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TOWN OF LUDLOW

Town of Ludlow
Office of the Select Board

The Meeting of the Select Board held on Tuesday, November 3, 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

5:45 P.M. – Joint Meeting – Finance Committee & School Committee.
Motion made by Mr. Mullin to open the Finance Committee meeting. **Motion made by Ms. Bowler** to open the School Committee meeting. Representatives of the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee met to discuss the upcoming budget development process, establish preliminary timelines, and emphasize the importance of collaboration and communication among all departments. Mr. Rosenblum welcomed participants, noting that budget schedules remain flexible and are intended to provide a framework that can be adjusted as financial information becomes available. He stressed that the Town has an opportunity to improve communication and coordination among departments and committees throughout the budget process.

Finance Committee members discussed the need to establish a structured budget timeline, including reviews of departmental budgets, new position requests, capital requests, revenue projections, and multiple budget review stages. Ms. Ribeiro explained that critical information such as health insurance costs is typically unavailable until late January, requiring the use of preliminary assumptions during the early stages of budget planning.
Several participants reflected on lessons learned from the previous budget cycle. Mr. Kelliher cautioned against releasing preliminary financial projections too early, particularly discussions about a potential override before key revenue and expenditure figures are known. He emphasized the importance of clearly communicating to the public that early budget figures are estimates and placeholders. Mr. Rosenblum agreed, noting concerns that early discussions of an override can create unnecessary public concern before all financial information is available.

Discussion focused heavily on improving budget accuracy and accountability. Mr. Kelliher stated that department heads should play a larger role in developing and managing their budgets since they have the greatest understanding of their operational needs. He also stressed the importance of reducing the number of year-end budget transfers by improving forecasting and monitoring throughout the fiscal year. Mr. Mullin echoed those comments, emphasizing the value of direct engagement with department heads during the budget review process. Ms. Ribeiro confirmed that annual budget meetings are routinely held with all departments and noted that additional support from Town staff would help improve budget management and reporting.

The committees reviewed the timeline for capital requests, new positions, and reclassifications, which are currently due in mid-November, while recognizing that deadlines may be adjusted as needed. School Committee representatives sought guidance on anticipated capital spending expectations after experiencing significant uncertainty during the previous budget cycle. Mr. Alves explained that capital funding is closely tied to available free cash and should be guided by departmental five-year capital plans that allow projects to be prioritized and balanced over time. He outlined a proposed capital review process that would begin with departmental submissions in November, followed by committee reviews and recommendations in early 2027.

Members acknowledged that delays in free cash certification had contributed to challenges during prior budget cycles. Mr. Gennette stated that financial reporting and free cash certification are expected to improve this year, helping create a more predictable capital planning process. Mr. Rosenblum noted that the Town's goal is to certify free cash much earlier than in recent years in order to support more informed budget and capital planning decisions.

The discussion also highlighted the importance of long-term planning. Participants agreed that all departments should develop and maintain multi-year capital plans to identify future needs and avoid unexpected large expenditures. Examples included school roof-mounted HVAC equipment and other building infrastructure that require regular replacement schedules to prevent costly backlogs.

Committee members emphasized the importance of maintaining open communication among Town departments, the School Department, and financial officials, particularly given recent changes in key leadership positions. Participants agreed that strong coordination would be essential to keeping the budget process on schedule and ensuring reliable financial projections.

The conversation further addressed external financial pressures, including potentially increasing costs for fuel, utilities, fertilizer, and employee benefits. Mr. Kelliher cautioned that future budgets should reflect actual spending trends rather than relying solely on prior appropriations, while Mr. Gennette announced that the Town expects to receive a comprehensive energy audit that may identify opportunities for energy savings and grant funding.

School Committee members reaffirmed their commitment to responsible budget planning and acknowledged the significant contribution made by local taxpayers to school funding. Ms. Bowler expressed concern about uncertainty surrounding future state education aid and pledged to continue advocating for changes to state funding formulas that better support communities such as Ludlow. Committee members discussed concerns that current state aid formulas disproportionately benefit larger urban districts while communities like Ludlow receive a smaller share of available resources. Participants agreed that continued advocacy with state officials regarding Chapter 70 education funding and other forms of state aid would be important as future budgets are developed.

