



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Kate Burnham, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, February 26, 2025
6:00 LMS Collaborative Room D 132- Hybrid

School Committee

Brian Lehtinen, Chair - Present
Anthony Sculimbrene, Vice Chair - Present
Carol Archambault, Secretary - Present
Peter Beardmore, Member - Present
Laura Brzozoski, Member - Present

Superintendent

Dr. Kate Burnham

Recording Secretary

Courtney Fuller

Guests: Tim Santry – LMHS Principal; Norman Yvon – THES Principal, Carla Squier – Primary School Principal, Dr. Deborah Bookis – Director of Teaching & Learning, Julianna Hanscom – Director of Special Services, Dr. Susan Gilson – Director of Administration & Finance, Amy Resnick – MTSS Specialist/Coach, Lisa Cantin – MTSS Specialist/Coach

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.

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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 Mr. Lehtinen at 6:02 p.m.**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Public Comment – Mary Foyle 985 Flat Hill Road,** I am here representing the LEA, obviously the proposed cuts are concerning to educators in the district and we will have more concrete details of those concerns in subsequent meetings. Today I am going to speak more about the institutional history and moving forward in regards to the budget. This is my 10th nonconsecutive year serving as union president. I have also spent 19 of my 23 years teaching here as a member of the LEA board. I can attest to the fact that most budget conversations in these past years have had talks of cuts. Your Lunenburg educations believe in the promise of a free and public education and what it offers for all students. A public school system is a nonprofit, often making fluctuations of the economy that much more impactful. Lack of overrides, a full 2 ½% tax creates an even larger budgeted gap. We cannot rely on the lack of raises, 1% and 2% to make up the budget shortfalls. The last time we faced significant cuts, we closed a building, removed key administrative positions, and had department and grade level cuts. I say this, not to encourage the same actions this time, but for institutional history, unfortunately we have been here before and if we as a school community, committee, and town continue making the same decisions we will continue to find ourselves in the same situation. Covid, despite all of its negative impacts, actually helped our current budget scenario at bay for a few years. If you watch meetings from prior years, I sound like a broken record, this shows that these budget woes are not anomalies, but rather perpetual and yes the Commonwealth could do more and needs reform in regards to school funding. Lunenburg also needs to take responsibility for its part in the issue. As a school committee, your staff implores you to determine, publicize, and advocate for the school system you believe that our students deserve. Decide if we will be a school system that offers the minimum for our students or one that is comprehensive, allowing for the development of the whole student. Become more of a mouthpiece for the town in its goals. Perhaps a 5 or 10 year plan with steps on how to actually achieve the goals. If history repeats itself, Lunenburg's budget woes will continue. It is clear that the town needs to make a decision; will it continue with taking similar actions and do what is needed to simply maintain a status quo or will it take steps to imagine a different future.

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On the behalf of educators and students I implore you as the school committee to consider what part you can and will play in what the future looks like for our students and schools.

