



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

**TOWN COUNCIL**

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**FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

May 13, 2019 at 10:30 A.M

Town Manager's Conference Room, 60 Center Square  
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028

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

Chair Saulnier opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m., and made note that ELCAT was taping the meeting.

DPW Superintendent Bruce Fenney had been asked to this meeting so the Committee could ask him questions regarding his capital requests. Chair Saulnier asked Mr. Fenney if the trailer mounted generator he is requesting has connectivity to any other building. Mr. Fenney replied no; the generator is intended primarily for the town hall. The server at the town hall is already backed up on a generator.

Chair Saulnier then asked where the generator would be stored, and Mr. Fenney said it would be stored at the DPW yard or the pump station and be in a weather enclosure. Mr. Broderick asked if another building in Town had an issue could the trailer mounted generator be used to support it, and is the trailer able to be brought somewhere else. Mr. Fenney said yes to both questions.

Councilor O'Connor asked about connectivity, and Mr. Fenney explained there would need to be a docking station put on the town hall building. Once the docking station was there it would take 10-15 minutes to connect, and part of the proposed cost of the generator includes the docking station for the town hall. Mr. Broderick asked what the connectivity process would be for the other buildings that do not have a generator. Mr. Fenney said, as they did for the Senior Center in the October storm years ago, they would feed the panel itself and disconnect the main power from the street. He said it's not the best way to do things and takes a few hours versus a couple of minutes. Mr. Fenney added that he had purchased temporary taps, which are "plug and play", and is installing them now at Watchaug station and the stations at Denslow Road and Vineland Avenue.

Councilor O'Connor said the police department has a very old natural gas generator, and asked what the plan was for that building. Mr. Fenney said they would go into a transfer switch, and he plans to replace that generator in a couple years as a part of the police department's addition.

Vice President Kane asked how many buildings will have docking stations added to them, and Mr. Fenney referred to the three temporary taps he is installing, and added that first they need to find out what they're doing with the police department.

Regarding Mr. Fenney's request for a Bobcat, Chair Saulnier asked if a lease to purchase option was considered, and Mr. Fenney said it was not. Councilor O'Connor said lease to purchase was something the

Committee felt should be looked into. He said in addition to the Bobcat, Mr. Fenney was also requesting a mini excavator and a John Deere tractor. Councilor O'Connor asked if Mr. Fenney considered purchasing all three pieces from the same vendor to offset the cost. Mr. Fenney said John Deere and Bobcat products don't match each other, but he will ask. Vice President Kane asked if the Town was leasing anything from Tyler Equipment and Mr. Fenney said no.

Regarding the DPW's request for an F250 truck for the stormwater enterprise fund, Mr. Broderick asked Mr. Fenney if he needed a truck or could he purchase something less expensive. Mr. Fenney said the request for a truck is typical for the DPW and the foreman needs it for the tools and equipment. He added that everyone in his department plows, and this truck would be used for plowing for which they already have a plow.

Councilor O'Connor asked is there a way Mr. Fenney could defer the purchase until the stormwater money accrues. Mr. Fenney said he doesn't have anything in his fleet for his employee to use, and vehicles are already at a surplus. He would advise against waiting. Councilor O'Connor then said if the three requested police vehicles are approved, could Mr. Fenney use a repurposed vehicle for the short term until stormwater accumulates funds to pay for it. Town Manager Denise Menard asked Mr. Fenney what his projection is for getting funding. Mr. Fenney said on July 1, 2019 all residents and commercial properties will be billed. He said if he ordered the truck in July he wouldn't get it or pay for it until October.

Referring to the school's willingness to defer for one year the modular units for Mountain View Elementary School, Mr. Broderick asked Mr. Fenney's opinion regarding waiting one more year. Mr. Fenney replied that the units can last a few more years. There was minor mold in one of the ducts because the air conditioning wasn't working properly, but that has been corrected.

Chair Saulnier said in April Mr. Fenney had mentioned that he had a 2007 mower that breaks down, and asked if he envisioned needing another one. Mr. Fenney said he is requesting a new mower next year, and he's been trying to space out his requests for less impact on the Town. Related to that, Chair Saulnier noted that DPW received \$45K to maintain the fields. Mr. Fenney said he moved money around and deferred some items to make that possible. He added that part of that was for two seasonal employees, and part of it was for field maintenance.

