

Town of Lunenburg

Finance Committee:
Terri Burchfield, Chairman
Michelle Walton, Vice-Chairman
Peter Beardmore, Secretary
John Henshaw
Jay Simeone
David Passios



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Lunenburg Finance Committee October 10, 2019 Meeting

Location: Town Hall
Present: Terri Burchfield, John Henshaw, Dave Passios, Jay Simeone, Michelle Walton, Peter Beardmore
Absent: None

1. Call to Order

- Terri Burchfield, Chair called the meeting to order at 7pm (all expected members were in attendance). This meeting is being recorded for broadcast on the Lunenburg Public Access channel.

2. Public Comment

- Peter Beardmore acknowledged the passing of former Lunenburg Police Officer Pat Barney and conveyed sympathy to the Lunenburg Police Department and The Barney Family
- Terri Burchfield announced the planned symposium meeting scheduled for October 29th at the LMHS auditorium. Presenters will include the Town Manager, Land Use Director, and Superintendent of Schools

3. Public Hearing for Special Town Meeting

- Brandon Kibbe, chairman of the land acquisition committee presented Article G, the proposed acquisition of the Saliba Brothers property on Northfield Road. Of the six criteria outlined for consideration of property acquisition in the open space and recreation plan, the Saliba property meets five. The assessed value of the property is 996,900. The appraised value is 1,110,000. Negotiated price is \$775,000, 22% below assessed value and 29% below appraised value. Additionally, state grants will contribute

\$500,000, leaving the final burden on the town of \$282,000 (after title-related expenses), or \$887 per acre.

The land acquisition committee will be holding two site visits on October 19th and November 3rd, both at 10am.

If the acquisition is ultimately approved by town meeting, 259 acres will be under the care and control of the Conservation Commission.

59 acres would be under the care and control of the Parks Commission.

Dave Passios called attention to the interest costs associated with borrowing, which should be considered as part of the overall costs.

- Adam Burney, Land Use Director, presented Article N submitted by the Planning Board dealing with earth removal and fill, which strikes the entirety of the existing bylaw and replaces it. The bylaw proposes to transition the licensing authority for earth removal and fill from the Board of Selectmen to the Planning Board and adjusts the thresholds and terms of licensing. Mr. Burney communicated there may be financial impacts to the town as result of the bylaw but are indirect and unpredictable.
- Town Manager Heather Lemieux presented the following Articles:
- Article A, a budget adjustment for FY20. Adjustments are based on final state aid figures, and an adjusted estimate to new growth (\$18,367 less than annual town meeting estimate), debt principal (a required pay-down on the LMHS principal), interest and temporary interest accounts, changes to the assessor's administration fund (due to new software), tax title (increased to \$24,000). The net effect of the changes come to a \$78,604 surplus available for appropriation.
- Article B, to purchase street lights from Until; or pay Until for conversion of the streetlights to LED. The projected cost of conversion is \$65,493. We annually pay approximately \$74,300 for streetlight service. Until is projecting a savings of \$31,000 annual after LED conversion. The cost of acquiring the street lights from Until is \$87,646, plus there would be subsequent costs for conversion of the lights after purchase (there are potentially grants available to recoup the conversion costs), plus costs to run and maintain the lights. The Green Communities Committee is recommending acquiring the lights, and long-term savings are expected, but more analysis is needed. It is currently unknown what option the town wants to pursue on this project.

Members pointed out that the article, as written, did not sufficiently account for the purchase option, and may need to be reworded.

Were the town to vote to purchase the lights at the special town meeting, it would position the town to apply for the Green Communities grants for conversion in March. A delay would likely push out the conversion project until the following-year's grant cycle.

- Article C, special purpose stabilization. The town manager recommended that the budget surplus be appropriated to the special purpose stabilization fund (the account was originally created for capital purchase,

requiring a 2/3 town meeting vote).

The Special Purpose Stabilization fund was established in 2017 and currently has a balance of \$836,207.