Mr. Beardmore Good evening, this will be a little bit repetitive, but I told people that I was going to be locked on to this until it is resolved and I am still locked on. Tonight you are going to watch five people make gut wrenching decisions that we all hope will be the least bad options. I have been dreading tonight and our next meeting and our next meeting after that and this is the situations that we are in. A previous commenter though is not wrong, we talked about the structural situation and the challenges that we could potentially face, particularly in an inflationary situation. When I was on the finance committee in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and while I was on the school committee in 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 our legislators came and talked to us and told us that local aid is their top priority. Then last year they told us that they would come and meet with us following the election. They did not. Instead they held a meeting and invited our chair to the meeting, we have had an open invitation to our legislators all along. A few weeks ago Representative Scarsdale spoke at the Lunenburg Council on Aging event during the day and spoke on camera about education funding in Chapter 70, but hasn't spoken with us. In her comments that day she spoke about the Student Opportunity Act and anticipated a very long period of time that it would take to resolve the formulas in the SOA. There were things that could be done; such as supplemental budget actions that could serve as a Band-Aid until that time. Let me tell you folks, what we heard from her that day about supplemental budget action or what we heard today from the regional schools consortium or what we heard a couple of weeks ago from the Consortium of the MTA and the MASC amongst other organizations are not going to help us anytime soon. The best we will see- any resolution to any of those items is the summer and probably later, long after these drastic cuts are made. None of that was unanticipated, we talked about this with our legislators years ago and months ago and they have done nothing. They talked about getting towns of similar interest together, but they have proposed nothing. There is no legislation other than legislation that would form a special committee that will report out in the summer of 2027. I say that wishing it was a joke, but it not. That is the situation we are in. Our legislators went to our local newspaper to try to explain the situation again rather than coming to us. They went and talked to a reporter from the local newspaper with no counterpoint. I am here to tell you that we have been pouring money into Gateway School Districts for the last three years and need to do something to fix this. While Representative Kushmerek who has been incredibly silent on this issue, pointed out that while Fitchburg doesn't have school department issues, they have massive budget woes across their municipality. They in fact, have the contrast that in the last 23 years Lunenburg has passed an override. We have passed a debt exclusion for a fire station, a debt exclusion for a Primary School, a debt exclusion for the Middle High School, a debt exclusion for our roads and we have poured additional money every year into our pavement management program. We have invested massive amounts of money in Lunenburg in excess of \$60 million just in debt exclusions. Fitchburg has never passed an override or debt exclusion. Let that sink in ladies and gentlemen, and it was said explicitly by our MASC representative, when she came and talked to us a couple of years ago. You are being asked to back stop the states lack of support by passing more and more overrides. While your income tax dollars and your sales tax dollars go to gateway cities and I am not faulting them, I think we have to support them, but we are also being asked to reach into our pockets again. The only mechanism to offer level services in our local public schools is through overrides. That is the only mechanism that we have, it is an awful situation and our legislators lack transparency, they lack practicality, and they lack urgency on these topics. I know that they're hearing from people, they need to hear from us consistently and constantly until this issue is resolved. I will sit here in this very unenviable position for the next several weeks and make cuts, but I got to tell you every time I do I am thinking about the complete lack of support we are getting from our partners in education. When proposition 2 ½ was passed in 1980, it was passed in a much higher inflationary period then we are currently in, much higher, but it was passed on the promise that local aid would serve as a back stop, because in an inflationary period income taxes and sales taxes tend to go up, collections tend to go up and our state has gone in the opposite direction. Instead of 60% in local aid to support our schools we are at about 40% in comparison. We have to do better, we have to hold them accountable.

Ms. Brzozoski Well you stole some of mine, the first thing I want to say tonight is that if you are watching this meeting congratulations, you are on deck to run for school committee or select board. If you are watching on zoom or the recording later on YouTube congratulations you are an engaged and informed citizen who cares about education in Lunenburg. If you are paying attention to the issues we are facing that means you care about the interests of the students, the town, and the citizens who live here. I am asking you to run, this town is small, this town can feel a little insular and sometimes it feels like you might need an engraved invitation to be considered for town government role. That is not how this works, but if you thought it did, consider this your engraved invitation. I am asking you to get involved, we have two open seats coming up on the select board and we have two open seats coming up on the school committee. Select board typically does not have a lot parent's serve on it, while school committee often does, but I think diversity of views is important on both boards. Right now you can help make your corner of the world a better place, you can help your community in your town and if you are watching this, you are already engaged. If you want to email Brian or any of us, we would be more than happy to answer questions and talk about the time commitment. You don't have to be a

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good public speaker. Secondly, I was extremely disappointed after reading The Lunenburg Ledger on Friday, specifically to Representative Kushmerek's remarks about the last adjustment to chapter 70 funding taking a decade of crisis for the gateway cities. They had a decade of crisis to deal with before action was taken to fix it. I have been thinking about that comment all weekend long, I haven't stopped thinking about it since I read it on Friday; there was a decade of crisis - my kids don't have a decade, none of the kids in any of the Massachusetts towns dealing with this have a decade to wait for it to get fixed. I recommend people go out and seek out the article, and read it. I am happy that our elected officials understand the scope of the issue, I am happy that they have become educated on the issue and that they have sought out the information and they know a lot about the issue, but it is becoming clear we cannot expect immediate assistance from the state. It is just not something we can rely on. Yes I have emailed all this to my elected reps and have not gotten a response back, which is disappointing. As a parent this is heartbreaking. I am having a hard time taking off my parent hat because this does affect my own children, it affects everyone, all the students in Lunenburg. I don't have 10 years to wait for the state to get together and fix the funding issue. All I see is year after year coming back here and talking about the same thing, we sat here at this exact time last year saying this is going to happen again and I think it's going to happen again next year too. I am very very concerned. I am having a really hard time knowing that this is a repeating issue, that they know it is an issue that is not being fixed and I don't know what the town can do to fix it other than continuously raising property taxes and that is not something we can continue to do.

