

LUNENBURG MUNICIPAL BUILDING DESIGN COMMITTEE



17 Main Street, P. O. Box 135
Lunenburg, MA 01462
978-582-4144 Fax 978-582-4148

Meeting Minutes July 28, 2026 7:00pm

Members Present: Brian Lehtinen, Tom Gray, David Blatt, Anthony Sculumbrine, Greg Roy, Laura Brzozoski, Matthew Brenner

Members absent: Kristina Masaitis

Town Employees: Chris Ruth, Town Manager

Community Guests: Kim Duffy, Renee Emkee, Glenn McLeod

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by David Blatt.

Lunenburg Municipal Building Design Committee (joint session with Select Board)

Municipal Building Design Committee portion opened at 7:05 PM by Chair David Blatt.

Joint briefing/workshop on energy programs and incentives (Mass Save / Mass programs) and focused discussion of TC Passios condition, uses, and next steps under the committee charge. Brooks House and municipal space program needs were discussed as related items.

Presentation: Mass Energy / Mass Save Programs (presenter: Dave)

- Overview: Summary of Mass Save / state program incentives and technical assistance for new construction and major renovations (focus on electrification, heat pumps, low energy use intensity targets, verification incentives, and technical assistance).
- Key program points:
 - Three incentive/technical-assistance paths for major renovations or new construction: (1) all-electric / net-zero pathway; (2) whole-building energy-intensity pathway (for buildings up to ~50,000 sq ft); (3) high-performance renovation pathway (less aggressive).
 - Incentives available for technical support, modeling, mid-design review, post-occupancy verification; sponsor (utility) support; potential incentives up to ~\$2.75–\$3.00/sq ft tiers and verification support (caps typically referenced at ~\$3M).
 - Heat-pump and electrification incentives: air-source, VRF, and ground-source incentives (amounts per ton noted); incentives for insulation, lighting controls, building envelope improvements, and equipment upgrades described.

- Mass program resources: project expeditors, vendor lists, product portfolio prioritization (PPP) and comprehensive building assessments (CBA) — technical assistance free/discounted via program; municipal energy manager program grants available (e.g., funding for a municipal energy manager position/shared regional position).
- Takeaway for committee: Engage utilities/PEX expeditors early; pursue CBAs for candidate municipal buildings; many municipal retrofit/new-construction projects will likely qualify as "major renovations" under program rules — technical assistance can offset analysis costs.

Transition to Workshop — Focus on TC Passios

- Chair outlined workshop plan: understand building condition, current status, options (renovate, partial rehab, demolish, new build), and align committee work with municipal program needs and community uses.
- Committee emphasized need to align on (a) municipal/town-office space requirements (square footage and program), (b) school needs (Turkey Hill), and (c) community uses (teen center, food pantry, senior uses).

Current Status & Facilities Report (presented by Chris Ruth, Facilities)

- Operational status:
 - Building mostly decommissioned after school department vacated; remaining active uses (as of update): food pantry (still using space), town file storage (a few classrooms used), and temporary election-related storage (moving to trailer). Gym and general public uses largely closed.
 - Recent storms and seasonal weather have increased leaks and deterioration in multiple sections.
- Major deficiencies (summary of issues reported):
 - Roof in failing condition; estimate to replace portions to stop ongoing water intrusion ~ \$1.1M–\$1.4M (estimate may have risen since estimate date).
 - Boilers: oversized, inefficient, system failures noted; state boiler inspection failure recently identified (repair costs cited in low thousands for immediate repair but larger systemic costs to make reliable).
 - HVAC and controls: antiquated controls (Windows XP), units unmaintained, mold/air-quality concerns in portions of building.
 - Electrical: degraded distribution, leaking transformers inside building, fuse/breaker issues.
 - Asbestos abatement and lead paint remediation required for any renovation — estimated in the high hundreds of thousands to ~\$800k–\$1M (remediation unavoidable and cost-increasing).
 - Sprinkler coverage incomplete; water intrusion and flooding in closed wings; interior structural/finish degradation; proprietary door systems with parts unavailable.
 - Building envelope, windows, and insulation outdated; many systems at near-failure condition.
- Financial/historical context:
 - Prior capital appropriations discussed: complex history of funds proposed/appropriated for roof repairs (\$300k appropriation from FY23 capital plan was double-counted/adjusted; no currently available appropriation for full roof replacement). Town meeting action corrected capital records; no

unrestricted funds currently reserved specifically for comprehensive TCP roof replacement.

- Past studies and cost estimates referenced (previous renovation/new-build cost estimates historically very high — tens of millions for full renovation or new construction).
- Immediate operational note: There is effectively 0% chance building will be usable this coming winter without immediate, substantial work (procurement timelines preclude quick fixes).

