

Lunenburg Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Bilotta Meeting Room
Lunenburg Town Hall
February 5, 2026

Present Members: Chair Chris Menard, Vice Chair Jean Russell, Clerk Tom Gray, Committee Member Ana Lockwood, Committee Member Mike Rupp, Committee Member Jay Simeone

Absent Member: Committee Member Tanya Dall

1. Call to Order

The meeting opened at 6:59 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements

Chris Menard requested Monty Tech come before the Committee and provide their presentation earlier than usual.

The Stormwater Task Force will be presenting a warrant article to establish a stormwater utility. They will also provide a presentation in front of the Finance Committee.

4. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

5. Town Manager & Finance Director Reports

Karen Barrett was introduced as the town's new Finance Director/Town Accountant. She will be providing a quarterly report to the Finance Committee beginning with FY 26 Q3. Additionally, the school Business Manager, Christopher McNamara, will be presenting quarterly reports to the Committee.

Town Manager confirms that interviews are ongoing to fill the Payroll and Benefits Coordinator position.

The schools have officially taken control of and will process their payroll starting in January.

Jennifer Warren Dymont spoke to the Division of Local Services regarding Schedule A reports. They were due to be submitted by February 13, but the town did receive an extension until February 28.

The Town Manager discussed free cash and the ongoing process to get it certified. Karen Brochu has reconciled the due to and due from accounts. There were several

errors that were encountered in this process. Next steps include reconciling free cash and receivables. Karen Brochu did note that this process has not been completed since the close out of FY24. The last step is to verify incumbrances and show activity on the funds for the current fiscal year.

The FY 27 budget cycle including health insurance, retirement assessment and school transportation have exceeded the revenue growth.

Town Manager and the finance department are continuing to work on establishing a baseline and confirmed a level service budget.

Department heads have contacted the Town Manager to request guidance regarding the Committee's expectations for their departmental presentations. Chris Menard previously requested a summary of key services, functions, and duties of the department, and organizational charts for each department. Chris Menard additionally suggested a report on grants and line-item transfers. The Committee also suggests obtaining the status of previous capital projects.

Chris Menard shared his frustration with the organizational deficiencies in the town. Jennifer Warren-Dyment believes that once the Zoom issue is fixed then this problem will be resolved.

6. Current Business

a. Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School Budgets

Superintendent Tom Brown and Business Manager Tammy Crockett provided their budget. Additionally, the Lunenburg representative Stephanie Quinn was also present.

In FY26 there was a total of 1403 students that attended Monty Tech and 97 of those are Lunenburg residents. A total of 18 communities contribute towards their budget. The required minimum Lunenburg is expected to contribute is \$1,378,183. The FY 27 foundation budget for Lunenburg is \$2,251,179.

There are many factors that contribute to the projected numbers including, DESE funds, special education district rates, total number of English learners, and low income.

Tammy Crockett states that DESE determines how much local communities contribute using their calculations and formula. The calculation includes half the income for town residents and half of the value of the property value in the town.

Ana Lockwood questioned why the transportation assessment raised so much. Tammy Crockett confirms it is higher because of the above net speeding component. This is due to the athletic complex renovation.

Ana Lockwood inquired about the lottery. Tom Brown states students need to fill out an application that is added to the lottery. The school also factors in the attendance of students. Chris Menard questions how many Lunenburg students were turned away. Tammy Crockett is unsure of the exact number.

Chris Menard inquires about the district agreement whether it's indefinite or if it can be renegotiated. Tom Brown believes the agreement is ongoing. He is also aware of some amendments, but they are very rare.

Chris Menard questions what if anything can be done to reduce the contribution that Lunenburg needs to pay. Tom Brown states there is potential to change but that requires a change to the formula. Tom Brown believes there needs to be more pressure on the representative for there to be a change.

b. Stormwater Task Force (Potential Joint Meeting)

The presentation was provided by Tim Willsmer, Jenny Pewtherer, John Beale and DPW Director Bill Bernard.

Stormwater utilities would operate as a dedicated enterprise fund and is supported by property assessments based on contribution of storm water to each of those properties that go into the municipal system. A stormwater utility can be used as a stable source of revenue that can be used to create the enterprise fund.

Stormwater is run off that comes from all properties after rain or melting snow. This run off picks up litter, bacteria, chemicals, sand and other debris. It then flows over land into the drainage system and into the bodies of water. The 3 major recreational lakes in town are Hickory Hills Lake, Shirley Lake and Lake Whalom.

Majority of funds will be used to remain in compliance with the MS4 permit. There are 6 minimum control measures that need to be implemented.

