

Lunenburg Finance Committee Meeting Minutes  
Bilotta Meeting Room  
Lunenburg Town Hall  
October 10, 2024

Present Members: Chair Chris Menard, Vice Chair Jean Russell (Zoom), Clerk Tom Gray,  
Committee Member Jay Simeone

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 7:00 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements

Evan Watters resigned from his position as the Chair over the weekend and the Committee is down to 4 members.

There is an upcoming finance appointing meeting on Tuesday where a 5<sup>th</sup> candidate will be discussed.

Chris Menard states the if any resident is interested in becoming a member they should inquire. The Interim Town Managers term is set to expire in January and the process to hire a new Town Manager will require a full board.

4. Public Comment

Dave Passios, formally 56 Whiting Street, suggests that the Committee take a close look at the revolving account that's being created for the Council on Aging. He doesn't believe it clearly states what kind of revolving account they are looking to establish under Mass General Law.

Additionally, Dave Passios states that the draft town warrant is listed as a Fall Town Meeting Warrant. There are no provisions in the charter for a second town meeting anytime during the fiscal year. At the last Special Town Meeting it was decided that there should be only 1 actual town meeting a year because of the different requirements for voting among other things.

Jay Simeone, Tom Gray, and Jean Russell thank Evan Watters for his knowledge, leadership and time he put into the Committee.

Chris Menard states he was not present at the last meetings and wanted to thank Dave Passios for everything he has done for the town.

## 5. Finance Director Report

Carter Terenzini confirms that new growth is being reviewed and a final assessment value will be completed by the assessment team next week. The Board of Assessors anticipates final action to be taken to submit everything for certification of free cash in the next 2 weeks. They are behind schedule but are in decent shape. A classification hearing is anticipated to take place in early November.

## 6. New Business

### a. Reorganize

There is discussion about who may be able to be the Chair. Jay Simeone and Tom Gray are unable to take that position.

Tom Gray suggests Chris Menard be the Chair. Chris Menard agrees to stand in as the Chair for the time being. Chris Menard has no problem running the meetings but is generally unavailable during the daytime.

Jean Russell agrees to be the Vice Chair.

There was a motion by Jay Simeone to nominate Chris Menard as Chair, Jean Russell as Vice Chair, and Tom Gray for the Clerk position, seconded by Tom Gray. Roll call vote. Jean Russell aye, Tom Gray aye, Jay Simeone aye, Chris Menard aye.

### b. Special Town Meeting Warrant Summary

Chris Menard is aware that the Parks commission is currently meeting and will be requesting a presentation for their warrant article. Their presentation will be added to the agenda on October 24<sup>th</sup>.

Carter Terenzini states he can write the Finance Committees recommendation as deferred in the booklet and could provide an insert that will be provided to attendees.

### 1<sup>st</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

Town will vote to authorize the payment of "late bill" from FY24, appropriate a sum of \$4,180 to pay bill, and meet appropriation by a transfer from the overlay surplus account. Last week the Board of Assessors certified \$225,000 as excess overlay reserved for appropriation.

Tom Gray inquiries about what the bill is for. Carter Terenzini will get the invoice to the Committee.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This is a request from the School Committee. After the state's final budget was settled there was a sum of \$31,882 in the chapter 70 account. The Committee is requesting that money be appropriated to them.

Tom Gray asks what the schools are anticipating using the money for. Carter Terenzini says he was not provided specifics. Chris Menard is requesting the School Committee attend the public hearing to provide further explanation.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is related to the Lunenburg MART connection transportation program. The request is to appropriate a sum of money to fund the rest of the fiscal year for the MART organization.

Carter Terenzini states he has received an answer from MART about transporting residents to Lunenburg. They have confirmed that will travel past 20 miles for a Lunenburg resident to get to Emerson Hospital.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is to vote to accept the provisions of law to allow the towns trust funds to be invested in the so called "Prudent Investor Rule".

#### 5<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is from the Planning Board and Carter Terenzini is unable to speak about this article in length. Carter Terenzini can request the Land Use Director attend the public hearing to discuss. The Committee only wants to know if there is any financial impact.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is to establish a revolving fund for the Council on Aging meals program. All deposits will be put into a revolving fund account and accounts would then be set up with vendors. Those bills will be paid out from the revolving account. First there needs to be an amendment to the code. Second there needs to be an annual estimated limit to spend yearly. The estimate is \$16,000 for the

balance of the fiscal year. At the annual town meeting a new limit will have to be set. There is a statute issue that requires that all revolving funds be set up by July 1<sup>st</sup> of a fiscal year. Additional funds can be set up throughout the year, but a written explanation needs to be provided to the Department of Revenue.

Chris Menard asks if there is a statute equivalent and Carter Terenzini states that would be 53E ½.

Tom Gray asks what the Council on Aging is expected a full year will cost. Carter Terenzini will inquire with Sue Doherty.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is related to statute 53D revolving fund for the Parks Department. Statute 53D requires that at the end of the year if there is a balance above \$10,000 it's supposed to go to the general fund. The general fund currently has over \$75,000. The 53D fund needs to be converted to 53E ½ as there is no cap on how much can be in the account at any given time. The Parks Department will provide a number for the FY25 spending limit by Town Meeting.