Committee Discussion — Programmatic Needs vs. Building Condition

- Recurrent themes:
 - Committee should define programmatic needs (town administrative offices: square footage, shared conference/common-area needs) before deciding whether to preserve/renovate/build new.
 - Community uses currently housed in TCP — teen center, food pantry, Eagle House (overlap municipal/community) — create programmatic gaps if TCP is removed; committee must consider these needs and transition plans.
 - Financial reality: substantial costs for remediation/renovation/demolition; demolition also carries significant cost (previous demolition of smaller building in 2023 cost \$775k; TCP demolition expected to be substantially more).
 - Historic planning context: Turkey Hill school project (MSBA timeline) and town capital priorities (master plan) strongly influence timing and feasibility of any TCP decision.
 - Several members (including Facilities Director and some committee/select board members) argued building is severely deteriorated and likely not worth renovation; land value and future flexibility favor demolition and new construction if/when funding permits.
 - Other members stressed the need to analyze options — partial demolition/retain gym and food pantry wing, renovate limited portions, or pursue redevelopment with private partners (e.g., senior housing with community access). They urged preparing cost comparisons for (a) full demolition, (b) partial demolition + targeted renovation, and (c) renovation/new build.
 - Consensus that more analysis and stakeholder engagement needed (Town Clerk for voting/storage needs; food pantry and teen center for community-use needs; school administration for Turkey Hill timing).
 - Repeated caution: any building work will trigger full code compliance and high remediation costs (asbestos, ADA, mechanical/electrical), so partial band-aids may be ineffective and expensive.
- No formal roll-call vote recorded specifically during the joint session on final disposition of TCP that night; however committee direction / consensus items to carry forward were established. (Committee planned to return to formal votes at a subsequent meeting after defined analysis steps.)
- Action items and near-term directives agreed by the Municipal Building Design Committee:
 1. Facilities (Chris Ruth) to prepare cost estimates and options for FY28 / next capital planning cycle:

- Prepare a cost estimate for roof replacement (approx. \$1.1M–\$1.4M ballpark) — if committee/Select Board intends to preserve building in short term; include asbestos remediation impacts and contingency.
- Prepare demolition cost estimates (including asbestos abatement and full demolition) and timing/options for demolition funding (capital article/town meeting or other funding mechanisms).
- Prepare estimated costs for partial preservation scenarios (e.g., gym/cafeteria/food pantry wing preservation/renovation) and rough ranges for mechanical/electrical replacement and code upgrades.
- Deliver these estimates in time for capital planning discussions and to inform Select Board direction (target timeframe: develop details between now and October, for capital planning and potential inclusion on next town meeting/capital cycle).

Committee to define municipal program needs and square-footage requirements:

- Committee to develop a consolidated list of municipal space needs (offices, records storage, vault, voting storage/operations, conference/meeting rooms, common areas) and to quantify required square footage (program-first approach).
- Committee members agreed to collect and consolidate department input (prior questionnaires and staff feedback referenced as helpful baseline). Committee to focus on needs vs. wants; prepare a working square-footage target to inform renovation vs. new-build feasibility.

Stakeholder engagement:

- Town Manager / Facilities to engage Town Clerk about elections, vault, and storage needs for municipal consideration.
- Engage community stakeholders (Food Pantry, Teen Center, Eagle House, Council on Aging) to document program needs and transition options if building were closed/demolished.

Tours and site visits:

- Committee agreed a mandatory site tour of TCP for committee members was appropriate; Select Board to schedule building tours the week of Aug 10 (or week after) — committee to participate; tours to include assessment of hazardous areas and necessary waivers/PPE as appropriate.

Committee scope / charge clarification:

- Committee reaffirmed that its charge allows analysis of TC Passios and other town-owned buildings and that municipal workspace, school uses, and community uses are within the committee's remit. Committee and Select Board agreed a comprehensive, prioritized approach to town facilities is necessary.

Communications / public process:

- Committee to plan public information sessions / outreach (not limited to Town Meeting) to present options and solicit community input on design permutations and funding appetite. Committee discussed non-binding public polls / info sessions as tools to test sentiment before formal appropriation votes.

Next meeting scheduling:

- Committee set next meeting date options: Members discussed meeting availability; consensus reached to schedule the committee's next meeting (in-person with Zoom option) for Monday, August 3 (time and location to be confirmed; planning for broader agenda: municipal square-footage needs, preliminary cost estimates, stakeholder input). (Committee chair to circulate formal meeting notice/agendas.)

Public comment:

- Kim Duffy (member of public, participant in master plan) commented in support of committee making timely decisions and offering that public education/engagement is important; referenced Mass Save presentation and suggested measured electrification strategies across multiple projects may be beneficial.

Adjournment

- Chair closed the Municipal Building Design Committee

Motion to Adjourn: Laura Brzozoski, seconded by Anthony Sculumbrine. Unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:00 PM.