The Meeting of the Select Board held on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, began at 5:30 p.m. in the Select Board's Conference Room.

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

Members Absent: James Gennette

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. – Ryan Devine, Red Bridge Run Club – Proposal to host the Ludlow Clocktower Classic 5K Saturday October 24, 2026.
Mr. Devine appeared before the board to request approval for the second annual Ludlow Clocktower Classic 5K. He stated that last year's event was a major success, drawing more than 200 runners and many spectators, with no issues reported. He said that this year's event will mirror last year's, following the same course and starting at Sole Syndicate Brewing in the Mill complex. Mr. Silva asked about the name of the race, and Mr. Devine confirmed the official name. Mr. Sanches asked whether an application for use of town property had been submitted, noting that the event includes use of the Riverwalk. Mr. Devine confirmed that the Riverwalk is part of the route. Mr. Strange explained that since last year's event, the board adopted a policy requiring sign-offs from Police, Fire, DPW, Building, and Health for any event using the Riverwalk, and that an application must be completed. He said that if the event stayed entirely on public roads, the application would not be required. He offered to have staff email the form to Mr. Devine. Mr. Alves asked whether the race was still being held in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Club and whether that affiliation might qualify it as a town-sponsored event, as it was treated last year. Mr. Strange said staff would review the details to determine whether the application process applies and would follow up after confirming the event's status. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve the race for Saturday, October 24, 2026, subject to the application initiated previously. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

6:00 P.M. – Firefighter/Paramedic Interview – Leo Couture.
Mr. Rosenblum invited the candidate, Leo Couture, to introduce himself. Mr. Couture stated that he is 25 years old and has been involved in firefighting for approximately eight years, primarily in South Hadley. He has four to five years of EMS experience, including two years as an EMT, with most of his EMT work completed in Holyoke. He said he loves the profession and hopes to continue his career in Ludlow as a Firefighter/Paramedic. In response to a question from Mr. Silva about why he is seeking a change, Mr. Couture said he is looking for a more progressive department and a change of scenery. Deputy Chief Lavoie reported that on July 16th the department interviewed five candidates, all of whom were strong, and Mr. Couture ranked first in their assessment. He said command staff and HR conducted the interviews and that the department is pleased to have a candidate with experience joining Ludlow. He confirmed that background checks have been completed. Mr. Rosenblum noted

that the board relies on the thorough hiring processes used by the police and fire departments, which include detailed evaluations the board itself cannot duplicate. Deputy Chief Lavoie acknowledged HR's critical role in the process. Mr. Alves asked whether the position was newly added or filling a vacancy. Deputy Chief Lavoie stated that it is the new position approved as of July 1st and that there are no other openings. He noted that this hire is being made off the local register. In response to a question regarding procedural disclaimers, Deputy Chief Lavoie said that all expectations and requirements were already reviewed with the candidate during the full-day interview process. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to appoint Leo Couture as our newest Firefighter/Paramedic. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

CORRESPONDENCE

26-109 Ludlow Firefighters Association Local 1840 – Requesting permission to hold annual Boot Day to benefit Muscular Dystrophy Association on Friday, September 4th, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. in front of the Fire Station at Chapin & Center Streets. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve the request to hold the annual Boot Day to benefit Muscular Dystrophy Association on Friday, September 4th, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. in front of the Fire Station at Chapin & Center Streets. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-110 MMWEC – Notification of routine inspections and mowing operations on its natural gas pipeline right of way beginning in August, Monday through Friday 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. daily. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-111 Kathleen (Kate) Agin – Request to be appointed as a Poll Worker. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to appoint Kate Agin as a Poll Worker. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-112 Town Clerk – In Person Early Voting Schedule for the State Primary.
Mr. Alves, at the request of the Town Clerk, provided an update on the upcoming State Primary Election. He announced that the State Primary Election Day will be held on September 1st, 2026, and that In-Person Early Voting for the Primary will take place from August 22nd through August 28th in the Town Hall, Clerk's Office, 2nd floor. Early Voting hours are as follows: Saturday August 22nd from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.; Monday August 24th from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Tuesday August 25th from 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.; Wednesday August 26th from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; Thursday August 27th from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; and Friday August 28th from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. He stated that the last day to register to vote or change party enrollment is August 22nd, with in-person registration available from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The deadline to request an Early Absentee Ballot by mail is August 25th by 5:00 p.m. All Vote-by-Mail ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office by the close of polls on Election Day. Mr. Alves noted that the full schedule will be published in The Register, posted at Town Hall during Early Voting, and shared on Facebook, the Town's website, LCTV, and at the Senior Center. He encouraged anyone with questions to contact the Town Clerk's Office. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to file. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

