

The Meeting of the Board of Selectmen held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Board of Selectmen's Conference Room.

Members Present: James Gennette, Derek DeBarge, Manuel Silva, Antonio Goncalves and William Rosenblum

First Order of Business: The Pledge of Allegiance

VISITATIONS

5:35 p.m. – Jamie Tomas, DPW Director – DPW Update

Mr. Tomas: Winter went great. We didn't have that much snow so that was a plus. Most of the events we had were snow events with mostly slush and ice so we did use quite a bit of salt. We were able to fight most of the storms with salt and not having to have a huge plowing event. We had a couple of breakdowns with the equipment but they've been fixed since then. As far as winter went, I think we did pretty good this year. This year we're planning on paving Grimes, Grimard, Willard, and Cady Streets from West to the Chicopee line. The layout is complete. Our operations supervisor has been working diligently to layout the roads for the reclamation process. We plan on paving late May early June weather permitting and starting the reclamation process. We're starting on Grimard and work our way up to Grimes and finish off that section including Willard Ave. That street was on the top of the list with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission study they did so we were able to fit that one in. We did get the Chapter 90 funding in place already. It was roughly \$684,000 that is in place and approved.

Mr. DeBarge: How does that compare to last year?

Mr. Tomas: It's pretty flat, right around the same amount.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have an estimated start time for Grimard?

Mr. Tomas: We spoke to the reclamation contractor and paving contractor. We have a little bit of sitework to do on Willard so we didn't commit to anything yet but they have us on the schedule. We're going to be giving them the green light very shortly so I'm assuming sometime in May.

Mr. Gennette: Willard is a complete reclamation?

Mr. Tomas: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: What about Grimes and Grimard and Cady?

Mr. Tomas: They're all reclamation. The nice thing is everything is really close so the machines can move around within the neighborhood?

Mr. Gennette: Will you do any resurfacing?

Mr. Tomas: Yes, we have 3 other streets depending on the budget we are possibly going to resurface this year.

Mr. Gennette: A lot of the residents are probably wondering about Stevens because that corner is so bad over there. It looks like there's another access point coming in just off of that area. What are we thinking?

Mr. Tomas: As far as we know, that's an emergency access point because they're building a pretty big retention pond there. It's more of an emergency access point to service the retention pond.

Mr. Gennette: What about Stevens? It's pretty bad over there.

Mr. Tomas: Stevens is going to get paved eventually. I know we have something in the works for that area that we're working on. Marc can correct me if I'm wrong but there's something with the whole Mills project.

Mr. Strange: That's part of our DIF District. Once those funds are available through the DIF we're planning on doing Stevens Street.

Mr. Tomas: Hopefully extend the gas line as part of that project.

Mr. Gennette: I was in a Safety Committee meeting the other day with you and thank you for paying attention to Stivens Drive. We partly paved that. Do we have any ambitions towards finishing the rest of that?

Mr. Tomas: I would like to finish from where we left off on the corner of Mountainview back up to Center within the next year or two. The community events we have. The 250th seems like it's a big hit and we're happy to help as much as we can. We started our first phase of street sweeping.

Mr. Gennette: Are you using the old and new one?

Mr. Tomas: Just the new one. We have the old one still and that will go out eventually once we get ramped up. Our Forestry Department is out every day trimming and responding to an abundance of tree service reports. Every day is something new with the trees.

Mr. Goncalves: In the last 45 days there's been a ton of wind.

Mr. Tomas: Our Highway Department as usual, catch basin, manhole repairs, pothole patching, the plants just opened up for hot mix. We started today doing permanent patches on potholes. A lot of curb repair. We had a mild winter but that's almost a worse scenario when it comes to plowing and curb damage. Nothing really freezes so as soon as a plow touches a piece of curbing it rips it right up. They're out doing those and lawn repairs from the plow damage. We're getting ready to open the transfer station. It's a pretty big undertaking this time of year. We have to move compost and make room in the compost facility for the season to start. We probably will be opening April 1 or a few days earlier. We have to wait till the mud and water recedes so nobody gets stuck back there. Street sweeping has begun. Our Cemetery crew is out. They've begun the spring cleanup for the 6 cemeteries that are owned and operated by the Town. With the clean-up and burials and cremations it keeps those guys pretty busy throughout the season. We also had a new sign that was installed last week. I was up there today and it looks really good. The grass is starting to pop, the front field we hydroseeded last year.

Mr. Goncalves: Are people able to start buying plots?

Mr. Tomas: They've been.

Mr. Goncalves: For a while it got shut off at Island Pond because there was a limited amount for emergency only.

Mr. Tomas: Island Pond is full but we have been selling plots at the new one. People come in on a daily basis. It's \$1,000/resident, \$1,200/non-resident.

Mr. Gennette: Is there plans for a mausoleum?

Mr. Tomas: There is a plan for a cremation wall on the backside of the cemetery. The original plan we had designed for Reservoir Cemetery has a cremation wall on the back side so I'm hoping we can erect that at some point once we start moving towards the back of the cemetery. Our Sewer Department, we're trying to get out there and flush lines for preventative maintenance reasons for sewer blocks and things of that nature. Catch basin cleaning to get things cleaned up and ready for the rainy season. We're also working on our new trash contract along with Marc and our team. Hopefully we can get something going with that very shortly. Our office staff works very hard every day answering calls and processing bills. We have an employee that started as a part-time admin helping out Westover Golf Course. He's up there 2 days a week Tuesdays and Thursdays and things are going very well.

Mr. Silva: I hate to put you on the spot but sewer bills.

Mr. Tomas: They're out.

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Mr. Silva: I know. I've gotten calls. These are from 7/1/2022? Why is that? People don't look at the dates and they're saying what the heck is going on. These are 2-3 years old.

Mr. Tomas: We're getting a ton of calls with that. It was how the DPW was going for the past 2 years and now we're playing catch up and hopefully from here on out...

Mr. Silva: Quarterly would be something that would be good to keep these going. Some haven't gotten them and I know you're going to be inundated with it.

Mr. Tomas: We already are.

Mr. Silva: I got 3 of them so it hurts. When you've got a sewer bills now it's not \$120 it's \$400-\$500. If you're working on that it's great.

Mr. Tomas: We are working on it.

Mr. Silva: That's what I was going to ask you, if we had any programming and we had to have these things updated. It's been like this for a long time.

Mr. Tomas: We're working really hard to streamline our sewer billing process. Hopefully from here forward we can come up with a better solution and maybe do the quarterly. There's been talks about that.

Mr. Strange: We did have a meeting relatively recently in the past few weeks to talk about is there a way to send the sewer bills out quarterly, because that makes sense. I wouldn't want to get a big sewer bill once unexpectedly. It sounds like the main issue is we only get the information from Springfield Water & Sewer once a year. I don't know if there's a way to get the information on a quarterly basis but that's been the hang up.

Mr. Silva: If we could even preliminary bills. If we know past years what happened and send a quarterly bill as preliminary just like we do the real estate tax bill which is based on what you paid for the quarter then you wouldn't get surprised with 4-5 quarters. Maybe we can do that if we can't get the information in time.

Mr. Tomas: We're going to reach out to Springfield Water & Sewer to see if we can set something up where we can get the information quarterly or however they work with their system. I'm sure there's probably a way. That's how the DPW has done it forever. We will definitely work on that.

Mr. Goncalves: The commercial property especially they bill monthly. I can't believe they don't have a way to get the numbers in on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Residential is every quarter?

Mr. Silva: No, it's monthly.

Mr. Goncalves: That would probably have to be a set-up of MUNIS.

Mr. Tomas: I would imagine and especially Springfield Water on their side sending us the information so we can bill out.

Mr. Silva: Not only that, if we're getting these kinds of bills we're going to have an influx of revenue from these bills, which we didn't have from 7/1/2022 – 2023 we must have not had any revenues. That screws up our revenues when we look at the budgetary thing.

Mr. Tomas: We'll definitely work on that.

Mr. DeBarge: For the 250th celebration I know they are extremely appreciative of the job that the guys did with the fire pits, it was windy, bringing everything they needed, moving things around, every event we've had the guys have been great. Even to help clean up after which is a very important thing, but to be there during the events and help us out has been great. You're doing a great job. I keep getting compliments about seeing guys out there getting the tree work done so I'm very appreciative of the work that all of you are doing.

Mr. Tomas: Thank you.

Mr. Gennette: I know a lot of people are interested in the track & field behind the high school and the construction that's going on and the follow up maintenance to all of that stuff, have you been in contact with the school? Is there a plan for after this project is done?

Mr. Tomas: I met with Tim Brillo last week and went over a couple things with the fence location, but as far as the maintenance goes, we have offered whatever they need we will help in maintaining. We're not quite there yet. We don't know how much maintenance we need to do but we'll continue mowing and if they need help with the sweeping of the turf or anything else they might need with the turf. I'm not familiar with the maintenance of the turf but we'll get there and we'll help them as much as we can.

Mr. Gennette: Will they maintain the baseball diamonds and lining the field or will that be a DPW thing?

Mr. Tomas: We will continue doing the baseball diamond. We just work it into our schedule. We get a schedule every week for games and our Parks Department goes out and takes care of all the diamonds. We've been doing that one and will continue.

Mr. Gennette: I'm going to follow up with Derek and say I'm telling everybody what a great job you've been doing. We've been seeing you out and it's night and day. I hope your staff morale is a lot better.

Mr. Tomas: It's going good there. The guys and girls there are fantastic. They're doing a great job and it's going pretty smoothly.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you. We appreciate you coming out.

5:45 p.m. – Marlana Patton – Ludlow Aggregate Electric Program Presentation

Mr. Gennette: Mr. Paul Gromer is here with us as well. I'm pretty excited about the Ludlow Power Choice.

Ms. Patton: I'm Marlana Patton from Mass Power Choice.

Mr. Gromer: I'm Paul Gromer from Mass Power Choice.

Ms. Patton: We're the consultants hired by the Town to help you implement and ultimately manage and support this program. The reason we're here tonight is because in order to launch a program like Ludlow Power Choice you have to develop a document called an aggregation plan and submit it to state regulators for their approval. Before you can do that you have to make it available for a period of public comment and review and this presentation is part of that process. The sample mailing documents are already available for public review and comment. The purpose of this presentation is for the public to provide an introduction to the contents of that aggregation plan because the document is not really written for the public, it's written for state regulators. This presentation takes the meat of it and reorganizes it in a way that's a little bit more friendly for non-experts on this topic, which is mostly everybody. The why we're here slide repeats what I said. The public comments are accepted through the 29th of the month, so everybody can continue submitting comments, or if you haven't now is a good time. Moving on to the slide with a dog on it, what is this program. It's called a municipal electricity aggregation. Nobody knows what that means. Everybody is as confused as the dog on the slide. The way to think about it is it's a group electricity buying program. It's going to be a municipal alternative to the private electricity supply offers that we all get over the phone or in the mail. What's in it for you? Why participate? There's a few key benefits. A big one is competitive, stable prices. A few winters ago, we all had sticker shock when utility prices went very high at the start of the Ukraine war. That's because utility prices for your utility supply changed seasonally. The utility has to go out every 6 months and buy electricity so their prices will track with the market. Ludlow's prices aren't going to do that. Ludlow is going to sign a long-term fixed price contract so you're going to have stable, long-term prices. That's one of the big benefits. As part of that, you're going to get prices for your electricity supply that have the potential to be lower than the utilities price and provide a little savings. I have to offer the caveat that savings can't be guaranteed and that's because you're going to be comparing a long-term fixed price with a short term varying price. The savings potential is there

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and most communities do save a little bit of money over the term of the contract with these programs throughout the state. That's been the historical experience. Another big benefit is consumer protection. This sets Ludlow Power Choice apart from a lot of those private electricity supply offers. One of the key consumer protections is the ability to get out any time with no fee or penalty. A lot of those private offers require you to agree to participate for a period of time and then pay a hefty fee in order to leave if you want to get their good price. That's not going to be the case with Ludlow's program. People can leave any time with no fee or penalty so the risk is very low for consumers to participate.

Mr. Gennette: They can also come in any time too. It's an easy opt in just as much as it's an easy opt out.

