



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW
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TOWN COUNCIL

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Kathleen G. Hill, President
Michael J. Kane, Vice President *Joseph A. Ford*
Donald J. Anderson Kevin M. Manley
Paul L. Federici Thomas C. O'Connor

FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 26, 2019 at 1:00 P.M
Library Conference Room, 60 Center Square
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

Present: Committee Chair Christine Saulnier, Jim Broderick, Council Vice President Michael Kane, Councilor Thomas O'Connor, and Council President Kathy Hill

Chair Saulnier opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m., and made note that ELCAT was taping the meeting,

Chair Saulnier said she wanted to take the opportunity to make a statement to the viewers and townspeople of the purpose of the Town Council Financial Oversight Committee. She said the Committee was appointed by the Town Council as an adjunct committee and is charged with three functions relative to the Town Manager's proposed FY20 budget: review, research and recommend. Chair Saulnier wanted to further state the Committee members are all stakeholders in the Town of East Longmeadow. They are taxpayers and concerned with having the Town's best interest in view; what is best for everyone who pays taxes in our Town.

Chair Saulnier continued, stating that each member of the Oversight Committee has served for a number of years in some capacity within Town government. It should be understood that the Committee has no voting power to affect the Town's final budget. They are asking questions and holding discussions to ensure that the dollars raised in taxes in the coming year are responsible, fiscally sound, and meet the Town's needs. The Committee will eventually submit a report with their findings to the Council for their decision and action. Only the Council will decide if budgets are altered or amended either way, up or down; that is their job. Chair Saulnier repeated again, the Oversight Committee's job solely is to review, research and recommend.

The first item on the agenda was for Vice President Kane to research dispatch staffing for surrounding towns. Vice President Kane said he reached out to other communities with a similar population as East Longmeadow. Of those he heard back from, Hampden, Longmeadow, Monson, and Palmer each have one dispatcher for an eight hour shift. Agawam has two to three dispatchers for each shift. However, Agawam has a larger population and also has to accommodate the public safety demand of Six Flags.

Regarding East Longmeadow's dispatch staffing needs, it should be noted that there is always other personnel in the building and can assist with dispatch on an as needed basis. Councilor O'Connor asked if there is a manager that oversees the dispatch shift, and Vice President Kane replied that dispatch is managed by a supervising police officer, like other communities. He will give an update on the communities that he hasn't heard back from yet, once he gets their responses.

Chair Saulnier next discussed the status of the obtaining the departments' individual budget requests by line. She said she was concerned about the flexible time the Town Manager will be working due to her current illness. Because of this she filed a public records request in order to get that information, which is the line item budgets and the original capital project requests.

Chair Saulnier then reported that the Town Manager's proposed budget will be submitted to the Town Council at their meeting on April 29, 2019. She assumes that the Committee can obtain a copy of that budget at the April 29 meeting.

Chair Saulnier commented that since Councilor O'Connor is going to be away, and because she does not anticipate a prompt submittal of the budget information that is requested, she would like to set the next meeting dates for the Oversight Committee for May 8 and May 10. There was discussion on whether the Council will need to hold special meetings outside of their regular meetings to accommodate budget discussions. President Hill confirmed that the only agenda item for the April 29 Council meeting is for the presentation of the Town Manager's proposed budget to them, and there will be no vote at that time. If Council members have questions, they can ask at that time. There won't be any action other than to set other meeting dates.

Councilor O'Connor assumed that the budget would come back to the Oversight Committee to review the draft and make recommendations, and President Hill agreed. Chair Saulnier is sensitive to the timing of the Oversight Meeting dates to make sure they have enough time to get their recommendations to the Council. President Hill said the Council will hold their public hearing for the budget in May. After public input, the Council will approve the budget by June 1, per the Charter.

The next Financial Oversight Committee meetings were scheduled for May 8 at 10:00 a.m., and May 10 at 1:00 p.m. Chair Saulnier said she was invited to meet with Finance Director Sara Menard and Town Manager Denise Menard on May 1 at 1:30 p.m., and Mr. Broderick will be joining her.

Mr. Broderick made a motion to adjourn at 1:14 p.m. Vice President Kane seconded and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne R. Quaglietti
Assistant Town Clerk