Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Kate Burnham, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, January 8, 2025
6:30 – Town Hall - Hybrid

School Committee
Brian Lehtinen, Chair - present
Anthony Sculimbrene, Vice Chair - absent
Carol Archambault, Secretary - present
Peter Beardmore, Member - present
Laura Brzozoski, Member - present

Superintendent
Dr. Kate Burnham

Recording Secretary
Courtney Fuller

Guests: Dr. Susan Gilson – Director of Administration & Finance, Krista Diamantopoulos – LMS Faculty, Mr. GD Richard – Scholarship Donor

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In accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, please be advised that this meeting is being recorded and broadcast live over the Lunenburg Public Access channel, on Facebook Live on the Public Access Facebook page. (http://www.facebook.com/Lunenburg-Public-Access-Cable-157427270975305/) and will be uploaded to the Lunenburg Access YouTube after the meeting.

The agenda lists all the topics which may be discussed at the meeting and those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Votes may be taken as a result of these discussions. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by Open Meeting Law

1. **Call to Order by Brian Lehtinen at 6:30p.m.**

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

   Mr. Beardmore makes a motion to go out of order and move our student representative report prior to executive session, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion all in favor

3. **Student Representative Report** Districtwide there is no school on January 20th for Martin Luther King Jr day. The Primary and Turkey Hill have parent teacher conferences both online and in person on January 30. Both schools will have a half day that day. Monday, January 30 will be the start for winter activities. The middle school will be having a Red Carpet dance on Friday January 17, and will also mark the end of the quarter for both middle and high school. The enrollment for Washington DC 8th grade trip remains open until January 15th. The after school music program is starting up for the middle and high school. The National Honor Society is now offering peer tutoring.

4. **Executive Session –** *to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion* **Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to enter executive session at 6:34, Mr. Beardmore seconds the motion all approve via roll call vote. Return at 6:57**

5. **Public Comment – Mr. Beardmore** I would like to advise the committee that I was invited yesterday to participate on a Fitchburg Access TV show next week, it is called Fitchburg/Leominster Area Politics. It is hosted by a classmate of mine from Lunenburg. This will be my second time sitting in on the show, he asked me for some potential topics, and I suggested Chapter 70 funding as a topic. I have been advised that he invited a member of the Leominster School Committee to participate as well, it will taped next Wednesday, and I do not know when it will air.

6. **Chair's Report** I would like to wish everyone a Happy New year. On January 1st the Mass State Senate and Representatives were sworn in. I congratulated our legislators and also wanted to mention that Senate President Karen Spilka called out K through 2 funding, in her speech for reform as a priority, to tackle review this session, they need revisions and to re-examine the formula, and that there are communities struggling throughout Massachusetts. The regional school transportation and

special education needed to be reviewed. On Sunday President Biden signed HR 82 into law, The Social Security Fairness Act.

7. **Review & Approve Minutes**

   a. **Regular Session 12/4/24 Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion all approve**

8. **Review & Approve Warrants, Line Item Transfers, & Donations**
   a. **Warrants 12/16/24-12/19/24 $237,027.01**– Warrants have been signed

   b. **Donations** From Principal Squire **$30.30 from Box Tops**, will be used for field trips. There is a donation in the amount of **$13.51 for art supplies from the Cultural Council**, this was the balance of money allocated to them for the Artist in Residence program. A donation of $**1,560 from the PTO** for STEM and Reading materials. All of this money will be deposited in the gift account. **Mr. Beardmore makes a motion to accept the donations with gratitude, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion all approve.**

   c. **Line Item Transfers** None

9. **Superintendent's Report** An update on the search for Director of Facilities, we have interviewed a very well qualified candidate in the last week, however we anticipate that salary may be a barrier for this particular candidate. We are setting up interviews with other candidates as well. The MSBA is conducting statewide surveys of school buildings. We are gathering information that will be required. Part of the process will be participating in virtual interviews with them and then following those interviews they will conduct site visits to all of our schools as well as TCP, because ACE is located there. The visits should be completed in late January or early February. At the last meeting the MSBA is going to be accepting statements of interest on January 13th, the eligible accelerated repair program projects for the 2025 cycle include roofs, windows, doors, and heat pumps. Based on the money available for the door replacement project at Turkey Hill, we will not be able to fund replacement of all the doors at turkey hill and we can have a conversation at the next school committee meeting after Dr. Gilson and I have the opportunity to attend MSBA's webinar on the 21st, we may want to consider putting in a statement of interest to get the rest of those doors. An update on the 911 phone – upgrades are almost complete, the only thing remaining is to fully transition the phone system and that will happen on January 21st. There was a communication pushed out today regarding the PowerSchool Breach regarding what was accessed. Our IT Management Consultant is also looking into what was accessed. We will be sending out updated communication to the committee and families as soon as we have more information.