- Article D, an article to transfer funds of \$9,993 from the Reserve Capacity Stabilization Fund to the Sewer Enterprise Fund. The intent of the article is to correct an error from the annual town meeting article with respect to the source of funds of the original article.
- Article E, an article to move retained earnings of \$7,513.66 from Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings to the Reserve Capacity Stabilization Fund.
- Article F, the collective bargaining agreement with the Police Union has not been finalized, thus the Town Manager is unable to present figures. Dave Passios expressed concern as to whether there would be sufficient time in advance of town meeting to review the terms of a contract, would a new contract be agreed to between the Police Union and the Board of Selectmen.
- Article H, to acquire 635 Massachusetts Avenue would likely be removed from the Town Meeting Warrant.
- Article I, to acquire 250 Howard Street would likely be removed from the Town Meeting Warrant.
- Article J, to acquire 842 Chase Road by gift, rather an in lieu of taxes as has been voted in a previous town meeting. The owner of the property has requested to pay the tax balance and then gift the property to the town.
- Article K, to add 189 Cross Road to the Sewer Service Area map. The article was submitted by the sewer commission. There is a residence at the property that is operating on a tight tank. It is unclear as to whether the lot is subject to be subdivided, or if an extension will better other properties or what the development ramifications may be. Peter Beardmore advised caution on this article, as there is considerable undeveloped, wooded land around the property.
- Article L, amendments to the Salary Administration Plan. The article would change the lifeguard position from grade 1 to grade 3, the position of Public Access Production Assistant to be added and assigned Grade 9, the position of Recreation Director to be added and assigned Grade 9, the position of Building Commissioner to be changed from grade 14 to grade 16, the position of Council on Aging Director to be changed from Grade 11 to Grade 14, and the position of Assistant Town Manager/HR Director to be added and assigned Grade 16. The only change that would reflect access to monies from the Salary Reserve Account would be the Council on Aging Director position.
- Article M, an amendment to bi-laws which would change the deadlines of submission of articles for the annual town meeting. The article would move the deadline date from a Saturday to the preceding Monday. This would allow more time for town committees to consider and make recommendations prior to the printing of the warrant.

- Article O, to accept Butterfly Lane. A hearing is scheduled with the Board of Selectmen on Tuesday October 15th. The Planning Board has released the subdivision bond and the Conservation Commission has signed off. There will be a financial impact, but the figures have not been finalized yet.
- Article P, a non-binding resolution to demolish the Old Primary School.
- Article Q, a home-rule petition to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for an additional retail liquor license for Lanni Orchards. This would sit outside the town's quota for licenses driven by population.
- Article R, a home-rule petition to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court for an additional retail liquor license (there is no current applicant). This would sit outside the town's quota for licenses driven by population.
- Finance Committee deliberation and recommendations
- Peter Beardmore moved to recommend Article A, Dave Passios Seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- Dave Passios moved to defer any recommendation on Article B to town meeting, Peter Beardmore seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- Peter Beardmore moved to recommend Article C, Dave Passios seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- Peter Beardmore moved to recommend approval of Article D, John Henshaw seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- John Henshaw moved to recommend approval of Article E, Jay Simeone seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- The Finance Committee agreed to defer recommendation on Article F.
- Peter Beardmore moved to recommend approval on Article G, Michelle Walton seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- John Henshaw moved to recommend approval on Article J, Peter Beardmore seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- David Passios moved to recommend to defer on Article K, Peter Beardmore seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- John Henshaw moved to recommend approval on Article L, Peter Beardmore seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- Peter Beardmore moved to defer on Article N, John Henshaw seconded. Unanimous approval.
- Michelle Walton moved to defer on Article O, John Henshaw seconded. Unanimous approval.
- Dave Passios moved to not make a recommendation on Article P, John Henshaw seconded. Approved 5-0-1 (Peter Beardmore abstained)
- John Henshaw moved to defer on Article Q, Jay Simeone seconded. Unanimous Approval.
- Dave Passios moved to defer on Article R, John Henshaw seconded. Unanimous Approval.

4. Town Manager Report

- Peter Beardmore asked about the status of the fuel tanks. The Town Manager reported that the town is in the process of getting quotes for the engineering portion.
- Peter Beardmore asked about the status of the Pleasant Street bridge replacement project. There was recently a kick-off meeting. It is not known if the money available is adequate for the project.

5. Next Meeting

- October 24, 2019, 7PM
- August 29, 2019, 6:30 symposium at LMHS auditorium

6. Adjournment

- John Henshaw motioned/ David Passios seconded; unanimous approval

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