

Lunenburg Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 21, 2022

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

Present: Chairperson Peter Beardmore, Chris Menard, in person. Attending remotely: Tom Gray, Tom Balish, Evan Watters

Guests: Town Manager Heather Lemieux, Finance Director Karen Brochu, Dave Passios

1. Call to Order

Mr. Beardmore called the meeting to order at 7:06 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/8jvBlfar6ZI>

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements:

4. Public Comment: Mr. Passios, commenting as a member of the public, informed the committee that though his term as a member of the Finance Committee was up at the end of June 2022, his term on the Capital Planning Committee as a member of the Finance Committee still has one year left, and he does not intend to resign from that position.

5. Chair Report: Mr. Beardmore was recently appointed to the School Committee and will have to resign from the Finance Committee at the end of September. Mr. Beardmore expressed his hope for a smooth transition.

6. Board Reorganization and Upcoming Calendar: Mr. Beardmore pointed out that with his resignation in September, the committee could be operating with only five members, and that choosing who will serve as liaison on other boards and committees could wait, but they should focus on who from the Finance Committee will serve on the Municipal Building Design Committee, and the Capital Planning Committee.

7. Reorganization: *Mr. Watters contacted Mr. Simeone via text during the meeting to inform him the committee was working on reorganization. Mr. Simeone informed Mr. Watters he had no intention to seek a higher position on the committee.*

- a. Chair: Mr. Menard moved to nominate Mr. Watters as Chairperson, Mr. Balish seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.
- b. Vice Chair: Mr. Balish moved to nominate Mr. Menard as Vice Chair, Mr. Gray seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.
- c. Clerk: Mr. Menard motioned to nominate Mr. Balish as Clerk, Mr. Gray seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

- d. Capital Planning Committee, finance committee appointee: Mr. Passios will continue to serve out his term as the finance committee appointee to the Capital Planning Committee. Mr. Menard and Mr. Watters agreed that the capital planning process needs to be more transparent, and that meetings should be recorded. Mr. Menard added that the committee will need to find a way to communicate with Mr. Passios as he won't necessarily be in regular attendance at Finance Committee meetings.
- e. Municipal Building Design Committee, finance committee appointee: Mr. Watters motioned to appoint Mr. Gray to serve as finance committee appointee to the Municipal Building Design Committee, Mr. Menard seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.
- f. Liaisons: The committee did not formally decide on who would serve as liaison to the following committees, but did discuss who served in the past. Mr. Balish said he is willing to continue to serve as liaison to police and fire, and the library. Mr. Gray said he is willing to continue to serve as liaison to the land use departments. Mr. Watters, being a member of the Board of Health will continue to serve as finance committee liaison. Mr. Menard is willing to serve as liaison to the Parks Commission. The committee did realize that Mr. Simeone has served as liaison to the DPW, but he was not in attendance to accept the role. School Committee, Council on Aging, and Green Communities Committee currently have no liaison assigned, and no committee member expressed interest in serving.

8. **Town Manager/Finance Director Report:** Ms. Lemieux reported that the EPA will fund the safe removal of underground gas tanks, and hazardous soil from 925 Massachusetts Ave. The previous property owners still have one year from July 6, 2022 to take ownership and pay back taxes.

Ms. Lemieux also reported that remote meeting participation options have been extended to March 31, 2023.

The town has been awarded a \$500,000 small bridge grant to fund the Flat Hill Rd culvert project. The project will go out to bid in January 2023, with hopes the project will be completed December 2023.

Ms. Lemieux also reported that the financial management letter comment on fraud risk assessment will be addressed in FY23 as there is funding available through a rewards program with MIIA to fund an assessment.

The town has received a Notice of Intent from Loofah Farms to do agricultural business at 361 Massachusetts Ave. The farm will seek tax incentives from the town. Mr. Menard commented that the parks department does own land adjacent to the farm property, and it would be good to consider granting access from Mass Ave. as opposed to Northfield Rd.

Potential warrant articles for fall Special Town Meeting (date TBD): adding Salary Administration Plan (SAP) positions to the compensation classification grid, funding for an outside consultant to perform a compensation study for SAP positions; additional funding for assessor's budget for cyclical data inspections estimated at \$35,000, and a prior year invoice from FY21.

FY22 Q4 report will be presented to the Select Board on August 23, 2022.

Ms. Lemieux has met with the DPW director to update the Pavement Management Plan as several roads have been addressed.

A purchase and sales agreement on the street lights should be ready by the August 2, 2022 Select Board meeting.

The town has received one bid on the town beach building project, and it was much higher than expected. The plan for the town beach building may change. Ms. Lemieux will be meeting with DPW Director and Parks Commission for feedback.

Road materials for FY23 has increased between 20-40 percent from the FY20 contract.

Ms. Lemieux informed the committee that the state has passed their budget, and the town will receive \$54,417 more in state aid than originally anticipated.

9. **FY23 Goals and Operating Principles:** The committee agreed they'd request an overview of department heads' FY24 budget presentations to include an overview of current fiscal year operations to date –successes, gaps, and priorities that influence budget requests. As well as budget requests, including details regarding line items included in the Town Manager's budget recommendations, as well as a summary of spending for the first half of FY23, and expected transfers or lines that will be underspent. Mr. Menard added that when the committee meets with department heads before the budget presentations would be a good time highlight how each department operates, and during the actual budget presentations the committee can discuss the numbers.
10. **Discuss timing and plan of Fiscal Policy and Debt Planning:** The Select Board will discuss fiscal policies on August 23, 2022. The committee agrees that there should be budgeting guidelines established when it comes municipal building design projects. Mr. Beardmore inquired whether there is a way to determine how much money the town could borrow while following the current fiscal policy in order to decide on a project based on cost. Ms. Brochu suggested the town would need to know how much money a project would cost in order to determine how much money could be borrowed.
11. **Discuss plan and timing for addressing Town Meeting amendments to capital plan articles:** Mr. Beardmore would like to see the capital planning article written in a way that permits changes to be made within the town's capital plan at Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Beardmore then pointed out that one elected Select Board may change the language in the article, but as the

board's composition changes, so might the language. Mr. Beardmore then suggested writing a bylaw would permanently change the way the article is written. Mr. Beardmore will seek town counsel's guidance, and hopes to get the item on the Select Board's agenda in September 2022, in order to put the bylaw in effect at Special Town Meeting.

12. Discuss new member on-boarding plan: Mr. Balish plans to meet with the Town Manager, and consult the Massachusetts Association of Finance Committees, and will be ready to report at the August 18, 2022 meeting.

13. Minutes: Mr. Gray moved to approve the minutes from the May 19, and June 9, 2022 meetings. Mr. Menard seconded. On vote, motion carried. (4-0-1)

14. Committee Reports no reports

15. Public Comment

16. Items for Future Meetings

17. Next Meetings July 28, August 18, August 25

18. Adjourn At 9:07 Mr. Menard motioned to adjourn. Mr. Gray seconded. On vote motion carried unanimously.