

Lunenburg Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Bilotta Meeting Room
Lunenburg Town Hall
October 24, 2024

Present Members: Chair Chris Menard, Vice Chair Jean Russell, Clerk Tom Gray,
Committee Member Tanya Dall, Committee Member Jay Simeone

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 7:00 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements

There is a new member on the Committee, Tanya Dall.

There are still 2 vacancies if anyone is interested in making a difference for the town.

Chris Menard states he has been called off on business travel for the night of the special town meeting. Jean Russell will be filling in on his behalf.

4. Public Comment

John Bowen, 162 Highland Street, Thanks Evan Watters and Chris Menard for their work.

John Bowen has previously pushed for a cemetery corporation because of the wasteful spending and misuse of the sale of lot funds by the Cemetery Commission. He brought up the expenditures for 2021 and provided examples of discrepancies. John Bowen is concerned about whether the Cemetery Commission will be able to pay back bills discussed under Article 5 in the warrant.

5. Town Manager & Finance Director Reports

Carter Terenzini states that all values including new growth have been submitted and certified by the state. The classification hearing will take place on November 19. The estimated tax rate will be completed prior to the Special Town Meeting.

6. Scheduled Meetings

a. Municipal Building Design Committee update

There will be an updated article at the Special Town Meeting in November from the MBDC. The Committee encapsulated members from the Finance

Committee, Select Board, School Committee, and members from the community at large. Over the past few years, the TC Passios building has been brought up in many discussions. The MBDC wants to turn the building into a meeting house and the first floor will have 4 meeting areas. The first quote to repurpose the building was 23 million dollars. When the Committee was ready to go forward with a vote the price went up to 30 million.

b. Parks Commission presentation on Marshall Park Borrowing

Anita Scheipers the Chairman of the Parks Commission shared the information related to Marshall Park. The Parks Commission has been looking at improvements to make Marshall Park more attractive and suitable for residents of all ages and abilities. Back in 2020, a public information gathering session was held. The Town Meeting did approve some initial funds to pay for some early schematic design of the park and a firm was hired. It was estimated that the park would cost approximately 5.2 million to construct. This would include improvements to the playing fields, added basketball court, pickleball court, pavilion, playground, dog park, and walking paths. The Parks Commission went back to the Town Meeting and received additional funds to further the design of the park. The Select Board voted to allocate 1 million ARPA funds to the park project. The Parks Commission then hired an owner's project manager and a landscape architecture firm and a new schematic design needed to be completed. The new estimated cost rose to 14 million in October of 2024. Initially the Parks Commission thought there would be enough in hand to start phase 1 and would ask for the remaining funds at the Special Town Meeting to finish phase 2. There is now not enough money to complete phase 1.

The Parks Commission considered narrowing down the scope of the project and discussed cutting the project back. There are commitments under the grant programs and after speaking with them it was determined we were committed under that grant contract that was already signed. They would have to complete the project, or they would not get reimbursement from the grant program for what was already spent and committed to.

The Parks Commission made the discussion not to move ahead with the borrowing article at the Special Town Meeting. will be meeting again on November 6th to discuss possible next steps. This article may be brought back up at the Spring Town Meeting.

Jay Simeone questions what the status of the million-dollar ARPA funding that was previously committed to. Anita Scheipers spoke with the Interim Town Manager about using the ARPA funds to continue the design work for Marshall Park.

7. Public Hearing

There was a motion to enter into public hearing by Jay Simeone, seconded by Tom Gray. All in favor.

a. Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

The Interim Town Manager, Carter Terenzini, discussed the warrant articles.

Article 1: This article has been split into 2 pieces since the previous meeting. This is a legacy article to amend the FY25 town budget to the extent it needs amendments. There was more new growth than anticipated and the Select Board intends to seek to appropriate that delta to the FY25 budget.

Jay Simeone questions what the delta is right now. Carter Terenzini states its approximately \$115,000.

Ana Lockwood, 91 Main Street, questions what that appropriation will be going to. Carter Terenzini states this hasn't been settled yet. Today the retiree health insurance rates were received, and they went up 19.3%. Carter Terenzini anticipates presenting a formal proposal at the Select Board meeting on November 5th.

Ana Lockwood states that free cash has grown tremendously and inquires where that is coming from. Carter Terenzini states there were a lot of projects that didn't get completed due to supply chain, delays in getting materials, and issues related to Covid.