Ms. Archambault The town caucus is March 10 at 7 p.m. in our auditorium at the Middle High School. If you want to run for the select board or school committee, grab a friend to nominate you and come to the town caucus. You do not have to collect signatures, you don't have to do anything else if you show up at town caucus. The people there support you, if you like to be part of the something that is the way to do it.

Mr. Sculimbrene After watching other proceedings in the town government boards, there is a question about how did we get here and what happened. If you go back and watch the meetings that we had for school committee last year at this time and even before that we indicated that there was going to be budget crunch because of predictable and obvious causes. One of the things that I was asked when I was delivering the report for the budget task force was...why does the costs in schools keep going up and the reality is the cost in schools keep going up for two reasons. One is inflation if you look at inflation since 2020 we have experienced 18% inflation over that four year period. Our costs are going to go up at least that much because dollars are worth that much less. The other issue is unlike other service providers in town we have constitutional and legal mandates that we have to abide by. We have to provide a free appropriate public education, we cannot discriminate based on the amount of need or the cost of the education. When people move into town or come to town with children that are going to go to school we have to educate them and sometimes it cost more. Those are the two primary causes for why our budgets are constantly under this strain. I agree with what Peter and Laura said about the need to have action by our legislator but, I want to make sure that it is clear that this is not an either/or situation. We need to be doing both we need to fix this problem ourselves and we need to be regularly in contact with our legislators. I know Representative Kushmerek is sponsoring a bill to help address some of the concerns about transportation costs - that is not a fix for everything but I do think that there are actions that they could take and would be shorter term solutions than refiguring how Chapter 70 funding works. It is important to remember what Mary said, but also to think about this experience from your own personal life. I deal with a lot of municipalities in my day job. This pattern of boom or bust funding for municipalities is not something that is unusual, it is something that is normal, it is cyclical and when you are in a boom period it seems like everything is working. When you are in a bust period everybody is grumpy, all the belts are tightened, and it is unpleasant, but I want to make sure that this is part of a pattern and, this did not surprise us. We are not going to be able to address the problems we have got to understand how this happened. The fact that it repeatedly happens over and over again. That leads me to my last comment which is how do we get out of this problem. In the short term, we need to restructure how the school operates, and I think that's one of the things that is proposed in the budget. I think we need one more town override and finally looking at the numbers and how town generates revenue in Massachusetts. This town in particular needs to adopt the Community Protection Act. We have tried to do it multiple times before, it made its way to town meeting but lost. This is the only other lever of revenue generations that towns in Massachusetts have and when our tax rate is locked in place by prop 2 ½ we have to make up the funding gaps. The CPA offers us an opportunity to do that, but it also provides a state match for tax dollars. Renovating buildings in town or renovating Marshall Park those things will make us eligible for the CPA and will help get us more money. We have to move away from the notion that this is a crisis, we knew this was going to happen last year. We know what causes are, and the solutions aren't perfect but we need to take steps toward recognizing those solutions. The reality is we must solve the problem ourselves.

4. **Chair's Report** – I want to thank everyone for being here tonight, your engagement is crucial. As we navigate these challenging budget discussions. There will be a budget Q&A where the public can participate later on in the agenda. I also want to express my gratitude for the volunteers in the community, my fellow school committee members, and our dedicated staff and administrative team who are here to help guide us through these decisions. If this is your first

