

Lunenburg Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 15, 2022

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

Present: Chairperson Evan Watters, Chris Menard, Tom Gray, Tom Balish, Jay Simeone (remote)

Guests: Town Accountant Karen Brochu

1. Call to Order

Mr. Watters 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/DUq6UA_WMt8

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements: none

4. Public Comment: none

5. Chair Report: none

6. Town Manager/Finance Director Report: Mr. Watters read an email from the Town Manager reporting that the DPW has ordered a 6-wheel truck funded from the FY22 Capital Plan, as well as a 10-wheel truck, and the tractor mower from the FY23 Capital Plan. The three purchases cost \$1,140 over the capital appropriations, and funds will come from the current year's operating budget. The police department's FY22 capital plan requested cruiser is now on the road, and another will be on the road shortly. The police chief will be ordering the hybrid cruiser, and pickup truck listed in the FY23 capital plan soon. The COA will receive \$12 per elder in the FY23 Formula Grant fund. The number of elders is based on a UMass population count of 3,155 people over the age of 60 in Lunenburg. The COA director and new facilities director have discovered that the \$100,000 FY23 capital plan request for the ADA patio at the senior center will not be enough money to fund the project. The public safety building chiller project from the FY22 capital plan will begin at the end of September. Monty Tech has begun the Ritter break room project from the FY21 capital plan. The Woodruff property cleanup project will go out to bid September 19, 2022, which is part of the FY23 Capital Plan. The new facilities director is working on putting projects out to bid regarding various municipal building repairs from capital plans' past.

7. Joint Select Board Meeting Planning:

- a. **Debt Capacity:** Committee members agreed they'd like to see a range of scenarios for borrowing for future projects in order to settle on a plan for municipal building projects, and school building projects that the town can afford. Mr. Gray commented that knowing the timing of debt capacity can change when certain projects could start.

Committee members also agreed that they have no desire to change the current fiscal policy regarding debt capacity.

- b. **Financial Policy:** Ms. Brochu explained that the policy is written so excludable debt is 11 percent, while regular debt is 4 percent, but the total allowable debt is 14 percent of the total tax levy. Mr. Balish opined it would be helpful to know what borrowing at 11 percent would look like over a long period of time. Mr. Simeone added that the town shouldn't be maxed out at 11 or 14 percent, and that the town should reserve a cushion for unpredictable circumstances.

8. Capital Plan Process

- a. **Bylaw proposal:** Mr. Watters read Mr. Beardmore's proposed bylaw regarding Town Meeting and the Capital Plan.

"§ 81-11 Amending capital appropriations. Warrant articles and floor motions shall not restrict Town Meeting voters' ability to propose and approve amendments in totality, description, and/or scope to individual items or projects in capital appropriation articles and motions. Notwithstanding the above, amendments shall not limit the Town Manager's authority to reapply capital funds among the individual items and projects in the capital plan, nor shall Town Meeting be authorized to increase the total capital plan appropriation printed in the warrant."

Mr. Menard motioned to submit the bylaw proposal to the Town Manager to go on the Special Town Meeting Warrant, Mr. Balish seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Watters added that Mr. Beardmore is preparing a statement to go along with the proposed bylaw. Special Town Meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2022.

9. Committee Reports none

- 10. Public Comment** Mr. Menard commented that he watched the ZBA meeting/public hearing on the proposed 40B project, and anticipates legal fees regarding the matter.

- 11. Items for Future Meetings** School Committee pre-budget meetup, ESSER funding update

- 12. Next Meetings** 9/20 joint meeting with Select Board, 9/22, 10/13 Board of Assessors, 10/27 public hearing regarding Town Warrant.

- 13. Adjourn** At 7:53 p.m. Mr. Menard motioned to adjourn, Mr. Gray seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.