



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Kate Burnham, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, March 12, 2025
LHMS Collaborative Room #D132
6:30 – Hybrid

School Committee

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

Superintendent

Dr. Kate Burnham

Recording Secretary

Courtney Fuller

Guests:

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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 at 6:30 pm by Mr. Lehtinen

- 2. Public Comment - Casey McDonnell 1024 Massachusetts** I want to start off tonight by saying I know it's been a lot, there's a lot of people that do not envy the position that this board is in. It's definitely easier being on this side whether we're coming at it with our own biases or whether we're not. It's much easier being here nitpicking the decisions and the actions that the board is getting. I understand that myself I'm a teacher in the high school I teach History and ELA. I'm also very proud to be the head coach of the football program that has been brought up several times by this board in the last couple meetings. I put all that aside, I have my own thoughts, I have my own concerns about things that have been said, I put that off to the side simply to mention we all want the same thing we all want the best quality education that we can provide our kids. In order to do that we need to make sure that we are giving them the best experience we can in the school as well as the extra-curricular that run parallel to those goals, we also need to make sure that kids can feel like they are excited and engaged about what's going on in their community and with what's happening. I know for myself me and my fiancé we're so excited to eventually have kids that we raise in the school system that become "Lunenburgers" of their own. I know from the small sample size that I have the privilege to work with that a lot of the families that we are working with are families that are generations worth of "Lunenburgers" that have raised their families in this town that are now having kids and families of their own. This town that's a long line of pride and commitment to this community and I know there's a lot going on right now between figuring out this budget. The fact that several members of this board will not be on this board this time next year I understand that I'm simply here tonight to ask that when the dust settles somewhat that we take a moment to re-evaluate the accessibility of information and the efficiency of information that this board and this committee works with. I will tell you from last meeting there was a large group of kids that over overwhelmed town hall and I'll tell you from what I've gathered from the kids that I have the privilege to work with on a daily basis a lot of them were very discouraged with the last meeting. For the ones that had the courage to speak a lot of them felt like they had not been heard, others that were there that didn't talk also felt like nothing was done and that things kept getting tabled and pushed off. As much as we focus on the quality of education for these kids we also need to realize that this is the next generation of Lunenburg residents that will be contributing to this community and I really think we need to reevaluate our ability to access that information. Make it efficient and make sure that kids want to be excited and engaged in what they're doing. You saw signs of it last week,

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kids are willing to step up when they need to. I think we need to meet them head on and we need to give them a chance to continue to maintain their excitement and engagement in being a part of the community. I know for me I'm a little curious as to why the meetings bounce back and forth between in here and going to town hall. Both of which has felt very much like a very small venue for what we're trying to do here. I would love for somebody to be able to summarize what took place last night with the select board just for people that maybe are tuning in for this one or here in person that don't know about what was talked about last night between yourselves and the select board which I feel like is pertinent information for what's going to get discussed tonight

Owen Snyder 985 Flat Hill Road I am a member of the high school band and I have been in band and music programs ever since I was in fifth grade. Now in the budget the fifth grade band is being cut now. I know that there are between 30 and 40 kids in fifth grade band this year and that's a lot of kids especially compared to the class sizes. That's a huge percentage of kids that are going to be missing out on this huge opportunity I know that it is a huge opportunity to get into music and to be able to be part of something that can help with many different skills that you can use in your high school career. I'd also like to talk about how with marching band and High School band being compared to Athletics in the budget. The band transportation is being cut by 100% well the athletic transportation is being increased by 231.38%. I'm not in any way trying to cut Athletics or speak to try to cut Athletics all I want is equitable treatment between all extracurricular here at Lunenburg