The meeting concluded with further discussion regarding state revenue sources, including unrestricted general government aid, and the need to remain cautious and conservative in financial planning given ongoing economic uncertainties and potential fluctuations in state funding. **Motion made by Mr. Kelliher** to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. **Ms. Elias second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0. Motion made by Ms. Codding** to close the School Committee meeting. **Mr. Manfredi second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

6:45 P.M. – **PUBLIC HEARING** – Board of Assessors – Tax Classification Hearing. **Motion made by Mr. Silva** to continue the hearing until November 17th. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

CORRESPONDENCE

26-167 MMWEC – Notification of Routine Inspections on Natural Gas Pipeline Right of Way. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-168 Erin McMurray, MPH Shared Services Coordinator for Mill Towns Public Health – PHE Participating Municipality Statement of Commitment Annual Notification. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-169 Mass DOT – Bridge Inspection Report Genovevo Drive/Minechoag Brook – August 13, 2026. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to file. **Mr. Silva second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-170 Andrew Loin Esq. – Request to be appointed to the Ludlow Zoning Board of Appeals. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to appoint Andrew Loin, Esq. to the Ludlow Zoning Board of Appeals. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

26-171 Thomas Foye, Resident – Request for Road Repair & Safety Assessment.
Mr. Gennette said a letter request came into the DPW, and it was included to us. Dear Director Tomas, Chair Rosenblum, and Members of the Select Board, I am writing to formally request immediate intervention, proper road repair, and a comprehensive safety evaluation for Loopley Street, specifically the segment extending from Blanchard Street to the CVS corridor. Currently, this corridor completely lacks sidewalk infrastructure, forcing all pedestrians to travel along the shoulder of the roadway. Compounding this risk, the existing asphalt contains poorly paved potholes and uneven patch jobs. While temporary patching may be intended to alleviate structural gaps, these paved potholes are excessively bumpy and create severe handling hazards for residents using assistive mobility devices, such as rollators, walkers, and wheelchairs. The uneven topography causes rollator wheels to deflect, making it incredibly difficult for vulnerable residents to maintain a steady, safe path of travel next to moving vehicular traffic. Furthermore, we understand the town's historical justification for delaying or refusing full road resurfacing on this stretch has been a desire to slow down passing traffic. However, utilizing a deteriorated, dangerous road surface as an informal traffic calming mechanism is unacceptable and legally problematic. Allowing hazardous road defects to persist to slow traffic is fundamentally misguided when standardized, safe engineering tools—such as engineered speed bumps, speed humps, or raised crosswalks—are explicitly designed for that exact purpose. Leaving a road broken penalizes vulnerable pedestrians and individuals with disabilities rather than addressing speeding drivers safely. This letter serves to establish formal notice regarding these specific unsafe and non-accessible conditions under the following provisions of Massachusetts General Law and then he goes on to state the law. He thanked Mr. Foye for bringing the matter forward and commented that the condition of Loopley Road should be reviewed by the Safety Committee. Mr. Rosenblum stated that the issue would be referred to the Safety Committee for discussion at its next meeting on the 12th. Mr. Alves reported that he had spoken with DPW Director Mr. Tomas, who advised that Loopley Road is scheduled for paving during the spring or summer of next year. He explained that work was deferred this year due to potential sewer extension infrastructure projects, as the Town did not want to pave the road before a decision was made on the sewer work. Mr. Alves added that he and Mr. Tomas would work to contact the resident regarding the concerns raised and noted that a lack of contact information in the original correspondence had contributed to delays in follow-up. **Motion made by Mr. Alves** to file. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Board to discuss and possibly vote on the updated Entertainment License (Continued from October 20, 2026).
Mr. Sanches reported that the entertainment license application had been updated based on discussions from the previous meeting and was subsequently reviewed by Town Counsel. He explained that the version provided to the Board included counsel's recommended revisions, shown in red, and that no other substantive changes had been made.

Mr. Sanches reviewed the revisions, noting that the application title was changed to reference indoor and/or outdoor entertainment to reflect licenses that may apply to either type of activity or both. He explained that a new provision was added stating that applicants seeking both indoor and outdoor entertainment approval could be granted a license for only one of those activities if the Select Board determines that either component may create a

nuisance or pose concerns related to public health, safety, or public order. This provision preserves the Board's discretion in approving entertainment activities.

He further stated that Sections 3, 4, and 5 remained unchanged. In Section 6, counsel added language requiring applicants to acknowledge that the Select Board may request additional information necessary to evaluate potential impacts on public safety, health, order, or neighborhood conditions and may impose reasonable licensing conditions. Examples of such conditions include requirements related to police or fire details, crowd control, parking and traffic management, alcohol service, lighting, sanitary facilities, site safety, insurance, and notice to abutters. The added language also specifies that any violations of applicable laws, regulations, or license conditions may result in modification, suspension, or revocation of a license following written notice and a hearing and may be considered in future license renewal requests.

