



## TOWN OF EAST LONGMEADOW

Town Manager's Report

May 9, 2023

Good evening:

A Department Heads meeting was conducted on April 12, 2023. Many issues common to all departments were discussed and the information regarding office moves, property acquisitions and budget presentations to the Finance Oversight Committee were reviewed.

Tonight I'll begin with property updates. We now have a signed purchase and sale agreement regarding 70 Maple St. and a closing is anticipated by May 26, however, the exact date has not been set. Also, the monthly lease payments on the space at 382 North Main St. have been added to the DPW budget (Building Division). The rental cost of that space is an obligation that was not known with certainty when the draft budget was submitted. I will provide an update to you as to when these payments will begin as this issue evolves.

The Finance Oversight Committee has begun its review of the Town and School District operating and capital budgets. The committee meets each week and Department Heads are available to answer any questions and/or explain all aspects of their respective budgets.

Planning Director Bailey Mitchell and DPW Superintendent have been working with WestMass Development Corporation on submission of applications for Mass Works funding through the Commonwealth's One Stop portal. The projects are Town Center zoning through a Community Planning Grant, and the rehabilitation of the Chestnut St. Water Pumping Station respectively. These projects would be eligible for over 2.5 million dollars in grant funding if approved by the Commonwealth. Initial expressions of interest filed for each of these matters have been favorably reviewed and formal application narratives are being drafted. The grants are awarded in the fall of each calendar year. I am cautiously optimistic that both projects will be funded this coming October.

Our labor relations counsel and Town management met with George Driscoll, the management representative from the Joint Labor Management Commission regarding the mediation process with the Fire Department labor negotiations. Due to staffing shortages there, the next session is not anticipated to occur until late May or possibly June. Negotiations continue with the UPSEU units as well.

The Eastern Hampden County Veterans Board of Directors met May 3, 2023. Two candidates were interviewed for the vacant Veterans Service Officer position. A final decision on hiring is subject to a successful reference check of the applicant.

The Council on Aging Department, through Director Erin Koebler's initiative, received a commitment from Rep. Ashe's office for funding in the state budget for a Tri Town van in the amount of \$75,000. Erin has been discussing this need with Robin Frechette in the representative's office for several months so it's very gratifying to see her effort rewarded. Details will follow regarding acquisition of the vehicle.

At a recent meeting, the Town identified its critical facilities map for inclusion in its updated Hazard Mitigation Plan and began our community assessment worksheet to identify resources and programs available to reduce hazard impacts.

The Recreation Department's spring schedule has begun, albeit hampered a bit by the weather; preparations are underway to get the pool at Pine Knoll ready for the season. Director Prather is working hard as usual to please the many different interest groups that have expectations of her Department. Jessica Stacy provided much needed support for the Department during a recent absence of the Director. I am appreciative

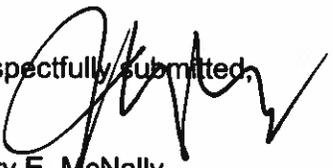
of her effort.

The Library and Council on Aging Departments have many activities and events planned for the coming weeks to enhance the quality of life for all of our residents and to provide resources and information on many crucial issues affecting the emotional and physical well-being of our citizens.

I have submitted Christine Johnston's application for reappointment to the Board of Health for your consideration. She is the sitting Chair of the Board and is excellent in that role. The term of long serving member of the Planning Board, George Kingston, expired on April 1, 2023. Mr. Kingston has graciously continued in that role due to several pending matters before the Board. I have received several applications for appointment to the Planning Board, all of which are currently under review. I wish to express my personal thanks to George and the Town's gratitude for his many years of devoted service to this community.

The Westcomm Board met numerous times throughout March, April and May to negotiate and complete the Executive Director's contract. There are currently 7 dispatchers in training and job offers have been extended to 6 additional individuals. After this training and hiring is completed, the District will be fully staffed.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary E. McNally  
Town Manager