

TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

June 14, 2022

Good evening:

Congratulations to all of the candidates who ran campaigns for Town and School offices.

Since our last meeting on May 24, 2022 at which the budget was passed by the Council, preparations have begun to recruit for the new positions authorized in the budget. Office space and seating capacity continue to be major problems as we try to place these new hires in a suitable working environment. We have also begun to plan the bidding process for the various capital projects that were approved in that budget and previous budgets.

The first negotiation meeting with the Fire Department occurred on June 1, 2022. Guidelines were discussed and agreed upon and documents requested by the Department have been provided.

The Town has received a Winter Recovery Assistance Program (WRAP) grant for road work and the contract has been executed. This grant provides an additional \$327,917 (reimbursement based) for road work projects and spending must be completed by June 30, 2023. This additional funding will most likely be used for managing overages in previously bid projects.

My office continues to cooperate with the efforts of the Mass Municipal Association to encourage the FY23 Budget Conference Committee to advocate for Municipal Priorities. A copy of its letter to Conference Committee members is attached for your reference.

We have received too many calls to count regarding delays in trash pickup. The current contract will end on June 30, 2022 and we are expecting improved service from the new vendor, Casella Waste Management of Massachusetts, Inc. In the meanwhile, the Health Department has arranged for a dumpster to be on site at the transfer station on Wednesdays and Saturdays through the end of the month for disposal of household waste, using green bags.

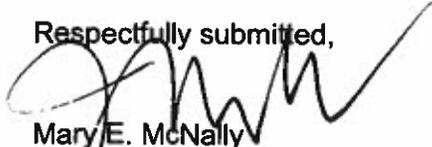
Our Veterans Service Officer, Michele Barrett, has resigned. The Board of Directors met on June 2, and again this morning to discuss necessary amendments to its salary line item in the FY23 budget. The Town will likely need a motion to set aside free cash for additional salary for her replacement. Michelle participated in the Town's observance of Memorial Day on May 30, 2022 by delivering an address. The Veterans District will advertise for her replacement immediately.

We have chosen our new Library Director. Katherine McGonigle will begin her employment here on July 18, 2022. She is currently the Youth Services Librarian at Storrs Library in Longmeadow. Ms. McGonigle was highly recommended by the members of the search committee who spent many hours interviewing numerous applicants over the last 4-6 weeks. I want to publicly thank David Boucher, Cynthia McNaught (Chair and Vice Chair of the Library Trustees) and Melanie Mannheim (former Trustee and former member of Friends) for their time and thoughtful evaluation of the applicants. Also noteworthy are the contributions of Michele Lemire, the Childrens Librarian, Kristen Savaria, our Cataloger and Carol Galiotta, Administrative Assistant, some of the many Library employees who have taken on additional responsibilities or cooperated in other ways in the absence of a permanent Director.

Amy Pawle has applied for reappointment as a Library Trustee and is recommended by her reappointment.

Negotiations are ongoing regarding acquisition of 70 Maple Street. The status of that property has prompted our Planning Director to begin a conversation about creation of an overlay District in the center of Town. Initial, very preliminary discussion was held on June 6, 2022 and further discussion on that topic will be an item on future Planning Board meeting agendas.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary E. McNally
Town Manager



Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lieutenant Governor
Jamey Tesler, Secretary & CEO



April 28, 2022

Mary McNally
Town Manager
60 Center Square
East Longmeadow, MA 01028

RECEIVED

MAY 02 2022

Town Manager's Office
East Longmeadow MA

Dear Mary McNally:

We are happy to announce \$100,000,000 in statewide funding for the Winter Recovery Assistance Program, also known as WRAP. WRAP provides supplemental funding to cities and towns for improvements to their transportation networks in response to this past winter's harsh weather. Program funding is allocated using a formula based on a municipality's share of local roadway mileage. East Longmeadow's WRAP funding apportionment is \$327,917.53 based on its locally owned mileage of 98.327042090000006.