Dave Passios, formally 56 Whiting Street and registered voter in the Town of Lunenburg but currently residing in Jefferson, NH proposed there needs to be a review of the practices that are used to fund capital projects.

Article 2: The Town has received \$31,882 in Chapter 70 money. The School Committee asked that be allotted to the School Committee and the Select Board agrees. They intend to use that money to supplement their salary reserve, to address critical staffing, and compensate short falls.

Chris Menard also believes the Chapter 70 money should be applied to the schools as voted on by the legislature. He did note that the funding has fluctuated and decreased in past years.

Article 3: This article is to authorize a payment of 1 late bill totaling \$4,180 with a transfer from the overlay reserve. This is from Canon for the copiers in the school department.

Article 4: This article is related to the MART program. The MART program provides rides for seniors, teenagers, and those with mobility issues. They deliver 400 rides a month to 70 unique users. \$20,000 will come from the overlay surplus reserve for appropriation. MART will be present at the Special Town Meeting.

Rhonda Liscio, 181 Reservoir Road, asked if this program started through a state grant. Carter Terenzini is unsure as this was prior to his start date with the town.

Dave Passios believes this grant has a sunset grant built into it but was miss shuffled because it was mid fiscal year.

Article 5: This article is related to investments and trust funds. Currently there are restrictions on the types of investments, stocks, and deposits that town can do. This will allow more flexibility with a little more risk but may increase the yields.

The Select Board inquired about how many towns have adopted this. Carter Terenzini believes there are at least 20 plus communities.

Article 6: This article is related to COLA and clauses relative to tax exemptions.

Carter Terenzini states previously there were 2 provisions accepted but in order for COLA to be applied there are clauses that need to be adopted.

Jay Simeone questions who found out that these clauses had not been adopted. Carter Terenzini confirms the new assessor noticed the numbers didn't match up with her experience. After some digging these clauses were not in the DOR database or the town books.

Article 7: This is an article from the Water Supply Protection District and there were no questions.

Article 8: This article is related to setting up a revolving fund for the Council on Aging. Currently, the contributions for the meals are being paid in cash and held at the adult activity center. It is then used to purchase supplies and food. The handling of cash in this manner is non-conforming by statute and generally not a good accounting practice. This article would create a revolving fund. The money received for the meals program would be submitted to the treasurer's collection. From there an account would be set

up with the venders, vendors could then submit a bill, that would subsequently be provided to the accounting department. The proposed set limit for the year is \$16,000.

Article 9: This article is requesting a revolving fund for the Parks Department be established under a provision of statutes. There are some provisions that state if there is an excess of \$10,000 at the end of the fiscal year then that money is supposed to go into the general fund.

Article 10: This article is a request from the Architectural Preservation District Commission related to the Brooks House. They have requested that the Board of Selectman obtain a study of the Brooks House property to determine if it's possible to sell or lease the house.

Anthony Sculimbrene believes if the Brooks House is kept then money will need to be spent but will turn into an asset rather than a liability.

Dave Passios states there is a problem with perpetual parking easements on town property for potential private business entities.

Glenn Mcleod, 436 Reservoir Road, believes selling the property would be a mistake and that the town would lose control of the small parcel within the larger parcel.

Chris Menard believes that given the other needs of the town that money isn't available to spend to rehabilitate that building.

Peter Beardmore, 282 Pleasant Street, is a member of the School Committee and the Capital Planning Committee but speaking on behalf of himself. He questions who controls the property that the Brooks House sits on. Dave Passios believes all property lines are documented in schematic reports.

Article 11: This article is related to employment and hiring. The article addresses a sick leave bank, incentive program, and holiday time for part time employees on their usually scheduled workdays.

Glenn McLeod believes that the vacation time should be maxed if the employee brings their expertise to the town and shouldn't be limited. Additionally, he believes the pay rate and stage can be determined by the Town Manager and the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Article 12: This article is related to the salary administration plan and amendments. There were no questions.

Article 13: This article is a presentation by town bodies including the Municipal Design Committee and the Budget Task Force. There were no questions.

Article 14 & Article 15” The articles were citizen petitions for Marshall Park. Ana Lockwood was the citizen petitioner, and she intends to ask that these articles be passed over.

Dave Passios questions where they were in the process of getting grants approved. Anita Scheipers confirms that there were 6 grants applied for. Last budget season the Finance Committee approved a line item in general government for \$50,000 for grant writing services. Dave Passios believes that money should be used in this fiscal year to move this process forward.

