

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 November 14, 2019 Meeting

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

1. Call to Order

- Terri Burchfield, Chair called the meeting to order at 7pm. This meeting is being recorded and broadcast over Lunenburg Public Access.

2. Public Comment

- Dave Passios attended the Capital Planning Committee Meeting and chatted with the Fire Chief. Their biggest challenge currently is repair cost. Trucks aren't lasting as long as they previous did.
- John Henshaw spoke with the Police Chief. There has been recent damage to squad cars by apprehended suspects.
- Peter Beardmore commented that he watched the Special Town Meeting on YouTube, and feels that he does not understand what is happening with storm water planning and how that is relating to requirements for new developments and new additional costs to the town. We should inquire with the Storm Water Task Force or DPW Director.
- Michelle Walton commented that the costs associated with annual maintenance on Butterfly Lane were difficult to obtain prior to town meeting.

3. Review of Special Town Meeting and Symposium

- John Henshaw was struck by how many additional positions were identified by the Superintendent of Schools, though he thought they were

well-justified. He was wondering how these costs may affect other financial commitments such as capital planning and public safety.

- Michelle Walton questioned as to whether the demographic growth and enrollment support the additional staffing. She's looking forward to a clearer picture from the Superintendent and Town Manager at their 5-year forecast in January.
- Discussion ensued about the existence and timing of strategic plans, and whether one should be considered separate from the budget process.
- Michelle Walton and Peter Beardmore agreed to meet to discuss the timing and level of coordination required from both the Town Manager and School Department.
- Peter Beardmore commented that he's hopeful that the Land Removal and Fill article will be re-considered and proposed again by the Planning Board.
- John Henshaw commented that he thinks there is opportunity to publish more commentary relating to the Finance Committee's rationale for its recommendations to town meeting voters. He thinks we may want to consider structing a checklist to determine what constitutes financial impact.
- Peter Beardmore commented that perhaps we should also consider communicating the level to which we were able to consider a particular article prior to making (or not making) a recommendation.
- John Henshaw volunteered to draft a checklist as described for consideration by the committee.
- Terri Burchfield reviewed the confusion relating to the changes in the personnel grade recommendations that happened just prior to town meeting.

4. Open items, goals, definitions, committee assignments

- Discussion on terms for budget process. There hasn't been progress on identifying these definitions. There is some question on the terms being used by the Town Manager. We need a meeting with the Town Manager to clarify the terms and meanings.
- We'd like a multi-year synopsis of free cash, and where the money originated from year-to-year. Peter Beardmore reported that his conversation with the Town Manager indicated that fluctuations in recent years are mostly attributed to unique circumstances in each year (such as tax title programs).
- The committee would still like a list from the Town Manager on non-municipal funding.
- Peter Beardmore suggested we should look at dashboards from the new software that is being used for budgeting.

- John Henshaw committed to continue working on a forecasting tool.
- Peter Beardmore commented that he is uneasy with the BOS entering into a collective bargaining agreement with no oversight, checks, or balances. There ought to be an 'agent of Town Meeting' representing the legislative interest in long-term financial commitments. He is conducting research on this.
- Dave Passios reported that the TCP building design committee will have an RFP out by 1 January for selecting architects. They are planning to re-engage all the parties who are requesting space. Next meeting will be the first Wednesday in December.
- Peter Beardmore reported that the School Committee met on 6 November and discussed the budget process following the symposium.
- John Henshaw reported the Capital Planning Committee met on 5 November and met with public safety departments, discussing the police cruiser replacement cycle the timing of the acquisition of the new fire truck. They will be meeting with the school department and DPW in subsequent meetings.

5. Minutes

- John Henshaw motioned to accept minutes from October 10, 2nd by Dave Passios. Unanimously approved.

6. Public Comment

- None

7. Next Meetings:

- December 5, 2019
- December 12, 2019

8. Adjournment

- Peter Beardmore moved to adjourn. Dave Passios 2nd. Unanimous approval at approximately 8:30 PM.

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