Ms. Patton: Consumers are always going to be able to join. Bouncing back and forth is not the way the program is designed. If you're on a private supply contract and you want to join the program you can do that at any time. Another big benefit is more electricity from renewable sources. As a big customer, Ludlow is able to get competitive prices for both the electricity and also for buying a little bit extra of your electricity from renewable sources. That's something Ludlow is going to do and it's still going to be able to get cost effective pricing through the program. Moving to the slide that has the word bubbles on it. One thing I like to get out in front is that Ludlow Power Choice is not a replacement for Eversource. That can confuse people. You don't have a choice in your electric utility in Ludlow. Eversource owns the poles and the wires. They're always going to deliver your electricity. If you live in Ludlow you've got Eversource. No choice. But you do have a choice in your electricity supplier, which is the company that buys electricity and puts it on the grid for you. That's what Ludlow Power Choice is about. Moving on to the slide that says Three Ways to buy Electricity in Ludlow in Massachusetts. To understand this program, it can help to understand that there are 3 ways for consumers to buy electricity in the state. The first is to have Eversource to buy it for you. I said Eversource delivers it and you don't have a choice. When you first open your electricity account they're also buying it or supplying it and when they're your supplier as well as delivering it that's called basic service. That's the default and what we get when we first open our electricity account. We don't make any other choices. We can always go back to that. That's option 1. Option 2 is you sign a private contract with one of these folks that's marketing to us all the time. When that happens, Eversource is still your utility, you're still getting your bill from them but when they calculate your bill they're going to use the price from that company to calculate the supply piece of it. The 3rd option is your town signs a contract with one of those companies that you can benefit from. That's what electric aggregation is. That's what Ludlow Power Choice is going to be. In that case, Eversource is still your utility, you're still getting your bill from them but when they calculate the supply part of your bill they're going to have a Ludlow price for it instead of your basic service price. As the extra piece I mentioned before, Ludlow is going to buy more electricity from renewable sources and that makes this program a green aggregation. An increasing number of communities in the state are going with green aggregation and they're using the program as a way to buy a little more from renewable sources and less from fossil fuels. The next slide is a diagram of what I was talking about for those of you who are visually oriented. That diagram shows you what basic service is. This is you haven't signed a contract with the supplier, you're not in a municipal program, this is your default. Eversource is doing 2 things, they're supplying and delivering your electricity and you're the end user, a delighted customer receiving electricity. The next slide is the same diagram just with a different color for the supply piece. There's a new entity in the picture, it's the company Ludlow signs a contract with but the right 2/3 of the picture hasn't changed. Eversource is still delivering it, you're still the consumer receiving it and there's no interruption in the relationship between Eversource and you, the consumer. There's no interruption to your electricity supply. There's no interruption in your billing. None of that changes. It's just an electricity supplier off to your left putting electricity on the grid for you. The next slide is the one with choices on it. The program is going to have new choices. Three options for people in Ludlow that they don't have right now. The town has to choose one that's the default. Meaning it's the one you get if you don't choose the others. That's the one all the way on the left. Ludlow standard, automatic enrollment. That one is going to have a little bit more renewable energy than what you're getting from National Grid. We don't know much yet. We're not going to know that until Ludlow gets all the way through the regulatory approval process and can go out and see prices from the market and see how much that extra renewable energy is going to cost. At that point, you'll make a decision how much extra you want. Right now, we know it's going to be some extra. Then you're going to have 2 options that are available by request. Ludlow 100% green where you can choose to pay a little more and get all of your electricity from renewable sources, and Ludlow basic which gives you the minimum amount

of renewable energy required by law, and there is a minimum amount required by law, no extra. It's the same electricity mix you're going to get from Eversource but a Ludlow price for it. That's going to be the least expensive option in the program and that's available by request. All of those options are going to have the long-term fixed prices that Ludlow is going to get. Eversource in comparison is going to have that basic service price. That's going to change every 6 months or less and that's always going to be available to Ludlow electricity customers. If you don't want to participate in the program you can always opt out. The next slide has a utility bill on it. It impacts your supply charge, which is the part of the bill where you pay for the electricity you use. It doesn't impact your delivery charge. The delivery charge is where Eversource makes their profit. A lot of people worry that Eversource is going to give you worse service if you participate in this program, or they're going to try to recoup their losses because you're in this program and you don't have this basic service price. It doesn't work that way because Eversource isn't losing money if you participate in this program. On the supply side when you have their basic service price it's a straight pass through anyway. They're pretty neutral whether you have their basic service price or Ludlow price or some other price. It's just the supply part of the bill. We can't influence the delivery side of the bill. There's some black magic that happens between Eversource and the DPU and nobody has any control over that. On the next page you'll see the program on the calculation for your supply charge. On the 2nd page of the bill there's a little math problem where you see the calculation for your supply charge and that big decimal is what's going to change. That's pretty much what you're going to see as a consumer. This program is pretty seamless to participate in. The next page will touch on what that means. As a consumer your primary relationship remains with Eversource, the same as it always has been. They're still delivering your electricity, as I said, you're calling them if the power goes out, you're getting your bill from them, you're paying them and you're not getting a new bill, you're only still getting that 1 electric bill. If you're eligible for any discounts, like a low-income discount, you're still getting that discount from Eversource with no change. The next slide will talk about participating. By state law, all aggregation programs like Ludlow Power Choice have to use an automatic enrollment model. This is not a choice Ludlow has. They all work this way across the state. What that means is participating in the program is going to be really easy for just about anybody. Anyone that's on will be eligible for automatic enrollment at launch, not people who have signed a private contract already. If you've signed a private contract, your contract is going to be honored. If you have Eversource's basic service you're going to be eligible for automatic enrollment and you're going to be notified before it happens. There's going to be a notice that goes out in the mail more than 30 days in advance. You're going to have 30 days to look at the prices and options and you'll see the Eversource price at that time and you'll be able to decide, do you want to allow yourself to be enrolled or not, and you can decide if you want to choose the other options or not. You'll have that ability before it starts and if you don't want to participate if the program's not right for you, you don't have to. But if you do it's as easy as doing nothing. The next slide is some Q&A's. One of them I just touched on. What if you already signed a contract with an electricity supplier. What if you have responded to one of these offers and you have this really great price and you don't want to be sucked into Ludlow Power Choice you won't be. Your contract will be honored. You can participate if you want to. You'll just have to take a step to do it. Also, what if you're in a contract but that contract has another 6 months when Ludlow's program is launching and you don't want to get out of it before those 6 month ends because it's a great price. You don't have to. You can wait till it ends and then join Ludlow Power Choice and you'll still get the program price. What if you have solar panels or you're participating in community solar and you're getting bill credits or an incentive payment? There's no change in that. It's completely independent. The calculation is not affected by the Ludlow Power Choice price. That still happens with no change. I mentioned a moment ago low-income discount, tell anyone who's nervous about that you're still going to get that discount with no change. That's a discount on the total bill. Eversource will calculate your delivery charge using their special sauce, they will calculate your supply charge using the Ludlow Power Choice price then they'll apply the low-income discount on the total bill. The next slide is the timeline slide. Where are we and how long is this going to take? That's the magic question. We are off to the left in that first dark blue bar. First there's a public vote that's required. Every community has to take a public vote. The next step is to plan the program and you have the public review of your plan. That's what we're doing right now. Once we get through this process of the public comment period then we move into the regulatory review and approval process. That's a little bit variable. I put on here optimistically here 4-12 months. You may have heard in recent years the DPU has been a little bit slow and that process has taken longer than 4-12 months but they're working really hard and Paul has been working directly with them on revising their guidelines around aggregations as part of that dramatically accelerating review process. I'm very optimistic Ludlow is going to benefit from these new guidelines that are almost finished. We don't have control over

that process and that period of time. We just have to wait. We get everything over to the regulators and then we wait. Once you get your approval then things start to move quickly. Then you can go out to market and get bids from electricity suppliers and see how much electricity is going to cost, see how much extra renewable energy is going to cost and sign a contract. Once you sign the contract then you know the program details and then we start public outreach. That notice that I mentioned that everybody that's eligible for automatic enrollment gets, that's when they get it. After you've signed the contract. They get that in the mail. Ludlow is going to have a public education effort that's going to include public information sessions, press release, various publicity things. That happens all the way down at the end when we know all the details. Once we get through that 30-day period that everybody has to decide whether or not they want to participate, then the program launches, which is actually a little anti-climactic because people will start to see it on their bills. When/how will I get more information? This is frequently a question. This sounds complicated. As I just said, it happens way down at the end after you sign the supply contract, then the notice is going out in the mail. The program website is on here. That's already up. We built that for you folks. Right now, it has some basic information about how aggregation works. For anybody that wants to know the information is there for you. Customer support is up and running. If anybody wants to call and talk to us we're happy to talk about aggregation. We can go on at length. All that's coming down the road. The next slide is a screen shot of your home page we built for you. The final slide is a reminder that we're finishing up a public comment period that goes until March 29. You can get copies of the aggregation documents on the municipal website, on LudlowPowerChoice.com, hard copies in the Selectmen's office. You can submit comments on either website. That concludes it and we're happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Silva: You touched on solar. For solar you're not going to join the program, you're just going to be automatically put on there and your solar program stays virtually the same. There's really no benefit to go on this program.

Ms. Patton: If you have solar panels on your property you probably have to buy electricity from the grid if your solar panels aren't producing. The credits you get from the solar panels are used to offset what you buy from the grid. Those credits are going to go further if the price you're paying when you buy it is a little bit lower. There is value in participating in the program because it's going to impact you when you buy electricity from the grid.

Mr. Silva: So, there is a benefit there.

Ms. Patton: Absolutely.

Mr. Silva: What's the disadvantage? It seems like there is none. Why is there an option? Why wouldn't everybody join this program.

Mr. Rosenblum: I shop my supplier. Right now, I'm using EnergySwitchMA. If you didn't have an aggregate plan, right now Eversource basic service would be about 15.81 cents/kw. I put in 1,200 kw because my last bill was about \$12.45. I did town square and it got it at 10.57. Right now, even some of the rates are 10.45. These rates are sometimes lower than what you have, but you're locked in on a rate that's probably lower than what Eversource is putting out. We're shopping it ourselves and signing that contract between renewable and the aggregate plan.

Ms. Patton: Through the program there's going to be a long-term fixed price, which won't have any of the limitations that some of those private have.

Mr. Rosenblum: I'm on 7 months with no cancellation fee. I always shop the one that's no cancellation fee. I know they cycle it and it usually takes a cycle so it could be a month, or month and a half based on your Eversource bill.

Ms. Patton: It's typically 2 billing cycles to get anything done the way Eversource does it. They're going to be market driven prices. When Ludlow goes out to bid it's going to get a market driven price as well. It should be competitive with whatever is in the marketplace at that time. You're right, the contract will be a long-term fixed price contract and you may go on energy switch and see a lower price at some point and that's why there's the ability to leave the program at any time.

Mr. Gennette: That's the difference between a group buying power as opposed to an individual as well.

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Mr. Rosenblum: You said it already. The people that really want to bounce it's probably not what you want to do. You were saying you can't bounce out, come back in and out.

Ms. Patton: The program is not designed for people to bounce in and out. It's designed for people to come in and look at it from a long-term perspective. That is how you want to look at it because the Eversource prices are constantly moving around, the market is constantly moving around and it is typically the case for these programs. That long-term fixed price is better than the Eversource price for part of the year and worse than the Eversource price for another part of the year, but on average better. And that's normal because the electricity market is a volatile thing. If you're going to participate in this program you've got to be comfortable taking a long-term view comparing a long-term fixed price with a short-term varying price.

Mr. Gromer: To add one point, the competitive supply offers is that looking across the state in customer participation, those people who really pay attention like you can do well with those offers. Most people don't really pay attention and they pick once and just stay and those people tend to do poorly. The Attorney General has issued multiple reports, residential customers have lost hundreds of millions of dollars on those contracts because they don't pay attention, which most people don't. But if you do pay attention there are absolutely opportunities there and as Marlana said that's always an option for you. The program doesn't preclude that.

