



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

**TOWN COUNCIL**

(413) 525-5400 ext. 1001

*Kathleen G. Hill, President*  
*Michael J. Kane, Vice President*      *Thomas C. O'Connor*  
*Donald J. Anderson*                      *Ralph E. Page*  
*R. Patrick Henry, Jr.*                      *Marilyn M. Richards*

MINUTES  
Town Council Meeting  
March 10, 2020 at 6:00 pm  
Council on Aging Media Room  
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

Approved 4/14/2020

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

**Absent:** 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.

**Public Comments:**

A. Zoning Bylaws – Larry Rich of 17 Autumn Ridge stated the reason that he is here tonight is because it has been 13 months since he first started working on this and he has not gotten anywhere. Mr. Rich stated that on April 2, 2019 he asked the Planning Board to review 3.20 because it does not make any sense to have that in residential areas. Mr. Rich brought copies of the minutes from the April 2, 2019 Planning Board meeting; Mr. Rich stated that what is written in the minutes is not what he petitioned for. The minutes state that Mr. Rich proposed his zoning amendment petition to increase the acreage requirement for the operation of a pig farm; so a pig farm may not operate in residential zones of five acres or less. In that meeting the Chair explained that the agriculture requirements that Mr. Rich was petitioning against are regulated by State agricultural law. Mr. Rich stated his request was to review the Zoning Bylaws and not to talk about the pigs.

President Hill asked Mr. Rich to the best of his knowledge has the Planning Board taken any action on his request. Mr. Rich stated no the Planning Board has not gotten back to him. President Hill asked Ms. McNally if she knew whether or not this has been addressed by the Planning Board. Ms. McNally stated that she spoke to Mr. Rich on March 9, 2020 and it is her understanding that Mr. Rich left the meeting on April 2, 2019 thinking that the Planning Board was going to revisit his issue at a later date and that has not happened yet. Ms. McNally stated that it has been almost a year and that Mr. Rich is here because Mr. Rich believed that he has the right to petition for a new bylaw to be enacted and reviewed in the absence of any Planning Board action.

Mr. Rich does not believe the pig farm should be in residential areas. Mr. Rich informed the Council that he has a neighbor who has two pigs and the pigs have dug up some of his lawn. Mr. Rich stated that pigs should have four shots and that rabies shots are not approved, therefore you do not get a certificate.

Mr. Rich asked if someone could tell him what a residential zone is. Councilor Page stated that agriculture through the state is allowed in any zone. Agriculture on the state level supersedes the Town Bylaws, so they followed some of the State guidelines. Councilor Page cited 3.021.

Mr. Rich feels that the Town has not followed through. Mr. Rich also stated that no one has checked the pigs to see if they have been inoculated. President Hill stated she would ask that the Health Inspector pay a visit and make sure the owner of the animals is in compliance.

President Hill informed Mr. Rich that a member of the Council will work with the Town Manager, the Planning Board Director and the Planning Board Chair to understand where their position is so that they can try and address his concerns. Councilor Page offered his time to go over this with Mr. Rich.

*Councilor Anderson made a motion to move out of order on the agenda and go to 7a and 7b and then return to item 4. Councilor Page seconded the motion. **The vote was 6 in favor 0 opposed 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).***

## **7. Communications, Correspondence and Announcements:**

A. Eagle Scout Citation for Sean Callahan – President Hill presented Sean Callahan with the Eagle Scout citation. President Hill asked Mr. Callahan to give them a synopsis of his project. Mr. Callahan stated that on Hampden Road at the Community Garden there are some hiking trails in the back and he put some exercise stations back there, a balance beam and parallel bars. The Council congratulated Mr. Callahan on his achievement.

B. Legislative Update - Senator Eric Lesser- Senator Eric Lesser stated since it is budget season he wanted to come by and have a conversation about the Town and answer any questions the Council might have for him.

