

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
School Committee Meeting Minutes
Meeting of the Tri-Board, July 8, 2025
Eagle House, 25 Memorial Drive

Note: References to the Tri-Board in the context of this meeting refer to Finance Committee, School Committee and Select Board

Select Board Members Present: Chair Caesar Nuzzolo, Clerk Renee Emkey, Member Brian Lehtinen, Member Glenn McLeod (Absent- Vice Chair Amada Moore)

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Anthony Sculimbrene, Vice Chairperson Laura Brzozoski, Secretary Mandy Gilman, Member Emily Young, Member George Yapp

Finance Committee Members Present: Chair Chris Menard, Vice Chair Jean Russell, Member Jay Simeone, Member Tanya Dall, Member Ana Lockwood (Absent- Clerk Tom Gray and Member Mike Rupp)

Tri-Board Moderator: Tim Murphy, Town Moderator

Also Present: Town Manager Jennifer Warren-Dyment, Superintendent Dr. Jodi Fortuna, Finance Director Ezequiel Ayala

TRI-BOARD CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Tim Murphy, who served as Moderator. He asked everyone to stand and address the flag for the Pledge of Allegiance.

After the Pledge, Mr. Murphy invited each Chair to officially open their respective meetings and introduce their members. Caesar Nuzzolo, chair of the Select Board, called their meeting to order at 7:01 PM and introduced Renee Emkey, Glenn McLeod and Brian Lehtinen. School Committee Chair Anthony Sculimbrene introduced Laura Brzozoski, Mandy Gilman, Emily Young, and George Yapp. Chris Menard, Chair of the Finance Committee, introduced members Ana Lockwood, Jean Russell, Tanya Dall, and Jay Simeone.

Mr. Murphy introduced himself as the facilitator for the meeting, mentioning that he had been asked by some members and the Town Manager to help moderate the discussion. He asked if anyone objected to his role, and no objections were raised.

I. NEW BUSINESS

Tri-Board Ground Rules Adoption

Mr. Murphy referred to the ground rules that had been sent out via email, noting that he preferred to call them "guiding principles". He mentioned that the Select Board had already voted to approve these rules. When asked if anyone wanted to discuss the guiding principles, no questions, comments, or concerns were raised. Mr. Murphy highlighted that one particularly important rule was the "hard stop" at 10 o'clock, which was agreed upon by all.

Discussions on Departmental Growth: *Presentation on Fourth Shift by Fire Chief Patrick Sullivan*

Fire Chief Patrick Sullivan gave a presentation on a proposal to add a fourth shift in the Fire Department. Chief Sullivan provided a historical overview of the Department's staffing, noting the transition over the decades from an on-call system to the current career staffing model. He explained the increasing call volume, particularly in medical calls, and the challenges faced in staffing, especially on Sundays. He explained the proposal of moving to a 4-shift cycle, changing the work week from 48 hours to 42 hours. This would add a fourth shift of 3 Firefighters, providing full-time coverage 7 days a week. He estimated the cost at \$464,369.26, which included the salaries for three new Firefighter/Paramedics, expected increases in overtime and holiday pay, and the creation of one new officer position for the new shift. Members asked clarifying questions relative to call volume, forced shifts, and overtime.

Discussions on consolidations, efficiencies, and timeline

Members engaged in a free-form, broad discussion on potential consolidations and efficiencies across Departments. Several ideas were proposed and discussed:

