Town of Ludlow
Office of the Select Board

The Meeting of the Select Board held on Tuesday, July 21, 2026, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Select Board's Conference Room.

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

Members Absent: Antonio Sanches

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

5:45 P.M. – **Public Hearing** – Blue Water Sushi – 221 East Street – Change of Stock Interest. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to open the hearing at 5:50 p.m. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.** Frank Caruso appeared on behalf of the petitioner for Blue Water Sushi. He explained that the request involved an internal change within the LLC, with no alterations to the business operations. When the LLC was originally formed, Helen's husband, Leo, was not eligible to own shares; he is now eligible, and the CPA has recommended transferring stock from Helen to Leo. Both individuals work full time at the restaurant, and Helen will remain the manager of record. Mr. Caruso emphasized that there would be no operational changes. Mr. Silva asked whether abutters were required to be notified. Mr. Caruso stated that the law does not require abutter notification for this type of ownership transfer, but Ludlow customarily sends notices as part of its local policy. He noted that notices had been sent and provided a check for the associated fee. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve Blue Water Sushi, 221 East Street, change of stock interest as presented. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0. Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to close the public hearing at 5:51p.m. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

CORRESPONDENCE

26-103 letter from Kathleen Shea – Request to Study a Temporary Moratorium on Data Center Development.
Mr. Gennette stated that he had a question regarding the matter, noting that it had been referred to multiple boards, including the Planning Board. He said that the Select Board should wait to hear back from the Planning Board before taking any further action. Mr. Gennette stated that the communication in question had been sent broadly to multiple boards and that it is primarily a Planning Board matter. He explained that the Select Board cannot take action until the Planning Board determines its position, which is why the motion was structured accordingly. Mr. Alves noted that because the item appeared as correspondence, no Select Board action was required regardless. He also recalled that at the previous meeting, Mr. Sanches had spoken with the Town Planner about the issue. Mr. Strange confirmed that the Planning Board is working on a bylaw addressing data centers, consistent with the request that the matter be studied. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to take no action. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-104 Phillip Tierney – Request to be appointed to the Council on Aging. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to appoint Phillip Tierney to the Council on Aging. **Mr. Silva second. Alli n favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-105 Kathleen Ziemba & John Ziemba – Request to be appointed to the Pond Committee. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to appoint Kathleen & John Ziemba to the Pond Committee. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-106 Eversource Meter Outreach.
Mr. Gennette issued a public announcement regarding Eversource's ongoing replacement of older meters with new electronic meters, noting that the upgrades are required under state guidance. He explained that Eversource has mailed letters to customers who have not yet scheduled an appointment for the meter change. He advised residents that failure to schedule the replacement will result in a $240 charge and an additional monthly fee of $35 until the meter is updated. He stated that the town has already posted this information on its website and emphasized the importance of notifying residents to ensure they are aware of the costs and state requirements. Mr. Rosenblum clarified that the Eversource meter replacement program is entirely under Eversource's authority and not affiliated with the Town of Ludlow. He stated that the fees and requirements described are imposed by Eversource and not by the Select Board or any town department. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to file. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-107 Springfield Water & Sewer Commission – Elevated Disinfection Byproducts at the SWSC.
Mr. Gennette asked whether the report under discussion was the same type of routine update the Board typically receives or whether it indicated elevated levels of concern. Mr. Rosenblum responded that the report states there is no emergency and that it is provided for informational purposes only, noting that while elevated levels were mentioned, the communication makes clear that the situation is not classified as an emergency. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-108 Joel Silva, Planning Board – Letter of Resignation. Board to post the vacancy. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to accept the letter of resignation from Joel Silva and post the vacancy as soon as possible. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to approve the FY26-FY27 LATOSS collective bargaining agreement (Tabled from July 7, 2026). Tabled.

Board to discuss Treasurer/Collector staffing (tabled from July 7, 2026). **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to take no action. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

NEW BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign minutes from meeting of July 7, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and sign meeting minutes of July 7, 2026, with all members present. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign minutes from meeting of July 15, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to approve and sign meeting minutes from July 15, 2026, with all members present except James Gennette. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to sign amended liquor license for Casa Pizza (previously approved May 19, 2026). Mr. Alves noted that the liquor license request indicated it had been previously approved and that no changes were being proposed. Mr. Strange confirmed that the reference pertained to the indoor seating approval granted earlier and that nothing new had been submitted. Mr. Silva added that the license reflected exactly what had been approved on May 19.