Chris Sullivan, 108 Highland Street first of all I just want to say I appreciate all the time you guys have all put in so far and continue to put in tonight. I did want to speak here tonight to share some continued thoughts regarding the athletic cuts. I'll preface this by saying that I'm a parent of two student athletes - girl soccer, indoor, and outdoor track, golf team, and the ski team. I'm also a very active in sports here. At the school committee meeting on February 26th Dr Gilson referenced having a breakdown of cost for sports by season and individual cost by sport. I requested this information as a matter of public record and assumed it was fairly easily accessible. As she was reading that data off the laptop at that meeting and referenced it was information that was received from the athletic director. I was told today by Dr Burnham that this data is incomplete and not ready to be shared publicly which leads me to believe that the school committee will also be making decisions this evening that will impact student athletes futures without having the full picture. Also speaking based on facts alone, that I know tonight, and also don't have which also means that I don't have the full picture for each sport because of this lack of information regarding cost to particular athletic programs. I can see how it might be easier to look at a less popular sport or a team with fewer athletes and say let's shut that program down. Or a program that does not generate revenue for the school. I'm hearing rumblings that perhaps the Lunenburg ski team is on the block tonight. This is a partnership with several area schools including Leominster, Ayer Shirley and Quabbin, this team uses zero transportation budget, zero equipment budget, no referee fees, the extent of the expenses are fees to two mountains for training and racing. I know the total cost of those bills is \$1,440 for this year. Outside of a coach's stipend that is the total expense, I expect that we're sharing these costs with other schools who are part of this program. I don't know if that's the case or not I couldn't get clarity on it. Perhaps maybe we just discovered a cost savings for this particular program. The athletes buy their season passes, buy all their equipment, there's no Lunenburg ski jackets or helmets, they even buy their own race bibs. Student athletes have made choices sometimes pushing themselves beyond their comfort zones to try new things and participate in a sport to build a resume for college, demonstrating hard work, commitment, and dedication. Before you look at completely removing the sport from our program, please consider that you are taking away that opportunity in its entirety. Please look at how you can equitably share the burden that we are all facing across all sports. Allowing all students to live the path that they have chosen. We keep hearing how transportation is a huge factor, I still recommend this is a place where we should start looking -how much is a bus, we've heard about this, but how much is a bus that goes to an event, most of the students ride home with their parents. How much do it cost to send a football team to Martha's Vineyard, I assume a soccer bus to Cohasset isn't cheap. I think the same thing should be kept this in mind when you look at other extracurricular as well. You just heard Owen speak about students who choose to participate in anything, should be supported and encouraged in any way that we can, as best as we can. No student should have something ripped away from them entirely we need to think about the social and emotional impact on the wellbeing of these students as we continue to create and foster opportunities for all students to find their path as best we can.

Laura Barooshian, 389 Mulpus Road after being at the meeting last night understanding that there is a there will be cuts here today to urge the committee to use equity and fairness. We're raising well-rounded students', well-rounded athletes, musicians, and chorus. We just have to look at all programs. Everyone I think needs to share in this, you know in what we're trying to do here and trying to get something where we can continue all of the programs and not single one out. You know one music program, one ski program one whatever it might be. But just really looking at how we can look at cuts where they're significant and where they're equitable

Shoshana Mule, 139 Cove I will try to be brief because I know you guys have a very long night and a lot of big decisions to make. Having been through this process with you all last year I have a view of perspective. It's really hard when you're in it and I feel very strongly about all of the activities that mean so much to these kids, and I wholeheartedly understand the mental health benefits to kids from whatever activity they participate in. Unfortunately the situation that the school is in, fiscally right now, is a lot worse than last year and so that leaves various interested parties fighting over

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scraps. I guess my main message is that whether or not there's a request for an override this year or next year the school budget needs to speak to the fact that the in classroom instruction is the most important thing. So that means keeping paraprofessionals and keeping classroom teachers. I know that you are going to revisit the administrative positions, some of them that have very high salaries, and that's important I would not want any kids to miss out on sports, music, or art etc. However you're going to hear from a lot of other parents tonight too, but I just want to stress that this budget needs to put Reading, Writing, and Math as the most important for this year because of the situation. Thank you all very much for all of your work, I really appreciate you

Ms. Brzozoski I wanted to ask everybody if they could close their eyes and think about when they were kids, when they were students at school and if they could remember as a student a time when they were nervous about school budget issues, if that was an issue they faced as kids, if they spent time being nervous about programs being cut, losing teachers they cared about. Or if they ever went to a school, did any of you guys ever go to school committing meetings when you were younger to fight for programs, was that like a thing? I know some of you did, some of you were born doing this. I don't think that's a normal childhood thing to worry about. I'm a little upset it's the childhood we're giving our kids. I'm not happy this is what we're doing to Lunenburg students. These are kids that were hit by Covid. The fifth graders were in kindergarten when Covid hit they learned to read and write over a computer. They have the handwriting to prove it, they returned to masking, they returned to six feet distancing, they missed out on playdates, they missed out on field trips, they missed out on school concerts, and a normal childhood when they were very young. These are kids who are in school right now, they had that, and now we are cutting things from them. And while we're talking about things like cutting this year and delaying things and waiting for the town to get their act together. We are saying well you can keep or cut, we can do without for a little bit these are kids have already suffered and now we're doing this to them again. I don't think it's fair. I'm frustrated - is this the best that we can do for our kids? Is this is the best that Lunenburg can offer our kids? We're at a point where we're making cuts that are going to hurt, and they're going to affect kids, and people are going to be unhappy because we're at the point where we have to remind ourselves that we have to focus on our core mission of educating the kids. That extracurricular come with the word "extra" in front of it because we're at that point where we have to take very hard looks at everything in the budget. I'm very frustrated that we're at this point. I'm really frustrated. Frustrated that we've put kids in this situation of having to fight for what's important for them when we should be doing it. I'm frustrated the town has put kids in this situation. I'm frustrated the taxpayers have put kids in this situation.