Mr. Rosenblum: When my bill came in, a lot of these if you don't pay attention and you know that it renews back into a higher rate if you're not paying attention to that. My wife said take a look at the bill. I went in and looked and our supplier is at the basic for Eversource. It switched out of it. You're supposed to get an email that tells you when it's going to end. I know I didn't get one this time. I think on my last bill my savings would have been \$68 and when you do that over 12 months it's a savings. It's like you're cutting your cable bill. I think it's great and I know that it's going to fluctuate but also in the long run be lower than what the basic is through Eversource. I hope people study it and understand it.

Ms. Patton: That's why we have customer support too. We try to provide a lot of information on the website and it is complicated. Massachusetts electricity is complicated. We spend time with people on the phone from other states who come in and are like what is an electricity supplier. It's impossibly complicated here so we're sympathetic to that. The information is there and it's just another option or another 3 options that people can have.

Mr. Strange: Once we put the bid out for the electric supplier what's the typical length of the contract?

Mr. Gromer: Most communities lately have been going with 2 years as a good term. When prices are really low as they were a couple years ago, many communities went longer than that and locked in a low price and this last year when prices were super high communities tended to go with a shorter term thinking it's got to get better than this. Two years is the average.

Mr. Strange: Are there any automatic out triggers if prices rise a certain percentage during the course of the contract?

Mr. Gromer: No, the supplier is committed to the price for the term of the contract and they're committed no matter how many customers participate. Even if there's only 1 person left in the program they still have to honor the price. But individual customers can always leave. Customers can leave at any time but the supplier is locked in for the term of the deal.

Mr. Goncalves: If I decide I'm going to go with this vs staying with option 4, can I bounce between 1, 2 and 3 at will?

Ms. Patton: Anytime.

Mr. Goncalves: If I want to be a good samaritan and save the trees I go into 1 or 2 and if I'm not feeling generous I can bump into 3. At the end of the day, I know part of this is to push renewable and save the planet, is that 1 and 2 going to be comparable to what Eversource is? I don't think there's going to be a lot of savings in option 1 or 2.

Ms. Patton: It really depends on where the market is when Ludlow goes out to bid. If Eversource's price is one place and you guys get a really competitive price with a lot of head room in between them, you're going to have...

Mr. Goncalves: What have you seen on the renewable?

Ms. Patton: It's really varied. Everybody that we work with is able to add in some extra renewables without exceeding the basic service price when they launch. We wouldn't recommend you guys launching with a price that's higher than Eversource's price anyway. That's not a great way to launch a program. In general, we would anticipate that if you're going to add extra renewables in, you're going to do it and you're still going to beat the basic service price at launch. The 100% one may or may not because you're adding so much extra renewable. Sometimes it beats basic service and sometimes it doesn't. For the folks that are choosing that they're typically a bit less price sensitive so they're doing it because they want the renewable energy regardless of the price. They can always switch out of it if it gets too expensive for them.

Mr. Rosenblum: If you're saying generally we're in a 2-year contract that would be something we would have to be diligent to be able to start shopping then we go back out to bid for suppliers and renewable.

Ms. Patton: That's something we help you with. We keep an eye on the market, we get in touch with you.

Mr. Rosenblum: You'd say you got 3 months.

Ms. Patton: Yes, that's exactly what we do.

Mr. Rosenblum: That's one of those things that slides by. Mine just went up to basic and didn't get it because you need a watch dog on it to say hey. At that point if you're seeing 15.8 and 12.7 down the road when it's after 2 years then lock in for another 2 then maybe go a year.

Mr. Gennette: Are you guys the ones that are actually negotiating the price or is there an independent 3rd party?

Mr. Gromer: We do it, although it's a bid process. We tee it up so that the deals are equal. We get all the contracts in advance; we get everybody to agree to comparable terms then we'll take bids for you from the suppliers who are active serving the aggregation market. Typically, that's about 5 companies, and then we'll present the bids to you. There's typically not a lot of negotiation involved. People put forward their best price and you pick the one you like or decide we don't like any of these so we're going to say no to everybody and try again another day.

Mr. Gennette: That was a great presentation and I appreciate you coming out. If anybody was not paying too much attention, the website is up and running. You can always go there and they have customer service. You can call the number.

6:15 p.m. – David Kornacki – Lieutenant Interview

Mr. Gennette: You know how this rolls out. We're going to give you an opportunity to open up, we'll ask you some questions, give you a chance to close, let the Chief speak and we'll go from there.

Mr. Kornacki: My name is Dave Kornacki. I've been with the Ludlow Police Department since 1994. I've been in the detective bureau since 1997 and I want to come out of the gate expressing gratitude. For the last 30 years that I've been a police officer I've watched the pendulum of public opinion nationally with police officers swing from enemy to hero. As a police officer in the Town of Ludlow I've not felt that. I've felt supported by this community for the last 29 years that I've been doing this job and I'm grateful for that. Part of that comes from the Police Department itself. I think we have an exceptional Police Department. We're not perfect, we've made mistakes but we always come out and do the best we can for this community and I know the community appreciates it. I'm grateful to be part of this Police Department and grateful to have spent the last 29 years of my career as a citizen of this community and a member of this Police Department.

Mr. DeBarge: My question is about budgeting. As a lieutenant, you may likely be involved in budgeting, resource allocation. How do you approach budget management and can you provide an example of successful budgeting decision you've made?

Mr. Kornacki: As a detective, which I've spent most of my career as, budgeting is not something that is a strength of mine or forte of mine. I don't get involved in those kinds of things. I am cognizant of the fact that what we do is important and I do the best I can to manage my staff to cut down on overtime. I know that since I've been appointed the position of acting lieutenant, which I've been doing for the past 20 months I've worked on a grant opportunity to try to get a clinician for the Police Department. As that progressed, I realized that the situation that was presenting itself through that grant would result in a ride-along clinician. I didn't think that was the best fit for this community. During this process I've worked very closely with CHD and developed a relationship with them and was able to commandeer a clinician for the town for \$0. First it was for one day a week, then 2 days a week and I'm hoping by the end of this month to have the clinician for 3 days a week. How has that helped us budget wise? I can tell you statistically through analyzing the information that I keep as it relates to the CHD clinician, repeat calls for people with mental health issues have come way down. Doing the numbers for CHD that are repeat referrals is only 9-11%. What that means in the long run is it's reducing the number of times police officers are called for the same call over and over again. While that's not a budgetary issue, it's certainly conserving resources for the community. It's getting people the help they need rather than continually responding with no results. As a result of working with CHD, and I'm not taking full credit for this, I do this with the Health Department and School Department, we received the Assent Award for Government Participation with CHD this year. I'm very proud of that aspect. As a detective I don't think that's something that is done by most detective bureaus. Because of my role of reviewing cases and analyzing the law I thought I was the best person to pick up the ball for this because I see these cases over and over and I thought I'd be the person to run this and that's where it's gone.

Mr. Goncalves: In that 29 years, what happened somewhere along the line that kept you in the game vs saying you wanted to go do something else?

Mr. Kornacki: I had a glint of an idea to go with the FBI. That happened around the time I was trying to have a child. I was offered a position with the FBI in the academy and I found out my wife was pregnant and deferred that academy. The agent said be there for your family, and I'll call you when the next academy comes around and when that call came I decided that wasn't for me and I wanted to stick with this community. I think there's an itch that all investigators get. We see it often, people thinking there's greener pastures out there but I meant what I said about gratitude for this community. I'm happy here every day. I love this job. I love the challenges this presents me. I'm nowhere near the same detective I was in 1997 or 1998. I've grown and learned with this position. I've contributed to writing laws that are related to modern technology and the way crime has changed. I think the core value of being a police officer comes down to human interaction and understanding emotions and managing those. This is my home. I was a high school wrestling captain. I went to kindergarten here. This is my home and I feel comfortable here. I'm proud of this Police Department, I'm proud of Paul Madera, I'm proud of Dan Valadas for the way they've run this Police Department in this community over the years. It's exciting and it's a joy to come to work. I love my job.

Mr. Rosenblum: It goes on and on. Your dedication to the town is unquestioned. What's your strongest trait that qualifies you to be detective lieutenant.

Mr. Kornacki: There are a number of things. I could talk for hours about why I think I'm the best candidate to be a detective lieutenant in this community. I think my stress tolerance is very high. I know we've had other detectives, other detective supervisors that have not fared so well handling the stress of this job. For one reason or another I've been able to sustain that. I've been able to stay fresh, invigorated. I like to reinvent myself. I like to challenge myself. I like to be ahead of the curve. Not to compare myself to Tom Brady. I know you're a sports guy. I know there was a point in his career where he talked about feeling like he knew what was going to happen before it happened. I can really relate to that. As an investigator, supervisor in the detective bureau. Not only do I feel like I answered the questions but I feel like I anticipate the questions. I get called in the middle of the night and I can hang up the phone and still be half asleep and feel like I've given good advice to the guys that call me when they need guidance. It's what I do. As I mentioned earlier it's about being a human being, understanding emotions. As a human being we experience

27 different emotions. The top 3 are fear, weakness, and sadness and those are the reasons people call the police. Understanding that out of the gate that the reason we're being called is because someone is afraid gives you a leg up on what you can expect as a response to that. Doing this job for a long time gives you that understanding of what people need.

Mr. Silva: You answered my usual question. Why are you still in Ludlow and you answered it very well. So, while I was sitting here I made one up. You've been acting for 20 months. What's been the most difficult situation doing this?

Mr. Kornacki: As a lieutenant? The biggest transition from Sergeant to Lieutenant that I've experienced is I feel as a Sergeant I felt I was directed by the Chief and directed by things that happened to take action. As a Lieutenant and working closely with Chief Valadas I feel empowered. I feel the Chief trusts me to make decisions on behalf of this Town and behalf of this Police Department. We don't always agree on everything at the beginning but we come to a point in our conversation where I know where my heart is. It's with this community and with this man. We hash it out and come up with what we feel is the best for this Town and department. The Chief has given me a long leash with what it is that I do and he trusts me to always represent this community with integrity. Like I mentioned earlier with my involvement with CHD, that's not a typical activity with a detective bureau. We're inundated with all kinds of activity. Allowing me the time to explore this as an option for our community and trying to address problems that precede us. These are problems in society that have preceded myself, Chief Valadas, Chief Madera, Chief McGowan. These are problems that we've dealt with forever. Sometimes the same solutions don't always work. I heard somebody say if the only tool you have is a hammer every problem becomes a nail. I think it's important to step back and look at other ways to solve problems and the Chief allowing me to be involved in the CHD, as an investigator investigating drug overdoses, we can take all the drugs off the street but if we're not addressing the person who has a drug problem, then the need is going to be met one way or another. We have to start focusing on the user as much as we focused on the supplier. That's the experience I've had over the past 20 months. Feeling supported and empowered and having the responsibility of leadership to make decisions that are different, that are out of the box. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don't but you have to keep trying to solve these problems and be creative about it and find ways to solve money in doing it.

Mr. Gennette: From where I sit when I look at the Police Department, you guys get hit with a lot of the results that are happening in the community. It's hard to be proactive when you're handling situations that are coming at you. We've had the opioid crisis for quite a while and you mentioned a minute ago about mental health and I've been hearing a lot of things that there's a mental health crisis with our younger generation coming up. How do you perceive the problems we have related to those? And are we making improvements in being proactive with those that you're seeing them on the back side?

Mr. Kornacki: Adamantly I say we are. Since we've put together this coalition with the Health Department, School Department and CHD addressing mental health needs of this community, I go through the log on a daily basis and we've created this team. We've pulled the Fire Department in and they share information from ambulance runs and I really feel like these calls that would have been overdoses and deaths are now overdoses and people are getting treatment. These mental health issues that are small fires are put out before they become big fires. I was so happy with the success of the program that we had town-wide that as Lieutenant Detective I've also been the commander of our School Resource Officer program and created a mini version of this program involving clinicians, health care folks and social workers. We meet on a regular basis and it's to put these fires out before they even start. I think the problem with law enforcement is proactive activity that reduces crime or reduces issues, you can't measure deterrence. I taught DARE for 10 years and I got sick of listening to the media bash DARE saying drug use is up. You can't measure deterrence. You can't count the number of ships that don't run aground because of a lighthouse and that's the problem with law enforcement. We're out there. We're doing our thing. We're preventing problems. We're heading problems off without a doubt. I think the number of problems are growing so much I think the best thing to do would be to compare how things are in Ludlow to equally demographic communities, which I haven't done but I'd be willing to bet the programs run with the School Resource Officer program and our meetings down there are definitely addressing issues that stay small rather than becoming large.

