



TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

April 5, 2022

Good evening:

The draft budget for FY 23 has been prepared and is submitted for your review this evening. It comes with a cautionary tale because the revenue information is not final or reliable as of this date. The Commonwealth's budget is not finalized so local aid numbers are subject to change. The Mass. Municipal Association is zealously advocating the Legislature to include revenue sharing in the amount of 7.3% rather than the Governor's proposed 2.7% based on the tax revenue received by the Commonwealth in excess of estimates. If successful, this increase would be 116k in additional local aid for East Longmeadow. The local meals tax and excise tax receipts are based on less than a full year's experience, we would like another quarter's performance for a better estimate; and the new growth value represented here is an estimated projection based on building permit fees and past sales. This year is also a revaluation year, Diane Bishop and the Board of Assessors continue to work on this issue.

Most operational budgets are in final form and several of them include requests for additional staff positions, all based on need, not want. Department Heads have supported their new requests with memoranda describing these needs, which of course will be made available for your review. However, the Police Department budget may change significantly in the next week or two depending on the outcome of ongoing labor contract negotiations. Many hours in the month of March have been devoted to resolving this matter and the next formal session is April 12, 2022. The Fire Department labor agreement ends on June 30, 2022, so there is potential for change in that budget as well. A first meeting with that Union is scheduled for later this month. The Department of Public Works has recently been notified of cost increases from Springfield Water and Sewer Commission and utility estimates may rise again before the final budget is submitted to you. The Finance office personnel have worked diligently to prepare this budget while attending to a multitude of other accounting functions resulting from the recent settlement of two collective bargaining agreements. Significantly, they were able to complete the required Cares Act financial reporting for the period of March 2020 to December 2021, reconciling \$539,652.36 of receipts and expenses to the penny.

Capital spending as presented suggests use of ARPA funds and Town resources other than tax revenue and bonding to accomplish the projects. This approach differs from the customary presentation and may not be agreeable to the Council or the Oversight Committee. The Town Manager's Capital Advisory Committee met several times throughout the month and was diligent in its review and evaluation of the many projects (valued at \$7,000,000.00) submitted for consideration. Ryan Quimby served as Chair and he was assisted by Richard Frechero, Town Councillors Page and O'Shea, Jim Broderick and Finance Director Steve Lonergan. I am grateful to all of these individuals for the time and effort they spent on this important matter

There is a Parc Grant training scheduled for May 4, 2022 which will be attended by Donna Prather and Stephen Lonergan. The Town is eligible to apply for this grant in this cycle as we now have an approved Open Space Plan. Funds received from a successful application could be used for the Heritage Park project.

The Town has been notified that it will share in proceeds of the Statewide Opioid settlements reached on or before Jan. 1, 2026 on a pro rata basis with other participating municipalities.

The Veterans District established the Town's budget contributions to the District for FY 23 and has reimbursed the Town for the improvements made to the office space at the COA.

The last remaining case at the MCAD against the Town has been dismissed with a finding of no probable cause.

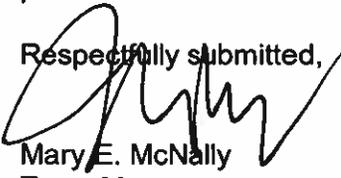
Planning and Community Development Director Bailey Mitchell began his employment with the Town on April 4, 2022. We welcome him and look forward to his contributions in implementation of many suggestions based on the Master Plan among other things. In partnership with the Economic Development Council of Western Mass., the Town has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$37,050 funded by the Mass. Office of Business Development to proceed with the North Main Street Project focusing on identifying the needs of businesses impacted by Covid.

The Police Department has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$2,500 from the Automated External Defibrillator Equipment Program.

The Town is also in the process of seeking a Library Director and Benefits Coordinator and will be evaluating applicants in the near future. Interviews for the latter position were held this afternoon.

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Respectfully submitted,



Mary E. McNally
Town Manager