26-113 Tom Barbeau – Cub Scout Pack 180 – Annual request for use of Veteran's Park Field on Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. to launch model rockets.
Mr. Barbeau explained that Zelda has participated in this Cub Scout rocket launch event before, which they try to hold annually, though it was not held last summer. The plan is to set up tables and a canopy near the former Veterans Park School site, where a friend, Gary Cislak, provides a launch system that allows multiple rockets to be launched safely at once. The Cub Scouts have built rockets, and the event also includes a few adult-sized launches. It is open to the community, and children of Cub Scout age who attend are offered ready-to-fly kits so they can participate. The event serves as both a fun community activity and a recruitment opportunity. Attendance is typically around 30 people, and organizers handle their own cleanup. Mr. Barbeau said he submitted the required application on Friday due to time constraints but had not yet brought it to the Police Department. Mr. Alves asked if he had received the application back with departmental comments; Mr. Barbeau said he had not. Mr. Alves noted that all departments recommended approval, with the Police Department requesting that Central Dispatch be called on the day of the launch. Chief

Brennan confirmed the call is simply to notify them before rockets are sent into the air. Mr. Alves added that the Fire Department requires a permit but will waive the fee, and the Health Department indicated that no permits are needed since no food will be served. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to approve the request from Cub Scout Pack 180 to use the field at the former Veteran's Park Elementary School on Saturday August 15th 10:00 a.m. to launch model rockets. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to approve the FY26-FY27 LATOSS collective bargaining agreement. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to take no action. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss Outdoor Entertainment License Policy.
The board continued its discussion on proposed outdoor entertainment regulations. Mr. Rosenblum asked whether members wished to suggest changes and stated that he would prefer limiting Sunday outdoor entertainment unless approved by special permit. He noted that the draft listed permitted hours as 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily but questioned whether Sundays should instead be restricted. Mr. Alves asked how the 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. timeframe had originally been chosen. Mr. Strange explained it was simply part of the draft proposal. After further discussion, members considered shifting all start times to noon and debated appropriate closing times for different days of the week. Suggestions included Monday through Thursday from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 12 p.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday either restricted to special permits or limited to 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Mr. Silva said 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays would be reasonable.

Chief Brennan offered input, noting that the town's noise bylaw prohibits certain activities on Sundays, and if the board wished to mirror existing regulations, Sunday entertainment could be limited to special permit unless otherwise exempted for town events. He said reducing weekday hours and allowing Friday and Saturday to go until 9 p.m. was sensible. He reminded the board that most enforcement issues involve reasonable noise assessments by responding officers, who already work with establishments to lower volume when necessary. He said the proposed policy includes additional elements such as speaker placement, frequency of outdoor events, seasonal limits, and public-safety considerations including crowd control and parking.

Mr. Alves stated that many of the enforcement practices described by the Chief already occur and that adopting a townwide blanket policy may unintentionally burden longstanding businesses or create conflicts with athletic events, restaurants, or organizations such as the Lusitano Club. He suggested the town revise the entertainment license application instead, adding sections to identify whether entertainment is indoors or outdoors, requesting site plans, establishing hours, and outlining expectations case-by-case. He said this individualized approach would allow the board to consider a venue's history and minimize unintended consequences. Chief Brennan agreed that the current licensing system lacks clarity between indoor and outdoor entertainment and that some form of guidance is necessary.

Board members further discussed how a blanket policy might affect athletic events and other non-music gatherings. Mr. Sanches expressed concern that case-by-case decisions could result in inconsistent treatment of establishments and said a single policy would ensure all outdoor entertainment follows the same rules. He said the policy could specify speaker direction, placement, and other parameters that assist enforcement. He also raised the possibility of including decibel limits specifically for entertainment uses, though Mr. Rosenblum reminded the board that voters at Town Meeting rejected a townwide decibel regulation and he would not support overruling that decision. Mr. Sanches said he believed decibel guidelines applied only to licensed entertainment may still be permissible, since they would not impose townwide restrictions.