- **Facilities Department:** There was discussion about potentially combining the town and school facilities departments. While some saw potential for better efficiency and cost savings others expressed concerns about the different needs of schools versus town buildings. Members acknowledged that this proposal may not save in the operating budget, it may save in the long run for the town properties. Particular concerns were raised about prioritizing snow removal and the need to open safely open the schools during the winter months. Mr. Sculimbrenne explained that extending the school year due to winter closure beyond a certain date can be particularly costly to the district. Members showed support for consolidating facilities-related vendors for service contracts. Ms. Lockwood commented on the utility of having shared equipment so that there is not double the service and maintenance costs. Dr. Fortuna commented on the importance of having a nimble facilities team.
- **Legal Services:** Mr. Sculimbrenne suggested hiring an in-house lawyer, stating he believed it would yield savings. Ms. Warren-Dyment explained the fee structure for Town Counsel and explained the services provided by Counsel. Mr. Sculimbrenne explained the ways in which the schools used their law firm.
- **IT Services:** The group briefly discussed the possibility of combining IT services, though some members expressed reservations based on past experiences. The idea of leveraging combined purchasing power for both the town and schools was discussed, particularly for items like software licenses and equipment.
- **Trash Enterprise:** The group discussed how the trash and the recycling program operate, with half of the program being supported by taxation and the other half being supported by the bag fees. The Town Manager explained that shifting the entire program into an enterprise makes the program self-sustaining but is just a cost shifting to the residents.
- **Human Resources:** There was interest in exploring the consolidation of certain HR functions between the town and schools. There are certain consolidations already in place, such as benefits administration.
- **Health Insurance:** Health Insurance was briefly discussed, but it was stated the topic is on the agenda for the next meeting.
- **Procurement:** Mr. Ayala recommended exploring a joint procurement/purchasing department and shared finance staff, such as grant and contract manager.

The group agreed to continue exploring these ideas in future meetings, with Jennifer Warren-Dymont, the Town Manager, noting that some of these consolidations might not be feasible until future fiscal years due to the complexities involved.

Discussions on Departmental Growth:

The discussion on departmental growth primarily focused on the school department's needs. Mr. Sculimbrenne highlighted the importance of expanding the number of Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) to help keep special education students in-district, which is both beneficial for all students and more cost-effective for the town.

Dr. Jodi Fortuna, the new superintendent, mentioned the potential impact of losing certain federal grants (Title 2A, Title 4A, and Title 3) on the school budget. She also noted that hiring a competent business manager was a priority for improving fiscal management in the school department.

For other departments, there was mention of potentially making the Parks and Recreation director position full-time. The Fire Department's proposed fourth shift was also noted as a growth area.

Specific Requests from Tri-Board

Members discussed future meeting locations and whether there would be public comment at meetings. There was general consensus that once the Tri-Board is further along in the process, they would consider listening tours or feedback sessions and that public comment could be given during the meetings of the individual member boards.

Financial Management / Best Practices

Ms. Lockwood raised concerns about financial management practices, particularly regarding revolving accounts and budget presentations. She emphasized the need for all revolving accounts to have a budget, even if they are not town meeting revolving accounts, to prevent negative balances from going unnoticed.

The group discussed the need for standardized budget presentations across departments and the implementation of best financial practices. Ms. Warren-Dymont mentioned that the town had received grant funding to complete an update of financial best practices, which was currently in draft form.

Members agreed to work on prioritizing and implementing these best practices, with Ms. Lockwood and Ezequiel Ayala, the Finance Director, taking the lead on identifying high-priority practices to deploy urgently.

The group discussed the need for more transparent and comprehensive budget presentations, particularly from the school department. There were requests for:

- A more digestible budget format
- Inclusion of grant money in budget presentations
- Clear explanations for significant year-to-year changes in budget items
- A 3-5 year projection of staffing and budget needs for each department

Mr. Lehtinen emphasized the need for better communication between the Finance Committee and the superintendent in preparation for school budget presentations.

IMPORTANT DATES & UPCOMING MEETINGS

The dates for future meetings will be recirculated and having future meetings at Town Hall to allow for live broadcasting and increased transparency.

ADJOURN

At 9:32 PM, the chairs of each board moved to adjourn their respective meetings.

Motion to adjourn the Select Board meeting. Moved by: Clerk Emkey. Seconded by: Member Lehtinen. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn the School Committee meeting. Moved by: Chair Sculimbrene. Seconded by: Secretary Gilman. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting. Moved by: Member Lockwood. Seconded by: Member Dall. The motion passed unanimously.

Minute Approval

Minutes approved at the meeting of August 26, 2025

Select Board Motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 8, 2025. Moved by: Seconded by: The motion passed unanimously.

School Committee Motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 8, 2025. Moved by: Seconded by: The motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee Motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 8, 2025. Moved by: Seconded by: The motion passed unanimously.