There was a motion to close the public hearing by Jay Simeone, seconded by Tom Gray. All in favor.

8. New Business

a. Recommendations on Warrant Articles

Article 1: There was a motion to defer recommendations to town meeting until final numbers are available by Tom Gray, seconded by Jay Simeone. All in favor. Deferral was recommended 5-0.

Article 2: There was a motion to recommend approval by Tom Gray, seconded by Jean Russell. All in favor. Approval was recommended 5-0.

Article 3: There was a motion to recommend approval by Tom Gray, seconded by Jay Simeone. All in favor. Approval was recommended 5-0.

Article 4: There was a motion to recommend approval by Jean Russell, seconded by Tom Gray. All in favor. Approval was recommended 5-0.

Article 5: There was a motion to recommend approval by Tom Gray, seconded by Jean Russell. The vote was 4-0-1 for approval. Jay Simeone supports this article but states there are no budgeted numbers thus he doesn't see a direct financial impact.

Article 6: There was a motion to recommend approval despite there being no direct financial impact by Chris Menard, seconded by Tom Gray. The vote was 4 -0-1 for approval.

Article 7: There was a motion to find no financial impact by Tom Gray, seconded by Jean Russell. All in favor.

Article 8: There was a motion to recommend approval despite there being no direct financial impact by Jay Simeone, seconded by Jean Russell. Approval was recommended 5-0.

Article 9: There was a motion to recommend approval by Jean Russell, seconded by Tanya Dall. The vote was 4 -0-1 for approval.

Article 10: There was a motion to find no financial impact by Tom Gray, seconded by Jay Simeone. All in favor.

Article 11: There was a motion to recommend approval by Tom Gray, seconded by Chris Menard. The Committee recommended approval 4-1.

Article 12: There was a motion to recommend approval by Chris Menard, seconded by Tom Gray. The Committee recommended approval 4-1.

Article 13: There was a motion to find no financial impact by Chris Menard, seconded by Tom Gray. All in favor. The motion passed 5-0.

Article 14: There was a motion to defer by Chris Menard, seconded by Tom Gray. All in favor.

Article 15: There was a motion to defer by Chris Menard, seconded by Tom Gray. All in favor.

b. Liaison Re-assignments

There was discussion about the school and budget task force liaison. Jean Russell was the second on the budget task force and will now be the primary. If she is unavailable Tom Gray agreed to be a second. Jean Russell also agreed to be the school liaison.

9. Old Business

a. Budget Presentation Template

There were no discussions about this topic.

b. Town Manager Search Committee Update

Chris Menard states there hasn't been a recent meeting.

c. Budget Task Force

There were no discussions about this topic.

d. Project 211 (School Funding Formula)

There were no discussions about this topic.

e. Grant Writing Services

There were no discussion about this topic.

f. Consolidation of Services/Departments

There were no discussions about this topic.

10. Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes from August 22, September 12 and September 26th of 2024 by Tom Gray, seconded by Jean Russell. The vote was 3-2.

Tom Gray is going to send the minutes to the town clerk and move the minutes over to the approved folder.

11. Committee Reports

Jay Simeone states that the Sewer Commission met. They have been looking for a business manager, but the prospects have not worked out. They are changing direction and looking to hire a part-time sewer business manager. Several applications have been received.

Chris Menard confirms that the Capital Planning Committee met twice. The presentations for schools and facilities took place.

12. Actions and Topics for Future Meetings

There were no suggested actions or topics for future meetings.

13. Important Dates

a. 11.2.2024 – MMA ATFC Annual Meeting 9AM– 2:15PM Sharon Community Center

b. 11.12.2024 – Special Town Meeting 7PM Lunenburg Middle High School

14. Upcoming Meetings

a. 11/7/2024 (if necessary)

15. Public Comment

Dave Passios asks if the edits he provided from the last meeting were added and Chris Menard confirms they were added. Additionally, Dave Passios will email Carter Terenzini a reminder that smart growth needs to be applied for every year. Lastly, he states that Senator Cronin mentioned at a prior meeting that the Department of Local Services has a program that if the Select Board votes to invite

them into the town they will do a top to bottom inside and outside audit of procedures and town operations for free. They can come up with recommendations and corrective actions.

16. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Jay Simeone, seconded by Tom Gray. All in favor.
The meeting closed at 9:55 PM.