WRAP is a reimbursement-based program, and municipalities must enter into an agreement with MassDOT before incurring any costs. Funding must be spent on eligible expenses in order to be reimbursed by MassDOT, and municipalities must submit online project reports with each reimbursement request. Please only begin WRAP work after receiving a Notice to Proceed from MassDOT. To initiate the contracting process, email WRAPReporting@dot.state.ma.us with the contact information (including email address) of your municipality's authorized signatory. The spending deadline for WRAP funding is **June 30, 2023**.

Additional program details including contracting, eligible costs, project reporting, and key deadlines are available online at www.mass.gov/winter-recovery-assistance-program-wrap. Thank you for your commitment to improving the Commonwealth's transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Charles D. Baker
Governor

Karyn E. Polito
Lieutenant Governor



Massachusetts
Municipal
Association

3 Center Plaza, Suite 610 • Boston, MA 02108
617-426-7272 • 800-882-1498 • fax 617-695-1314
www.mma.org

June 6, 2022

The Honorable Aaron M. Michlewitz, House Chair
The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues, Senate Chair
The Honorable Ann-Margaret Ferrante, House Vice Chair
The Honorable Cindy F. Friedman, Senate Vice Chair
The Honorable Todd M. Smola, Ranking House Minority Member
The Honorable Patrick M. O'Connor, Ranking Senate Minority Member
Joint Committee on Ways & Means
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Delivered Electronically

Dear Chair Michlewitz, Chair Rodrigues, and Distinguished Members of the Fiscal 2023 State Budget Conference Committee,

On behalf of cities and towns across the Commonwealth, we are writing to express our appreciation for the many provisions in the fiscal 2023 budget bills approved by the House (H. 4701) and the Senate (S. 2915) that benefit communities throughout the state. Both bills reflect a commitment to a strong fiscal partnership with municipalities.

We thank the House and Senate for advancing a state budget framework that continues to value a strong state-local government partnership through the support of several key local aid accounts. While there are a number of areas where the House and Senate agree on funding levels for municipal and school aid accounts, there are several areas where the two branches will have to resolve differences. In this letter, we offer municipal government's position on important funding and policy proposals that would impact communities, and we respectfully ask you to take action on these matters.

Municipalities across the Commonwealth are at a critical juncture at this stage of the public health emergency. At a time where cities and towns are benefiting from a one-time influx of federal and state funding, many are also facing the tightest operating budgets that they have experienced in years. Property taxes, the primary source of municipal revenue, are capped under Proposition 2½, and many cities and towns have seen revenues stay flat, while watching the costs of delivering core services increase far above municipal revenue growth. As a result, the Legislature's leadership in funding key local aid accounts is vitally important and truly appreciated.

We ask you to please invest in essential municipal and school aid programs, as well as adopt provisions that will aid city and town operations.

Appropriations

Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA)

The Senate appropriated \$1.23 billion for the Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) account (1233-2350 and section 3), an increase of \$63 million, or 5.4%, over the fiscal 2022 level of funding. With property taxes tightly capped by Proposition 2½, cities and towns rely on adequate state revenue sharing to provide municipal and school services, ensure safe streets and neighborhoods, and maintain vital infrastructure. These services are fundamental to our state's economic recovery, success and competitiveness. Unrestricted General Government Aid is *the* revenue sharing program that cities and towns receive to fund these essential municipal services. We respectfully ask the Conference Committee to include the full UGGA amount voted by the Senate. This is a very high priority for municipalities throughout the state, as these funds will all be devoted to balancing local budgets and maintaining the local programs and services that residents rely on every day.