President Hill asked about the issue of the crumbling foundation. Senator Lesser stated that the public meeting on the crumbling foundation is this Saturday March 14, 2020 at 10:00 am at the Granite Valley Middle School in Monson. Senator Lesser also stated there is no short term fix. They now have a lot of data and have learned a lot from Connecticut. Parallel to what was happening in Connecticut they passed legislation last year to set up a commission. The commission completed that work and they issued a report with a set of recommendations. Senator Lesser's hope is that in this coming budget year they will be able to implement some of those recommendations. In the meantime Senator Lesser stated that people who are concerned should get their foundations tested. There is a fund available for people to get reimbursements after they get the tests. Senator Lesser stated that his office is available to work with individuals who have questions. Senator Lesser would encourage people to make safety their priority if they are concerned about their foundation.

Councilor Anderson stated that he appreciates the work they are doing in trying to push this forward. Councilor Anderson asked if we are going to raise the tax on gas for infrastructure by five cents. Why not go to six cents and have that extra penny allocated to consumer infrastructure throughout the State for those who have been adversely impacted by matters such as this or other related? The damage to our tax base is going to be severe, stated Councilor Anderson. Senator Lesser stated that his point is

well taken and there are different ways of getting the money but they need to have a better understanding of the potential scope and scale of the liability.

President Hill asked about Chapter 90 funding. Senator Lesser first thanked the School Committee, Superintendent Smith and the Town Council on their great work and the advocacy for a new High School. Senator Lesser has personally spoke with Treasurer Goldberg on numerous occasions about East Longmeadow's spot in the queue for a new High School. With regard to Chapter 90 funds Senator Lesser stated that they know it is not enough and that it will likely be level funded.

Senator Lesser stated that he knows that with the Corona virus and stock market issues there is a lot of uncertainty right now and good fiscal management is very important. The State does have a robust rainy day fund and while there is continued pressure to touch that rainy day fund for all kinds of things there has been a bipartisan commitment over many years not to do that. Senator Lesser believes we are seeing a fiscal picture that might change very dramatically. Senator Lesser stated that he was with the DPH Commissioner on March 9, 2020 and they have a universal and bipartisan commitment to doing everything that needs to happen to keep the citizens of Massachusetts safe. The Speaker of the House and the Senate President announced today that next week they will be voting on 15 million dollars of supplemental funding and the Governor announced a State of Emergency today. Senator Lesser stated that the State is very much focused on this and would like everyone to follow the Mass. Department of Health guidelines or the CDC guidelines.

**Council Comments:**

Councilor Anderson gave an update on the Planning Matters subcommittee. Councilor Anderson stated that he is the Chair of the subcommittee and most of the members of the Subcommittee were in attendance tonight; Marilyn Richards, Connor O'Shea and Ralph Page. Councilor Anderson praised the subcommittee members for all their hard work and dedication.

Councilor Anderson stated that they have spent countless hours working on the Planning Board proposed mixed use bylaw. Today (3/10/2020) they have a working draft completed. They will send it to the Town Counsel who is a dedicated specialist on matters of zoning for review; they will also send it back to the Planning Board because of the substantive changes that were made.

Councilor Anderson explained the affordable housing aspect of the mixed use bylaw.

Councilor Richards stated that the Planning Board had a good document but they felt with their Planning Board experience they wanted to take it a few steps further. Councilor Richards stated that the affordable housing issue is a challenge because they are not looking to create large developments they are just looking to meet their regional fair share, which all communities are required to meet.

Councilor Page stated that the Attorney will look at the draft and then it will come back to them. The subcommittee will then make a recommendation to the Council; the Town Council will need to hold a Public Hearing. Councilor Page also stated there is still more to do.

**Town Managers Report:**

Town Manager, Mary McNally gave her Town Manager's report as shown in attachment A.

Ms. McNally stated that the town is taking all necessary precautions with regard to the Corona virus. Ms. McNally also stated that there are no current cases of the virus in East Longmeadow however they are planning for the eventual spread of the virus.