Mr. Gennette: I appreciate that response. Is there any closing comment you'd like to make?

Mr. Kornacki: I've already said, I've been doing this a long time. I hate to keep throwing numbers out. In that period of time, Boards of Selectmen have selected Chiefs of Police to run the Police Department, and I've worked for 3 of them. All 3 of those Chiefs have put me in the Detective Bureau or elevated me to a supervisory position. That means more to me, and I don't mean it in a disrespectful way to the Board here. The fact that I'm recognized by the 3 Chiefs that I've worked for, I've been kept in this position longer than anyone in the history of this community. I've been entrusted with supervising officers in this community by every Chief that I've served and I've asked them if they're pleased with the work I've done and they all have said yes. That's what means the most to me. The integrity I've built over these 29 years, the support I've received from my leaders I want to pass on to the guys that work for me and the future girls that work for me and make Ludlow a better place and improve the quality of life here in this Town as much as I can.

Chief Valadas: If I could address the Board after all of them, the only thing I do want to state to acting Lieutenant Detective Kornacki is that the position you're appointing for is your approved position that started in FY22. This was the Lieutenant's position. The position is permanent civil service Police Lieutenant but the position is the commander of the Detective Bureau. That's what this directly would be. Your appointment is permanent Police Lieutenant from that funding which you approved. There was a delay in the civil service exam where the candidates took the exam, we met the minimum of 4 candidates, they took the exam a year and a half ago and the exam was found to be null and void by a district court appellate process. They were not granted their scores. They had to retake it and that's why it took a year and half. It normally would not take a year and half for civil service to garner a list and this culmination tonight is the list that was generated.

6:25 p.m. – Sean Knox – Lieutenant Interview

Mr. Gennette: We're going to give you a chance to open up, we're all going to ask you a question, we'll let you close and we'll move on from there.

Mr. Knox: Thanks for having me. Day 1 into this job I never thought I'd be at this table for an interview for a Lieutenant, never mind being a Sergeant and all the things in between. It's a hard process to get here so I'm thankful for that at minimum. Lieutenant Kornacki is an impressive man. It's someone I look up to and strive to be. I was torn coming into this whole process of who he is and who I am, everywhere we've been and where this department has gone. I've had some sleepless nights on how I'm going to handle this interview. In the end, let's handle it and make sure the Board knows who I am as a person, not even as a cop, in case you don't know who I am and where I've been, what the community means to me and I think that's the best approach for today. Many of you know me. I've worked with some, golfed with some others. You have the packet that was sent over so I'm not going to get too into it. There's 7 pages of an intro. I've been on the PD for 17 years. I moved to Ludlow when I was 6 from Worcester and I've been here ever since. First grade through 12. Graduated and straight out of high school went into the military. I took a deployment shortly thereafter. I joined the military September 7, 2001, and we all know what happened a couple days later. The shock in my eyes when that happened. But I pushed through it. My very first stressful moment in life as an 18-year-old kid. We're going to war and I just signed up. From there on I continued to grow. That was the first wall I hit. I did a deployment to Iraq and I came back and started to really figure out my career. Policing was from the onset through the military. That's the path that I chose and I didn't veer from it. I started testing civil service in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and all over. Eventually I found my way to Ludlow as a resident. I got in after 2 rounds of interviews and took that position in 2007 as a patrolman. I went straight in being as active as I could. Being engaged and moving through the ranks. My first opportunity was joining the SRT team that Derek was running at the time. That was a huge eye opener. Very much militaristic in the tactics. It was a different view on life and policing itself. From there I became an FTO. I kept taking classes in leadership, investigative services and eventually found myself a narcotics detective. Again, policing changed. It wasn't like being a patrolman. Everything is different. I worked through that for a couple years and decided that I think it's best that the knowledge that I gained throughout, it was 10-12 years in before I got into the DB that my knowledge that I had based on my military service, which I ended up doing 22 years of, my deployments, my tactical, my EMT, being a Field Training Officer and inspiring the young ones to do better and be better that I would take a leadership role and try to become a Sergeant. I took a couple tests and back then those tests everybody was failing. To get promoted is one of the hardest things. Sitting in front of the Board of Selectmen is probably the hardest thing a cop has to do, but we get there and we move through. I got promoted and back on patrol and

again things change. You see things in a different light and you grow as a human. Start building a family, wife, kids, and your perspective on life changes into a whole new universe. I took command of the regional team, SRT team, and that is a bear in itself but it's been a great opportunity. These leadership opportunities keep coming and I keep enjoying them and I said the sky's the limit. Let's take the Lieutenant's exam. Let's get to the next level. I'm not going anywhere, I'm here for the department, the community, and here I am today. Ready to keep going, even if it doesn't happen tonight you'll see me again. Sometimes you've got to be a realist. I'm not going anywhere.

Mr. Goncalves: Thank you for hanging in there. I don't think a lot of people, from our standpoint we do forget that you do have families and a life beyond and every time we see one of you guys we measure you on just being a cop. It's a tough juggle I imagine. It's not easy going home and what your families go through worrying and wondering.

Mr. Knox: At the same time, it's rewarding to see them because it does take a little off of you.

Mr. Goncalves: At some point after you got hired, there had to be something that made it where you knew you were going to be here today or something that maybe almost took you out of here. What happened significant that said this is where I'm going to be.

Mr. Knox: I don't think there was any one point I can point out. I can go through all the trials and tribulations that we have as officers. You can walk down the hallway and hear someone say I'd rather do something else. It's a very stressful job. People are always at the highest stress level so that's common. Guys are still there. They don't mean it. Very early on when I became a Sergeant if I had to point one specific. When you come out of the patrol universe from going to calls and helping people out to now helping the organization out. Sure, you're still attached to the community and you want to do whatever is right but now you're more into the organization aspect and I kind of fell in love with the administrative work. It's a bear but there's so much happiness because you're actually doing good for the organization. You're trying to make changes that are meaningful that will impact the guys below you, the guys above you and the Town itself. At that point when I realized I do like this, making those meaningful changes, I was like let's keep going further. To make more changes let's get higher. You can make those impactful changes that you think of throughout all the years. How are you going to change it? Sometimes you have to get in that leadership role to make that change. I kept pushing forward.

Mr. Rosenblum: Congratulations. What do you believe to be your strongest trait that qualifies you as a Detective Lieutenant?

Mr. Knox: I could go off on a tangent but I'll stick to one. My organizational skills in my opinion, and I think some of the guys will contest to this, are above and beyond. I find myself to be almost a perfectionist when it comes to just about everything I do. I can organize and manage very effectively. It's what I enjoy doing so I figured out what I like and how to manage it. I think I do it very effectively. There's not much that I miss. I'm very detail oriented, very task oriented, and if I had to pick a strong suit I think that's what it would be. Some may think it's not my strongest suit and it may be a disadvantage but for me I'm a perfectionist in the grand scheme of things. OCD is a real thing. If you're going to manage a Detective Lieutenant, Operation Lieutenant or Administrative Lieutenant you have to be able to manage everything on your plate. If you're mismanaging what you're doing you're mismanaging the organization. If you can't figure out a way to manage everything given to you I think it's a problem.

Mr. Silva: I've been around so long and I know everybody. When these things come up it's difficult. What do you think is going to be your biggest challenge if you move into this position?

Mr. Knox: If we're speaking directly as the Detective Lieutenant, I guess you could say that for any of them. There's a whole new technical aspect of it. I've been in the DB before, it was mostly narcotics related. The Detective Bureau itself has grown immensely over the years. The amount of work that's in there is nuts. The technology and the way investigations are handled has grown over the years that I've been detached from it there's going to be a huge learning curve for me. I'll be the first to say that. Yes I can write a search warrant, yes I can write a subpoena or detailed narrative arrest support and drug investigation or even a multi-jurisdictional investigation. I do that now with the TACK team so that's not unfamiliar to me but those real technical aspects or cell phone data extraction and things of that nature. There's going to be a huge learning curve. For me I've

got to lean on the expertise of who's already in there to teach me that stuff because it's one of those things you can't dive in and do without getting a feel for it beforehand.

Mr. DeBarge: When I first saw the list for the interviews and I saw your name on it I was not surprised at all. Your answer to Rosenblum's question was perfect. Since I've known you, you have been methodical, driven and I am not surprised at all that you are here. I have a budgetary question. As a Lieutenant you might be involved in some type of budgeting, resource allocation, and also in your tactical experience being in charge I'm assuming you do as well. How do you approach budget management and can you provide an example of successful budgeting in your career.

Mr. Knox: Being a Sergeant we don't really have a full layout of the budget but the Chief does relinquish some control to us. I'll give a couple examples. One early on was I started the Bike Patrol program again with Chief Valadas and he relinquished the control to me and said we need to put guys out there. The community likes it but we have to manage the money and we don't want to overspend in that specific area. I created the policy and I was tracking everybody that was working through reports and time slips just to know. Every once and a while I would give Chief a report saying this is what we've done and spent and can we continue? It would be yes or no depending on the circumstances. We'd move into the tactical world and it was the same thing. When it was Ludlow SRT I was managing those financial avenues. Every once and a while the Chief would ask where we are at. I know how much it typically costs per year. I would always have some sort of report for him with our figures at this time. I'm always watching it. When it comes to the schedule I'm bringing the guys in trying to do as many swaps or off shift things that would work to ease the burden of the overtime. Most recently I wrote the Byrne Grant because we were in need of new tack vests and helmets. We approached the Capital Improvement Committee for an offer there. I sought many different avenues and finally one came through with the Byrne grant. It was close to \$50,000 for everything we needed, and I'm still making sure the numbers are accurate based on what the State gave us and the quotes I had to make sure we're not overspending that grant. That's the most recent aspect of trying to manage that funding. I'd hate not to be good with the numbers with the State. Chief gives us a little bit of leeway. I'm always on top when he asks me for a report. I'm usually tracking what needs to be tracked knowing if we overspend someone is going to get in trouble. I don't want it to be me, I don't want it to be Chief. We try to manage the best we can.

Mr. Gennette: When I see the Police Department and a couple other departments, I see them as reactionary. If we are going to see a lot of things that are going wrong in the community, normally our police are going to start seeing it first. We'll start seeing it in schools. We saw that with the opioid crisis and now I'm hearing opinions that we might be heading into a mental health crisis with youth in combination with the opioids. The proactive measures that the police are taking and in your opinion of what's happening with that, are we making good strides towards improvements with the opioid crisis and mental health? What's your feeling in the position you're in?

Mr. Knox: Overall, it can't be a Police Department only function. It's got to be a community approach, state-wide approach. Mental health is the hot topic. There's no mistake about it. I see it, I'm part of it, I have family members that are part of it. My wife is a teacher in Town. She tells me all the stories of kids and how they're coping with things. As a community and Police Department we have done great things. The Detective Bureau has created this mental health outreach program where we take certain calls in, we screen them, CHD comes in and they go out and talk to these people who are in crisis. We have avenues to do that. Can there be more done, absolutely. The biggest thing I have with mental health is the fact that we know mental health exists and we kind of know the sources where it comes from. Policing as an example. Mental health is big in policing, in youth, adult, first responders across the board. We've identified those certain areas. Stress, tragic calls, shift work, all those things. The biggest problem we're facing is we're doing nothing to mitigate those causes. We always wait until mental health happens then we treat the mental health. I would like to take a different approach moving forward and attack the root causes before it becomes an issue. When we get to that state it's not too late, it's treatable, but certain mental health disabilities are always going to be there. PTSD. OCD. Depression. They tend not to go away but you can manage and treat them very effectively but I think the approach we need to focus on are the actual causes themselves. What can we do to change those triggers that cause the mental health in the future. As the community grows and we get all these programs together, that's a conversation we should have and maybe it's already begun. Policing is difficult and you can't take away going to a deceased body or tragic accident but there are other avenues we can figure out to help us

mentally. That also applies in the youth and schools and any sort of community where mental health is an issue.