The Financial Oversight Committee thanked Mr. Fenney for coming in for clarification, and he said if they have any further questions they could contact him.

Ms. D. Menard commented that Ms. S. Menard was not in the office today but did drop in with some information the Committee was looking for. Mr. Broderick explained what they had been looking for. He said they had asked Ms. S. Menard for clarification of how the change worked for adjusting the salary when the Committee wishes to drop a full time position to a part time position. Chair Saulnier said she had asked Ms. S. Menard for the cost of salary increases in the 2020 budget. Ms. S. Menard was to get that information to Chair Saulnier by Friday, May 10, but Chair Saulnier has not received that information yet. Other information Ms. S. Menard was to get to the Committee was to let them know what she was using for the levy limit when she was calculating the tax rate.

Emergency Dispatch Director Scott Burns was present to answer the Committee's questions regarding his budget requests. Chair Saulnier asked Mr. Burns about renovations at the police station. Mr. Burns said those renovations are coming from some of the FY19 state grants, and the computer software was funded from the EMD grant from 2018. The total renovation budget is being used from money left over from previous years that they're using as a change over budget, and Mr. Burns thinks there is approximately \$116K in that account. He said change over costs are currently at \$89K, and the biggest portion of that is

going towards emergency medical dispatch (EMD) software, which is \$45K. Mr. Burns further explained the grant is reimbursable for specific categories of funding.

Vice President Kane asked if these are actual renovations or just software and Mr. Burns said the renovations are paint, carpeting and a new window. Mr. Burns said the new window is a safety issue. The original station was built in the 1970's and the ballistic window was taken out.

Councilor O'Connor asked Mr. Burns about his reference to "monies from the past". Ms. D. Menard said it was grant money earned through the police department and some of that gets reimbursed back to the police department and some goes to dispatch. Councilor O'Connor then asked what the total amount of the grant was for last year. Mr. Burns replied that last year the two categories supporting the center was \$43,586, and for FY18 it was \$22,189 for the EMD grant. Chair Saulnier asked if you can reapply for the grant every year and Mr. Burns said yes, and for the next fiscal year the state will award the grant on needs based criteria instead of for specific categories.

Chair Saulnier said based on Mr. Burns' organizational chart it shows four full time dispatchers and three part time dispatchers. Mr. Burns said they are budgeted for five part time dispatchers; they are training a fourth, and he doesn't think they'll fill the fifth position. Mr. Burns gave statistics for calls from November 2018 through April 2019 showing an increase in calls, more so in the last three months than the first three months. He added that in comparison with Longmeadow, East Longmeadow is expected to have more medical calls, especially with East Longmeadow opening another medical facility.

Mr. Broderick said this is a 24/7 operation, and asked what type of staff is on each shift. Mr. Burns said they originally planned for two dispatchers on first shift, two dispatchers on second shift, and one dispatcher overnight. He said there are times when they have one on first and second shift, but it is less than ideal. The day of the meeting, there was one dispatcher working, with Mr. Burns as the second, but if Mr. Burns is in a meeting or not in the office he can't help cover the shift.

Chair Saulnier asked what the duration of each call is and Mr. Burns said the EMD calls are more in depth. They can't hang up until the paramedics are on site, and the average for those calls is 3-5 minutes. Mr. Broderick asked if Mr. Burns had some of the four full time workers on second and third shift. Mr. Burns said he, himself, is on the day shift with the lead dispatcher. Second shift has two full time people, and the overnight shift has one full time person. He uses the part time workers to backfill and cover since they have a staggered schedule.

Councilor O'Connor asked what the rationale was for part time workers. It seems like they are being paid a flat salary of \$15K. Mr. Burns said they are budgeted for a sixteen hour pay period, and they are only being paid for the hours worked.

Mr. Broderick said, looking at the budget, it looks like five part time workers are budgeted for. He asked Mr. Burns if he is holding out unless he needs five. Mr. Burns said the part time position is more for flex shift coverage for busy periods, and it's hard to project forward since they've only been operational for three months. Councilor O'Connor asked if that means they can remove the \$15K. Ms. D. Menard replied that the originally proposed number of part time positions was six and they decided they could get away with one person for the overnight shift. She added they were trying to be as conservative as they can.

