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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Town of Ludlow
Office of the Select Board

The Meeting of the Select Board held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Select Board's Conference Room.

Members Present: Anthony Alves, James Gennette, William Rosenblum, Antonio Sanches, and Manuel Silva.

First order of business: Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Rosenblum: Pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, section 20(f), after notifying the Select Board chair, any person may record the open session of this Select Board meeting, subject to reasonable requirements of the chair. This meeting is being recorded by Ludlow Community Television. If anyone else is recording, please identify yourself now. There is no one.

5:30-5:45 P.M. – PUBLIC COMMENT

VISITATION

6:00 P.M. – Salman Zahid – Conservation Commission Member Interview
Mr. Zahid said he lives at 156 Pinewood Road and works for MASSDOT, currently on Piney Lane. He described himself as environmentally friendly and committed to keeping streams and wildlife safe from hazards in construction zones. He shared photos taken during their work phases showing environmental protection and said everything has been done within a controlled environment. The position interested him because it involves overseeing the natural reservation in town, and he wants to help manage and preserve natural resources long-term. He said it would also be a good learning curve for understanding how the town handles resources, wetlands activity, and buffer zones. Mr. Gennette thanked him for applying and confirmed he works for MASSDOT. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to appoint Salman Zahid to the Conservation Commission. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

6:15 P.M – William "Bud" Ellison – Conservation Commission Associate Member Interview.
Mr. Ellison introduced himself as William Ellison of 555 Miller Street and said he is 5th generation on the property. Mr. Silva asked if he was interested in the Alternate position, and Mr. Ellison clarified it was the Associate. Mr. Silva explained they were interviewing for a full member and an associate member, so he would not be considered for the full member spot. Mr. Gennette confirmed Mr. Ellison is already on the Planning Board and asked about any conflict. Mr. Ellison said there was none and that he had previously talked with Penny and Angela about joining, believing there could be good synergy between departments. When the Planning Board opportunity came up, he took that on as well but felt the Associate Member role here would be less stringent, allow a learning curve, and let him help without overextending himself, and he does not expect to vote unless needed.

Mr. Rosenblum asked if he was still on Open Space. Mr. Ellison said he is and believes he is still chairman. He said the CPA is being reassembled, he will represent the Planning Board on that committee, and he is excited about the new approach. He said he wants to bring everything together and feels now is the right time, even if he does not plan to do it forever.**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to appoint Bud Ellison as the Associate Member. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

6:30 P.M. – Judy Breault – Conservation Commission Member Interview.

Ms. Breault introduced herself as Judy Breault from Haswell Circle, where she has lived for 35 years. She currently serves as chairman of the Ludlow Pond Management Committee and has had many discussions with Angela Tierney about pond-related issues. She felt this position would mirror the work she already does with the Pond Committee. She has 30-plus years of corporate experience, is retired, and now has the time to help make Ludlow a better community. Mr. Silva noted that Conservation can be more restrictive than pond work and asked if she was comfortable with that. Ms. Breault said she was, explaining that much of the challenge comes down to helping people understand the rules around Conservation, buffer zones, ecology, and limitations. She said she has also experienced frustration with treatment efforts at Minechoag but understands the regulations.

Mr. Gennette asked about potential conflicts between the Pond Committee and Conservation. Ms. Breault said she had considered that and would step away from decisions involving notices of intent for pond treatments or surveys. She said the synergy comes from education efforts such as fertilizing practices, trash pickup, water levels, and aquatic life, and she hopes to learn more from working with the Department of Environmental Protection and bring that value back. She acknowledged there will be times when she must recuse herself.

Mr. Rosenblum said that while she is qualified, he is also considering the benefit of involving someone new who has never volunteered before. Ms. Breault said she understood and only applied because she believed Conservation needed additional members, and she was glad to see others had applied. She said she would take no offense if not appointed and is happy to continue her work on the Pond Committee or work with whoever joins Conservation. Mr. Alves agreed, saying more voices are good and that appointing a first-time volunteer is important. He appreciated her willingness to abstain when appropriate but felt that made him lean more toward appointing Mr. Zahid since the committee needs someone able to participate actively.

