

Lunenburg Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 25, 2022

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

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

Guests: School Committee Chairperson Carol Archambault

1. Call to Order

Mr. Watters called the meeting to order at 7:02 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/RO3mZ0V8uk8>

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements: none

4. Public Comment: none

5. Chair Report: none

6. Town Manager/Finance Director Report: Town Manager Heather Lemieux briefed Mr. Watters via email. Loofah Farms submitted their application to the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, and will be considered for State credits in addition to the T.I.F. The Town Manager and Assessor are working on finding the estimated value of the project.

FY23 Earmarks and Funding include \$100,000 toward the senior center ADA patio project. A bill regarding hazardous material abatement, which could've funded some of the 30 School Street project was hung up on legal issues regarding a 1986 tax law. The 30 School St. project has begun, and the existing conditions survey has been completed. A report on asbestos will be provided in December. Bidding for the demolition of 30 School Street will begin in January 2023.

Special Town Meeting Warrant is open, and will close September 20, 2022. Special Town Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Lunenburg Middle High School auditorium.

The Town Manager will be sending out inquiries regarding department heads' requests for ARPA funding.

Pond View Commons has filed their comprehensive permit with the ZBA. The first hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, September 14, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

7. End of Year Departmental Transfers: Mr. Beardmore motioned to authorize the chairperson to sign the FY22 departmental transfers, Mr. Simeone seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

- 8. New Finance Committee Member Orientation and Onboarding:** Mr. Balish presented a draft of a document he created to assist new committee members in getting acquainted with the Finance Committee's roles and responsibilities. The committee agreed the booklet should be treated as a living document. Mr. Beardmore suggested adding that the town's fiscal policies, and the state often mandate a lot of rules and regulations regarding town finances. Mr. Watters suggested adding a general calendar of how the committee meets regarding budget season, the capital planning calendar, and off-season. Mr. Menard suggested defining Proposition 2^{1/2}, overrides, and the levy. Mr. Balish plans to meet with the Town Manager and Finance Director a few more times before presenting another draft of the document.
- 9. Bylaw Proposal – Amending Capital Plan and Monetary Appropriation:** Mr. Beardmore consulted Town Moderator Tim Murphy, and has submitted a draft of the bylaw to Town Counsel. Mr. Beardmore hopes to be able to discuss the bylaw, and get it on the Warrant for Special Town Meeting. Mr. Watters acknowledged that in order to get the bylaw on the Warrant in time, the committee would have to discuss and vote on the bylaw at the next meeting on September 8, 2022, and also considered the possibility of a special meeting on September 15, 2022 to let the committee consider the discussion in order to vote.
- 10. Town Fiscal Policy – Debt Capacity and ARPA spending:** Mr. Beardmore opined that the language of the town's current fiscal policies is not controversial, but debt capacity in regard to those policies is unpredictable. As debt service decreases, capacity increases, and the town has several costly projects in its future. The committee agreed the town needs to seek the assistance of professional external financial consultants in order to narrow down the amount of money the town can afford to spend it comes to those upcoming projects. Mr. Menard suggested the town develop a Vision Document. Mr. Menard explained that the Master Plan, and the current plans for parks would need to align to the Vision Document, which the Select Board should probably be charged with developing. Mr. Watters said he has started to work on spreadsheets regarding the town's debt capacity, and will reach out to the Town Manager and Finance Director for guidance.

The committee also discussed the town's \$3.4 million in ARPA funds. Mr. Gray suggested the funds could be spent something less politically pleasing than parks as spending is under the Select Board's discretion, and a vote at Annual or Special Town Meeting is not required. Department heads will submit their ARPA funding requests for review by September 30, 2022.

- 11. Minutes:** Mr. Beardmore motioned to approve the August 18, 2022 meeting minutes, Mr. Gray seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.
- 12. Committee Reports:** Mr. Simeone reported that the DPW director has submitted purchase orders for two trucks, one from FY22 and one from FY23, and that he's looking into quotes for other equipment, and has found that the prices have gone up substantially since budget and capital plan requests were made. For instance, the requested tractor mower has gone up \$20,000 since the capital plan was passed in May of 2022. Committee members were then led

to discuss how underfunded capital plan items are addressed, and agreed to ask the Town Manager how such issues are handled.

13. Public Comment none

14. Items for Future Meetings: Fiscal Policy, ARPA Spending, Capital Plan bylaw, informal meetings with various department heads regarding upcoming budget season.

15. Next Meetings September 8, 2022, September 20, 2022 (with Select Board)

16. Adjourn At 8:28 p.m. Mr. Menard motioned to adjourn, Mr. Simeone seconded. On Vote, motion carried unanimously.