Mr. Beardmore I've got a few comments tonight. First I'd like to address the point that was made by Mr. Snyder a little bit earlier about the transportation budget. Sometimes when you read lines from left to right in a budget they don't necessarily reflect the reality of the situation. The cost of athletic transportation is not up 200%. The way we are accounting for athletic transportation has been corrected from past practice that was done incorrectly. It was not transparent therefore, you are seeing a number that is substantially higher than what was carried in previous years, but is not necessarily that substantially higher than what has been actually paid in previous years. So I apologize that sometimes these things are illustrated in a way that don't necessarily reflect reality. Second comment for those of you on the zoom please mute if you're not speaking thank you. Third comment, I grew up in this, I think everybody knows, Laura just said my mom was on the school committee for six years while I was a kid in Lunenburg schools. This is in my bones and Lunenburg as was discussed last week has been through feast and famine over the years. We had massive budget cuts when I was a kid programs cut when I was a kid. The walker radius which we don't have any more was increased dramatically when I was a kid and then retracted again. As I said last week this is an ugly business, it's a messy business and while I regret that some people don't like what they see, you are seeing a microcosm of the reality that exists here, and in businesses, and in state government, and federal government. The business of government is a messy ugly business, I wish it could be cleaner, I wish it could be easier. We have to bring five people informed by a variety and a lot of different data some of which is unfortunately incomplete to a conclusion. We all come from very different perspectives and that is a really hard thing to do and on top of that we have to do it in public. There are three or four exemptions that you're allowed to do executive session and a budget discussion with the exception of the discussion relating to a security item has to be done in public. I have a kid who graduated from Lunenburg 5 years ago that kid was not an athlete, they were a band student and a theater student and a straight A academic student. I have another student, who needed extra help in the Primary School grades and was extremely well served in Lunenburg, and is not an athlete, he's an athlete and a very good student. I've seen the full spectrum of what it is, and I've lived it by the way, but I've also seen that full spectrum of what it is to be a student in Lunenburg. The ups and the downs, the services that are needed, the benefits of living in a small community and the activities that define our character and who we are. I think that is all important and we have to find a way to find a balance and ensure that we are protecting and preserving what it is to grow up in Lunenburg, and be a part of this community. These are issues that I'm struggling with, I've come around on a lot of these issues over the course of the last several weeks and you're going to hear tonight that I have changed my mind on an issue or two as well. Just since last week that's what happens. This is hard work. Tony and I got into an argument about this sitting here two months ago, about how much work this was going to be, here we are. I'm sorry that people don't like it, I'm sorry that I get blamed via email, and on social media on a pretty regular basis. This is what we signed up to do it's

not pleasant frankly it's quite unpleasant right now, but we have to do the job and we're not going to make everybody happy with decision.

Ms. Archambault First I want to thank all the parents, all the families, all the kids, the staff members are wonderful, office administration and building administration for the time, the effort, and the concern put in to what we're doing tonight. This is very difficult and as Mr. Beardmore has said not everybody's going to be happy and I'm going to say none of us are happy. This is not going to work to anybody's advantage. We are, as Peter said, a couple weeks ago, trying to make the least bad decision. They're all bad decisions somebody's going to get slighted or hurt or their experience is not going to be what it should be because of what we do tonight. What we are hoping to do tonight is to maintain as much as we can of the character of the school district. We have listened and read every single letter someone has written. Mr. Lehtinen replies because that is our protocol, but we have all read every word he passes them right on to us. If you've written to him your thoughts are with us as we look at everything. We have people saying you know keep all the academic stuff don't worry about extracurricular. We have people saying extracurricular need to be taken care of first. I was a music teacher, my husband was a music teacher in the district for 28 years. I understand extracurricular are important, everything is important and this is why it is very difficult. I can't argue with anything anybody said. I want to thank people for being involved and want to remind people about the caucus, there is a one year school committee membership still available if you wish to run. You go to the town hall you take out papers you get 50 signatures and I believe they have to be returned on the 20th.