CORRESPONDENCE

26-68 Chief Brennan – Police Firearms Range Proposal.
Chief Brennan said we had been looking at the possibility of developing a new range for some time. Myself and Lt. Irwin run our ranges with the good graces of private people here in town. Long-term planning may not be feasible forever and we've run into conflicts with operations. We looked at the DPW property; it's feasible. We could construct a range using our DPW personnel. It comes down to earth movement, building up berms about 16 ft. tall and 10 ft. wide for a backstop and to deflect or contain noise. We could do it with the equipment we have and we would own the property. Alternatives would be renting range space with travel time and rental costs. This seemed like a no brainer. I credit Lt. Irwin. I'm looking for approval to work with the DPW.

Mr. Silva asked about the $17,000 and any estimate for building it. Lt. Irwin said a few days to move all of that. No materials. You're taking existing earth and moving it around. No clearing. Mr. Gennette asked is it gated and secured. Chief Brennan said yes. It's on the DPW property which is secure, and the backside abuts the turnpike. Concern about people wandering; plan would be signage and sweeping the area. Operating hours usually daytime; requirement for lowlight training occasionally. Usually in October/November and April/May around dusk. Mostly Monday through Friday, some Saturdays, generally not Sundays.
Discussion of location: on the DPW side, further from residents. Question about qualifying residents for LTCs; right now for our own personnel but could potentially lead to safety classes. Location checked for wetlands; both bogs outside the buffer. Environmental stewardship: scraping earth every five years, sifting, and replacing.

Lt. Irwin noted range rental recently quoted at 7,000 for the year, plus overtime and travel. MBTC funding pulled back. Mr. Gennette asked about hosting other police departments; idea is to start with us. Concerns about insurances and liabilities. Before bringing anyone else you would have to work that out. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve the request of the police department for developing a range at the DPW. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-69 Recreation Commission – Reorganization.

Mr. Alves said from the Rec Department at their meeting scheduled on April 7th they reorganized as follows: Sean McBride chairman, Shawn Lebeau vice chairman, Edward Garbocik member. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-70 Finance Committee – Reorganization.
Mr. Alves said per correspondence from the Finance Committee be advised that their meeting April 15th, 2026 they voted to reorganize as follows: Chad Mullin chairman, Mike Kelliher vice chairman, Susan Boyea member, Michael Kelley member, Aneta Lombardi member. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-71 Our Lady of Fatima Parish and Festa Committee – Request to waive all administrative & permit fees associated with this year's Festa, including but not limited to Fire, Police and Building Department services. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve Our Lady of Fatima Parish and Festa Committee request to waive all administrative & permit fees associated with this year's Festa, including but not limited to Fire, Police and Building Department services. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-72 Robert Haryasz – Request to be appointed to the Celebrate Ludlow Committee. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to appoint Robert Haryasz to the Celebrate Ludlow Committee. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-73 Joanna Stoeber – Request to be appointed to the Celebrate Ludlow Committee. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to appoint Joanna Stoeber to the Celebrate Ludlow Committee. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-74 Cannabis Control Commission – Delivery of Marijuana & Marijuana Products – Municipal Waiver Option.
Mr. Strange explained that the Governor recently signed an Act Modernizing the Commonwealth's Cannabis Laws, which creates a right for delivery into any community. Communities like Ludlow, which voted not to allow cannabis sales or cultivation, can request a waiver from the Cannabis Control Commission, and the CCC must accept it. Delivery became effective immediately, so delivery into Ludlow is currently legal until the waiver is submitted and approved. Mr. Silva asked where deliveries would go and whether this meant to residences. He said he had no issue with residents having products delivered to their door and noted the town's prohibition was against establishments selling in Ludlow, not against personal delivery. Mr. Alves noted medical delivery cannot be opted out of and this only pertains to recreational. Mr. Gennette said he opposed establishments in Ludlow but delivery did not bother him and confirmed this does not supersede the bylaw prohibiting cannabis businesses. Mr. Alves agreed, saying delivery is safer for users and necessary for those who cannot leave their homes. Mr. Sanches asked whether the Chief had been consulted on safety implications. Mr. Strange said it is a state law. Mr. Silva said the Board does not have to take action unless they choose to. Mr. Strange confirmed that if the Board does nothing, delivery will remain allowed. Mr. Silva said the Chief could approach the Board later if he had concerns. Mr. Strange confirmed there is no time limit and that the town can opt out at any point. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-75 NextEra Energy – Massachusetts Disclosure Label, LLC. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-76 Charter Communications – 2025 Annual Financial Report. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to file. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Linda Collette came in to discuss the revised parade route. She explained that because the West Street Bridge is permanently closed, a new parade route was created with Police and Fire. The parade will still start at the Gremio Lusitano Club on Winsor Street and will go up Winsor, turn left onto Laconia by East Street School, then left onto East Street and continue to the Veteran's Memorial. Marchers will go up Chestnut as usual, while floats and larger vehicles will turn at the river walk. Staging will take place on State Street and at the Senior Center, with participants coming up Worcester Street and onto Winsor to begin. The route is

