



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

March 9, 2021

Good evening:

The bulk of activity in the month of February involved FY 22 budget preparation. Operational and capital budgets have been submitted to my office, with the exception of the School Department budget which I expect to receive next week. Steve Lonergan and I have met with each Department Head to discuss budget submissions and long range goals for each Department. Most of the budgets have not necessitated significant revision as they reflect the ongoing attention of management staff to fiscally prudent decision-making. The Department Heads, with few exceptions based on requests for new positions, have also maintained level funding but for pre-existing contractual obligations. The Capital Advisory Committee has begun its review of capital projects for FY 22 and will be meeting weekly to discuss and make recommendations on projects. We are also in the process of determining next steps regarding financing options for FY21 capital projects.

The Commonwealth's decision regarding vaccine administration by local Boards of Health has previously been forwarded to you by copy of the letter from Secretary Sudders. The Town has also recently placed a robocall to residents informing them of these most recent developments and where residents can seek alternate sites. We communicated with Senator Lesser and expressed to him the frustration we experienced by not being able to serve our population in the manner we felt was best. He was understanding and appreciative of our comments regarding the relative advantages of local sites over mass sites and expressed them in the Covid committee hearing held last week. We have no additional recourse in this regard.

Elaine Grimaldi has finished her work for the Town as of February 26, 2021. She served admirably over a fifteen month period, assisting in the restructuring of the department and development of orderly processes in our Human Resources functions. Her graceful demeanor, kindness to all and professional competence will be sorely missed. Joan Iwanicki is settling in nicely, integrating with employees and familiarizing herself with Town Union contracts among other issues.

The Master Plan Steering Committee continues its work. The visioning session conducted on Saturday, February 13, 2021 was very well done and successful. Many Town residents participated in that meeting to give the Town the benefit of their input about the issues that are important to them and what they see as strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Their contributions will be considered in the final Master Plan. As a result of this meeting, I recently received an email from a local family, the Chrusciels, who credited this meeting with inspiring them to lead an Earth Day initiative in Town, which I forwarded to you under separate cover.

ELCAT has a number of initiatives underway. The Charter license agreement is under review after a number of edits suggested by the Town. Don Maki and Jamie Rooke are working together with several Departments to create informative videos on a number of topics of interest. For example, they are working with the COA staff on their monthly program regarding activities; the Planning Board has suggested a video on the permitting process and zoning issues; school sports are being live streamed by Jaime, who is simultaneously mentoring and developing student broadcasters in that area; acts for SPARTANUM are being taped for a virtual presentation and there is interest in providing some type of candidate forum as the election period approaches.

The 2020 Town Annual report has been sent to the graphic designer prior to final review before printing. Town Departments continue their diligent efforts to serve their constituents; Recreation, Library and COA continuously develop and offer programs to address quality of life issues during Covid. All other Departments are carrying on the necessary business of the Town without interruption despite the ongoing difficulties presented by the pandemic. Their collective good will and cooperation are evident every day and are a credit to the community.

The Board of Directors for Westcomm reviewed the responses to the RFQ's for a feasibility study and design services regarding improvements to be made at the former Salter College building in Chicopee for an operations center. A contract for services will be negotiated with Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc. of Foxborough, Ma. which was the most highly rated submission.

There has been considerable publicity regarding a recent audit of the Hampden County Retirement Board by PERAC. The findings have been referred to authorities with enforcement powers for further investigation. Many of the errors acknowledged by the Board, while egregious, are in the process of being addressed and corrected. The investigation is ongoing and I will advise as reliable information becomes available.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary E. McNally
Town Manager