#### 8<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is related to the Brooks House and was submitted by Architectural Preservation District Commission. The Commission is requesting the town vote to request to have the Select Board prepare a report. This report will then be presented at the 2025 annual town meeting with the intent of offering the building for sale or long-term lease.

Chris Menard states Nathan Lockwood had provided a detailed discussion at a recent Select Board meeting.

Carter Terenzini states if this passes the Land Use Director will look at zoning, prepare a sketch, meet with the schools, participate in public meeting and then present that report at the town meeting in the spring of 2025.

Chris Menard questions what income would come from leasing the building. Carter Terenzini confirms that will be part of the study.

#### 9<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is related to amendments and additions to code and salary administration plan.

Carter Terenzini states there have been challenges in recruiting and retaining employees. Listening sessions were held where employees attended and shared their concerns. There are issues with the process that requires formal action by the Personnel Committee in an open public session.

Chris Menard suggests reaching out to the prior Personnel Committee members as this was something they had discussed.

#### 10<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is a vote to amend the Code of Lunenburg Chapter 250 related to the Water Supply Protection District.

#### 11<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is requesting that State Statute be adopted to allow certain exemptions for the elderly. Over time the limits have been adopted at town meetings but there were 3 provisions that were never adopted. This article would make necessary changes so that the next fiscal year and going forward would be able to start increases again.

Currently there are 21 people who qualify for these programs and 2 of them will not be able to get this benefit for this fiscal year.

#### 12<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This vote is to allow the Chair of the Budget Task Force, and the Lunenburg Municipal Design Committee make a verbal report on the status of the work of their group force.

#### 13<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This article is requested the Town vote to borrow a sum of money to complete the Marshall Park improvement project. The Parks Commission is having a presentation on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October.

#### 14<sup>th</sup> WARRANT ARTICLE

This is a citizen's petition requesting the Town vote to borrow a sum of money within the town's debt limits for the purpose of funding the remaining costs of design and construction of Marshall Park.

Chris Menard is requesting general definitions be added to the booklet.

## 7. Old Business

- a. Budget Presentation Template – There was no discussion about this topic at the meeting.
- b. MART Taxi & Livery Grant Update – There was no discussion about this topic at the meeting.
- c. Split Tax Rate Presentation/Discussion – There was no discussion about this topic at the meeting.
- d. Town Manager Search Committee – Update  
Chris Menard confirms that the Town Manager Search Committee met. The Town Manager requisition was posted to MMA. The posting provided an overview of Lunenburg and the expectations and positions. Resumes are due by November 8<sup>th</sup>. Any discussion going forward will be done in executive session until the list is narrowed down. They anticipate screening interviews with the candidates. The Select Board will then complete their interviews and that is anticipated that be completed in late December or early January.
- e. Budget Task Force – Update  
Jean Russell was not able to attend the Zoom meeting but will watch it on YouTube.
- f. Grant Writing Services – Update  
There were no updates.
- g. Consolidation of Services/Departments  
Chris Menard states that the school facilities director has resigned. At prior meetings there has been discussion about consolidation of services and that the facilities department may be a good place to start. Chris Menard suggests a single facilities director may be more logical. The Committee questions if there would need to be a change in charter for this to occur.

## 8. Minutes

Dave Passios provided a note for the August 22 minutes. Approval of minutes will occur at the next meeting.

## 9. Committee Reports

Jean Russell has no committee reports.

Tom Gray attended the Zoom meeting about Project 211 by the Regional School Committee Group. During the meeting, participants learned how Chapter 70 is calculated and the formulas. The State gives more money depending on how well the town is run. Project 211 wants to change the formulas. Tom Gray will continue to follow these meetings.

Tom Gray states Municipal Design Committee met but he wasn't able to attend the meeting.

Jay Simeone watched the Sewer Commission meeting. A new business manager was hired and then left after a week. Interviews have been held and a discussion will be made at the next meeting. They are still looking for an assistant sewer business manager.

Chris Menard states that the police department provide their capital plan at the last meeting. This year's capital plan focuses on police cruisers and expansion into the second floor for extra workspace.

Chris Menard confirms that the Parks Commission is meeting tonight, and they intend to finalize their warrant article.

#### 10. Topics for Future Meetings

The focus of the Committee over the next coming weeks will be the Special Town Meeting that will take place on the second week of November.

#### 11. Important Dates

- a. 11/2/24 – MMA ATFC Annual Meeting, 9a-2:15p @ Sharon Community Center
- b. 11/12/24 – Special Town Meeting, 7p @LMHS

#### 12. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. 10/24/24
- b. 11/7/24

#### 13. Public Comment

Dave Passios is excited to hear about the new benefits coming at the Town Meeting. Additionally, he wants the Committee to consider having someone liaison with the DPW director especially with the winter months coming.

Chris Menard reiterates that there are 3 vacancies on the Committee.

#### 14. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Jay Simeone, seconded by Tom Gray. Roll call vote. Jean Russell aye, Tom Gray aye, Jay Simeone aye, Chris Menard aye.

The meeting closed at 9:10 PM.