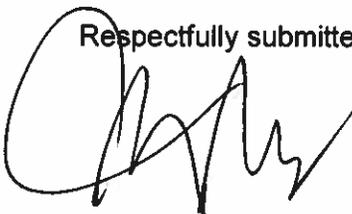
IT is working on a major upgrade to the MUNIS software. The Department also reports that the one to one project (chromebooks) has moved along quite well, various defects in the devices have been covered by warranty. New switches and wireless access points have been installed at the COA and will be installed at Town Hall and the Library in the near future.

The relocation of Town offices is scheduled for February 4, 2020. Accounting, HR, Town Clerk and Health Depts will be impacted. The DPW is coordinating the physical relocations.

I have received several responses to my solicitation for legal services beginning this month. I will be evaluating those proposals in the near future.

General fund free cash was certified by the DOR on January 2, 2020 in the amount of \$1,688,773.00.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary E. McNally', written over the typed name below.

Mary E. McNally