only slightly shorter due to fewer turns. Police and Fire preferred Laconia instead of Stevens to keep Stevens Street open for emergency access, and East Street offers many side streets and parking options. The review stand will move to East Street School, and LCTV has been notified. Billy Koss and Bill Rooney will provide parade commentary. Once approved, the updated route will be shared online, on social media, in the Register, and through a robocall.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to discuss and possibly revise vote on FY27 CIPC recommendations.
Mr. Alves explained that the Finance Committee reviewed revised recommendations following the change in certified free cash. With only three members present, the committee evaluated departmental requests alongside their five-year plans, aiming for balance across departments and across fiscal years. He noted that items on the capital plan represent legitimate needs and that delaying them typically increases costs, citing an example where a project rose by 25 percent in one year. He also referenced ten-year data on stabilization levels and free cash trends, indicating the town is now within the state-recommended stabilization range after years of improvement.

The committee agreed on most recommendations but initially hesitated on the community center request due to incomplete information; after further discussion they recommended postponing it. Mr. Gennette asked why certain capital items totaling $386,426 were removed instead of reducing contributions to OPEB or capital stabilization. After reviewing the free cash sheet, it was clarified that OPEB had already been reduced and that maintaining sufficient free cash and stabilization balances guided the committee's decisions.

Board members discussed the role of various stabilization funds, the town's reserve position, and differing views on how much to place in stabilization versus leaving funds in free cash for flexibility. Mr. Alves emphasized that with stabilization funds now healthy, the committee aimed to fund as many projects as feasible to avoid cost escalation. Mr. Sanches suggested directing a portion of remaining funds into capital stabilization to ensure future obligations, such as trash and fire truck payments, are covered if free cash is low next year. Mr. Alves favored retaining flexibility by keeping remaining funds in free cash.

Several members noted concerns about delayed free cash certification and its impact on planning. Questions were raised regarding the absence of the previously discussed insurance stabilization fund, which had been presented earlier in the cycle but did not appear in the warrant. Mr. Strange confirmed it had been removed before finalization. The discussion concluded with questions about the significant decline in free cash from earlier estimates due to higher uncollected taxes and other unrealized revenues. Mr. Strange stated he would review the details with auditors and return with a full explanation at a future meeting. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to follow the recommendation of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee for the items they have listed and adding the Community Center back in for $86,100 for locker room renovations. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to withdraw support for certain FY27 Free Cash expenditures and the corresponding warrant articles.
The Board discussed how to proceed with the warrant articles relating to stabilization and other allocations. Mr. Gennette asked for a motion, and Mr. Alves suggested following warrant order. It was clarified that postponing the warrant articles would effectively mean making no allocations, as a motion to take no action would be made at Town Meeting. Mr. Strange noted that each of the stabilization-related articles could be addressed individually with motions to take no action, including capital stabilization, park and recreation stabilization, the diff fund, OPEB, the stadium turf account, ITP Munis projects, and the public safety HVAC article. Members agreed that it would be useful to formally record their recommendations.

The Board then reviewed the warrant articles. Electronic voting devices would remain funded at $8,200. For the diff special revenue fund, Mr. Gennette reported that postponing the allocation would not significantly impact the Stevens Street paving plan, as Chapter 90 funds could be used next year, and gas line installation may occur beforehand. Questions were raised about the process for determining diff contributions, with Mr. Alves noting his

understanding that the incremental tax revenue should be identified early in the budget process rather than relying on free cash. Mr. Strange clarified that, given timing and prior practice, the transfer must come from free cash.