Mr. Silva reiterated concerns about policies becoming cumbersome and noted that outdoor music is only one type of noise among many, including athletic events and crowds. Chief Brennan acknowledged the complexity, citing scenarios where noise or vibrations may be disruptive even when not easily measurable. He explained that public-safety planning is often needed for large events, including parking management and traffic control, sometimes requiring police details. After extended discussion, board members agreed to review the current entertainment license before deciding whether to proceed with a full outdoor entertainment policy or instead add an amendment page to the license addressing outdoor music specifically. Mr. Rosenblum said the existing license should be circulated to all members before the next meeting so the board can determine its preferred approach. He noted that any changes would later require review by town counsel, a public hearing, and an implementation period for businesses to comply. Mr. Strange said he would send the current entertainment license to the board and begin compiling sections for possible inclusion. Mr. Alves requested that the final decision on direction be made at the next meeting, out of respect for Mr. Gennette, who originated the proposal but was not present.

NEW BUSINESS

Board to approve and sign minutes from meeting of July 21, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign minutes from July 21, 2026, with all members present except Mr. Sanches. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign Sunday Entertainment Licenses for Our Lady of Fatima and Fanelli Amusements for Festa on September 6, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to approve and sign Sunday Entertainment Licenses for Our Lady of Fatima and Fanelli Amusements for Festa on September 6, 2026. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign ten (10) copies of the warrant for the call of the election for the September 1, 2026, State Primaries. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign ten (10) copies of the warrant for the call of the election for the September 1, 2026, State Primaries. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Chief Brennan – Request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, §111F for an Officer injured on duty on June 12, 2026.
Mr. Strange said Carrie and I had spoken previously on this and just in general we're recommending the board deny this request. Mr. Alves said this is the one we had correspondence on. Okay. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to deny the request for Chapter 41, §111F for the officer in question injured on duty on June 12, 2026. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Chief Pease – Request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, §111F for a Firefighter/Paramedic injured on duty on June 8, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve the request to charge off medical expenses and lost wages to Chapter 41, §111F for a Firefighter/Paramedic injured on duty on June 8, 2026. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to sign contract extension for Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to sign the contract extension of employment agreement for Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to accept MIIA Wellness Grant in the amount of $19,940. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to accept MIIA Wellness Grant in the amount of $19,940. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss and Chair to sign a letter of support for the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan.
Mr. Rosenblum explained that the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan was originally developed several years ago by a working group that included himself, Buddy Ellison, Angela Tierney, and others. The plan had remained on hold for two to three years. Mr. Rosenblum described the plan as a comprehensive document that maps local walking and biking trails and highlights outdoor recreational opportunities throughout town. He said he was pleased to see it ready to advance. **Motion made by Mr. Sanches** for the Chair to sign a letter of support for the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign agreement between Charlie Park Main, LLC and the Town of Ludlow for two (2) parcels – 0 Center Street.