Chair Saulnier asked Mr. Burns which community he is exploring to join East Longmeadow. It seemed to her that East Longmeadow was well staffed. Mr. Burns said that Hampden is in a more difficult financial situation than East Longmeadow. In his mind they are doing what's best for East Longmeadow. Palmer and Ware expressed interest in joining once East Longmeadow was operational. Mr. Burns said the state is encouraging regional dispatch, but his focus now is to keep East Longmeadow up and running.

Ms. D. Menard said part of the statement made to the Council was that the Town first needs to have the dispatch in order before reaching out to other towns. The door is always open to Longmeadow, but they may be going with Chicopee; however, that is not confirmed yet. She feels that Longmeadow would be a good match for East Longmeadow and they may come our way.

Chair Saulnier stated that the Town's dispatch staffing would be able to accommodate any additional community, so they wouldn't have to add any. Ms. D. Menard said we would be cost sharing and receiving income. President Hill said she recalled at a previous Council meeting that Mr. Burns had reached out to Hampden for interest and a possible offer. Mr. Burns said he has had no response from Hampden.

Vice President Kane said he has completed formulas before to decide what dispatch staffing is appropriate based on current call volume and time spent on the phone. He said he could do that for East Longmeadow.

Councilor O'Connor commented that the proposed budget for dispatch has an increase of 83%. Mr. Broderick said that's a partial budget since they just started in February. It hurts the budget but is not reflective of twelve months of operation. Ms. D. Menard said the amount that is budgeted is less than what was projected.

Chair Saulnier said they had reduced the overtime but are still requesting \$24K, and asked Mr. Burns if that is still necessary. Mr. Burns said in February, March and April they only spent \$4K. He said the full time workers have three months of probationary time, and he can take another look at the overtime in another three months.

There was discussion regarding the increased call volume in the last three months and Ms. D. Menard asked Mr. Burns to check with the fire chief and police chief to see why there was an increase. She thought there may have been more accurate reporting in the last three months due to the software.

Chair Saulnier asked if the dispatch was completely civilian, and Mr. Burns replied yes. He said there is some involvement on the police and fire sides. A lot of agencies have to find a balancing act to have someone step in to cover the phones if someone is on break or away from the office. The state mandates a certain amount of training. Ms. D. Menard said the goal was to not have to train police officers and have them on the road, and they have done that.

The Planning Department's budget was discussed next, and Chair Saulnier said she had sent an email to the Planning Director asking about the increases. Mr. Broderick commented there was a substantial increase in postage and he wondered how much of that relates to the master plan. Councilor O'Connor thought they were looking to outsource the master plan. Ms. D. Menard replied that a lot of it was being done internally; however, there will be a lot of fact gathering that may require special skills so they may have to outsource. Chair Saulnier said that would explain the increase of \$950 to \$2K for training. Ms. D. Menard said that training seminars were underfunded in the past since the previous planner had been in that role for many years.

Planning's advertisement fees were discussed and Ms. D. Menard said that advertising has gone up since Planning is using The Republican. Timing for legal notices for public hearings was more difficult with The Reminder, and some dates were missed. For this reason The Republican is used and is more expensive.

Chris Saulnier commented that a lot of questions had been answered in this meeting that the Oversight Committee had from their May 8 meeting. Mr. Broderick then distributed a worksheet to the Committee reflecting potential changes for the budget.

Councilor O'Connor noted that some of the recommendations focused on casino mitigation funds, and said he had not been part of that agreement. President Hill said the first year-end of the agreement is August 2019 at which point both the Town and the casino would do independent studies to review any impact. Ms. D. Menard said the annual payment to the Town is \$100K for five years with a lookback. There is an additional grant opportunity if a huge increase in traffic occurred, but the Town has not experienced this. Ms. D. Menard has asked the department heads to inform her if they realize any impact within the Gaming Commission's parameters, and this year there was none.

Councilor O'Connor said he lives on the end of Town near Springfield and he gets feedback that it's difficult to enter North Main Street. He feels the traffic has increased and sees a lot of Connecticut license plates going through that area. It is Councilor O'Connor's opinion is that the change in traffic is a result of the casino.

President Hill said it behooves the Town to spend casino mitigation funds on something that correlates with the casino's impact.

**Motion:** Vice President Kane made a motion to adjourn at 11:40 a.m. Mr. Broderick seconded and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne R. Quaglietti  
Assistant Town Clerk