The Board agreed that Article 12 (diff transfer) would be no action. Article 13, the Finance Committee reserve, would remain funded. Article 14, the building infrastructure fund, would remain at $100,000. Articles 15 and 16, relating to stabilization and turf replacement, would be no action. Radio communications maintenance funding would stay, as it is required. Munis improvements would be no action. Articles for capital stabilization, park and rec stabilization, OPEB, and others would be no action, except for the housing production plan, which would remain funded due to its low cost and ongoing progress. Article 23 had already been withdrawn.**Motion made by Mr. Alves** to recommend to take no action on the following Town Meeting Warrant Articles: Article #'s 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and an amendment to 14 reducing it to $100,000. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly approve Select Board liaison positions.
Mr. Silva said the WMDC, which he serves on, was not listed. Mr. Strange said he believed that was an official seat. Mr. Silva added that when he went to be sworn in, the clerk had the same WMDC appointment listed for both him and Mr. Rosenblum, and he believed Mr. Rosenblum's was sent in incorrectly because he was actually on the Westover Advisory Committee. Mr. Strange clarified that the Westover Advisory Commission is different. He said these items were all liaisons, and noted that Anthony and previously James were on Capital. He said he would have Amy add it. Mr. Alves suggested that going forward it may be cleaner to have a liaison list and an appointment list. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to accept the liaison list as presented in the packet. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

NEW BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign minutes from meeting of April 7, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and sign minutes from meeting of April 7, 2026, with all members present. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign minutes from meeting of April 14, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and sign minutes from meeting of April 14, 2026, with all members present. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign two (2) one-day permits for Cottage Melts Sip & Shop to be held on Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Saturday, June 20, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and sign two (2) one-day permits for Cottage Melts Sip & Shop to be held on Saturday, May 9, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Saturday, June 20, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign five (5) one day permits for Our Lady of Fatima Parish Festa to be held Thursday, September 3 through Monday, September 7, 2026. Fees to be possibly waived. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and sign five (5) one day permits for Our Lady of Fatima Parish Festa to be held Thursday, September 3 through Monday, September 7, 2026. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to recognize May 2026 as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Awareness Month.
Mr. Rosenblum read the proclamation: Town of Ludlow, Massachusetts, Office of the Select Board, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month, WHEREAS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a progressive fatal neurodegenerative disease in which a person's brain loses connection with their muscles, slowly reducing a person's ability to walk, talk, eat, and eventually breathe; and WHEREAS, thousands of new amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) cases are reported every year, and estimates show that every 90 minutes, someone is diagnosed with ALS and someone passes away from ALS; and WHEREAS, on average patients diagnosed with ALS survive only two to five years from the time of diagnosis; and WHEREAS, the exact causes of ALS are unknown and there is no known cure for ALS; and WHEREAS, people who have served in the

military are more likely to develop ALS and die from the diseases than those with no history of military service; and WHEREAS, securing access to new therapies, durable medical equipment, and communication technologies is of vital importance to people living with ALS; and WHEREAS, clinical trials play a pivotal role in evaluating new treatments, enhancing quality of life, and fostering assistive technologies for those living with ALS; and WHEREAS the ALS Association is the largest philanthropic funder of ALS research globally and has committed more than $154 million to support more than 550 projects across the United States and 18 other countries; and WHEREAS, the ALS Association is committed to make ALS livable and cure it for everyone, everywhere; and WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month provides an opportunity to increase public awareness of the dire circumstances of people living with ALS, acknowledge the terrible impact this disease has on those individuals and their families, and support research to eradicate this disease; Now, therefore, I, Select Board Chairman William Rosenblum, do hereby proclaim the month of May 2026 as ALS Awareness Month. I call upon all Americans to join in supporting ALS research, advocating for increased funding, and standing in solidarity with those affected by this relentless disease.

Board to approve and sign Extension to Operation, Maintenance & Management Services Agreement between Veolia and Town of Ludlow dated January 1, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign Extension to Operation, Maintenance & Management Services Agreement between Veolia and Town of Ludlow dated January 1, 2026. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve order for four (4) new streetlights on existing poles on Lawton Street and Szlosek Road.
Mr. Alves said there's no hearing for this because the poles exist. They're either adding or replacing street lights to a pole that already exists. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to approve order for four (4) new streetlights on existing poles on Lawton Street and Szlosek Road. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign the contract between the Town of Ludlow (DPW) and Dennis K. Bruke, Inc. for FY27 Gas Agreement.
The Board discussed whether to lock in pricing for unleaded gasoline and diesel fuel for fiscal year 2027. Given current instability in the Middle East and elevated fuel prices, the question was how much of the Town's expected fuel use should be fixed under contract. An initial recommendation of locking in 80 percent, consistent with common municipal practice, had been circulated. Mr. Gennette explained that the Town can secure a fixed price for approximately a year based on an estimated annual fuel usage. Locking in 80 percent would provide budget predictability while leaving 20 percent available for spot pricing if market prices decline. Several members raised concerns about committing to a high percentage at a time when fuel prices appear near historic highs. Mr. Alves sought clarification about whether the Town is committing to a specific volume or purchasing fuel as needed, and Mr. Gennette confirmed that the Town estimates its annual usage and commits to that percentage at today's price.

