

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Zoom Only
Monday, November 17, 2025

Members Present: Chair Caesar Nuzzolo, Vice-Chair Amanda Moore, Clerk Renee Emkey, and Member Brian Lehtinen.

Members Absent: Member Glenn McLeod

Also Present: Jennifer Warren-Dyment, Town Manager
Public Comment Participants are listed in the minutes

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Caesar Nuzzolo called the Select Board to order at 6:06 PM. The meeting was held remotely via Zoom and was recorded and broadcast live on the Lunenburg Public Access Facebook page, with the recording to be uploaded to the Lunenburg Access YouTube channel following the meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was omitted as the meeting was conducted remotely.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Nuzzolo reminded all attendees that Special Town Meeting was scheduled for the following evening, Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Lunenburg Middle- High School Auditorium.

Clerk Renee Emkey announced an upcoming regional school funding forum to be held Thursday, November 20, 2025, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Groton-Dunstable Middle School Performing Arts Center. The forum is hosted by state legislators including Representative Scarsdale, Representative Kushmerek, Senator Cronin, and House Education Chair Ken Gordon. Clerk Emkey noted that free childcare would be available with advance registration, that questions could be submitted prior to the event, and that the forum would be recorded and made available on the Groton Channel website. A flyer with a QR code and registration information was noted to be available on the school's homepage.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment

None.

Board Comment

Clerk Emkey offered a public comment in advance of Special Town Meeting, acknowledging the significant preparation effort made by town staff and presenting committees. Clerk Emkey stressed the obligation of appointed and elected officials to actively monitor their Town email accounts, respond to requests for feedback in a timely manner, and remain current on updated materials shared prior to Town meetings. She noted that a lack of timely engagement from board and committee members had been apparent and cautioned that officials speaking from outdated information at public meetings risks confusing residents. Clerk Emkey also reminded colleagues to be mindful of

Open Meeting Law requirements when using reply-all email, and indicated that with budget season approaching, this standard of engagement would be increasingly important.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

Discussion on November 18, 2025 Special Town Meeting and Warrant Articles

o Potential Votes on Deferred Warrant Articles

Chair Nuzzolo noted that two warrant articles previously deferred remained pending for Select Board recommendation: Article 2 (Amending the FY 2026 Omnibus Budget) and Article 3 (Payment of Prior Year Bills). Finance Director Katie McKenna was present as a resource throughout the discussion.

Article 2 — Amending the FY 2026 Omnibus Budget

Town Manager Jennifer Warren-Dyment presented a detailed breakdown of the proposed \$160,052 supplemental appropriation to the Town Accountant budget, revised upward from the \$150,000 figure discussed the prior week. The components were as follows:

- Town Accountant Salary Supplement (\$12,181): The position salary line required a supplement to bring the budgeted amount to \$145,000, the rate at which the position had been posted, after a planned transfer from the salary reserve brought it only to \$135,000. A small additional amount covered vacation payouts during the personnel transition.
- Audit Costs (\$20,000 supplemental + \$3,500 prior year balance): The FY26 budget had allocated \$40,000 for audit services. Under a proposed three-year agreement with CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), the cost of the FY 2025 audit, to be paid from the FY26 budget, is \$60,000—a substantial increase. Town Manager Warren-Dyment noted that the alternative primary auditing firm in the region is not currently accepting new clients, leaving limited options. An additional \$3,500 covered a remaining balance on the FY24 audit.
- Contracted Services (\$107,000): This represented the largest component, broken down as follows: accounts payable support at 22 hours per week through the end of December (\$15,730); continuation of a contracted payroll and benefits specialist through the end of January (\$40,950); and transitional Finance Director services with consultant Eric Kinsherf, with a not-to-exceed contract amendment from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

Clerk Emkey asked whether the \$50,000 Finance Director transitional services allocation would carry the Town through the end of January. Town Manager Warren-Dyment and Finance Director McKenna indicated the duration would depend heavily on hiring progress. McKenna noted that billing from the consultant had been relatively modest to date, running approximately \$175 per hour, but that costs would increase as the consultant engaged more substantively with year-end work including the balance sheet and Schedule A. Town Manager Warren-Dyment stated plainly that the \$160,052 figure may not be sufficient to sustain transitional services through the end of the fiscal year, and that further adjustments might be necessary.

The second component of Article 2 covered salary reserve transfers, reflecting settlements and adjustments including the police collective bargaining agreement, the finalized Police Chief contract, the Finance Director salary adjustment, and an IT position reclassification following an internal promotion. A final transfer of \$27,500 appropriated at May Town Meeting for a special project was

proposed to move from the authorization account to Assessors Administration, to support a newly proposed internal approach to an assessors' project for which no outside bidders had been received.

Clerk Emkey asked whether the \$27,500 transfer to Assessors Administration was contingent upon a related article creating the special assessor position. Town Manager Warren-Dyment clarified that if the position creation article failed, the funds would remain in the Assessors Administration budget but would be held unspent pending a future town meeting action.

