

Lunenburg Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Bilotta Meeting Room
Lunenburg Town Hall
June 13, 2024

Present Members: Chair Evan Watters, Vice Chair Chris Menard, Clerk Tiffaney Tavares, Board Member Tom Gray, Board Member Dave Passios, Board Member Jean Russell, Board Member Jay Simeone

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 7:00PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements

Evan Watters states that the Town Managers last day will be August 4th. A search committee will be put together to find a new Town Manager.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

5. Town Manager Report

The Owner's Project Manager Services contract for Marshall Park was awarded through a park grant.

The Town received notification from FEMA for denial of public assistance from the severe weather and flooding that occurred in September of 2023. The State issued that a million dollars be set aside from the fall supplemental budget to be distributed to affected cities and towns. Lunenburg received \$30,000. This number was reached based on storm related expenses, municipality size, and the amount of infrastructure related costs.

The Fiscal 25 tax bills will include the override amount and are only an estimate until the tax rate is set in the fall.

Representative Scarsdale received the earmark for the MILO training simulation systems for the police dept project. This training simulation previously didn't make the cut in the capital plan.

The repairs to the public safety building were completed.

Chris Menard questioned when the grant writing services will be available. Heather Lemieux states a process needs to be put in place and established to ensure the resources aren't put into one department or committee. Tiffaney

Tavares agrees to work together with Heather Lemieux. Heather Lemieux will reach out to her association for additional input.

6. Finance Director Report

Ezequiel Ayala has no new information or reports.

The quarter finances for Q3 were submitted and should be available within the next couple of weeks.

7. New Business

a. Town Manager Search Committee Representative (Possible Vote)

The Town Moderator is responsible for chairing a committee to replace the Town Manager and has already reached out to Evan Watters. This Committee will include a representative from the Finance Committee.

Chris Menard questions if the Committee must come up with a group of candidates. Evan Watters states the group is to consist of 5 members: the Town Moderator, Finance Committee representative, Tom Alonzo, Peter Beardmore, and a Planning Board Representative.

Evan Watters nominated Chris Menard to be on the Committee for the permanent Town Manager, seconded by Dave Passios. All in favor.

The Committee for the interim Town Manager will be handled exclusively by the Select Board, Assistant Town Manager, and HR director.

b. Budget Task Force Discussion (Possible Vote)

There has been no official vote to start a budget task force from the Select Board.

There is discussion about whether this group will include only appointed or elected members of the town or if it should include members of the public.

The budget task force is anticipated to include a Finance Representative, School Committee Representative, Superintendent of Schools, Business Director for Schools, Select Board Member, and a Planning Board Member.

Chris Menard nominated Evan Watters to be the Finance Committee Representative, seconded by Tiffaney Tavares. All in favor.

c. Meeting with Rep Scarsdale, 1st Middlesex District, and DESE to Discuss School Budget Issues

Representative Margaret Scarsdale sent out an email to members of her district including Town Managers, Moderators, Select Board Chairs, School Committee Chairs, and Finance Committee Chairs.

The topics to be discussed include the school budgets, regional school transportation, minimum required contributions, Chapter 70, effectiveness of the foundation formula and the 4 1/2% cap on the student opportunity act.

The proposed dates for the 2-hour long meeting include July 12 & July 19.

Chris Menard suggests creating a prepared statement across the 3 Boards. Evan Watters suggests the statement be drafted by the School Committee. Tiffaney Tavares suggests a collaboration between the Finance Committee and School Committee.

d. Missing FinCom Minutes

Evan Watters spoke to PAC and was told to search specifically for "FIN" and that should generate everything available.

Chris Menard questions if there is a time limit for when minutes need to be submitted.

Chris Menard asks if it's been determined that if no meeting was held thus there are no minutes, then what needs to be provided for compliance.

Chris Menard also suggests appending the material to the minutes.

8. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

9. Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes from the May 23, 2024, meeting by Chris Menard, seconded by Tiffaney Tavares. All in favor.

10. Committee Reports

Chris Menard states the Parks Committee met and Ana Lockwood resigned from the Committee.

Chris Menard shares that the Capital Planning Committee met and is focusing on the 5-year plan. There is an at large seat available on the Committee. The busiest time of the year for the Committee is during the fall and winter months.

Dave Passios states that Green Communities Committee met. Recently, the Committee backed out of the spring grant round at the last minute for the sewer project. It turned out to be more beneficial to wait until the fall grant round to obtain a larger sum. Meetings are scheduled monthly throughout the summer. Dave Passios shares that information is being provided on Facebook about the accomplishments of the committee related to finances. Currently there are 2 associate member seats available.

Evan Watters shares that the Master Plan Steering Committee met but Evan Watters was unable to attend.

All 5 of the members on the Personnel Committee have resigned. Currently this is a completely empty Committee.

11. Topics for Future Meetings

A list of future topics was created throughout the meeting.

12. Upcoming Meetings:

a. 6/27/2024

b. 7/11/24

13. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

14. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Chris Menard, seconded by Dave Passios.

The meeting closed at 8:01 PM.