Board members questioned whether it is prudent to lock in such a large portion given current market conditions. Discussion covered risks, potential shortages, and the value of ensuring availability. Mr. Sanches asked for last year's fuel purchase amounts and when last year's futures were locked in. He also noted that the Town's fuel broker, Paul W. Schroeder of LPVEC, recently advised communities that this may not be a good time to lock in due to unusually high prices and volatility. His guidance suggested monitoring the market through October 31, as future prices could shift depending on global events. Mr. Strange confirmed that Schroeder is the Town's fuel broker and that additional information can be obtained regarding last year's purchasing timeline and volumes. The Board indicated interest in waiting as long as practical before making a decision.**Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to table. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly vote to appropriate Building Infrastructure funds for carpeting in Town Hall.
Mr. Strange reported that the new Treasurer/Collector has identified security concerns with the office's current location on the first floor and has requested to move the office back to its previous second-floor space. The Accounting office would return to its original location

as well. Before any move takes place, the plan is to replace the carpeting in both the current Accounting office and the space that would become the new Accounting office. The quoted price includes removing and reinstalling the furniture.

Board members discussed the rationale for the move. Mr. Gennette asked for clarification on the security issue, and Mr. Strange explained that the concern relates to the office's proximity to an exit. Mr. Gennette noted that the front doors are unlocked and questioned whether the second-floor location provides additional security, though it is farther from the parking lot. Mr. Alves asked whether the exterior door could be designated as an emergency exit only. Mr. Strange added that the Treasurer/Collector wants her staff consolidated, as they are currently split between two floors.

Board members reviewed the history of the office locations. Mr. Strange explained that the Treasurer and Collector positions were merged, and their staff had been moved to the first floor to reduce foot traffic in the HR area and to make bill payment easier for seniors, especially when the elevator had been unreliable. Mr. Alves asked if the carpeting replacement was necessary or mainly convenient due to the proposed move, and Mr. Strange said all of the carpets are due for replacement.

Questions arose about the fund balance available for carpeting and whether the project required bidding. Mr. Strange said the project could be considered as two separate carpet replacements, giving the Board flexibility to approve them individually.

Board members expressed differing views about the proposed move. Mr. Gennette supported addressing the Treasurer's security concerns but favored keeping the office on the first floor for senior accessibility, especially given past elevator issues. He suggested exploring alternate security improvements rather than relocating the office. Mr. Rosenblum questioned whether deciding office locations is within the Board's purview but emphasized retaining employees and supporting staff preferences. Mr. Silva supported proceeding with the move if it improves comfort and security for the Treasurer/Collector and noted that using the elevator is reasonable when it is functioning properly. Mr. Sanches agreed with Mr. Gennette's concerns about accessibility.

The Board also discussed whether they should first allow the department heads to finalize a plan for office locations before voting on carpet funding, as approval of carpeting would depend on whether the move proceeds.**Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve the carpeting quote for the accounting area for $6,150. **Mr. Alves second. Motion passed 3-2. Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve $7,200 for the old accounting area carpeting. **Mr. Alves second. Motion passed 3-2.** Mr. Sanches asked, can we request to get a balance in that account? Mr. Strange said yes.

Board to approve and sign Union Contract for Police Patrol & Supervisors. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign Union Contract for Police Patrol & Supervisors. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and authorize e-signatures of the Memorandum of Agreement for Entry Level Local Register Appointments for the Police Department. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and authorize e-signatures of the Memorandum of Agreement for Entry Level Local Register Appointments for the Police Department. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to approve and sign agreement between the Town of Ludlow and Springfield Water & Sewer Commission for Wastewater Services.
Mr. Gennette asked to have legal take a look at this contract just to make sure that everything copacetic. Mr. Sanches asked about the terms. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to table. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board to discuss and possibly approve creating a Public Safety Building Planning Committee.
Mr. Rosenblum noted that, with the article for the Safety Complex withdrawn, it may be an appropriate time to establish a long-term planning committee for public safety facilities. He explained that the Fire Chief plans to install mini-splits, develop a maintenance plan, and

perform some cleaning at the existing building, which should keep conditions stable for now. However, given the age of the building and the likelihood that major renovation or relocation may be needed within the next 10 to 15 years, he said a planning committee should begin examining long-term options. The Chief suggested including more than one representative from the Fire Department, since the planning process could extend beyond his tenure. Mr. Rosenblum emphasized the value of having both police and fire personnel involved to ensure the committee understands operational needs.