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meeting I hope you leave with a clear understanding of the budget situations and the factors that shape it. I want to provide an update on the significant financial challenges facing Lunenburg Public schools and over 200 other districts across Massachusetts. This is not a Lunenburg specific issue but a statewide crisis that requires legislative and budgetary solutions. The school committee wants to assure community that Lunenburg Public schools is committed to fiscal responsibility and transparency. Lunenburg has not mismanaged funds and our budget accurately reflects the district's needs. We recently negotiated a fair contract with our unions in good faith ensuring that we stay competitive with other towns. While attracting talent to our vacancies our staff are working to earn a living wage, just like other professionals in our community. Many of our teachers are our neighbors and we work together to ensure that Lunenburg remains an attractive place to work while maintaining financial sustainability. While we actively seek and receive grants, this will not solve this large budget shortfall. Many other districts are also competing for the same grants and these funds typically come with restrictions that limit their flexibility. The real issue is the inflationary measures and the states funding structure. Together we can focus on our advocacy efforts. The financial strain on public schools comes just 5 years after the overhaul of the state school funding formula through the Student Opportunity Act. While this law is set to increase school funding by over \$1.5 billion by 2027, the majority of those funds are being directed to about three dozen districts with the highest concentrations of students in poverty, with disabilities, or English Language Learners. Meanwhile many other districts including Lunenburg are receiving only modest increases that are not keeping up with rising costs. If you read the most recent news you will see districts like North Middlesex, North Andover, and Belchertown are grappling with multi-million dollar deficits forcing them to consider drastic measures such as cutting positions and even closing schools. Lunenburg is not immune to the pressures, rising costs of healthcare insurance, transportation and special education outpacing our revenue. It is becoming difficult to maintain the level of education our students deserve. Fixing these systematic funding problems will take time, but we are actively working with key coalitions to push for change. Organizations such as The Massachusetts Teachers Association, 211 Associations, and the United for our future Coalitions and 15 other partner organizations that are advocating for short-term and long-term legislative solutions to address the inequities in school funding. We encourage the community to contact legislators and elected officials, attend legislative meetings and coalition events. They need to hear from all the stakeholders. Several bills have been filed to provide relief for various types of districts including rural, vocational, minimal aid, and regional schools and also to increase chapter 70 inflation adjustments, improve special education funding, and support in district transportation. While not all of these bills directly impact Lunenburg, we need to continue to advocate for the ones that benefit our town as well as all districts. Legislative action takes time, and changing the chapter 70 funding formula or securing additional relieve requires through debate committee reviews and hearings before any bill can move forward in the state. However, we remain committed to advocating for fair funding for our schools and ensuring that Lunenburg students receive the high quality educations they deserve as we confront the reality of budget shortfalls. We welcome feedback and ideas from the community. It is also important to recognize the expertise of our administration and teachers who are making professional informed recommendations on how best to educate our students with the constraints we face. It is important to understand that securing additional revenue will require a multifaceted approach, this includes advocating for state level funding changes, while also working with town officials to explore local solutions. We must also continue to advocate for more local funding from the finance committee, select board, and town manager. This is not solely a school issue Lunenburg is facing, inflationary pressures in all departments, however, as the largest department in town, these financial challenges are particularly visible in the school budget. You will hear tonight that we are exploring expanding partnerships, revisit fees, and leveraging town resources as part of our efforts to increase revenue and minimize cuts. The school committee will make decisions that impact the education of Lunenburg students the least while also looking at increasing revenue, in an effort to decrease cuts. These are not easy decisions there will be many ideas presented, but not all will be accepted as some are not in the best interest of Lunenburg or the student success. A strong school system is a reflection of a strong town. As we have seen in other communities families may choose to move away if they feel their schools are not adequately funded and prospective home buyers often avoid purchasing in towns with struggling schools. Investing in education is not just about our students, it is about the long-term health and vitality of Lunenburg as a community. We appreciate the community's engagement and support as we navigate the difficult financial decisions together. Please continue to reach out with your thoughts, and lets work together to push for the legislative changes needed to secure the future for Lunenburg Public schools. For those interested in getting more involved, the Lunenburg Caucus is an opportunity to run for local offices, including school committee and select board. The Caucus will be held Monday, March 10th at 7 p.m. in the Lunenburg Middle High School. The town election is on May 17th.

5. **Student Representative's Report** I am here on behalf of the Student Council. The biggest concerns for the council today were around the budget. We are very worried about the cutting of upper level and high achieving classes. That will drive those kids out of Lunenburg. Students that can't take AP classes, won't be able to compete to get into the schools you want and students will end up leaving. The other big thing they are worried about was the rise in athletic fees, if they are a 2 or 3 sport athlete, it's likely some of them won't be able to keep up with rising fees and therefore will have to drop things they are passionate about.