Mr. Strange explained that two parcels sold at auction last year had been advertised as buildable, but were later determined not to be. Town Counsel and counsel for the purchasers developed a way for the purchasers to transfer the deeds back to the town, after which the town would reimburse the purchase price. Without this approach, the matter would have required a Town Meeting vote. The purchasers filed a lawsuit, and as part of the settlement the board agreed to accept the quitclaim deeds back into town ownership and refund the approximately 20,000 dollars paid. Mr. Alves asked whether the purchasers were agreeable to this arrangement, and Mr. Strange confirmed that they were. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign agreement between Charlie Park Main, LLC and the Town of Ludlow for two (2) parcels – 0 Center Street. **Mr. Alves second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to approve and sign one (1) day permit for Cottage Melts to hold Sip & Shop event on Saturday, August 15th from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to approve and sign one (1) day permit for Cottage Melts to hold Sip & Shop event on Saturday, August 15th from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to notify the Town Clerk of the one-year vacancy for the Planning Board for the 2027 Annual Town Election that shall be placed on the next annual town election ballot March 22, 2027.
Mr. Silva asked whether the board was appointing someone on an interim basis or waiting until the election. Mr. Strange clarified that there will be an interim appointment, which will then place the position on the ballot. Mr. Alves noted that the board must proceed this way because an appointment can only extend until the next election. Mr. Rosenblum asked whether the Planning Board's non-voting associate member could be moved into the position or whether a joint meeting would still be required. Mr. Strange said the individual would still need to go through the formal appointment process, after which the Planning Board could assign an associate member as needed. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to notify the Town Clerk of the one-year unexpired term for a Planning Board Member that shall be placed on the next annual town election ballot on March 22, 2027. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Board to discuss performance evaluations of Town Administrator.
Mr. Rosenblum stated that he would read through the summary of the Town Administrator's evaluation and then invite comments from the board. Mr. Silva asked whether the discussion should take place in executive session, noting that evaluations can be considered detrimental to individuals. Mr. Strange said the discussion was appropriate for open session because the board was reviewing a compiled summary rather than individual evaluations, which would require executive session. Mr. Rosenblum proceeded to read the key points from the 2025 Select Board evaluations. He highlighted strengths that included community engagement through forums and senior center outreach, effective human resources work and collective bargaining, significant progress on organizational goals such as the capital stabilization fund, the DIF revolving fund, filling the finance director position, and appointing a permanent police chief, as well as strong government relations and grant-seeking efforts involving state agencies.

He then summarized the primary concerns noted across evaluations, which included budget preparation and financial management, relationships and leadership involving department heads and staff morale, and communication challenges such as not always keeping the board adequately informed and difficulty accepting constructive criticism. He stated that the average overall rating was approximately 3.0 out of 5, explaining that Mr. Sanches' evaluation was not included due to his recent appointment, consistent with past precedent. He reiterated key strengths as community engagement, labor relations, strategic planning, grant pursuits, intergovernmental partnerships, and availability, and he listed areas in need of improvement, including budget preparation, financial accuracy, free cash certification, communication with the board, relationships with staff, and leadership style. He noted that budget preparation and administration appeared to be the most significant shared concern. Mr. Strange thanked the board for the feedback and said he appreciated the comments and works each day to improve. Mr. Rosenblum clarified for viewers that the summary was not related to contract negotiations, which are handled exclusively by the Select Board in executive session. Mr. Sanches added for the record that no policy prevents new board members from submitting an evaluation and that he was required to complete one. Mr. Rosenblum acknowledged the comment.

Board to review and discuss proposed FY28 budget calendar.
Mr. Strange reviewed the upcoming budget calendar and said he could go through all dates if the board wished, but would highlight the changes. Mr. Alves asked that he focus on the changes, noting that Mr. Sanches was already familiar with much of the schedule from the Finance Committee. Mr. Strange explained that departments will submit level-service budgets by August 20, with level-zero budgets set for August 28. The joint meeting with the School Committee and Finance Committee is planned for early November, slightly later than in previous years. New position and reclassification requests, previously due in October, will now be due on November 15, which is also when capital requests and level-one budgets are due. The tax classification hearing is scheduled for November 17, and Mr. Strange said he has asked the Assessors' Office to prioritize meeting that date so the town does not fall behind into December as it has in prior years. He added that a member of the Board of Assessors may request time with the Select Board in September to discuss tax classification and abatement issues. Mr. Strange noted that the town will learn its health insurance increase on January 23 through Connect351, so the joint meeting with the School Committee and Finance Committee will take place afterward to ensure a more informed discussion. This schedule also aligns with the goal of quarterly meetings between the three bodies. He expects to present the budget to the board on March 2, and a public budget forum is planned for March 15, consistent with last year. End-of-year transfers and the townwide spending freeze remain set for June 1.