Chapter 70 School Aid

We greatly appreciate the support from both the House and Senate to fund Chapter 70 School Aid at nearly \$6 billion, representing a commitment to fund the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) following the original intended schedule. In addition to keeping the commitment to fund the SOA rates on target, both chambers recognized the challenges facing 135 "minimum aid" districts that would only receive an increase of \$30 per student over the previous year under the budget filed by the governor in January. We applaud both the House and Senate for doubling this increase to \$60 per student in minimum aid, and strongly support the investments in both H. 4701 and S. 2915. While the intention and total amount of these provisions are the same, we encourage you to adopt the language from the Senate version, which includes the total amount of \$5.99 billion in the Chapter 70 account (7061-0008 and Section 3), securing the fiscal 2023 Chapter 70 amount in each district's base for future years.

Special Education Circuit Breaker

We support the \$440 million appropriation for Special Education Circuit Breaker (7061-0012) in H. 4701, which reimburses school districts for the high cost of educating students with disabilities. This amount reflects an increase of \$67 million over the current fiscal year. The Student Opportunity Act expanded the circuit breaker by including out-of-district transportation, to be phased in over three years. We urge you to provide the appropriation level provided by the House. The House total reflects years two and three of the schedule in the Student Opportunity Act, achieving full funding a year earlier than the governor's budget proposal would.

Charter School Mitigation Payments

We support the appropriation in the charter school impact mitigation account (7061-9010), of \$243 million for charter school mitigation payments, which represents an increase of \$89.2 million over the current fiscal year and \$24.4 million more than the governor proposed. Both the House and Senate bills would fully fund the state's statutory obligation for charter school mitigation payments as outlined in the Student Opportunity Act, pushing the state to phase in the plan by fiscal 2023, a full year earlier than the governor's budget proposal would.

Rural Schools

We support the appropriation of \$5.5 million in S. 2915 for Rural School Aid (7061-9813), providing rural school assistance to eligible towns and regional school districts. These grants will help schools facing the challenge of declining enrollment to identify ways to form regional school districts or regionalize certain school services to create efficiencies. We respectfully ask the Conference Committee to support the \$5.5 million amount.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes on State-owned Land

We strongly urge support for the Senate appropriation of \$45 million to pay a portion of the payment-in-lieu-of taxes (PILOT) amount to cities and towns with state-owned land (1233-2400), which represents a \$10 million increase over fiscal 2022. Inadequate PILOT funding over the years has created a significant hardship for smaller communities with large amounts of state-owned property, and we respectfully ask the Conference Committee to support the \$45 million funding amount.

Regional School District Student Transportation

We support the appropriation of \$82 million for Regional School District Transportation (7035-0006), which represents an 85% reimbursement rate and is closer to the DESE full funding estimate. We respectfully ask the Conference Committee to support the amount included in the Senate budget.

Out-of-District Vocational Student Transportation

We urge support for full funding for reimbursements due under statute for part of the cost of transporting students to out-of-district vocational education placements. Chapter 74 of the General Laws requires the state to reimburse cities and towns for the cost of transporting students to out-of-district vocational education programs (7035-0007). This reimbursement program recognizes the significant expense of providing transportation services for out-of-district placements, as these students must travel long distances to participate in vocational programs that might not be locally available. While short of full funding, we support the Senate's appropriation of \$250,000.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Student Transportation

We are grateful to both the House and Senate for adopting budgets intended to fully fund the state mandate to provide school transportation for homeless students (7035-0008). The Senate budget amount is slightly less than the House, reflecting DESE's most recent full funding estimate for fiscal 2023. Full funding of this account is appreciated by impacted communities and school districts.

Shannon Anti-Gang Grant Program

We support the House and Senate appropriation of \$12.3 million for the Shannon Grant program (8100-0111). This anti-gang grant program has helped cities and towns respond to and suppress gang-related activities. We ask for your support for this important crime prevention program.

Outside Sections

Extension to Remote Meetings & Town Meetings

We strongly support Section 133 in S. 2915, to extend temporary authorizations for remote local government meetings, currently due to expire on July 15. This provision would allow the option of remote meetings through Dec. 15, 2023. Remote participation at public meetings has ensured continuity of operations during the public health crisis and provided the additional benefit of enhanced equity in access, public engagement and transparency in government operations. Extending this option through next December will prevent disruptions to local government during future surges in COVID transmission, and give communities the ability to implement public engagement strategies on a more sustainable basis.