Ms. McNally stated that the Fire Chief is here tonight because it has been determined that we need a stronger disinfectant than the one that is currently being used by the custodial staff; unfortunately no one has any money in their budget and they will be asking for the Council to consider a free cash transfer.

Chief Morrissette explained that the disinfectant they are using now will kill the virus if it is on the doorknob but if someone walks in an hour or two later that is carrying the virus and grab the doorknob then put their hands on a counter top the virus will then transfer.

Chief Morrissette stated that a lot of the communities are going to Durisan Medical and medical hospitals have been using it for years. This product has less stay time; it is easier to mix and is an anti-microbial germicidal solution. Part of the purchase would be the hand sanitizer for all Government Buildings and the other part would be the solution mixture with spray bottles. Chief Morrissette stated because of the high demand for the next three or four weeks they will still need to use the chlorine bleach style cleaner that they have been using.

Councilor Anderson asked if the supplier has been gouging the price. Chief Morrissette stated that he received a quote back from the representative today and the price is slightly discounted below what the normal discount would have been.

President Hill asked if the amount they need to buy is sufficient. Chief Morrissette believes this will get us through for now and come July 1<sup>st</sup> they will see where the virus is going.

Councilor Kane asked if this would be standard operating procedure after the corona virus is behind us. Chief Morrissette believes that it will be. They recently learned that some people have allergies to the bleach products.

Ms. McNally informed the Council that they are in touch daily with the Department of Public Health at this point they are not planning on cancelling any activities but that remains to be seen. Precautions are being taken, they have asked each Department Head to prepare an updated continued operations plan and those are due back to her office by Monday 3/16/2020. Ms. McNally applauds the work of Aimee Petrosky, Chief Morrissette and Superintendent Smith; they have all been diligent in communications and managing all of this.

Councilor Henry commented that he is very disappointed that we terminated the contract with ADP. Councilor Henry stated we have known for years our payroll and HR systems were sadly antiquated, this contract was just the first step, payroll only, and now we are back to square one having expended a lot of money, time and effort. Councilor Henry realizes that this effort began well before our current Town Manager, Mary McNally, worked here. Councilor Henry feels the ball was dropped by East Longmeadow, and that either the town failed to disclose the various unusual payrolls we employ or we failed to follow the guidelines that ADP gave us. Councilor Henry would like to see a report that details exactly what happened and what the failures were. Ms. McNally would be happy to provide that report and believes it should be done in Executive Session since it is a contract matter.

Councilor Page asked Ms. McNally about the Open Space plan. Councilor Page knows the Recreation Director is looking at it and that it has been sent to the State and then back to us. Ms. McNally stated that the Recreation Department, as well as many others are really overwhelmed with what they are trying to accomplish. The Recreation Department has limited staff and enormous responsibilities and is working very hard to accomplish all of their goals. The Open Space is a huge project stated Ms. McNally. Ms. McNally assured Councilor Page that attention is being paid to the Open Space plan.

**7. Communications, Correspondence and Announcements continued:**

C. Acceptance of Seth Thomas Grandfather Clock from Mr. Robert Picknally, per Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 Section 53A ½-

*Councilor Richards made a motion for the Town to accept the gift of a Seth Thomas Grandfather Clock from Mr. Robert Picknally, in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44 Section 53A ½. Councilor Page seconded the motion.*

Councilor Henry stated that Mr. Pknally is a veteran and served as a member of the Republican Town Committee for many years. President Hill stated Mr. Picknally's generosity is very much appreciated.

*The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).*

D. Presidential Primary Review -

Town Clerk/Clerk of the Council Jeanne Quaglietti updated the Council on the Presidential Primary. Ms. Quaglietti stated that there are 12,255 registered voters in East Longmeadow. There was a 30% turnout for the Presidential Primary; this includes the ballots that were cast for Early Voting. Ms. Quaglietti stated that for this election we had five new voting machines, three new election workers, some election workers that were graduated up to wardens and clerks for the first time and one new Town Clerk. Ms. Quaglietti stated that the day went extremely well considering all of that. Ms. Quaglietti thanked all of the election workers, all the Town Departments that are involved and her staff. Ms. Quaglietti stated that it is truly a group effort and without the help of everyone involved she could not have done it. Ms. Quaglietti stated that because of the Corona virus they took necessary precautions by using disinfectant wipes to wipe down the booths and pens and had hand sanitizer available.