Mr. Gennette: Do you see the situation with opioids improving?

Mr. Knox: I kind of do. I haven't seen a great amount of narcotics related arrests in Town, overdoses aren't as frequent as they used to be. You could pull some data and state records but there's no real way unless there's an outreach to the community asking them if it's worked. I think it is. I think it's turned a little bit. I don't see it as much as I used to. When I was in the DB we were tracking down heroin and opioids on a daily basis. It doesn't seem as intense as it was. I do think it's working to a certain degree when it comes to opioids, but when it comes to mental health it's still there. Now we have to figure out how to fix that so we don't retract back into that opioid kind of state. Nationally it's still an issue. Our community is doing great things to curb that a little bit.

Mr. Gennette: Do you have any closing comments you'd like to make?

Mr. Knox: Thanks again for having me. It's nerve wracking for all of us but we get through it. I'm happy to be here. I'm happy to be part of the team the Chief has, happy to be part of this community. This community is a larger family. We see everybody at the golf course or the store and it's nice to walk into a store and someone knows your name and at the golf course the guys ask how's the wife and kids. I think the community itself is wholesome. Hopefully our department and as leaders we grow up and can better collaborate and be more effective on whatever grounds we need to make this work.

Chief Valadas: I'll save my comments till the end to keep things equal. As I stated to acting Detective Lieutenant Kornacki it's a permanent position but it's the DB commander.

Mr. Gennette: We're going to go into the appointment for the Lieutenant interview.

Chief Valadas: Jus a few minutes of your time. You've interviewed both experienced and veteran police supervisors. Let me state how we get to this point. We need a minimum through the civil service system. I can tell you there was 2 fine, excellent supervisors that tested for this position as well because you need the minimum before you can even administer the exam. The candidates you have you interviewed by rank, which is Acting Detective Kornacki and Sergeant Knox. Acting Detective Lieutenant Kornacki was placed in that position about a year and half ago. He was the most qualified at the time and I needed a commander in the Detective Bureau. In July he hits his 30-year anniversary. That's a full police career. That's a difficult point to reach for anybody. He has exceptional experience as an investigator, 27 years is very rare as he stated. You just don't get that kind of length in bigger departments. We're a mid-size department but to have that many years is quite a bit. He was promoted to Sergeant in 2019. It's been always as an investigator. He's the most experienced investigator that I know of. I know of maybe 2 others in other communities that go back to the 80's but I understand one of them is retiring or just retired. He's the best investigator I've ever seen. He has a certain way about him of communicating with people. He's a contemporary. He has a way to see things and endure to persevere. That's a true test of this gentleman. Sergeant Knox I met the first time I was a staff instructor at the police academy in 2007. Right away he was as shining star. His military service carried on. Army deployments are for 12 months, that's in country above and beyond any premobilization or after action so a lot of Army deployments are 14-15 months so it's a long time to be away. Usually, they give you one leave to come home. His service report is excellent. It makes you proud reading that. He's been a fantastic police officer, veteran, and he continued on. He had that perfect mix of 10-12 years as a patrolman and then he went into the Detective Bureau. Got that 3 years of Detective experience and then he promoted. When you promote you study your butt off, pass the exam and if you make it in the room it's a complete career change. Now you have to start managing people. He has the military experience which helped. They both have educational backgrounds. If I could just point out to you that the 2 candidates you have here are at different points in time in their career. They're immensely respected in the Police Department. They're the core. David is a contemporary, he's a breath of experience. He's closer to the end of his career. He said I give him a lot and I trust him a lot and it's because it's pride, perseverance, integrity, and honor. He has all of that. Sergeant Knox is in the sweet spot. He's in the middle of his career. Young, beautiful family. You're going to get so much out of him. He is a future leader of the Ludlow Police Department. I give that to you. You have 2 different candidates that are outstanding but they're in different parts of their

career. I was speaking with the DA last week on a Ludlow case and he asked if I needed some help with a trooper and I said no I have Detective Lieutenant Kornacki working the case and he said perfect because he knows this man. I think that goes a long way.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm going to talk about the interviews first because I've worked with both of them. I think their personalities, careers, everything they've done has been stellar. The answers to their questions I usually don't give perfect marks but for one person and I actually gave them for 2. I'm amazed by both of you. David, you're a rock star. You've been a rockstar since the day I've met you when I came in to do my interview. I didn't get selected the first time and you talked me out of storming out of here and roasting my tires up the street and filing an appeal because I was so mad that the Board of Selectmen had the audacity not to pick me the first time. You told me to relax and go home. There was another time to come around 6 months later and I was selected. I probably owe you that because you saw how angry I was. I probably owe you more than I give you credit for. Sean, I said it when you were in the interview, since the first day I met you and I think you came down to the range down at the pit the first time I met you. From that day on until I left the department you described yourself to Rosenblum's question perfectly. Driven, a perfectionist, and I don't take that as a negative, I take that as a positive. I think you have one hell of a career coming and Chief said it best, a budding leader in this department. I have no reservations at all with the kind of leadership that is in the middle part of their career and going into the twilight. A decision has to be made, a decision from 29 years to 17 years and David's experience in the department to the experience that you're gaining in the department is the obvious answer here. My vote for when you need a motion is obviously for David and I look forward, Sean, to seeing you again.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to appoint Acting Detective Lieutenant David Kornacki to the full-time Lieutenant position at the Ludlow Police Department effective immediately.

Mr. Goncalves: Is that for a regular Lieutenant or Commander Lieutenant?

Chief Valadas: It would be for a permanent Police Lieutenant Commander of the Detective Bureau. If that could be from midnight that would be fantastic.

Mr. Goncalves second.

Mr. Goncalves: I've known you guys for a long time. I've said that since I've been here and probably before I was on the Board, we've been really lucky with the guys we have coming up in the department. In general, everybody it's a career, a way of life, it's just not a job punching the timecard and going home in the middle of a report. We're very lucky. You guys are at that point in your life, Dave, you've paid your dues. Twenty-nine years is a long time to do anything. I see not a lot of years before you're back here and you've got a Lieutenant's position. Not that the Chief is getting old but as the Chief progresses and things start moving I'm sure another position will open up in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Rosenblum: In discussion with the people I've talked to in the past and now, obviously Detective Lieutenant Kornacki your reputation precedes you. From what I understand you were about 2 years in when you became a Detective, which was unheard of at that time. It probably PO'd a bunch of people on the force. From what I understand, there's no one that can do an investigation like you can. From FBI to troopers that I know of you're second to none. Obviously I'm in favor of Detective Lieutenant Kornacki. Sergeant Knox I only see great things for you. We have a great team here and we should be proud of that and proud of the fact that we have people that want to be leaders.

Mr. Silva: Sean, I just want to say that by coming here it's a great thing that you actually come here and what you said about him was great. As most of you know, I'm a stickler for tenure unless you've not handled the job well and the Chief certainly would have mentioned something like that. It's kind of difficult to jump ship. That's where I am.

Mr. Gennette: When I became a Selectman I didn't even know we had Detectives. I've been amazed with the Police Department for a long time and I've known David for a few years and I think this is the first time I've met you Sean. As far as you sitting up here in front of us I've got to tell you I'm more impressed by you guys for what you do every day. This is easy compared to

what you have to do so I commend you for everything and I appreciate it, from me and everybody else.

Mr. Rosenblum yes, Mr. Silva yes, Mr. Goncalves yes, Mr. DeBarge yes, Mr. Gennette yes. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Kornacki: There's not a person I respect more than Sean Knox and it's been my honor to compete with him. He lit a fire under me to make me want to be better and Sean has that effect with everybody around. He's awesome.

6:35 p.m. – Andrew Roxo – Sergeant Interview

Mr. Silva: What Roxo are your parents?

Mr. Goncalves: The pharmacist right?

Mr. Roxo: No, that's my father's cousin. Peter Roxo was my father. Fernando Roxo was my uncle. He built 52% of Ludlow.

Mr. Silva: He's in Florida.

Mr. Roxo: He was a ski bum for a really long time now he's going to the hot climates. I think his knees started hurting him after a while. He did construction for a very long time.

Mr. Gennette: We're going to let you open, say a few things. You have no competition so this is going to be pretty easy to win.

Mr. Roxo: I appreciate you guys giving me the time today. I know it's late and we're running over but I really do appreciate you having the time for me. I'm Andrew James Roxo. I've been working as a Police Officer in the Ludlow Police Department for 10 years now. During that time, I've acquired several different specialty positions to include Special Response Team member, Field Training Officer and Drug Recognition Expert along with maintaining my certification as a nationally certified EMT. I'm going to keep it active because that's one of the things I really enjoy. I graduated from Westfield State University with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. I served in the US Army as a combat medic for my 6-year contract. I've lived in Town since I was 11 years old. I moved in with my father and we hung out in the same house the whole time. It was recently sold to one of the guys I work with so it's kind of funny that it changed hands like that. I still live in Town with my beautiful fiancée and my brand-new baby boy. On March 3rd, Chief Valadas found it appropriate to appoint me to acting supervisor for the Sergeant position.

Mr. Goncalves: Thanks for hanging in there and thanks for your interest in the Town of Ludlow. Over the years I've seen less people interested, less people coming out of those tests and being able to apply for the positions. It's good to have a Ludlow guy. You've got a special interest in the Town.

Mr. Roxo: I'm not going anywhere. I have 2 decades left in me.

Mr. DeBarge: I have never been in a situation before for Police or Fire where we don't have more than 1 candidate. It's interesting to not have to grade every answer to every question. Andrew was coming in when I was going out. I followed your career as more of a Selectman. I know your reputation is one of respect and admiration and I congratulate you for passing the test and getting in the room. Now you're making your way up to the next step. Congratulations.

Mr. Silva: It's great to meet you. What do you think is the best way to deal with our budget deficit and how do you think we should lower taxes in the next 5 years? Welcome.

Mr. Rosenblum: Congratulations if you're the only one to pass. That has something to say about your work ethic and who you are as a person.

Mr. Gennette: It's a testament to you're the one that is here out of the few that tried and you're the one on the list still. I'm happy to have you. Chief, how many Sergeants are we going to have? Are we full on Sergeants?

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Chief Valadas: Yes. The other Sergeants position, you gave me a Sergeant in FY22, so that was just before the Lieutenant, and this will fill all of them. I don't have anybody on leave. This will fill all the Sergeants. You will have a rank structure of myself, the 3 Lieutenants and 8 Sergeants. Officer Roxo in 2014 I did his background back then. He had an excellent military career. The Combat Medic School in the Army is the longest and most difficult. Officer Roxo has a certain acuity to him. He's quick, he's an excellent writer, he's a fast mind. I've always admired that from the beginning. Being his shift Sergeant he was really adept at explaining things. Not only did he make it on the SRT Team he was already an EMT. His medical skill was excellent. He became a DRE, which is very difficult. I only have 2; it's Sergeant Brad Tierney and officer Roxo. To go to the DRE school is 3 phases, it's 6 weeks, and at the end you either go to New York or Maricopa County in Arizona and you do your trial interviews on people affected by Methamphetamines. Not an easy school. They wash out more than half. That's this man. He doesn't wash out. I congratulate him on his career to this point, which is over 10 years. I think it's awesome to have 10 years. I always thought being a police officer for 10 years is a good step to move forward. People already look up to him and he already commands that presence. Beautiful family. He's going to be in a little bit different of a stage. He's at that point where he's grounded now as a police officer, he's skilled, he has all the tools, now it's time to manage people and to make crucial decisions. He's well prepared. He's got a great base.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to appoint officer Andrew Roxo to the permanent position of Sergeant in the Ludlow Police Department effective immediately. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

6:45 p.m. – Ira Brezinsky, PVPC – FY24 DLTA Award for Trash & Recycling Assistance

Mr. Brezinsky: This is not an award of money, it's an award of service for us to help you navigate your favorite topic, how to take care of trash. The award came last month so this is the next step. It's a simple scope of service that outlines what it is that we're intending to do to get you where you need to be as you figure out the last year of your trash contract and whether to cut that short. You're in the same position that every other community is in. It's a very fast-moving, dynamic business. As part of the scope of service we're going to survey other communities and we've already started doing that. I sent out an email last week to 8-9 towns and gotten back information from 4. I'm certain we're not going to find any 2 that are identical. Everybody does it a little bit differently. My background is I have a degree in music, was a high school band director in the 70's. I spent 38 years in business. Retired in 2018. Spent a whole bunch of time doing what you're doing, School Committee, Finance Committee, Select Board in South Hadley so here I am. I retired in 2018 and a few years after that PVPC called up and said do you want to do some part-time work? For the last 3 years I picked up projects like this.