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6. **Review & Approve Minutes**
 - a. **Regular Meeting 1/22, 1/29, & 2/5 Ms. Archambault makes a motion to approve the minutes for 1/22, 1/29, & 2/5, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion, all approve with Mr. Sculimbrene abstaining**
7. **Review & Approve Line Item Transfers, Warrants & Donations**
 - a. **Warrants 2/3/25 – 2/4/25 \$387,798.50 – Signed and approved**
 - b. **Line Item Transfers - \$9,200 from vehicle maintenance to contracted services to take care of HVAC on roof of LMHS. Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to approve line item transfer, Mr. Beardmore seconds the motion, all approve**
8. **Superintendent's Report** We went before the finance committee a week ago and requested funding for the \$60,000 unbudgeted additional cost for the 911 upgrades at Turkey Hill. Our next update is we are finally 911 compliant in all buildings.

Upcoming Reminders

March 5th School Committee meeting

March 6th PacSal meeting 6 pm zoom

March 6th Presenting Budget to Finance Committee

March 19th School Committee meeting

9. **Presentation – None**

10. New Business

Action

a. Increasing New & Existing Revenues

- I. **Athletics** A slideshow presentation of athletic user fees is presented to increase fee for high school up to \$325 and \$275 for Middle School. A 25% discount for siblings. Reduced fee for high school to \$50 and \$40 for middle school with a family cap of \$1500. Mr. Bigelow is asked to suggest a sport to cut **Ms. Archambault makes a motion to accept the increase, Mr. Sculimbrene seconds the motion all approve via roll call vote**
- II. **Student Activities** a proposal for an increase in fees, potential of having a base fee, and then additional fees based on clubs or activities students participate in. Committee recommends Dr. Gilson meet with students to discuss these possibility of increases in fees.
- III. **Transportation Bus Fee** A proposal is presented to charge families a fee per student that ride the bus in grades 7-12 and also K-6 students that are under 2 miles from the school. Committee would like a survey to go out to parents to get community feedback.
- IV. **Facilities** Proposal to increase fees by 50% **Mr. Beardmore makes a motion to accept this as proposed, Mr. Sculimbrene seconds the motion, all approve via roll call vote.**

Discussion

- b. **Joint meeting with Select Board 3/11** The select board chair reached out trying to get a joint meeting with the select board and school committee to try and discuss anything and everything. Committee agrees this is a good idea and will propose the March 11th date for the meeting
- c. **Protection of Students & Their Information** Lately there has been concern of access of personal information. We have had a recent breach however, we do not share any personal information or school records. That information is private.

11. Old Business

Discussion

- a. **FY26 Budget Update** Slides are posted and available on the website. Dr. Burnham shares the presentation and explains how budgets are developed. The administrators for the district explain their list of priorities to the committee.
- b. **FY26 Budget Q &A**

Q Laura Peria, 44 Whiting Street I have a kindergartener, who is enrolled at the Primary School and I also had two high school students already go through the Middle High. I have seen all the different levels. Everything said today was spot on and I appreciate all of your comments. One question I had was you were talking about these meta-analysis studies, which again I think there is a lot of different studies out there, do you know what the range of classroom size that was studied? I don't think obviously there is an end point that classroom size may cut off. I don't think anyone is going to argue that a

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classroom size of 5 is the same as 5. Do you know the actual range that was studied? **A.** Dr. Bookis responds A meta-analysis which looked at many studies and they pinpointed that the impact on achievement was from 13 to 17 students. For high school from that point up to 30 students and middle school up to 28 there showed there was no negative effects of learning based on the class size. **Q.** Can you clarify what the current proposed cuts to MTSS are? I noticed when I looked at the excel spreadsheet positions were grouped under Special Ed. **A.** Dr. Burnham answers all three positions were to be cut in the initial proposal. **Q.** Has physical classroom size been assessed for the increase potentially in students, and is it appropriate and safe? **A.** Ms. Squier answers that we can fit more kids in the classrooms, however the materials that would be out on display and available will be limited. Teachers will have to rearrange their classroom and be limited in their materials. **Q.** I saw a salary increase of \$71,000 for an HR Specialist, I am curious as to what that represents and especially if we are cutting jobs why need to further HR support and do we have multiple HR positions? **A.** Dr. Burnham shares that is not a new position, it was moved from a different part of the budget and no we do not have multiple positions **Q.** I noticed on the expense cuts that were presented tonight the additional cuts to PE and music programs in the lower levels, was that just materials? **A.** Yes