Rich Freccero, who works the elections, reinforced what the Town Clerk stated. Mr. Freccero also stated that the Town Clerk put together four different meetings before the election which was a real collaborative approach. Mr. Freccero stated that the election ran very smoothly and Ms. Quaglietti was very well prepared. Mr. Freccero wanted the Council to know that Ms. Quaglietti did a great job.

**Orders of the Day**

- A. Licensing Matters- None
- B. Financial Matters

1. School Committee request for a transfer from free cash in the amount of \$240,848-

Chair of the School Committee Greg Thompson made two points of interest before they began; first were the zoning changes Councilor Anderson spoke about. Mr. Thompson stated they are interested in what the impact would be on the schools and asked that an impact study done. Councilor Anderson stated that an impact study is part of the plan. The second point of interest Mr. Thompson wanted to make was he watched a previous meeting where the Recreation Department met with the Council and wanted to remind the Council that the School Department has jurisdiction over 19 acres at Heritage Park. Mr. Thompson wants to make sure they are kept in the loop if anything happens over there going forward. Councilor Page stated that was something that came up when he talked to the Recreation Department and he thought that was something that would go through the Town Manager and legal to see what should be done. Councilor Page thought once the Charter went through the Town Manager is in charge of all Town properties. Mr. Thompson stated that the School Committee is the executive for the schools properties and they can discuss at a later time.

Mr. Thompson stated that every year they have some out of district costs in terms of tuition; there are children that need specialized programs and they have to send them out of district. This year there is an abundance of those students and the costs for out of district tuition is at \$546,000.00 this year. Every year they do anticipate some out of district tuitions including new ones, and it is usually \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00 in cost. Mr. Thompson stated that they look first at some of the ways they could mitigate those costs within their own budget and after completing they are wondering if the Council could do a transfer of free cash.

Councilor Richards stated that she received a call from a resident who had some questions. Is there any way when you're dealing with out of district programs to shop around; is there a way to still meet the needs of your students at another facility if the facility they are using is out of their price range? Superintendent Smith explained that when an individual education plan is put together there is a team who looks at what is going to be the most supportive environment. Generally you may have, depending on the situation, one or two programs that could be looked at. Unfortunately more of the programs are situated in Eastern Massachusetts; there are fewer of these programs in Western Massachusetts. The family will go and look at the programs and then the team comes back and tries to make the right decision for that child. Councilor Richards stated the resident thought at one point the School Committee had a reserve fund. Does that still exist or has it ever existed? Superintendent Smith stated he does not believe it ever existed. Superintendent Smith does think at some point there was discussion of possibly developing an emergency fund of some sort for this type of situation.

Councilor Page asked if there was any chance of expecting some of these huge increases. Superintendent Smith stated there is always some expectation that programs can change but not necessarily to this level. Superintendent Smith stated this year they have had seven changes that took place, and on top of that they have five additional new out of district placements. Assistant Superintendent of Business Pam Blair stated that they have analyzed all of their accounts and have done their own internal transfers.

Councilor Henry believes the budgeting was appropriate and wants to make sure no stone has been left unturned before we proceed. Councilor Henry asked if they are below budget year to date in total and if so how much of the underage are you earmarking for this issue also might anything be recovered later from state or grant funds. Ms. Blair stated that as of her January 27<sup>th</sup> Financial Report the deficit was \$412,000.00 in the out of district account. Ms. Blair assured Councilor Henry that no stone has been left unturned.