Mr. Gennette agreed, noting that the building dates to the 1970s and that past estimates showed that most renovation costs stem from bringing the building up to current code. He said the building no longer meets the needs of the Police and Fire Departments, both of which are serving a growing community. He believes the Fire Department may wish to remain centrally located, but the Police Department may need a facility closer to downtown. He recommended forming a temporary Public Safety Building Planning Committee immediately, which could later formalize its structure and present membership recommendations to the Board. He stressed the importance of long-term planning to determine potential locations, costs, grant opportunities, and design considerations. He also cited recent examples of insufficient planning in other town projects and said that better preparation is essential for major capital decisions. He added that if the Town had proceeded with a $6.8 million HVAC proposal for the current building, he would have insisted on an oversight committee due to the high cost for such an old structure. Mr. Sanches supported the idea and requested a formal written charge for the committee, defined membership, and quarterly reporting to the Select Board. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to table until the Town Administrator can draft a charge & charter. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

BOARD UPDATES/MISC

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

Mr. Sanches reported that the Cleanup Ludlow event held on Saturday was very successful. He thanked Linda Collette for organizing the civic groups and all the volunteers who participated. He noted that the DPW and the various civic groups did an excellent job. The Ludlow Rotary Club cleaned the Riverwalk area, where volunteers collected several items including tires, six bags of trash, and a filing cabinet. He also recognized the efforts of the Harris Brook group and all participants, expressing appreciation for their work.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Gennette thanked everyone who attended the pre–Town Meeting, noting that while he wished more residents had participated, those who did found the information helpful and expressed that they enjoyed the session.

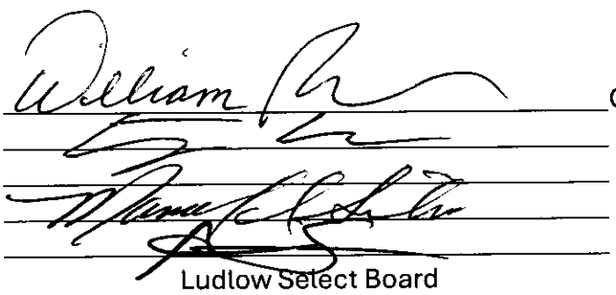
Mr. Sanches acknowledged that the meeting was challenging, particularly regarding the free cash issues, but emphasized that addressing difficult matters with transparency and accountability is essential for maintaining public trust. He expressed appreciation that the Board had worked through the discussion openly.

Mr. Rosenblum noted that despite the unexpected shortfall in free cash, the Board was able to bridge the gap without affecting jobs or essential services. He emphasized the importance of improving real estate tax collections, which historically ranged from $500,000 to $800,000 in receivables; returning to that level could restore an additional $1.5 to $2 million in free cash. He also remarked that, although taxes are high everywhere, Ludlow remains in a stronger position than many surrounding communities facing overrides. He cautioned that the next few years will still be challenging, particularly with anticipated insurance increases of 8 to 12 percent, but thanked the Board for working through the issues and expressed confidence that they will continue to find solutions.

Mr. Silva reminded residents that Town Meeting will be held on May 11 and encouraged everyone to attend. He noted that even non-voting members can benefit from hearing the discussions, as Town Meeting is where questions about how funds are allocated are fully addressed. He urged anyone interested in understanding town finances and decisions to participate.

Mr. Alves reflected on the evening's budget discussion, noting that although many viewpoints were shared, the Board reached a constructive outcome. He emphasized that the town is able to make progress on needed projects without drawing down savings, and while no additional funds are being set aside this year, the town remains well within recommended reserve ranges. He highlighted the importance of timely free cash certification to avoid large swings and last-minute decisions in the future. He added that several facility improvements long overdue will now move forward. Mr. Alves also recognized two residents recently featured in the news: Corinne Ryan, named to Business West's 40 Under 40, and Carla Alves, who received the Rotary's Service Above Self Award.

Motion made by Mr. Gennette to close the meeting at 8:37 P.M. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**



Chairman

Ludlow Select Board

All related documents can be viewed at the Select Board's Office during regular business hours.