Mr. Gennette: Marc, will he be participating with our negotiations with Waste Management?

Mr. Strange: Yes, we talked about it and wanted to make sure you guys were ok with that. We tee'd it up for tomorrow at 1:30 Zoom.

Mr. Silva: It seems straight forward and it's always good to get some help with that. It's going to be quite a dilemma. Two of you have been on a subcommittee.

Mr. Gennette: Tony is coming in now and I've been in on the negotiations with Waste Management. They seemed receptive to doing the contract. Early on we thought that was kind of it but it would be great to have your insight to see if that's the way we need to go. We certainly have some avenues we just want to make sure we pick the right ones.

Mr. Brezinsky: If you look toward the bottom of the front page, basically we can give you our best advice over the next month or so as you decide whether or not you want to pull the trigger on doing something totally different. That could be beneficial in terms of your FY25 budget. You have to balance that against since you do have another year on the contract how in depth do you want to get in terms of studying various alternatives for the longer term. There aren't any 2 communities that do it the same, there's not any one solution that's perfect. I'm here to collect data, present findings and hopefully give you some alternatives if you choose to go in that direction. If you decide to go quicker and go with a 5-year contract now that timeline gets sped up quite a bit.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm grateful for the help and thanks for staying here. I know we're late. I appreciate your time. We have some tough decisions to make with this.

Mr. Brezinsky: I've been where you are with regard to trash.

Mr. Gennette: The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has come through in many different ways so it's nice to see you guys jumping in. You have helped us in a lot of difficult situations so we're happy to have you.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to sign the agreement with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

CORRESPONDENCE

211. Brian Shameklis, Chairman of the Safety Committee – Informing the Board that temporary spray painted no parking signs will be removed by the DPW and replaced with 15-minute parking signs to ensure adequate parking at 246 East Street.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to file. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

212. Steve Lottman, Division Controller, Charter Communications – Summary of the Annual Franchise Fee Payment for January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023 for Charter Communications.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

213. Marianne Waszkelewicz-Gould, Moderator First Church in Ludlow – Informing the Board that after the voting scheduled for the remainder of this year the Church will no longer be able to provide their facilities for voting.

Mr. Silva: That's going to be an issue but I believe the Clerk is going to be fronting this and looking for a location to move it next year.

Mr. DeBarge: Our Town Clerk and Eric Segundo have been talking about the Pet Center taking over the First Church's precinct. Kim asked Eric if that would be possible and Eric asked me so I would foresee that happening. I think all the I's need to be dotted and T's crossed.

Mr. Silva: Is that location good for that precinct?

Mr. DeBarge: If Kim reached out to him I think that it is. We have room in the conference hall for the machines and all of that.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to file. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

214. Chief Pease – Request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on March 6, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to approve charging off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on March 6, 2024. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

215. Chief Pease – Request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on March 9, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to approve charging off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, Section 111F for an injury sustained by a Firefighter/Paramedic as a result of an incident that occurred on March 9, 2024. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

216. Linda Collette – Chair of the 250th Celebration Committee – Requesting permission from the Board to put lawn signs up in front of Town Hall, the high school, and some intersections in Town

for the upcoming tag sale on Saturday, April 20, 2024, with a rain date of Sunday, April 21, 2024, at the Ludlow High School.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to grant permission of the 250th Celebration Committee to put lawn signs up in front of Town Hall, the high school, and some intersections in Town for the upcoming tag sale on Saturday, April 20, 2024, with a rain date of Sunday, April 21, 2024, at the Ludlow High School. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes for February 20, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes for February 20, 2024, with all members present except Mr. Goncalves. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2024.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign Selectmen Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2024, with all members present. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

NEW BUSINESS

Board to accept \$10,000 DLTA grant award from PVPC for assistance in evaluating trash and recycling services in Ludlow and the region.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and Chairman to sign the acceptance of the grant for the PVPC evaluating trash and recycling services in Ludlow and the region. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and Chairman to sign the Ambulance Service License Application.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and Chairman to sign the Ambulance Service License Application. **Mr. Rosenblum second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to set a date for a public hearing pursuant to G.L. c. 82, § 22 to consider the laying out of Piney Lane as a public way as shown on a plan entitled "Alteration Plan of Piney Lane in the Town of Ludlow, MA" prepared for the Town of Ludlow, prepared by C&C Consulting Engineers, LLC, and shown on a plan entitled "Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division Plan and Profile of Piney Lane Bridge No. L-16-026 in the Town of Ludlow Hampden County, Preliminary Right of Way Plans", also prepared by C&C Consulting Engineers, LLC, comprised of seven (7) total sheets, originally dated March 11, 2022 and revised through February 8, 2024" and to refer the matter to the Planning Board in accordance with G.L. c. 41, § 81I.

Mr. Strange: This is for a federally funded project to rehab and rebuild the Piney Lane Bridge. During the course of the project, it was determined that the original plans were never accepted by the Planning Board. The process is the Board of Selectmen has to refer this matter to the Planning Board for a public hearing where they will consider the original plans and then the amended plans and that will get bounced back to the Board of Selectmen for a public hearing on April 2.

Mr. Goncalves: To approve it as a public way?

Mr. Strange: Yes, to approve the plan. Then it will be part of the Town Meeting article.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to refer the aforementioned alteration of Piney Lane to the Planning Board for public hearing. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign the agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Springfield Water & Sewer Commission to install 1,763 feet of 8" diameter water main for Millside Drive Construction. **Motion made by Mr. Goncalves** to approve and sign the agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Springfield Water & Sewer Commission to install 1,763 feet of 8" diameter water main for Millside Drive Construction. **Mr. DeBarge second.**

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Mr. Silva: Why are we signing the agreement if the property is not ours? It doesn't sound like we should be signing any agreement.

Mr. Goncalves: Millside Drive has been approved as a public way, right?

Mr. Silva: It really doesn't matter whether it's approved or not. That property belongs to WestMass Development. It's not a public way so it's not ours. If it was a public way it would be our street.

Mr. Strange: This project is being funded through a MassWorks grant that the Town got. We do have easements on the property to do the construction. There was some back and forth between Springfield Water & Sewer Commission and Tighe & Bond, who is our consultant, and Geeleher and WestMass. That was above my head but they ended up working out the logistics of it. They were going to send back the agreement to redo it for the exact reason you're talking about but they decided they did not need to. The practical effect of this is once this agreement is signed we have to send it to Springfield Water & Sewer Commission, that will give the Town a construction memo, which is basically a notice to proceed so they can start digging and installing the water lines. **All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign the agreement between the Town of Ludlow and TJ Conway in the amount of \$11,569.00 to furnish and install new compressors for the Senior Center.

Mr. DeBarge: The compressors themselves are warrantied; this is for the labor.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to approve and sign the agreement between the Town of Ludlow and TJ Conway in the amount of \$11,569.00 to furnish and install new compressors for the Senior Center. Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to accept the Capital Improvement Planning Committee's FY25 capital project recommendations.

Mr. Gennette: The Capital Improvement Planning Committee is always working hard to make good recommendations. The recommendations are as follows. The Board of Selectmen's request for back up generator for Town Hall is a \$25,000 grant match. The amount is \$120,000 coming out of free cash. There's a 3-year 5-year lease on the ladder truck for the Fire Department. The lease each year is \$335,000 coming out of free cash. The new ambulance first year of a 4-year lease is \$100,000 coming out of the ambulance subscription fund. Police patrolman replacement vehicles are \$235,000 free cash. We dropped that from 3 to 2 didn't we?

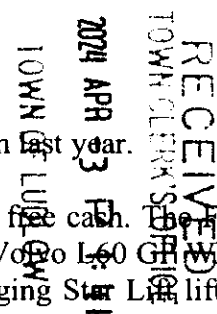
Mr. DeBarge: It's always 2.

Mr. Strange: We took it out of the operating budget and put it to the free cash last year.

Mr. Gennette: The Volvo compact excavator for the DPW, \$66,079 out of free cash. The \$350 super duty pick-up with plow \$59,382 out of free cash again for the DPW. Volvo L60 wheel loader first year of a 3-year lease \$68,624 out of free cash. Council on Aging Star Liftvan \$35,000 out of free cash. They have a van that they need to have a lift installed on and it's quite expensive. This is actually \$125,000 request but they brought most of the money to the table and are just looking for the Town to match it with the \$35,000. I love that the Senior Center does that. They always come in with something to offset it.

Mr. DeBarge: This is also the Friends of the Seniors. The best fundraising group this Town has ever seen.

Mr. Gennette: It's amazing the stuff they do. That's part of the reason it's easy to help the Senior Center. Hubbard Memorial Library historic windows repair \$219,540 out of free cash. Three years ago the library came in here looking for historic windows replacement. The quote was \$18,000 and it started to balloon and we ended up with bad quotes. It was a mess and hopefully the Board of Trustees has it all figured out and we're good to go with the \$219,540 out of free cash. Obviously the Hubbard Memorial Library is a very important building in Town. It's a historical piece so we have to do it right and that's why it's expensive. Schools. LHS, the main gym HVAC \$85,000 out of free cash. LHS, replacing the main gym HVAC \$85,000. Those are 2 units, free cash. East Street



School fire replacement panel \$115,000 free cash. We called out to the Fire Marshall and building inspector and we made sure that this was something that had to happen and everybody did validate the request. East Street School parking lot and sidewalk replacement \$53,185. We had the DPW go out there and we had them survey the sidewalks and determine if they really did need an overhaul and they confirmed that it did. The school's new pick-up truck to replace the 2011 Chevy Silverado, \$48,000 free cash. LHS rear wall repair \$500,000 out of free cash. This is peremptory. We don't know what the wall is coming in at but we don't want to get surprised by it next year so we're trying to allocate the funds available so we can handle the cost once it does hit. We'll have to see where that comes in next year. Westover Golf Clubhouse kitchen upgrade \$60,000 through retained earnings. Golf cart fleet, 2nd year of a 4-year lease \$73,428. The golf car leases used to be covered by the Town and that's coming now out of the operating budget for the golf course. Westover Golf Greenmaster 3150, \$63,257 coming out of retained earnings. Westover Golf Ventrac 2nd year of a 3-year lease \$16,127 out of retained earnings. Westover Golf Sandpro 3040 2nd year of a 3-year lease \$9,439 out of retained earnings. The golf course is doing well on keeping their revenues coming in that it's easy to allocate funds towards some better equipment, making it easy for them to do their jobs. In total expenditures \$2,247,061.

Mr. Strange: The bids for the repair of the high school wall are due at the end of April, which is an inconvenient time to get the number. If it's above \$500,000 we may have to do an amendment on the floor of Town Meeting, which we can do. There's 1.6 million dollars in free cash so we'd have to act quickly depending on what the low bid is. We're also looking at applying for a park grant for Whitney Park. The park grant is up to \$500,000. Town Meeting has to vote to allocate \$500,000 in free cash before we can apply for the grant. It will be a wash because we will be reimbursed those funds but we'll have to deduct that \$500,000 if Town Meeting votes for it. It's not in the warrant yet. I wanted to run that before you before I put it on the warrant.

Mr. Gennette: Are you going to run that as a separate item or are you going to add that to these items?

Mr. Strange: I haven't really thought about it.

Mr. Gennette: Why don't we keep it as a separate article?

Mr. Strange: Sure.