Board to discuss and possible vote to adopt a Visitors Code of Conduct policy.

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The Board discussed a proposed Visitors Code of Conduct policy intended to address escalating behavior toward staff in town buildings. Mr. Gennette said that while he initially questioned whether such a policy was necessary, after reviewing it he felt it provided important clarity for both employees and visitors. Mr. Rosenblum noted that similar visitor-conduct policies are used in hospitals and other institutions, including his workplace in Hartford, and that these policies outline expectations for the public as well as internal standards for staff. Mr. Silva stated that in his experience such a policy may not prevent all issues but agreed that having one posted is appropriate. Mr. Strange explained that recent incidents in town offices had left staff unsure how to respond when confronted with escalating or abusive behavior. He said a formal policy would give department heads clear authority to direct visitors to leave when necessary.

Mr. Rosenblum added that a posted policy provides the town with some protection if service must be refused due to misconduct, as it documents the expectations and procedures. Mr. Alves said he agreed the policy stemmed from real situations and employee feedback, and that posting it would help communicate that staff are supported. He asked whether the policy would apply to all town buildings, including the library and senior center. Mr. Strange responded that the policy would be shared with all departments and outlying facilities and that each could post it where appropriate. The Board discussed presentation and formatting, with Mr. Alves suggesting that a posted version be condensed to a single page and Mr. Rosenblum asking whether DPW could assist with permanent signage. Mr. Strange clarified that the document before the Board was the full policy and that a simplified public-facing version could be created. Mr. Gennette asked whether legal counsel had reviewed the policy, and Mr. Strange said it had not yet been referred for legal review. I didn't know if you guys were going to be amendable to it so if you want to table it and I can shoot it over to Brian and he can take a look at it. Mr. Gennette said I would just make sure that we don't have any legal concerns or anything. I'm all for it but I just want to make sure that we cover our bases. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to table until Town Counsel can review. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss creating a policy to allow other towns to borrow electronic voting devices. Mr. Rosenblum asked whether the discussion involved charging a fee for lending the town's new voting devices. Mr. Strange clarified that the agenda item should have been listed as a discussion about creating a policy not to lend the devices to other municipalities. Mr. Gennette noted that the town has not yet used the devices and suggested understanding their operation before considering any policy. Mr. Silva asked why lending them would be prohibited. Mr. Strange explained that the Town Clerk raised concerns that, if Ludlow became known for lending voting devices, frequent requests from other communities could create a burden and increase the risk of loss or damage. He emphasized that managing and tracking the devices would fall on the Town Clerk's office. Board members discussed whether a formal policy was necessary. Mr. Alves questioned the need to adopt a policy to prohibit something the town does not typically do, comparing it to not having policies about lending town vehicles. He stated that he would be uncomfortable lending equipment used for official voting, citing concerns about calibration, custody, and tampering. Mr. Gennette agreed that the costs associated with replacing lost devices could be an issue, and Mr. Rosenblum floated the possibility of charging a fee if lending ever occurred. Mr. Silva said he values maintaining cooperative relationships with neighboring communities, but agreed that safeguards would be needed. Mr. Strange reiterated the Town Clerk's concern that other towns might ask to borrow the devices once they learn Ludlow has them. After discussion, Mr. Gennette recommended waiting to address the issue until another town actually makes a request, rather than establishing a policy preemptively. Board members agreed that, if a request arises in the future, the Board can revisit the matter and decide at that time. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to take no action. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss turning off comments on Town social media pages.
Mr. Strange informed the Board that the Town of South Hadley recently voted to turn off comments on its municipal social media pages. He noted that Ludlow had previously asked Town Counsel about this issue but had never pursued it further. After speaking with other Town Administrators and Town Managers, many of whom limit or disable comments on

certain municipal pages—he asked Town Counsel again and was told there were no First Amendment concerns with doing so. His suggestion was to disable comments on the town's main Facebook page while allowing individual departments to decide whether to keep comments open on their own pages. Mr. Gennette agreed with disabling comments on the main town page, stating that misinformation posted in comments forces the town to bear responsibility for inaccurate statements. He said departmental pages should retain discretion because many rely on comment interaction for communication. Mr. Alves said he was undecided, explaining that allowing comments can be useful for questions but also leads to misinformation and harassment. He noted that residents have multiple other ways to ask questions or voice concerns, and disabling comments would not prevent conversation in other online spaces. He said he would support whatever Town Counsel advised and was comfortable leaving comment decisions to individual departments.

