

Lunenburg Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 28, 2022

Location: In-person at Lunenburg Town Hall and broadcast on Zoom

Present: Chairperson Peter Beardmore, Chris Menard, Jay Simeone, Dave Passios, Evan Watters, Tom Balish, Tom Gray

Guests: Town Manager Heather Lemieux

1. Call to Order

Mr. Beardmore called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and read a statement concerning the Open Meeting Law, and how all public meetings are legally being held remotely.

This meeting was recorded and is viewable on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/w5L-N6S0nEk>

2. Pledge of Allegiance

- 3. Announcements:** Mr. Passios announced that Little League Opening Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 30, at Marshall Park. Mr. Beardmore announced there will be a Memorial Day ceremony on May 31, 2022 at Veteran's Memorial Park at 10:00 a.m.

4. Public Comment: none

- 5. Chair Report:** Mr. Beardmore reported that there's been a lot of communication pertaining to the capital plan, and that he will be attending a meeting at the high school to test out the new handheld voting devices to be used at Annual Town Meeting.

6. Town Manager/Finance Director's Report: none

- 7. Capital Plan Process:** Mr. Beardmore met with Town Counsel, and Mr. Passios and Select Board Chairperson Tom Alonzo were in attendance. Mr. Beardmore reported that town counsel says the pertinent matter, the way the capital plan article is written, is to see if the town will appropriate the money, not to see if they'll change the plan, regardless of the scenario that took place in 2020 during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, when a precedent was set, and voters at Town Meeting did debate items the capital plan. According to Mr. Beardmore, town counsel opined the effect of the precedent that set would be minimal. The discussion lead to how power is implied when the words of law are ambiguous. Interpretation is left up to the Town Moderator. Mr. Beardmore pointed out that the Town Moderator is obligated to defer to town counsel. Mr. Beardmore stated that his opinion on the capital plan article has not changed. Mr. Menard opined that suggesting to remove items from the plan should be allowed. Mr. Watters commented that the language of the bylaw is exceptionally vague, and can be easily be interpreted to make an amendment. Mr. Passios added that he does not like to blame Covid-19, but two years ago was the only time that Town Meeting has deviated from the process in over 20 years, and was ultimately defeated. Mr. Passios agreed that there are inconsistencies between the Town Charter and Mass General Law. Mr. Beardmore does intend to discuss the situation with the Town Moderator. Mr. Beardmore also pondered why the committee is charged with scrutinizing the capital plan, if not allowed to make suggestions to change it. Committee members discussed the possibility of writing a new bylaw, amending the Town Charter, and discussing that in the off-season. Mr. Passios said he stands behind the process, and the people who make the decisions to put items on the capital plan. Mr. Menard added that all committee meetings should be recorded, and pointed out that the Capital Planning Committee meets at 5:30 p.m.

- 8. Discuss and Vote/Re-vote on Annual Town Meeting Articles:** At their last meeting the committee deferred on Articles 4, 6, 7, 22, 23, 24, and 25. After learning more information on each article, committee members deliberated, and voted as follows.

Article 4: Budget amendment. Mr. Passios motioned to recommend approval, Mr. Menard seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

Article 6: Capital Plan: Mr. Passios motioned to recommend approval, Mr. Balish seconded. On vote motion carried. (6-1 Mr. Beardmore dissented)

Article 7: Administrative Organization Plan: Mr. Watters motioned to recommend approval, Mr. Gray seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

Article 22: Salary Administration Plan. Mr. Menard motioned to recommend approval, Mr. Passios seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

Article 23: 300th Anniversary Committee, \$5,000. Mr. Passios motioned to recommend approval, Mr. Menard seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

Article 24: Bylaw Review. Mr. Menard motioned no financial impact, Mr. Passios seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

Article 25: Sewer Bylaw. Committee members agreed there is still more information to be learned at Town Meeting, and decided to keep their original stance to defer this article.

- 9. Annual Town Meeting Consent Calendar:** Mr. Beardmore raised his concern regarding voting on financial articles outside of the consent calendar having a potential effect on the stabilization fund articles that are included in the consent calendar. Mr. Beardmore proposed removing the stabilization fund articles from the consent calendar. Mr. Passios opined he does not agree with the consent calendar concept in general. Mr. Menard motioned to recommend approval on the consent calendar, Mr. Balish seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

- 10. Minutes** none

- 11. Committee Reports** Committee members updated each other on their respective liaison assignments.

- 12. Public Comment** none

- 13. Items for Future Meetings** Town Meeting recap, agenda topics for off season

- 14. Next Meetings** Annual Town Meeting May 7, May, 12, May 26

- 15. Adjourn** At 8:35 p.m. Mr. Passios motioned to adjourn, Mr. Menard seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.