Mr. Rosenblum: In a prior meeting with the School Committee when we were discussing ESSR funding, from what I understand we got something saying they did find we were around the 4.8 million and they have about \$400,000 left. Is that \$400,000 allocated? Under ESSR funding you can take care of repairs. In the event we go over on this and they still haven't allocated that my suggestion would be instead of taking that out of free cash that it comes out of the ESSR funding because repairs can be taken out of ESSR funding.

Mr. Goncalves: There was at least \$158,000 that was unallocated.

Mr. Rosenblum: That is a suggestion from me so we don't have to take the free cash. It's unaccounted cash that's still available.

Mr. Gennette: \$500,000 for that wall I've got a sneaky suspicion that's not going to cover it. Any additional funds wherever we can get them will be appreciated because we don't know what it's coming in at. We're trying to put some allocation together so we don't get surprised.

Mr. Rosenblum: That would be something worth reaching out to see if that excess cash has been encumbered or is projected to be used. If we go another \$150,000 it's out of free cash. If they don't have an allocation for it yet or an idea for it that might be a suggestion.

Mr. Gennette: Dually noted.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to approve the aforementioned Capital Improvement Planning items to be put on the warrant for FY25. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.** Mr. Rosenblum: The funding sources on the bottom of free cash is 1.67 million out of the 2.2. The golf course comes out of their enterprise fund and isn't funded through Capital Improvement or free cash.

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Mr. Gennette: There is nothing from the golf course that hangs off of the Town at all. It's all self-sustaining.

Mr. Rosenblum: I wanted to say that out loud because the question has always been asked of me. It's mostly there to be here it is so everybody knows what's available and what they're spending. Their enterprise fund is a self-operating fund and the golf course should run by itself.

Mr. Gennette: They have been able to keep a positive balance growing. Hopefully they can keep improving and generating more revenue. They had a change in their pricing that seemed to work for them. I was a challenger of them early on and I'm happy to see they're doing better.

Board to review draft Town Meeting warrant.

Mr. Strange: Article 1 is acceptance of the Town Officer reports. Article 2 is the Town Committee reports, Article 3 is the budget article, which we're still working on, Article 4 is our revolving funds. As you'll see there was a lot of amendments to Chapter 9, which is the Animal Control bylaw and the ACO requested a revolving fund for Animal Control. We have not put that in yet. I'm still working with our Town Accountant but that might be an addition to Article 4. Article 5 is Celebrate Ludlow.

Mr. DeBarge: I probably should have called the Chair of the Celebrate Ludlow Committee because with the 250th Celebration we're not going to do Celebrate Ludlow this year. I don't want to jump ahead. We have an article coming up for the 250th so I don't know that Article 5 is necessary.

Mr. Goncalves: We can always remove it on the floor.

Mr. Strange: Let me know. Article 6 is the allocation for the Commission on Disability.

Mr. Gennette: Are they increasing the request?

Mr. Strange: I don't think so. I think it was \$4,900 last year.

Mr. Gennette: Do we have to do this every year?

Mr. Strange: For the allocation, yes. We can take it out of free cash and if not we can take it out of the operating budget. Article 7 is we got a quote from Weston & Sampson to do a master plan for Vets Park similar to what Tighe & Bond is doing now for Whitney Park. When we reached out for Whitney Park we reached out to 3 firms, Weston & Sampson, Tighe & Bond, and Rob Levesque out of Westfield. Tighe & Bond and Weston & Sampson were almost identical in their estimate. When thinking about Vets Park assuming the quotes are going to be similar I typically like to not go with the same firm every time. It's better to have different perspectives on stuff. That's what that is and that's where we are on that. I don't think we've talked about this before so I wanted to put it out there so we could chat about it.

Mr. Rosenblum: Would we want to put this out to public opinion or monkey survey to see what people think about ideas for it? I know pickleball will pop up. We did it with open space. We don't want to make the decision without public opinion.

Mr. Goncalves: Isn't that what the engineer is going to do, have a master plan and come up with a bunch of ideas.

Mr. Strange: This is just for the funding. It will be a whole process. They'll create conceptual designs and there will be 2-3 public meetings. Absolutely we need to get public input on that.

Mr. Goncalves: Regarding the engineering firm, for what it's worth, Tighe & Bond has half a dozen engineers who live in Ludlow. Dollar for dollar I would push for our residents if it's a non-bid situation or if it's the same I'd like to see it go that way, unless there's a bunch of Ludlow people working for the other firm. I'd love to favor them.

Mr. Strange: Tony DaCruz is the head of our Whitney Park team from Tighe & Bond.

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Mr. DeBarge: If Town Meeting approves the \$42,500 for this study and we go through the process, where are we going to pay for the project scheme we choose?

Mr. Strange: As I mentioned before, we're going to apply for a park grant for Whitney Park. It's not going to cover the whole thing. That project will probably have to be bonded unless we can come up with some other source of revenue. Same thing for Vets. Unfortunately, playground equipment is very expensive and the site work. We had the call last night, Whitney Park is contemplating 4 pickleball courts, a basketball court, new playground equipment and a pavilion. If it comes to fruition it's going to be really nice. We don't know what it's going to cost yet. That would be the same process at Vets Park.

Mr. Gennette: Is there going to be public opinion for upgrades to Whitney Park as well?

Mr. Strange: Yes. I have to schedule a public meeting. It's probably going to be 3 weeks or so. I have to figure out where to do it.

Mr. Rosenblum: That's still under Conservation.

Mr. Strange: It's probably within the buffer. I've gotten questions about that, whether we can build at Vets Park. Because it's within the wetland buffer does not mean you can't build there. You have to go through Conservation and they would put conditions on the development. Article 8 is the acceptance of the Chapter 90 funds. Article 9 authorizes the Board to enter into a contract with DOT. This is a typical article every year. Article 10 is our Capital Improvement slate which you just approved.

Mr. Rosenblum: On 10 & 11 should it say July 1, 2024.

Mr. Strange: Yes. Article 12 is the FinCom reserve fund for Fiscal 25. Article 13 is our building infrastructure fund. Article 14 is stabilization. The proposal is \$300,000 into stabilization. Article 15 is OPEB. The proposal is to put \$200,000 from free cash into OPEB. Article 16 would transfer \$25,000 from free cash to 250th Committee. Article 17 would authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into negotiations on a pilot for a solar array on East Street.

Mr. Silva: It's by the turnpike and Eversource project off of Chapin and East it's not mistaken.

Mr. Strange: It's by the pike.

Mr. Silva: That was my land. It's a couple pieces that he put together. Before you get to the underpass going down East Street to the right and the power lines, it's up there next to Eversource.

Mr. Strange: Article 18 would increase the bond authorization for the public safety HVAC project, which the cost estimate came in \$400,000 more than what the original estimate was. Article 19 is, you just closed out the Radio Communications project and there was \$468,485 in borrowed funds that were not spent. The proposal would be to reallocate those funds to cover any overages on Millside Drive. I don't know if there's going to be overages and if so I'm not sure that it will be that amount. This is kind of influx thinking maybe splitting that between Millside Drive and the sports complex in case that comes in over.

Mr. Goncalves: That's a better idea.

Mr. Silva: I agree. I'm still in a quandary why we're spending money on Millside Drive. I know we got the funding and I know it's a great project.

Mr. Strange: A quick update, right now we're still under budget. The low bid came in at 2.5 million. We got a quote from Eversource to do the lines and they're going to do overhead above ground lines. That's not going to be too expensive. They did run into some extra costs. They have to excavate additional rock they didn't anticipate. We're not sure exactly how much that's going to be. We're still waiting on an estimate. Those balls are still up in the air. We have a meeting tomorrow with Mountainview about the sports complex to get an idea from there on where we are. We'll rework this article depending on what those estimates are.

Mr. Gennette: I find it humorous that a construction company that digs in dirt found it odd they found rocks.

Mr. Strange: They didn't do the test pits.

Mr. Gennette: Either way we have to accept the \$468 in surplus.

Mr. Strange: We have to figure out how much to go to which. Article 20 is the Piney Lane bridge. Article 21 are changes to the Senior Citizen Abatement Program. We met with the committee and right now we have 75 volunteers that participate and the different departments, the biggest ones are the library and senior center and they're having difficulty placing all of those participants. They suggested we go down to 60. We had a meeting with the library, golf course, senior center, accounting, schools, and we decided that 60 was a good number. There's a formula in there that's based upon minimum wage so when we lowered the number of slots we had to increase the value. Article 22 is a request from the Town Clerk. Right now, the bylaws say that the Town Meeting warrants have to be posted by a Constable of the Town and obviously the Town Clerk does that so this is just some cleanup. Article 23 would be a transfer from free cash for opioid settlement funds. The Town got \$134,000 in Fiscal 23 but at that point there was no mechanism to put that money so it could easily be distributed so they closed out the free cash. In October, Town Meeting OK'd an opioid stabilization fund but after that in the early part of this year the Governor proposed and Legislature approved creation of a special revenue fund. Now this \$134,000, if Town Meeting agrees to do it, will be transferred to the special revenue fund and the Board of Selectmen can vote to distribute it as you see fit.

Mr. Gennette: That's a state law so we're just trying to get in line with the state.

Mr. Strange: The money is in free cash right now so we want to take the money from free cash and put it to the opioid stabilization fund.

Mr. DeBarge: We want the Board to distribute it and not Town Meeting.

Mr. Strange: Article 24 are the changes to the Chapter 9. They're quite extensive. They do make sense to me. A lot of these changes were modeled from West Springfield and Springfield's ordinances.

Mr. Gennette: Who put this together?

Mr. Strange: The ACO. She told me what she wanted and provided some of the references to Springfield and West Springfield. I put something together and sent it back to her, she made some additions and that's what this is. Article 25 would authorize a 5-year contract for license plate readers, similar to the taser contract in October. The terms that were presented to the Police Department was a 5-year contract and it includes software licensing and repair and maintenance over that 5 years.

Mr. Rosenblum: Is that June 1, 2024?

Mr. Goncalves: A lot of this was grant money, right?

Mr. Strange: This might have been MGM money. Article 26 is the DIF financing plan. We've been working with WestMass on putting together projects that we would be proposing to do with the DIF money. They are reclaiming Stevens Street from East to State Streets then from State Street to in front of the Senior Center where it ended. State Street got done to Ana Dias Fields. A gas line on Stevens Street, repaving East Street taking out the bump outs on the sidewalks and redoing the sidewalks. There's a couple other projects we're contemplating. One of them is additional parking at the library and improvements to Memorial Park. The perspective on this would be a bonding project and we don't want to spend more than half of whatever the additional revenue would be. For example, there's an additional \$500,000 from the value in Mill 8 coming online, half of that would be used to pay for a bond and the other \$250,000 would go into the operating budget as new growth. That's the concept there.

Mr. Gennette: That's an awful lot of bonding. If we're talking about Vets Park improvement being on a bond.

Mr. Strange: This wouldn't be taxpayer money. This is DIF money.

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Mr. Gennette: We're still bonding it right?

Mr. Goncalves: It's a loan back with the DIF money.

Mr. Strange: Article 27 is a zoning bylaw amendment. This was submitted and approved by Town Meeting last year but the AG's office kicked it back. I can't remember why so this is an adjustment. I did just get a couple other zoning change requests from Planning today but I haven't had a chance to put it together.

Mr. Gennette: When do we have to close the warrant?

Mr. Strange: We're closing the warrant on April 16.

Mr. Gennette: Do you want to keep this as is for now?

Mr. Strange: Yes. We still have to do some explanations, put a couple more articles in there. I'll put that together and take a look again on April 2 and see where we are.

Board to discuss Town Administrator evaluations.

Mr. Gennette: I have not looked at other people's recommendations and I'd like to have an opportunity to.

Mr. Silva: Is this something we should do in open meeting?

Mr. Strange: Yes. We checked with Town Counsel and he said it's got to be open session. These are public documents. If you want to avoid the awkwardness you don't have to go through what you said.

Mr. DeBarge: For our 8 viewers I think it's important for them to know what we as individual Selectmen think of how Marc is doing since he's come in. Whether it gets uncomfortable or not I don't think is the point.

Mr. Silva: It could be something detrimental.

Mr. DeBarge: I'm sure no one does but if somebody has an issue, let's say talking about character that is not public. I think some things can be held with discretion in an open meeting that don't necessarily need to be said that can be said privately but you can still give an overall summary.