Councilor Kane commented that he was on the Budget Finance Committee last year and one of the things he realized is that the School Committee budget is about 65% of the entire budget. The Budget Finance Committee spent a lot of time really going through that budget. They had a meeting with the School Committee and worked very diligently to keep this budget. The working relationship was really good. Because the budget was tight and they gave up quite a bit which is probably why there is not any extra money to cover the \$240,000.00 deficit.

*Councilor Anderson made a motion for the Town to approve a Free Cash transfer of \$240,848.00 to the School's Special Education Out-of-District Tuition Account. Councilor Henry seconded the motion. **The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).***

2. Health Department request for a transfer from free cash of \$30,000.00 for the purpose of purchasing 20 cases of disinfectant for use against the Coronavirus.

*Councilor Henry made a motion for the Town to appropriate \$30,000.00 from Free Cash to the Health Department for the purpose of purchasing Durisan disinfectant for the use against the corona virus. Councilor Kane seconded the motion. **The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).***

#### **Old Business:**

1. Speeding and traffic on Rural Lane- Mary McNally stated after the last Council meeting when the issue of speeding and traffic problem on Rural Lane came up she spoke with the Police Chief and the DPW Director. The DPW Director Bruce Fenney informed her that the installation of speed bumps was not fiscally feasible at this point because each speed bump is \$50,000.00. The next best option that Mr. Fenney suggested was to put up a jersey barrier to eliminate the street being used as a cut through; this could be done immediately and be a temporary fix stated Ms. McNally.

Tony Kuczab, a resident of Rural Lane, stated that they just wanted something done. Mr. Kuczab stated that he would support this decision, and it would definitely make the street safer. Mr. Kuczab believes that his neighbors would also support this.

Councilor Kane stated that a situation like this happened in Longmeadow and it has worked extremely well. Councilor Kane asked what end of the road they were thinking about closing. Councilor Kane stated there is a lot of congestion on Porter Road, trying to cross Parker Street headed South at certain times of the day. Councilor Kane would advocate where they want to stop that traffic. Mr. Kuczab has given that some thought and believes the DPW would have to weigh in.

President Hill feels there should be proper signage and also something in the Reminder to inform people of this.

Councilor Henry believes the real problem is the four way stop sign not the cut through. Councilor Henry stated that the right thing to do would be to install a traffic light and that would reduce the amount of cars cutting through on Rural Lane.

Councilor Kane stated that he and Jeanne Quaglietti spent quite a bit of time working with the DPW and the Police Chief to address this problem; he is hoping that they will be able to deliver

something that is satisfactory. Councilor Kane stated that if a traffic light was installed at that intersection the cost was north \$600,000.00. This would be a quick term fix that we can try and see how it works; if it doesn't work we can address it further down the road.

Alicia Lyon of 53 Laurel Lane stated that she works at home during the day and people cut through all day, not just two times a day. Ms. Lyons also stated that pulling out of her driveway is hazardous and believes that closing the street would be best.

Councilor Page stated that if they do the jersey barriers he would like to start by doing it temporary. Councilor Page also stated that they have to have signage. Councilor Page believes by doing this it will create more back up on Porter Road and at some point they will have to look into having a traffic light there.

Margaretanne Gomez of 483 Parker Street expressed her concerns about blocking this street off. Ms. Gomez stated it is a street and people drive on it that is what it is there for. Ms. Gomez believes there will be traffic problems and feels there should be some discussion as to what other alternatives can be made.

Councilor Richards asked if there was any discussion about traffic calming. Ms. McNally stated that she has had numerous conversations with the DPW Superintendent and the Police Chief about various possibilities. They are almost all cost prohibitive which is why Mr. Fenney came up with temporary solution of the jersey barriers so that they can try and bring some relief to the neighborhood.