Mr. Sanches stated that the revisions were recommended by Town Counsel to provide appropriate protections for the Town and to clarify the Board's authority in reviewing and regulating entertainment licenses. **Motion made by Mr. Gennette** to accept the new application for Entertainment License as presented to begin in 2027. **Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

Board of Assessors – Ameresco Solar Pilot Offer Fiscal Year 2028 (Continued from October 20, 2026). Tabled

NEW BUSINESS

Board to discuss Town Administrator Position.
The Select Board discussed options for filling the Town Administrator position, including conducting an external search, establishing a screening committee, or appointing the current Interim Town Administrator. Mr. Gennette noted that all options remained under consideration, while Mr. Sanches advised that the Town's bylaws grant the Select Board the authority to appoint a Town Administrator without requiring a formal search process.

Board members generally expressed support for appointing Interim Town Administrator Carrie Ribeiro to the permanent position. Mr. Rosenblum stated that Ms. Ribeiro's twelve years of service to the Town, experience as Assistant Town Administrator, and familiarity with municipal operations made her uniquely qualified for the role. He added that, if a search were conducted, he would favor significant involvement from department heads due to their close working relationship with the Town Administrator.

Mr. Silva voiced strong support for appointing Ms. Ribeiro directly, citing positive feedback from department heads and staff regarding her leadership and the current morale within Town Hall. He stated that promoting from within is preferable when a qualified candidate is available and questioned the value of undertaking a lengthy search process. Mr. Alves agreed, comparing the situation to recent internal promotions within other Town departments. He noted that Ms. Ribeiro's experience and established relationships within Town Hall would make a transition far smoother than hiring an outside candidate, particularly in the middle of the fiscal year and budget season.

Board members also discussed the challenges that would accompany an external search, including the time required to recruit and onboard a new administrator and the possibility that a successful candidate would not be available to begin immediately. Mr. Alves commented that, if a search were pursued, he would not support appointing a new administrator during the middle of the budget process. Mr. Gennette also expressed concern that an outside candidate would likely need to rely heavily on Ms. Ribeiro's knowledge and experience during the transition, further supporting an immediate appointment.

The Board acknowledged that Ms. Ribeiro currently balances both the Interim Town Administrator and Human Resources responsibilities and discussed the importance of addressing staffing needs within Town Hall should she be appointed permanently. Mr. Alves noted that plans would need to be developed to fill or restructure her existing Human Resources responsibilities to allow her to focus on the Town Administrator role.

At the Board's request, Ms. Ribeiro confirmed that she is interested in being considered for the permanent Town Administrator position. She stated that while managing both positions has been challenging, significant progress has been made during her interim tenure. She emphasized the importance of maintaining communication with Town departments, the School Department, and the Finance Committee, and noted that her experience in the role has provided insight into opportunities for organizational improvements and potential staffing adjustments.

Board members thanked Ms. Ribeiro for her work and expressed confidence in her leadership. Mr. Rosenblum concluded that there appeared to be general agreement among Board members regarding the preferred direction and announced that an item would be placed on the next meeting agenda for discussion and possible action regarding the appointment of the Interim Town Administrator as the permanent Town Administrator.

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 Public Safety Committee met the previous Monday and described it as another productive meeting. He stated that progress continues to be made on the public safety facilities project and that discussions remain ongoing. Mr. Sanches also attended a recent Finance Committee meeting, where the Town Accountant provided an overview of the Town's budget and financial status. He noted that the presentation helped committee members better understand the budget and current financial conditions and described the discussion as informative and beneficial.

Mr. Alves reported that he attended several community events since the previous meeting. He participated in the Clock Tower 5K, completing the race and speaking with one of the event organizers, who indicated that the event had raised an estimated $8,000 for the Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Alves thanked Mr. Devine for organizing the race for the second consecutive year and noted that more than 250 people participated, contributing to a successful community event. Mr. Alves also attended the Rag Shag event for the first time and described it as an enjoyable community gathering. He commented on the parade-like walk from Town Hall to the Boys & Girls Club and thanked the organizers and volunteers who helped make the event a success.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Motion made by Mr. Alves to close the meeting at 6:53 P.M. **Mr. Gennette second. All in favor. Motion passed 5-0.**

_____ Chairman

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Ludlow Select Board

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