

Lunenburg Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Bilotta Meeting Room
Lunenburg Town Hall
April 25, 2024

Present Members: Chair Evan Watters, Vice Chair Chris Menard, Board Member Tom Gray, Board Member Dave Passios, Board Member Jean Russell (Zoom), Board Member Jay Simeone

Absent Member: Clerk Tiffaney Tavares

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 7pm

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements

There was no announcements.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments.

5. Town Manager Report

Additional funding was received for the Flat Hill Culvert Project. A letter was submitted for additional funding to the DOT and we were notified that we received an additional \$100,000. Currently we have \$500,000 from a small bridge grant and the remaining \$375,900 for the Flat Hill Culvert Project that was put out to bid in March. The lowest responsible bidder totaled \$830,000. This project is anticipated to start in early fall.

The Town was notified that we received rural roads funding. The allotment was \$21, 979. This will be added to Chapter 90.

There are currently 2 bids out. The first bid is for landscaping the town facilities and parks and is due June 11th. The second bid is the rebidding for the removal of solid waste at the Lunenburg Woodruff Conservation area located at 104 Fairview Road and that is due June 12th.

There was another major leak at TC Passios specifically above the cable access studio. The studio is going to be moved to the back wing of the studio where there are no leaks. Dave Passios questioned why the roof in that area isn't being fixed. Heather Lemieux states a significant amount of time is needed to put a bid of that caliber together. There was a discussion about maintaining the TC Passios building. Generally, everyone believes the time is now to make a decision about its future.

The bill for means tested senior citizen property tax exemption is on the Governor's desk and has yet to be signed but made it past the House and the Senate.

6. Finance Director Report

There was no Finance Director Report.

7. New Business

a. Quarterly Financial Report (FY24 Q2) -Finance Director

The total revenue collected through December 31, 2023, was \$23,499,570.03. For comparison through December 31, 2022 was \$25,025,707.45

The estimated tax levy for FY 24 is \$31,493,890.48.

The total local receipts collected were 44.04% of the annual estimate or \$1,417,065.66.

State aid collected was 48.28% of annual estimate or \$5,139,824.85.

The total expenditures through December 31, 2023, was \$21,743,068.85 or 45.55% of the budget.

Total debt is 14% less than last year.

The total omnibus budget used for the first half of the year was 40.99%.

Chris Menard questions why the radio watch line 46 relating to radio watch was at 83%. Heather Lemieux states that line is for the Nashoba Valley dispatch assessment, and that line mostly gets fully expended. Chris Menard questions if this cost is all paid upfront. Heather Lemieux confirms that is the case.

Dave Passios feels that the incoming revenue comparison from 2023 to 2024 is showing a downward trend especially in excise tax. Ezequiel Ayala states the motor vehicle tax revenue is received in July but is a part of FY23 revenue.

Jay Simeone questions when the data for quarter 3 will be available. Ezequiel Ayala states the quarter ended on March 31 and is in the process of closing quarter 3. Ezequiel Ayala states they will be provided in the next couple of weeks.

Dave Passios requests a rundown of special revenue items to find out what we are earning in interest and ultimately where it's going. Ezequiel Ayala will create a presentation.

b. Revenue Turnover Policy Discussion

Dave Passios questions if it would be more appropriate to call this a revenue expense turnover policy. Heather Lemieux states this is just about collection of revenue and not about the expenditures.

Heather Lemieux is working with the division of local services to update our existing policies and add new financial policies. This is being completed through Community Compact. The purpose is to safeguard the town's assets as incoming revenue and how monies and checks are handled by staff when they are received.

Dave Passios questions when schools are mentioned in the policy its only related to lunch money. Dave Passios wants to know what happens to the money, for example that comes from field sales at athletic events. Heather Lemieux states that the list is not comprehensive and just gives some examples.

Chris Menard requests a comprehensive list of fees for the town. If the town is going to charge fees it should at least be written down somewhere.

c. Consent Calendar - Vote may be taken

For the town meeting the least contentious articles are combined into a single calendar article that gets voted on as a group.

The recommended articles to add to the consent calendar are Articles: 1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25.

There was a motion to remove article 4 from the consent calendar by Dave Passios, seconded by Jean Russell. All in favor.

There was a motion to recommend approval of the remaining articles and remove article 4 by Chris Menard, seconded by Evan Watters. All in favor.

d. Town Meeting Discussion

The Town Manager scheduled a pre-meeting for next Wednesday. Evan Watters will send out an update after the pre-meeting.

The auditorium for the Town Meeting has a capacity of 600 and there will be 2 overflow areas (gym, cafeteria).

Chris Menard questions if there will be enough parking.

8. Old Business

a. FinCom Report for Warrant Review

Dave Passios states that the last page ends abruptly.

After review there were minor grammatical errors that were corrected.

There was a motion to approve the annual report with the minor edits that were made during the meeting by Chris Menard, seconded by Jean Russell. All in favor.

b. FY25 Budget Discussion

Dave Passios states that for FY 25 we need to figure out what avenues we need to take to get to a point where we have borrowing capacity for short-term borrowing. We need to be in a position where we can take on short term debt that we can actually pay.

c. FY25 Override Discussion

There was no discussion.

d. Votes on Recommendations for Warrant Articles

There was no discussion.

9. Minutes

There are some members who didn't have a chance to review the minutes.

There are a few meetings that don't have minutes dating back to 2023. Evan Watters will send the list to the minute writer.

There was a motion to approve the minutes from March 20th and March 21st by Chris Menard, seconded by Dave Passios. The minutes were approved 5-1 with 1 member abstaining.

10. Committee Reports

Chris Menard shares that the Parks Commission reorganized. The board is as follows: Chair Anita Scheipers, Vice Chare Colleen Shapiro, Clerk Karin Menard, Member Ana Lockwood, and Member Christopher Sullivan.

11. Topics for Future Meetings

The committee wants to discuss the Chapter 90 briefing that the Select Board received that was provided by the Department of Public Works.

12. Upcoming Meetings:

a. 5/4/2024 - Annual Town Meeting - Middle High School starting at 9AM.

13. Important Dates:

a. 5/18/2024 - Annual Town Election TC Passios Gym

14. Public Comment

Jay Simeone refers residents to get their information and questions specially relating to the Water District presentation on their website as opposed to Facebook.

15. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Chris Menard, seconded by Jay Simeone. All in favor.

The meeting closed at 8:58 PM.