Community Preservation Trust Fund

We support Section 167 in S. 2915 to direct the Comptroller to transfer \$20 million to the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund prior to sending the net surplus for fiscal 2022. The number of CPA communities has reached 187, and this provision would increase the state's match from approximately 35% to 43%, approximately the same state match percentage as last year. This is a common budget item in times of surplus state revenues, benefiting communities that have adopted higher local property taxes to address environmental and housing challenges.

COLA for Retirees

We oppose Section 52A in H. 4701, which would allow retirement boards that have accepted Section 103 of Chapter 32 to award a cost-of-living-adjustment of up to 5% to retirees, rather than the current limit of up to 3%. While we can appreciate the interest in this provision, we oppose this section due to its considerable negative impact on municipal budgets. Most communities in the state participate in regional pension systems, and do not have direct decision-making authority regarding adoption of a higher COLA, and we are aware of no system that has incorporated higher COLAs into their unfunded pension liability calculations. Adoption of a higher COLA, even if limited to one year, would permanently increase the pension obligations for all participating communities, requiring increased annual appropriations to fund the cost. The increase in unfunded pension liabilities would be substantial, compounding pension funding challenges as assets are being impacted by declining performance in equity and fixed-income investment portfolios due to long-range economic concerns.

Summary

In H. 4701 and S. 2915, you and your colleagues in the House and Senate have demonstrated thoughtful consideration and strong support for municipal needs and priorities, and we again express our appreciation to you for your ongoing partnership with cities and towns.

This is a critical time for the Commonwealth, as cities and towns across the state continue to manage operating budgets with very little room for margin. Inflation is at a 50-year high. Local revenues are capped and have been squeezed by the pandemic. Federal ARPA funds can only be responsibly dedicated to one-time capital or economic recovery investments, not to ongoing operations. In order to deliver the essential local services that anchor our economy, cities and

towns are relying on Unrestricted General Government Aid, Chapter 70 school funding, and the key municipal and school priorities outlined above.

If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us at any time. Your office can reach out to me or MMA Senior Legislative Analyst Jackie Lavender Bird at jlavenderbird@mma.org or MMA Legislative Director Dave Koffman at dkoffman@mma.org at any time.

Thank you very much for your support, dedication and commitment to the cities and towns of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Beckwith".

Geoffrey C. Beckwith
Executive Director & CEO

cc: The Honorable Ronald J. Mariano, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Karen E. Spilka, Senate President

Call ✓
TC mtg 6/14/22

RECEIVED

MAY 24 2022

Town Manager's Office
East Longmeadow MA



Town of East Longmeadow Board & Commission Application Form

COPY

Name: Amy Pawle

Home address: 8 Day Ave East Longmeadow, MA

Preferred phone #: 978-257-5660

E-mail address: amy.pawle@gmail.com

Occupation: Information Risk Consultant

Board/Commission of Interest: Board of Library Trustees *Reappointment*

Briefly explain your reasons for being interested in serving your town in this capacity and note the qualifications you have which you think will be an asset to this Board or Commission.

As a member of the Board of Library Trustees since July of 2021, I've listened and learned about ways to advocate for the Library and ensure open access to information in East Longmeadow. A full term will enable me to put some of what I've learned into action, especially considering the current vacancy in the Library Director position.

Please include three (3) References with your application.

Name	Address	Phone
David Boucher	East Longmeadow, MA	
Cyndi MacNaught	East Longmeadow, MA	
Christina Uss	East Longmeadow, MA	

Date: 5/24/2022 Signature: Amy Pawle

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this application. Volunteers play a vital role in the East Longmeadow government and we appreciate your interest. Upon completing your application please forward to the Town Manager's office either at:

town-manager@eastlongmeadowma.gov

or