

Lunenburg Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Bilotta Meeting Room
Lunenburg Town Hall
April 24, 2025

Present Members: Chair Chris Menard, Clerk Tom Gray, Committee Member Tanya Dall, Committee Member Ana Lockwood, Committee Member Mike Rupp, Committee Member Jay Simeone

Absent Member: Vice Chair Jean Russell

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 7:00 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements

Chris Menard confirms this is the last Finance Committee meeting before the town meeting.

The Teen Center has asked if the Committee would field a team to compete at Are You Smarter than a 6th Grader. The team currently consists of Jean Russell and Tom Gray. 1 additional member is needed.

Tom Gray states there was supposed to be a Municipal Building Design Committee meeting yesterday but there was no quorum. The meeting will now take place on Monday at 5:30 or 6 via Zoom.

4. Public Comment

Jennifer Duffy, 684 Flat Hill Road, inquired about the town band warrant article. Chris Menard suggests reaching out to Mrs. Archambault. The Committee will investigate this further.

Dave Rodgers, 82 Highland Street, is concerned about the town taking money from free cash and from Chapter 70 to maintain roads. Dave Rodgers is looking for the town to provide some guidance about the school department budget situation. Tanya Dall confirms that they have hired a finance person for the schools. Ana Lockwood confirms there is no misappropriation of funds but feels the budget practices are very unclear and not transparent. Mike Rupp agrees and feels the town and school finances need to be looked into further.

John Bowen, 162 Highland Street, states that the Cemetery Commission had a meeting this morning. John Bowen feels that the Cemetery Commission has no idea

about any costs related to the cemeteries. He feels the Committee should be able to explain and show the needs of cemeteries, but they are unable.

5. Town Manager & Finance Director Reports

Chris Menard states that booklets have been mailed to residents for the upcoming town meeting. There are several hundred extras that will be available at the meeting.

The School Department will be selling a limited number of pre-bagged lunches at the town meeting.

6. New Business

a. Final Annual Town Meeting Discussions

Chris Menard was provided with the consent calendar from the Town Manager.

There was a motion to approve the consent calendar by Ana Lockwood, seconded by Tom Gray. Jay Simeone aye, Mike Rupp aye, Ana Lockwood aye, Tanya Dall aye, Tom Gray aye, Chris Menard aye.

Chris Menard created an interchangeable document with projections that has been saved on the SharePoint.

There was discussion about Article 8 and Article 9 on the capital plan. Article 8 was the originally presented article.

Article 9 is from the schools withdrawing the original capital plan and adding the primary school heat pump system with the remainder of money to come from other sources. The Committee previously voted on the article, but Chris Menard requested the Town Manager change the Finance Committees vote to deferred.

b. 2026 Budget Task Force Recommendations

The Select Board is looking to recharge the Budget Task Force over the summer to restart some work.

Ana Lockwood reviewed Budget Task Forces in other towns. They were very public, effective, and transparent.

There was discussion about having employees assigned to the Budget Task Force as well as the pros and cons. Tom Gray volunteers to be a liaison if nobody else is available.

c. Committee Assignments

The Chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee inquired about having a

liaison with the Finance Committee. Mike Rupp has expressed interest and will reach out to the Chair, Tim Willsmer.

Tom Gray will continue to be the liaison with the Municipal Design Committee and Chris Menard will continue to be the liaison with the Capital Planning Committee.

7. Old Business

a. FY26 Budget Discussions*

There was no discussion about this topic.

b. 2025 Budget Task Force Recommendations

The recommendations are in the SharePoint file. Some of the recommendations have already been completed. Chris Menard wants the Committee to review for discussion at upcoming meetings.

8. Minutes

There was a motion to approve the minutes of February 25, 2025, February 27, 2025, March 6, 2025, March 13, 2025, and March 20, 2025, by Tom Gray, seconded by Mike Rupp. Roll call vote. Jay Simeone aye, Mike Rupp aye, Ana Lockwood aye, Tanya Dall no, Tom Gray aye, Chris Menard aye.

Tanya Dall feels the minutes are not adequate and are missing information. The Committee is in agreement that they don't want a transcript of the meeting.

9. Committee Reports

Ana Lockwood has reached out to the school committee inquiring about obtaining specific information. After 10 days she didn't receive a response but later received a memo via email from Brian Lehtinen with none of the requested information. Ana Lockwood has again requested the data but feels as though the School Committee is not meeting their obligations under the charter as to their budget. Chris Menard agrees there should be full transparency associated with the funding source not just raised and appropriated to the Finance Committee. Tanya Dall wants to use a budget tool or a template for all departments to use for standardization.

Under Mass General Law the Committee is entitled to ask for and obtain information from departments.

10. Actions and Topics for Future Meetings

Chris Menard suggests that members brainstorm possible actions or topics to tackle over the summer.

The Committee anticipates completing a full year budget cycle going forward where budget requests are received much earlier.

11. Important Dates & Upcoming Meetings

- a. Town Meeting, May 3, 2025
- b. Fincom Meeting, May 8

12. Public Comment

Dave Passios, Jefferson NH, a former resident in Lunenburg, commented about the annual audit and the need to sort out some of the questionable practices. He disagrees with the annual audit that is required by statute that costs \$60,000. In the past it previously hasn't been effective in finding issues.

There were no comments from the Committee.

13. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Ana Lockwood, seconded by Tom Gray. Roll call vote. Jay Simeone aye, Mike Rupp aye, Ana Lockwood aye, Tanya Dall aye, Tom Gray aye, Chris Menard aye.

The meeting closed at 9:09 PM.