



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

March 27, 2020

Good day to all:

Smooth, uninterrupted management of municipal operations over the last several weeks has been accomplished through the steadfast efforts of Department Heads. We continue to meet daily by means of a virtual conference call. Today, and most days this week, the reports were upbeat and positive from all Departments. All town buildings will remain closed to the public until further notice. As you probably know, schools are ordered closed through May 4, 2020. I have advised everyone to continue to be mindful of the stress levels of their staff and take appropriate steps to encourage people to use their paid time off to re-energize when necessary.

Building facilities work continues; namely, renovation of the Recreation offices within the COA building, cleaning of the library carpets, work at Meadowbrook School and some minor fixes at the main Town Hall entry door. Work is also proceeding at the Allen St. landfill closure and other outdoor projects.

The United Municipal Employees Union (DPW) contract has been settled. The new agreement, beginning July 1, 2020, expires in December of 2022 (30 months, rather than 36 months) to allow for more thorough budget preparations for future fiscal years. The members have also agreed to the same payroll schedule as the rest of the Town, namely, bi-weekly with direct deposit. This concession will save the Town significant administrative time and expense which was incurred due to the prior requirements of a separate weekly payroll.

The consent vote for the Town Employees Union will take place within the next few weeks. Thereafter, depending on results, negotiations will begin on the new contract for that group of employees as well.

Hard copies of the operating budgets for each department have been distributed to the financial oversight committee for review independently by each member prior to our first virtual meeting, yet to be scheduled. The capital budget submissions will be copied next week. This is a significant administrative undertaking in light of the current staffing in our offices. Various bills are pending in the Legislature regarding extensions of filing for municipal budgets, use of free cash after July 1 and before the next certification by DOR, payment of 4th quarter real estate tax bills, etc. I am monitoring those bills and their potential impact on our budget planning. Our real estate and personal property tax bills have already been mailed and an extension of time to pay (to June 1) is anticipated.

I have signed an MOU with the City of Northampton for shared Public Nursing staff. East Longmeadow has received two separate grants from DPH, each in the amount of 25k, to be shared equally with Longmeadow based on our contemplated Shared Health Initiative. These funds will be used to compensate the nursing services provided to East Longmeadow. The Finance Dept. has been asked to track all extraordinary expenses incurred due to this health emergency, all of which will be submitted for re-imbursement by FEMA or MEMA. Arrangements have been made with a hotel in Springfield to reserve rooms for first responders who may require quarantine due to exposure. We continue to attempt to have our first responders tested at Baystate but have not achieved this goal yet. Sickness in these departments necessitates an overtime expense to backfill so we are anxious to have a testing mechanism in place before any infection spreads in house. The National Guard is due to deliver much needed Personal Protection Equipment to our Fire and Police Departments today.

The logistical details of the Town's merger with Westcomm Dispatch Center continue, with a July 1 date as the goal.

To summarize, the business of the Town goes on, albeit in a less comfortable way for employees. There is a new directive from DPH or the Governor almost daily, which prompts further inquiries from the community and staff. Each issue has many levels, each solution produces several more questions. The intensity of this situation and of course the unknown duration can be overwhelming to some. Responding promptly to these variables can be difficult, but be assured that the interests of the community and service to residents continue to be our highest priority.

I am available to speak with you at any time to elaborate further on the content of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. McNally, Town Manager