1. Public education and outreach
2. Public involvement and participation
3. Elicit discharge and elimination
4. Stormwater run-off controls
5. Post construction stormwater management

6. Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations

Additional requirements include catch basin cleaning, roadway sweeping, future requirements, stream restoration, new stormwater bmps, develop pesticide, herbicide and fertilizer program.

Currently, these requirements are being funded through the DPW operation budget. The total cost for this line item is \$110,000. This only covers public outreach, illicit discharge detection training, BMP inspections, engineering for some small projects.

There are multiple punishments and violations if all MS4 permit requirements aren't met.

In order to be in compliance there needs to be an additional \$496,793.

A project manager position would need to be implemented. Their duties would include billing, documentation, inspecting work of contractors and personnel, help develop contract specs for stormwater related projects.

Bill Berand suggests that a total of \$336,650 would be needed to start the utility. There is an engineering fee for the MS4 permit totaling \$25,000. There are 1,000 known catch basins and the estimated cleaning cost is \$81,250. There are 72 miles of mandatory roads that need to be swept twice a year. The estimated cost for roadway sweeping is \$230,400.

Ana Lockwood inquires about the machine that is needed to clean catch basins. Bill Bernard states it is a clamshell type machine. Aside from the initial cost there would also need to be an employee hired to operate.

The proposed residential single-family home will pay less than \$100 per year. All other properties will be on a tiered structure based on how much impervious area there is on the property.

Ana Lockwood believes it may be counterproductive to hire support staff and an engineer. The town has had an ongoing relationship with an engineering firm for the past 8 years.

Tom Gray questions if the DPW was able to afford the \$400,000 to get in compliance if they have the staffing capacity. Bill Bernard states the work would need to be put out to contract.

Jaurice Smith confirmed there are a lot of communities that set up a utility that do hire someone dedicated to stormwater work. More specifically, a storm water manager or stormwater engineer. In the near future, there will be a new permit that is much more extensive.

Chris Menard suggests having discussions with similar towns and look into regionalizing. More specifically sharing equipment between municipalities. Jaurice Smith has worked with other towns that have regional agreements to share equipment.

Chris Menard wants the task force to look into outsourcing.

Jay Simeone inquires what percentage the town is currently in compliance with. Bill Bernard suggests they may be 50% in compliance at the moment.

There was a motion to adjourn the Stormwater Task Force meeting by Jenny Pewtherer, seconded by John Beale.

c. Initial Town Manager's Capital Plan

There were 22 projects considered by the Capital Planning Committee for FY27 totaling \$3,267,208.

The highest ranking projects are as follows:

- Flat Hill Road bridge completing including engineering and construction costs - \$350,000.

- Replacement of police patrol cruiser - \$68,627

- Replacement of Engine 2 brush truck - \$335,000

- Primary school entry and driveway expansion design - \$25,000

- Building roof repair at the Public Safety building - \$494,500

- Replacement of front end loader with snow plow - \$259,000

The total cost for the above projects is \$1,532,127.

There was a discussion about the snow and ice deficit spending. As of January 30, there have been 18 snow/ice events. The budget was originally set at \$355,571.39 but to date the budget has exceeded \$523,418.07.

There will be a presentation on February 23 at 5PM at the Eagle House Adult Activity Center to discuss the potential fire department shift change.

Jennifer Warren-Dyment spoke to the Facilities Director, Chris Ruth about the TC Passios building. He estimated the yearly operating costs to keep this building open is \$120,000. There will need to be further discussion and an ultimate decision be made.

Regarding grant applications, Bill Bernard submitted a community culvert grant application in the amount of \$150,000 to support the design phase of Goodrich Street culvert over Easter Brook.

Jennifer Warren-Dyment submitted a community compact IT grant application with the assistance of Casey Chisholm. The grant would cover the full upgraded network at the adult activity center, new firewall switches, and new wifi access points.

d. Discussions on potential FY27 Prop 2 ½ Override

The warrant for Spring Town meeting is currently open now through March 16, 2026.

e. TriBoard discussions (Prior and Upcoming)

There was no discussion regarding this topic.

7. Old Business

There was no discussion about any old business.

8. Minutes (1/8/2026)

The minutes from January 8, 2026, were not reviewed.

9. Committee Assignments and Report

This topic was not discussed.

10. Actions and Topics for Future Meetings

There were no actions or topics to add to future agendas.

11. Important Dates & Upcoming Meetings

a. Tri-Board Meetings – February 9

b. Finance Committee – February 12

12. Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

13. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Ana Lockwood, seconded by Jay Simeone.

The meeting closed at 10:57 PM.