Laura Barooshian 389 Mulpus Road **Q.** Can you repeat where the slide deck is online **A.** It is under the school committee link and then the Meeting Minutes and Agendas. **Q.** On the line items noted for music positions that was materials correct? **A.** Yes that is materials not positions. **Q.** Some topics coming up were extra-large study halls, getting work credit, possible work credits, large PE classes were there other things considered but tabled? **A.** No we expect that there will be an increased number of kids in study halls, all classes will be larger. We are piloting a work a work based program, and will report back at the end of the school year. **Q.** I do like the idea of sponsorships, I think there are opportunities to have other funds coming in. What is the plan for a longer term, 3 or 5 year plans? **A.** I do not have a three to five year plan, it is going to come down to a shift in a funding mechanism, I can tell you that if this is what it is we will make cuts this year and we will be back here a year from now with likely more cuts.

Mr. Beardmore comments we are in a slightly different position then we were a year ago. There are actually more knowns today. A year ago we had several unsettled contracts that are now settled, including our contract with the LEA, those are big numbers and we can now project those costs out over the next two years. The numbers that are going to be projected are not good, there are going to be more gaps. We absolutely need to deal with and we need to have a very straight forward and realistic conversation with our partners on the select board, town manager, and or legislatures.

Vi-Anne Brown 118 Whiting Street I have been a resident here since 2008. I have two daughters in the school system. I am also the school social worker at the Primary School. In a town like Lunenburg that is small and highly interconnected, I do not think that our solution for the school is taking from another entity, because the all matter. They all contribute to the school, they all contribute to the public safety of the town, and they all contribute to the library, and all the other various organizations that we have. It all matters. I think the CPA money would impact the school, my question is: What has prevented the town from moving forward with this? **A** There have been two attempts, once it got to Town Meeting and lost, the other time the select board did not want to put it on the warrant. **(Comment)** We know learning cannot happen without a relationship. The relationship doesn't necessarily have to be with people, they can be with a specific subject matter or specific historian. Typically with younger children it is a relationship with a caregiver. I want everyone for a moment to think back on your most pivotal educational experiences. Did the building you were in matter, did anything about the grounds or the physical aspect about the environment matter? Likely not. What mattered? So Lunenburg, we are a community here and we actually get to make the decisions. This is not about the school committee, this is not about the select board, although they are important, it is about all of us. I would implore you, when you are making your decisions, whether to vote or make a public comment, to think about what mattered to you and your educational experience. I was also very fond of the sponsorship program, on thing that has been super impressive to me about this community is the willingness for people to just roll up their sleeves and do what needs to be done. The volunteers in this community are exceptional, from the pasta parties for athletics to the families opening their houses and garages for an entire month in the fall to let the students build floats. **Q** What are the limitations that currently exist in allowing parents or other volunteers to come in and support the school community? What would we need to do to get through the barriers? **A** We have a flyer on the website with different volunteer opportunities and we do not get a lot of volunteers. You don't typically get as many volunteers for grades 6-12 as you might for the Primary School or Turkey Hill. We also have limitations, as information is confidential and a non-employee would not be able to access to those kinds of things. Otherwise we would in need of cori checks, it would be best for them to reach out to the PTO.

Amy King 3 Gates Place **Q** There has been a lot of discussion about the athletics and the increase in the budget. We see many towns near us that have various advertising on their fields to help support the athletic budgets. I am wondering that has been discussed and if we are looking at that as a source of revenue. **A** Currently we have a school committee policy that prohibits this. The school committee will be reviewing this policy. **Q** I heard the conversation about increasing facilities fees, one concern I would have is are we also cutting facilities personnel but increasing those fees? We really need to make sure we are maintaining the facilities. I know we had a big volunteer group in the fall/late summer that came and cleaned up a lot of the facilities and fields. **A** None of the personnel cuts that would be connected to the use of the field or the gym are going to be impacted, they are not among the proposed cuts. **Q** You mentioned health insurance went up, is that with the current roster of personnel? **A** What is built into the budget is based on the January enrollment when we made cuts and pulled

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individuals out of the budget that were also taking health insurance. **Q** The large presentation on MTSS, have we looked at how other school districts are doing some of that? Are there other districts not using coaches and having good results? **A** The coach is not limited to MTSS in terms of direct service to students. The coach is a little bit of curriculum planning, prioritizing data, and differentiating instruction working directly with teachers. The MTSS structures that we have in place is a couple of licensed teachers working as intervention teachers, we have also had tutors. I think this is the standard practice that build into your system. You have staff to provide the direct service. The goal for the coaches is to be working with the teachers to strengthen the instruction that happens every single day. If we can strengthen the instruction that is going on every single day in every single class, you have kids learning and you are not having as many kids that are having difficulty accessing the learning and therefore, in need of additional supports.