*Councilor Henry made a motion that the towns authorize the Department of Public Works to install a temporary jersey barrier on Rural Lane for 120 days and then further review. Councilor Kane seconded the motion. **The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).***

**New Business:**

1. Discussion of the Town Council's budget priorities for FY21 and budget format, per Article 6, Section 1 of the Charter -

President Hill stated that the Charter does say that at this time of year the Council must give some guidance to the Town Manager in the development of a budget that will be delivered to the Council so the Council can react to it. President Hill asked Mary McNally to give them an overview of what has been done so far in getting to a budget.

Ms. McNally stated that she had all the departments submit their operating budgets by December 31, 2019; that was accomplished with a couple of exceptions from the departments that had Boards that had to meet. Ms. McNally met with the Finance Director and each Department Head and went over their proposed operating budget.

Ms. McNally stated that the first draft went out resulting in a tax rate increase of \$1.45 which Ms. McNally informed Department Heads that that increase could not be. They are working on a

second draft. The Finance Director was instructed to delete the few new positions that were in some of the budgets. The Finance Director was also instructed to eliminate any reserves that people had put in.

Ms. McNally explained that health insurance premiums are going up, minimum wage went up, and there are step increases and salary increases. Ms. McNally is focused on a level service budget. All the data has been accumulated and now they are trying to refine it.

Councilor Page stated that he has had numerous conversations with many taxpayers that were extremely upset over last year's budget, not realizing how much the Council had done to cut it, and are saying that the budget needs to be cut. Ms. McNally stated that she wants to create a budget that is accurate and reasonable, a budget that honors the hard work of your town employees. Ms. McNally stated that every week that she works here she is impressed with the dedication of the employees.

Councilor Henry feels it is important that they give the Town Manager a target.

Councilor Kane feels that they are in a much better place than last year and we have to keep in mind that there are contractual obligations that have to be met.

Councilor Henry asked if they have a dollar amount to give Ms. McNally.

*President Hill made a motion to use a two million dollar target for Mary McNally's initial budget. There was no second to this motion.*

Ms. McNally would like to start at where we need to be, not to start at a high number and then make cuts. Ms. McNally suggests that the Council inform her that they want a level service budget with the unavoidable increases from third party vendors or contractual agreements. This can be a target that does not have a number or dollar sign associated with it.

*Councilor Anderson made a motion to direct the Town Manager to prepare a level services budget with the understanding of the unfunded mandate and the unavoidable increases from third party vendors and contractual agreements. Councilor Kane seconded the motion. **The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).***

2. Discussion of Town Managers goals – President Hill would like to recommend that delivering a fiscally responsible Budget and Capital that they can bring to fruition should be one of the goals.

Councilor Richards stated that when it was discussed they talked about short term goals until June 30, 2020 it prompted Councilor Richards to put down that the Town Manager work with the Health Director to establish an action plan in response to Covid19. Councilor Richards feels that we already doing this. The rest of the Council agreed that this should be one of the short term goals.

President Hill suggests that a succession plan for the Town Managers position, because this is spelled out in the Charter.

Councilor Kane would like to see the HR Department as short term goal; but he would not want to hire the wrong person just to meet the obligation of a short term goal back up plan.

*President Hill made a motion for the Town Manager, for the short term; focus on the Budget Development, the ongoing troubleshooting of the Public Health issue, the creation of a reasonable succession plan and to strengthen the position in the HR Department. Councilor Henry seconded the motion. **The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).***

3. Action items- Coordinate with Ms. McNally and follow up on Mr. Rich's concern.

*Councilor Richards mad a motion to adjourn the Open Session meeting. Councilor Page seconded the motion. **The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 absent (Councilor O'Connor).***

Open session was adjourned at 8:52 pm. The next Town Council meeting is March 24, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Sullivan

Assistant Town Clerk

Documents: Agenda, Town Manager Report, Suggested Town Manager goals, Acceptance of gift, School Committee request for free cash PDF, Rural Lane pdf, Presidential Primary results, and Eagle Scout citation.



## TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

March 10, 2020

Attachment A

Good evening:

The Town is in the process of preparing necessary steps in the event of a further spread of the Covid-19 virus. The EMD and Health Depts. have prepared a COOP, which is a Continuity of Operations Plan. The Plan template has been distributed to all Dept. Heads and is due by Monday, March 16, 2020. Preparations are being made and adjusted continuously regarding precautionary measures with respect to the Covid-19 virus. Disinfectant sprays, paper towels and specific directions on hand washing and other hygiene protocols were disseminated to the Department Heads this past week. Our Health Dept. Director is in communication with the Commonwealth's Dept of Public Health on an ongoing basis to assure up to date information regarding the spreading virus and planning measures as they may become necessary. You have a motion before you tonight for a transfer from free cash (30k) to accommodate the purchase of a stronger, more effective disinfectant product for use in municipal buildings. Fire Chief Morrisette is here to describe the product and address the matter in greater detail. We have no cases of the virus in Town and these measures are precautionary only.

Negotiations are underway with the United Municipal Employees Union (DPW). That contract expires on June 30, 2020. There is also a pending petition filed by another Union with the Massachusetts Department of Labor Relations seeking to represent the bargaining unit for the Town Employees. A pre-conference hearing is scheduled in Boston at the Department of Labor Relations on March 12, 2020.

In our continuing effort to rebuild the Town's HR Dept., a job posting for an HR Assistant has been posted on the Town website and the MMA. This position will support the Benefits Coordinator initially and will provide much needed general administrative assistance.

The details of the Town's merger with Westcomm Dispatch Center continue to be worked out. Westcomm will apply for development and incentive grants to cover East Longmeadow's costs now that we have signed the District Agreement indicating our intention to join the regional center. Those grant applications are due by April 1, 2020 and generally, funds are not awarded until September. This delay may require the Town to budget for a portion of our initial assessment, which will be re-imbursed upon receipt of the grant funds.

The agreements regarding the District Improvement Financing project, (DIF) at Dwight Rd. and Maple St. have been finalized. The East Longmeadow Skilled Nursing Center and the Town have signed the agreement which documents the fiscal responsibilities of the parties.

I expect the second draft of the Town's operating budget to be completed by your next meeting. We have also completed the first round of discussions with various Department heads regarding their capital requests for FY 21.

The Departments are in the process of completing their reports for the annual Town report.

Discussions continue on the proposed implementation of the Shared Health services agreement with the Town of Longmeadow. Aimee and I have been meeting regularly with the representative from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the Mass. Department of Public Health and of course, our colleagues in Longmeadow to fine tune all of the necessary elements of this initiative.

We are in negotiations with Republic regarding an extension of their waste contract with the Town.

The DPW, representatives from Tighe & Bond and I met with staff from DEP on Friday regarding the DEP's desire to have the Town move forward with next steps to close the Allen Street landfill over a 3 to 5 year period. Plans for monitoring gas mitigation, access, volume filling and type of cap as well as the use of Town DPW resources to accomplish this closure were discussed. DEP had high praise for the DPW's efforts on the Somers Rd. closure and expressed a willingness to work with the Town again in a cooperative way to accomplish cost savings by use of "sweat equity", rather than outsourcing all of the required steps in this process.

I am meeting with Rep. Ashe's office to discuss requests for special funding (earmarks) projects on Thursday, March 12, 2020. An additional meeting with Sen. Lesser's office will be scheduled in the next 10 days.

Open Space Plan is under review by Recreation Director.

Pole location hearings, dog hearings, review of ADA Coordinator duties and review of Veterans Service Officer responsibilities are underway.

The Town has received a beautiful grandfather clock from Mr. Robert Picknally. It is located in the conference room at the Council on Aging. There's a motion regarding acceptance of this gift for your action tonight.

East Longmeadow High School girls basketball team won their semi-final game in the Division II tournament last week at WNEU and played in the finals at UMASS this past weekend, unfortunately lost that game but had a great season. Coach Kevin McGee has been named Division Coach of the Year. We acknowledge his contributions to the overall development of the student body in East Longmeadow.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. McNally  
Town Manager