Board members discussed the practical effects of leaving comments enabled. Mr. Gennette noted that allowing comments obligates departments to respond. Mr. Rosenblum said he avoids replying on Facebook because doing so often escalates negativity, and emphasized that residents can easily contact the Board or staff directly. Mr. Silva questioned whether a formal policy was necessary or whether the town could simply choose to disable comments. Mr. Strange asked whether the Board wanted him to draft a policy. Mr. Rosenblum said any policy should be simple and could take the form of a short statement or memo. Mr. Gennette suggested first determining whether legal requirements exist and then bringing the matter back to the Board. Mr. Alves asked whether a policy was even needed to disable comments, noting that removing or limiting comment functionality is an administrative action. Mr. Rosenblum said a memo to department heads might suffice if Town Counsel confirms no policy is required. Mr. Strange agreed to consult Town Counsel for guidance and determine whether a formal policy or a simple memo would be appropriate.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Strange provided an update on the motor vehicle excise tax abatement process. He explained that after the first fiscal year 2026 commitment was issued, a large number of residents requested abatements, which revealed a procedural issue. In past practice, a resident seeking an abatement would visit the Assessor's Office, receive the abatement immediately, and then proceed to the Collector's Office to pay the reduced amount. Because the Collector's Office cannot accept partial payments unless the abated amount has already been entered into Munis, this created situations where the system still showed the original amount owed and the Collector was required to accept payment for that full amount. Following discussion at the previous Select Board meeting and correspondence from the Board of Assessors, Mr. Strange met with Treasurer/Collector Michelle Hill, Assistant Assessor Joe Alves, and Maria from the Assessor's Office. They established a revised approach for the remainder of fiscal year 2026. Under this interim process, when a taxpayer requests an abatement at the Assessor's Office, the staff will immediately enter the abatement into Munis while the taxpayer is present. This allows the Collector's Office to accept payment for the correctly reduced amount when the taxpayer arrives downstairs.

Mr. Strange stated that a more significant change will take effect with the first commitment of calendar year 2027. At that time, taxpayers seeking abatements will still apply through the Assessor's Office, but they will be required to pay the full amount listed on the bill. Once the Assessors process the abatement, the town will issue a refund check to the taxpayer for the abated portion. Mr. Alves asked Mr. Silva for his thoughts based on his experience, and Mr. Silva said the process had always worked smoothly when abatements were posted promptly. He acknowledged that Munis can be challenging and that high-volume days add workload, but agreed that the updated process appears workable. Mr. Alves agreed. Mr. Strange stated that this solution balances the needs of both departments and provides clarity for residents. He added that the Board continues work on an outdoor entertainment policy, has circulated an internal draft for comment, and expects to place the draft on an August agenda. He also announced that the Board's fiscal year 2027 goal-setting meeting will be held Tuesday evening, August 11, at the Senior Center.

BOARD UPDATES/MISC

Mr. Alves noted that the new fiscal year has begun and that work on the library parking lot is underway. He said it was good to see progress, since although the project funding was approved in May, the town could not begin work until July. He also expressed enthusiasm for the upcoming renovations at Whitney Park, stating that construction is expected to begin once the summer camp concludes. Mr. Strange added that the town anticipates delivery of the park equipment in late August or early September. Mr. Alves also mentioned the recent Health Fair and noted that the Cultural Council continues to host concerts on Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

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.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Motion made by Mr. Gennette to close this July 21, 2026, Select Board meeting at 6:20 PM. **Mr. Alves second All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

William [signature] Chairman

[signatures]

Ludlow Select Board

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