Mr. Beardmore makes a motion to close the public portion of the Q&A, Mr. Sculimbrene seconds the motion all approve

Mr. Lehtinen shares his list of priorities for the committee to discuss and provide feedback, Director of Facilities and Grounds, it is recommended that Dr. Burnham hire the candidate she has interviewed. A discussion about sharing resources with North Middlesex, which was not supported by the committee. Committee does not support eliminating the Director of Teaching and Learning position, reducing Director of Special Services to part time or eliminating all assistant principals or eliminating Athletic Director. Committee tables the idea of eliminating Director of Finance and Administration and add an accountant position and HR Consulting Contract Support. Committee supports eliminating one of the assistant principals at the Middle High School and the part time athletics secretary, making the IT tech to a part time position. Committee goes through the expense cut proposal and discusses options.

c. Superintendent Search Committee discusses timeline and ultimately decide to proceed as listed.

12. Reports Tabled for the next meeting

13. Public Comment Laura Peria Whiting Street, We started this meeting talking about priorities being classroom learning, instructional learning. I would urge the committee and the superintendent to keep that in mind as you are looking at the budget. I think I heard Tony say a few times, we are not cutting enough and yet these are all really hard decisions and nobody wants to cut athletics, nobody wants to raise fees, nobody wants to cut transportation, but I would just ask that we try to keep in mind serving the most students, our most vulnerable students, serving that early education that we talked about being so critical as priority. That is not going to make everyone happy. I would really urge people to look at those transportation fees, I think that we went over a little quickly. I agree with Laura though saying that may target certain groups more, but we also don't want to raise fees. I'm imploring the group to really think about our priorities. It bothers me that I see a disproportionate cut at the K-6 levels in the classroom with the MTSS tutors and the teachers. I would love to see that be a priority for restoring those positions. I also appreciate looking at the admin roles, I think that is hugely helpful.

Kara Harunkiewicz, 165 Gilcrest Street, I am speaking on behalf of myself. As far as the student activities is concerned, when I looked at the list, I personally participate in 6 of them. That would cost \$450 which is more than any of the athletic fees were raised. Two of them are directly related to music, which is also another huge expense. I am trying to raise the awareness, even though some things that we are providing are seen as they don't anything. Any student in band has spent an insane amount of money to be in the band. Instruments cost a lot, you need reeds and that can cost \$50 a semester. It is not like those kids aren't paying anything, they just aren't paying anything directly to the school.

Mr. Beardmore It has been a hard night, I need to say something that is even harder. Tomorrow morning I will be informing the town clerk and the select board that I am resigning from the school committee effective May 16th. I spoke with the town clerk yesterday and the mechanics of this work such that, if I make my resignation known within a certain amount of time prior to the election, the position can be made available on the ballot at the next election. My personal circumstances have changed rather dramatically since I first joined the school committee. I have gotten married, my family has expanded quite a bit. My family responsibilities have changed and I have recently taken on a new job. That job is taking up a lot more of my time than my previous job. I need to manage my responsibilities better and as a result of those changes, I don't feel like I am personally able to put everything that I want to into the school committee. I have certainly felt that over the course of the last several weeks and certainly through the budget season, I have done a fraction this year with respect to the budget that I did last year and the year before that. I think I personally, my family, my colleagues and our school department deserve a member that can put more into this than I am currently able to. So we will have three vacancies on the school committee in May. I think that we also need to look over the schedule and see what needs to be done over the course of the next few months. I don't intend to retire from the public service, I will be back, but I do need to take a break it will be a little but I don't know how long.

*1025 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, Massachusetts 01462
978 582-4100 ~ fax 978 582-4103*

14. Topics for Future discussion

15. Adjournment Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to adjourn at 10:43 pm, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion, all approve

Respectfully Submitted

Courtney Fuller