   Upcoming Dates

   January 22 School Committee Meeting Hybrid LMHS 6:30
   January 17 Term 2 ends
   January 20 Schools and School Offices are closed.
   January 30 Parent/Teacher conferences for Primary School and Turkey Hill
   January 30 Half day for only the Primary School and Turkey Hill
   Happy New Year to everyone

10. **New Business**
    Action
    a. **LHS Scholarship Donation** Mr. George Richard, a former alum of Lunenburg Public schools has donated $15,000 for a scholarship award to honor one of his former teachers. Mr. Vincent Joseph. This donation is to go to an athlete that is pursuing college. Vincent Joseph, grew up in Leominster and had no money, Bridgewater State picked him up for one semester and he turned that into four and turned it into a teaching degree. He was an incredible advisor to our class and a great teacher out of the Lunenburg School System **Ms. Archambault makes a motion to accept this generous donation with gratitude, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion, all approve.**
    b. **Transportation Contract** Dr. Gilson supplied the bid with Dee Bus, it is a 3 year contract with tentative increases over the 3 years, working with them for a bit more consistency on increases throughout the contract. **Mr. Beardmore makes a motion to authorized Dr. Gilson to negotiate and finalize this contract, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion, all approve.**

Discussion

c. **LMBDC Plan** Mr. Lehtinen reports they met on Monday and they met with the architect for the second time. Mr. Michael Ray Jeffries met with department heads. Dr. Burnham reports they met this morning and was showed the plans for the Ritter Building and how they are setting up for the Central Office Staff. I did meet with my team to discuss this the projected plan. Dr. Burnham shares what does not work with this plan and how revisions would need to be made. A discussion regarding staff at central office and what their needs would be. There was also discussion with the Special Ed Coordinator regarding perceptions and having the ACE program downstairs in the basement is not what DESE likes to see. DESE does not like to see clusters of programs together, or in winged areas, they want to make sure it is in an "equitable" area, this could potentially be an issue when they come out for an audit, and you are not given very much time to rectify the concern and really not an appeals process.

d. **2025-2026 School Calendar** The school committee was provided with a draft of the 25/26 school calendar for review

e. **Revolving accounts – School Choice and Facilities Revolving Accounts** Dr. Gilson shares a presentation for School choice funds and the Facilities revolving accounts. She shares that these accounts are following the same patterns as other revolving accounts, which is the money coming in is not enough to cover the money going out.

11. **Old Business**

Action

a. **Facilities and Grounds Report** Dr. Gilson shares an update on projects that have been bid out. We were discussing in December that the fire alarm system came in much higher than expected, based on new requirements. Updates on the doors and security for Turkey Hill. The Fire alarm should be completed by August 15. We have $300,000 for the door and security that will cover all the security and only 3 doors. **Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to accept the report, Mr. Beardmore seconds the motional approve.**

b. **Class Accounts – Class of 2005** Krista Diamantopoulos officially requests the money from the class of 2005 be moved into a separate account for future use for the class. **Ms. Archambault makes a motion to approve the transfer of funds, Mr. Beardmore seconds the motion, all approve.**

c. **Committee Appointment** Sick Bank appointments, Dr. Burnham shares we have received sick bank requests, it was one member of the committee, and prior we had Mr. Cassidy, however, there was conversation for Dr. Gilson, however she feels as HR she should remain neutral, but we do need to have a second person for this committee. Ms. Archambault is currently the school committee member. Mr. Lehtinen volunteers to be the second member. **Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to nominate Mr. Lehtinen to serve on the Sick Bank Committee, Mr. Beardmore seconds the motion, all approved.** We are also looking for a Superintendent Search Committee, we were notified today the Superintendent will be retiring at the end of the school year. Mr. Beardmore suggests we allow our internal staff the opportunity to apply and interview before outside applicants. If we do not choose a candidate, we can then move to an outside search. Ms. Archambault volunteers to be on the screening committee **Mr. Lehtinen makes a motion to appoint Carol Archambault as the Superintendent Subcommittee Search subcommittee, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion, all approve. Mr. Beardmore nominates Mr. Lehtinen as a second member to the committee, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion, all approve.**

Discussion

d. **Restructured Fee Proposals** Dr. Gilson and Mr. Bigelow share a presentation for a proposal for increases for athletic fees.

e. **Recommendations on Cell Phone Use** Mr. Santry shares some gathered information from his middle and high school groups. We do agree cell phones are a distraction, however also feel classrooms need to remain sacred. Zero tolerance is untenable, especially if it's an unfunded mandate. We do have procedures within our School Advisory Councils, it allows us within the building to develop our procedures and update annually. We would prefer that each school have a policy that goes into the handbook.

f. **School Committee Resolutions** A draft has been uploaded into the folder, any feedback and suggestions can be emailed to Mr. Lehtinen

12. **Reports Ms. Brzozoski** reports PACSAL met on January 2, we had Melanie Ray as a speaker, she is a special ed. advocate and spoke on how and why to get an advocate, she shared the different types of advocates and organizations that are available. We are going through a DESE audit and there will be parent surveys sent out.
Ms. Archambault reports Fincom met on 12/19, there was a Budget Task Force Presentation, and all documents dealing with Budget Task Force are available online. Munis upgrade will occur between January and March. They FY 24 year end free cash came in at 2.5 million, there will be firm budget dates. The next meeting is tomorrow evening, budget meetings start on February 13th, and they need two more members
Mr. Lehtinen reports the Lunenburg Municipal Design Committee met Monday, Greg Roy, one of our members also went to the select board meeting yesterday with Mr. Jeffries, we want to remind everyone that we are planning to revamp the inside and really "Wow" you when you walk into the building. We will meet again on the 22nd.

13. **Public Comment Ms. Brzozoski** encourages people to go to the Municipal Building Design meetings, they are very fun and interesting.

14. **Topics for Future Discussion**
    Club User Fees
    School Committee Goals

15. **Executive Session** to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel

16. **Adjournment Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to enter into executive session and adjourn immediately following at 9:55, Mr. Beardmore seconds the motion all approve via roll call vote**

Respectfully Submitted

Courtney Fuller