Mr. Silva: I was just wondering if it should.

Mr. DeBarge: I think the 8 of you, and I hope you tell 2 friends and they tell 2 friends and so on that when Marc came in here it was a time of a lot of transition. My evaluation of Marc, I see a lot, I have a lot of attention to detail when I'm paying attention to things. I think he's done a fantastic job. I think it's been burdensome, I think there's been a lot of stress because there's been a lot of moving parts from opening a new Senior Center to multiple staff changes to taking on a Board of Selectmen that has just taken on the Board of Public Works, the Mills project, the high school, we took on Facilities Manager, Procurement Officer, we elevated our HR Director to Assistant Town Administrator, we are in the middle of a charter change that you have helped get started knowing that the actual change of government could be something negative to your position and I have always had a lot of respect for that because you come to work and do your job. You & I in private conversations we say that's all we want from everybody. To come to work and do their jobs and I appreciate that you do that. If I have constructive criticism, that is between me & Marc. I don't see a need to do any of that. That's not necessary for this type of venue. If it's a rating out of 5 I give Marc a 5. I think he's been fantastic and I think people need to know that.

Mr. Gennette: I went through and gave examples for each one of these questions. I don't think my score was the same as Derek's. Being the Chairman I think Marc and I have butted heads a few times. I said in this that was to be expected. I said that in my closing comments and I've said it to him that it takes a special kind of person to be able to shoulder the stress that he was under in this transition. He took on a lot, he shouldered it well, there was obviously going to be some kickback, there was obviously going to be some rough times. It's a transition, he's brand new. My closing

comment is Marc has a strong personality, which has helped him shoulder a lot of the stress as he worked through a new system here in Ludlow. His system. Two years in the making the dust has settled as much as it's going to. He has a much better picture and grip on the individual issues facing the community, the departments, and the budget. This is now on Marc. He is no longer the new Town Administrator. Mr. Strange is continually improving in his position and as a leader. Ludlow has benefited from hiring him and it will be exciting to see where he takes us in the near future. I think that kind of closes my feelings overall as far as Marc. Like Derek said, much of the individual confrontational stuff we've had between his seat and my seat was kind of to be expected. If we didn't anticipate that then that's where I'm at.

Mr. Rosenblum: I find it difficult because I've gone through performance evaluations and very rarely you find someone that hits 5's across the board on a scale of 1-5. I always think there's need for improvement but I guess my 5 would be a 4. That's a lot of what I gave Mr. Strange. When it came to the budget, budget preparation and administration I think the attention to detail in finding I pretty much said has done an exemplary job of identifying areas of funding that helps alleviate budgetary shortfalls. I think we dived into the budget more and more in different areas to find the money, there's a 5 there. I have one more 5 in personal and professional growth as a Town Administrator was a 5. Stepping outside the Town boundaries to promote and represent the Town is paramount and he has done well doing this to the point of Town Manager or Administrator Association. In general, I only had one that was kind of so-so. It's not glaring. I said overall Mr. Strange has done a very good job bringing the Town of Ludlow closer to the 21st century. One of his strengths has been dealing with budget complexities and finding ways to move forward while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The only aspect needing attention would be in relation to interpersonal skills and relationships with some Town employees/Department Heads. I gave a 3 and also said though I think we're moving in the right direction because there's so much going on in such little time I find it hard to perform a 5 but there's also going to be tension but that's to be expected. For me it was we dove in, did a lot of work in such a short period of time that there's tension. Sometimes there's tension where there shouldn't be but we learn from it. It's moving in the right direction going forward. It's constructive criticism. I find it hard to find someone that's 5's across the board. My 4 is probably a 5 unless someone is exemplary and I think the budget work has been great. When you average it out it's a little over a 4 average.

Mr. Goncalves: Very quickly, I'm not going to go into ultra detail, we were faced with having to hire somebody and we had other choices that came off the recommendations of the committee. There's no question in my mind that we made the right choice. With anybody, there's always fine tuning along the way. We're still in that stage of getting to know each other a little bit better and what makes you tick and what makes us tick, but overall, I think we lucked out with the choice we made. Definitely going in the right direction. I love Ellie and I wish her all the best but when you look at what Ellie did or brought to the table and when you look at what Marc does it's a different planet. The in-depth part of it. He's made the commitment to the Town. Outside of being here, he's outside, he participates, he's here for all the functions and everything else going on. He's really committed to the job. It's going in the right direction.

Mr. Silva: I talked to Marc slightly. I don't like these things. These things are ridiculous. We as board members are not qualified to do this.

Mr. Gennette: We're the only ones that can.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't agree with you on that.

Mr. Silva: We do not see what he does day in and day out. We do see what he brings to us. We can tell he's done a great job, and my numbers are great for him. I never give anyone a perfect spot because nobody is perfect. I did it in general across the board rather than reading into every single question. Marc's done a great job and he knows that. I gave him a very decent score.

Mr. Gennette: There's not a lot of people that could have stepped in and did the things he did without running for the door. He took a lot of heat on the chin. It was stressful at times. I saw him probably at his worst and it was tough and there's not a lot of people that can handle that.

Mr. Strange: I thought the evaluations were great. I appreciated all the positive support and feedback; I appreciated the constructive criticism. That's what I need as a professional to know where I can improve, what I'm doing right so that's exactly what I was hoping to get out of it,

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although I do agree with Manny. I don't like doing evaluations for people I have to do it for because if there's something going on I'll talk to that person about it. It doesn't need to be a formal thing. This is part of the bylaw, part of my contract. It's a necessary evil but I appreciate your candor.

Mr. DeBarge: Would you remove this? Would you tell the new council they shouldn't be doing evaluations of the Town Manager? Because I think the Charter Committee would have an issue with that saying somebody has to govern. That's why I disagree that we should be evaluating. I don't care what the platform is, I think it's our job to do it because we in effect hire the position and we answer to the people that vote for us in the positions that we hire, so we should be evaluating him and they should be hearing from us. They don't know how he's doing.

Mr. Strange: My only comment is that there's so much that goes on every single day, you guys don't see the interactions in the hallway and meetings, you don't know what the dynamics are. All you know is what you see and hear from people so it's very hard to evaluate that piece of it because you're not privy to it. You are privy to interactions with you and the general overall stuff.

Mr. DeBarge: That's why I think it's our job to make ourselves privy to as much information as we can.

Mr. Gennette: Our job is to provide strategic direction and some guidance about where we think the Town should go, it's his job to initiate that and implement what we decide.

Mr. DeBarge: And our job is to evaluate the position.

Mr. Gennette: That's the current arrangement. It really doesn't get into the day-to-day. If he has to use specific departments to further a goal or initiative we have then he's used it to the ability that he's had to use it to. We don't get into the day-to-day. I don't want to know what he has to do with the DPW. It's great to have them come in here and tell us how they're doing to give the community an update but it's not up to us to decide his interactions.

Mr. DeBarge: I don't know where you're getting that. Who said it was up to us to decide his interactions. It's up to us to understand what goes on around here if we're evaluating the position.

Mr. Silva: It sounds like everybody is happy with what they put for Marc and he's happy so let's not beat a dead horse.

Mr. Rosenblum: I go to my boss periodically, how are things going, anything I need to work on, anything you want me to do? And that's their opportunity to give me an answer.

Mr. Strange: This is a typical process. Most boards, Town Managers, Town Administrators go through this process publicly.

Mr. Rosenblum: If it was something totally egregious we'd be doing it in executive away. If this Town went to a mayoral form of government I guarantee you there would be a recall option.

Board to discuss and possibly vote to increase fire prevention inspection and permitting fees.

Mr. Silva: Most of them look like the state max fee allowed is \$50.

Mr. Rosenblum: If we increased everything \$5 do we know how much revenue that would generate based on permits and fee schedules?

Mr. Strange: I'm not sure, not enough. I sent a request to all the department heads to take a look at their fees and send us back any possible increases they think might be worthwhile. The Planning Board is looking at theirs now and Ryan, these fees are statutory so if they're \$25 they go up to \$50. Ryan suggested we increase \$25 to \$50. I do not know what the total value of that is. It's probably not going to be that much but every little bit helps.

Mr. Rosenblum: It's not like these fees are off the moon. My view is if the Fire Chief is thinking, again we go to our experts, if he believes \$25 should go to \$50 I have no problem with that.

Mr. Goncalves: He's thinking of bumping these. Absolutely.

Motion made by Mr. Goncalves to suggest that to the Fire Department. **Mr. DeBarge second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign the agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Amchar in the amount of \$59,143.70 for handguns and miscellaneous equipment.

Motion made by Mr. DeBarge to approve and sign the agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Amchar in the amount of \$59,143.70 for handguns and miscellaneous equipment. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

BOARD UPDATES/MISC

Chairman to approve and sign all bills, warrants and abatements. A record of all warrants is in the Selectmen's office for perusal until provided to the Town Accountant.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Goncalves: Next Monday we have Town Election. Thank you Mr. Gennette and Mr. Silva. Good luck to both of you. Make sure everybody goes out and they vote. The 250th Committee is like the Energizer bunny. I wish we could make 100 of those committees and throw them into everything we do. The next event for them is the tag sale on April 20th, Saturday, at the High School. Everything is rolling in Town really well. We're going to be coming into parades and golf tournaments and a big celebration this year. Hopefully everybody is going to get motivated and get out there and participate. See you guys Monday at the polls.

Mr. DeBarge: Please go out and vote. It's been nice to see signs out there. Nice to see some interaction with people. Whether it's volatile conversation or a nice conversation, at least it's conversation. You've got to get out there and vote. I hope people that look at the agendas that the candidates have look at the interviews they did with the newspapers or LCTV and see what motivates them to run for public office and make your decision that way.

Mr. Rosenblum: Go out and vote. We generally fall in 8-11%. It would be nice to see 15%. We have about 14,000 registered voters so let's get out and vote Monday.

Mr. Silva: Both of mine have to do with the election. I'm a little disappointed at some of the rhetoric that's happening out there. People are being rude, making insinuations. It's good to have dialogue, it's good to have difference of opinions but we have to agree to disagree and keep it cordial. That's not the way of Ludlow. I've been in many elections, never anything like this. It's terrible. Nothing has affected me fortunately. Everything has been fine with me but there's a couple different things out there that I'm hearing. It's not a good thing. The other thing is this may well be my last meeting. I want to thank you for being cordial. It's been great.

Mr. Gennette: Thank you for the opportunity to serve the community. That's all I ever really wanted to do was be a good civil servant in some way to pay back the community. Manny is right. We have a competition and regardless of who's signs are where. I don't think anybody wants to win because there's bad things happening to other people's signs. It's not worth it to get into that kind of argument. Support the person you want to support. Go vote for them. Thank you for the opportunity.

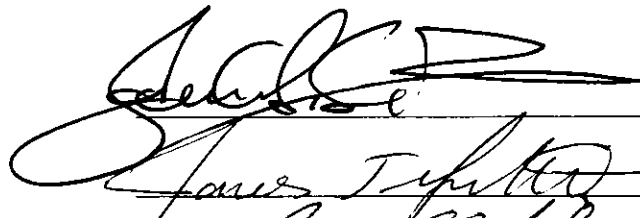
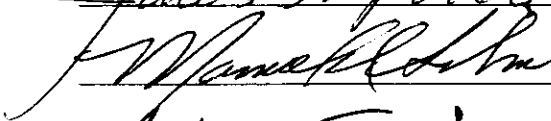
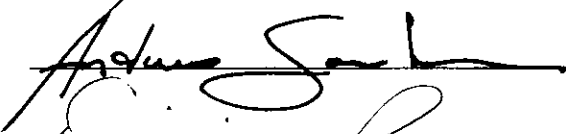

Mr. Rosenblum: Someone once said to me signs don't win elections anyway.

Mr. Gennette: I'd like to do a robocall to remind everybody.

Mr. Rosenblum: Polls are open at 10 and go to 8.

Motion made by Mr. Rosenblum to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 p.m. **Mr. Goncalves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Chairman


James T. Fitter

William Rose

Arthur S. Smith


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