Mr. Rosenblum asked when the tax classification hearing has typically occurred, noting it has often fallen in early December. Mr. Silva said he has long advocated for mid-November hearings to avoid delays in issuing tax bills, explaining that in the past late tax billing created significant revenue complications for the town. Mr. Sanches asked where free cash certification fits into the timeline. Mr. Strange said a date can be added and that, ideally, free cash should be certified in October, though recent years have brought delays due to reconciliation work. He said he has spoken with the Treasurer and Town Accountant, and the goal is to move certification from May to the end of December this year, then back to October or November in future years. He offered to bring in staff to provide an update at a future meeting. Mr. Rosenblum said that given new staffing in the Treasurer/Collector and Accounting Offices, achieving certification by December would already be an improvement. This would also support the January 11 CIPC review of fiscal year 2028 capital requests. Mr. Alves said the calendar should target the end of the calendar year for free cash certification, and while October may be the long-term goal, December would be a realistic milestone. He noted that earlier certification can give the town flexibility during Special Town Meetings. He also asked when last year's budget forum took place. Mr. Strange said it was earlier than March because the town expected a 17 percent health insurance increase and wanted to inform the public. This year, the forum is scheduled after the board and Finance Committee receive the full budget.

Mr. Rosenblum asked what health insurance increase is expected. Mr. Strange said the private sector is anticipating around 13 percent, and that number can be used as a placeholder until official projections are received. He noted the town now has tools to calculate savings from potential changes in insurance splits. Mr. Rosenblum said understanding those savings will help inform capital decisions and other spending decisions. Mr. Alves thanked Mr. Strange for continuing to host budget forums, noting they are one of the most appreciated improvements made in recent years. Mr. Rosenblum agreed, saying the forums help residents make informed decisions before Town Meeting, where time is limited for discussion.

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.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mr. Silva reminded residents that the Festa is quickly approaching and noted that the event brings increased traffic, activity, and noise in the area. He emphasized that while the evenings can be loud through midnight, the Festa is an important community event that generates significant revenue for Ludlow. He asked the public to remain patient during the few days it takes place and thanked everyone in advance for their understanding.

Mr. Alves said it was good to see progress on the library parking lot project and asked Mr. Strange whether an end date was available. Mr. Strange said he was not sure. Mr. Alves noted that the site appeared fully excavated and that paving still remained. He added that new equipment for Whitney Park is expected to be delivered in late August or early September. He also reported attending the Cultural Council concert on Sunday with his family, saying it drew roughly two hundred people and thanking Mrs. Hayes and the Cultural Council for the successful event. Mr. Alves also shared that he will meet with the new superintendent on Friday morning for an introductory meeting.

Mr. Silva raised ongoing requests from residents for pickleball facilities, noting that many residents currently travel to other communities to play. He said Ludlow has existing courts at Whitney Park and the high school that could potentially be repurposed or marked for pickleball at minimal cost. He asked for an update on prior discussions about establishing courts at Veterans Park or modifying existing courts at Whitney Park. Mr. Strange said the town has a conceptual design for Veterans Park and has submitted funding requests with assistance from the state delegation. He said the project was divided into phases, with the first phase estimated at around two million dollars, and funding remains the primary barrier. Mr. Silva said residents understand improvements require funding but still seek options in the interim, and he noted that DPW previously indicated a conversion at Whitney Park would not be expensive. Mr. Strange said DPW had been in communication with the Pioneers organization on a plan involving both futsal and pickleball courts and that he would check on the project timeline. Mr. Rosenblum added that a pickleball court has already been painted on the basketball court at Baird Middle School, where players can bring their own net. He noted that the Boys & Girls Club and the Tennis Club also offer pickleball options, though some require paid memberships. Mr. Silva said residents continue to request a town facility. Mr. Alves said funding remains the key issue but agreed that converting one of the courts at Whitney Park would be feasible.

Mr. Rosenblum said interviews for the new Recreation Director were underway and that support from the Select Board, Recreation Commission, and DPW will be important once the director is hired. He noted that after assessing current operations, a new director may identify grants to fund improvements and potentially upgrades at Whitney Park. He also shared concerns about noise lawsuits arising in other communities over pickleball. He said that in an ideal scenario, the town could develop a sports complex behind the high school with pickleball courts, repurposed fields, a playground, basketball courts, and restrooms. He added that CPA funding could assist such work if adopted locally, but emphasized that Ludlow voted down CPA twice and state matching funds have since declined significantly.

Motion made by Mr. Silva to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. **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.