Town Manager Warren-Dyment also presented a summary of available revenue capacity, noting a total revenue surplus available for appropriation of \$195,790.97, derived from positive changes to the cherry sheet, new growth, and certain adjustments to the recap. If Article 2 and Article 3 were both approved, the remaining additional levy capacity would be \$35,321.75. Town Manager Warren-Dyment indicated she had communicated this information to the Superintendent of Schools that afternoon and anticipated commentary on it.

Motion by Chair Nuzzolo to recommend approval of Article 2. Seconded by Clerk Emkey. Roll Call Vote: Member Brian Lehtinen -Aye, Clerk Emkey – Aye, Vice-Chair Amanda Moore – Aye, Chair Nuzzolo – Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4–0–0).

Article 3 — Payment of Prior Year Bills

Town Manager Warren-Dyment presented three categories of prior year bills included in Article 3:

- Heywood Hospital (\$266): A small prior year bill for physicals, to be paid from the FY26 budget.
- CliftonLarsonAllen (\$3,500): An outstanding balance on the FY24 audit, to be paid from the adjusted FY 2026 Town Accountant line as modified by Article 2.
- Advanced Print Technology (\$390): A prior year invoice for t-shirts, to be paid from the FY26 budget.
- City of Fitchburg (\$90,000): A newly identified and substantial prior year obligation arising from the town's 1993 intermunicipal water agreement with the City of Fitchburg.

Town Manager Warren-Dyment provided background on the Fitchburg water billing matter. Under the agreement, Lunenburg receives water from Fitchburg and is required to bill its customers at the Fitchburg rate plus a 30% administrative charge. Eleven separate accounts receive water under this agreement, with significant commercial volume at the Tri-Town properties. Due to cumulative staff turnover over multiple years, the Town had failed to timely bill its customers, and had not passed through rate increases approved by Fitchburg in FY23, FY24, and FY25 with additional increases scheduled for FY26 and FY27. Fitchburg charges 14% annual interest on late payments after 30 days, which accounts for a significant portion of the \$90,000 now owed. Town Manager Warren-Dyment cautioned that if Town Meeting failed to authorize payment, the city of Fitchburg could pursue litigation or initiate a cherry sheet intercept.

Finance Director McKenna noted that the water billing function operates as an Enterprise Fund, and that the FY26 budget had allocated only \$45,000 for this purpose, a figure that appeared to have been set without rigorous analysis and that would likely require adjustment at a future Annual Town Meeting. She further noted that because Lunenburg had not been billing or collecting revenues in FY25, demonstrating adequate revenue for the recap would present an additional challenge.

Proposed funding for the \$90,000 Fitchburg payment included transfers from the remaining balances of prior year capital articles (FY22 capital, including the Ritter ADA construction and Town Hall repairs projects) combined with a raise-and-appropriate component. During the discussion, Town Manager Warren-Dyment identified a mathematical discrepancy in the available capital balances attributable to funds from the ADA project that had already been committed to the stormwater project and a project estimator position resulting in a need to increase the raise-and-appropriate portion by approximately \$4,170, with a corresponding reduction to the transfer from Article 5 of the May 2024 Annual Town Meeting.

Vice-Chair Moore acknowledged the complexity of the information and suggested the Select Board defer its formal recommendation on Article 3 until the pre-Town Meeting session scheduled for the following evening, to allow Town Manager Warren-Dyment time to confirm the revised figures. Town Manager Warren-Dyment expressed agreement, noting she wished to verify her calculations. The Select Board concurred and Article 3 was deferred without a vote.

Clerk Emkey raised a broader concern regarding the ongoing FY26 water billing situation, noting that the \$90,000 authorization addresses only FY25 obligations, and that further rate increases and billing process reforms would need to be addressed promptly. Town Manager Warren-Dyment confirmed that the Select Board would need to convene a future meeting to establish an appropriate water rate, and that resuming regular monthly billing would be a necessary step to curtail further interest accrual.

V. MINUTES*/WARRANTS/ACTION ITEMS

Minutes

No minutes were available for approval.

Warrants

None.

Action Items

None.

VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports were presented.

VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE

Chair Nuzzolo noted the following upcoming meetings:

- November 18, 2025 — Special Town Meeting, with a Select Board pre-meeting session at 6:30 PM on the auditorium stage at Lunenburg Middle-High School.
- November 25, 2025 — Special Meeting of the Select Board, Tax Classification Hearing.

Clerk Emkey inquired whether the Tri-Board meeting tentatively scheduled for November 24, 2025 had been confirmed. Town Manager Warren-Dyment confirmed it was on the calendar and that a posting would follow, advising members to hold the date.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

• PUBLIC

No members of the public offered comment.

• TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Warren-Dyment expressed appreciation to the Select Board for their patience throughout a particularly demanding Special Town Meeting preparation process, characterizing it as one of the most challenging she had experienced, given the rapid pace of developing issues and the volume of information that had required attention in a compressed timeframe.

• BOARD

No comment by the Select Board.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Clerk Emkey adjourn at 6:56 PM. Seconded by Vice-Chair Moore seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Member Lehtinen -Aye, Clerk Emkey – Aye, Vice-Chair Moore – Aye, Chair Nuzzolo – Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4–0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Renee Emkey

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Select Board on: Tuesday, September 1, 2026