Mr. Lehtinen we did have a question about last night, so the school committee had a joint meeting with the select board, you can watch it we also posted it on Facebook it's on YouTube as well. For the first hour the school committee and the select board sat down we discussed the budget and potential overrides. The consensus by the school committee was that we were not interested in an override this year. It makes more sense to wait and do a full town override, instead of doing an override this year and still needing one next year. Also if you watch the video, throughout the whole select board meeting they talk about concerns of the towns finances.

Dr. Burnham Mr. Sullivan made a comment that he was looking for the athletic program summary by sport. I told him that it wasn't in a cleaned up version for me to post yet, but it was posted before the meeting this evening. It is available for everybody on the district web page, go to the school committee link, and then go to the meetings and agendas link and then it's posted under tonight's meeting

3. Old Business

a. FY26 Superintendent's Recommended Budget Dr. Burnham shares the one page summary that was shown at the last meeting and at the select board meeting. A list of the proposed cuts along with changes in the budget expense lines. This is also available on the district website.

Ms Brzozoski makes a motion to table the cut to the ski team and give the athletic director an opportunity to negotiate terms with co-op schools, Mr. Lehtinen seconds the motion all approve

Ms. Archambault makes a motion to accept the superintendent's proposal to restructure of the Business Finance Director Position, Mr. Lehtinen seconds the motion all approve

Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to vote on bus fees and send to policy subcommittee for setting rates and language of safety of travel. The rates would be \$180 for 1 child, \$270 for 2 kids or more and a \$50 reduced fee, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion. Motion passes 4:1 with Ms. Brzozoski opposing.

Ms. Archambault makes a motion to accept the superintendents recommended budget with the change of the ski team continuation to be funded by the bus fee \$25,787,474 and 3.6% Mr. Beardmore seconds the motion all approve.

4. Public Comment

Mary Foyle, 985 Flat Hill Road I am struggling as a high school teacher because I think as Mr. Santry said we have taken hits, and I know my department took a hit last year. This is actually the same point I made last time we brought in a busing fee. I do have concerns about economically disadvantaged families and some of those families who are on the cusp, who don't fall under free and reduced lunch. I think it puts an unfair burden on those who may be more disadvantaged if we have a bus fee that they have to pay but nothing happens with our parking fee. I know the parking fee goes to the town and not the school, I think that's something else it's two separate issues and that needs to be a change. I know this last time I brought this up for discussion with building leadership, not Mr. Santry, with building leadership at the time, I was told that having a car is expensive. I do understand having a car is expensive but if you're in a family who can somehow afford a car then you can afford a car. My own son will probably be a junior and maybe

driving next year as well, I also don't know what our parking situation is and if we can even absorb more people having cars and not riding the bus if that's an option that people are looking at. I think it's just worth a discussion point.

Jim Broden 24 Autumn Road 19 years ago I created the ski team and I asked only to use the Lunenburg name. The team was completely self-funded. What I think happened with this \$1,000 bill is that after four years we co-oped with Leominster, the Leominster athletic director and the school gave me the money and I ran the budget. When we get to our expenses from Wachusett Mountain and Nashoba Valley we had the athletic fee and then we looked at how much we owed and we divided it by the number of people which automatically adjusted. If there were 10 people from Leominster and 10 from Lunenburg we adjusted that fee every year. After I think 14 years, the first 12 years I coached the team for free I wanted to do it. After 12 years Jay Conroy took over as the head coach I became the assistant coach because my kids had all gone through. At 14 years the school decided they wanted to handle the budget, I think what happened is when we went over the athletic fees there wasn't a kickback to the team to say hey you got to collect more money to make it balance out even. So all of the parents when we have an opening meeting we explain to them this skiing - ski racing is not an inexpensive sport. We have never had any transportation. I think for two years we had a bus that brought the kids to the ski area but the kids went home on their own. In 19 years no kid has ever missed a race or practice because they couldn't get a ride so basically what we did is we went with the approach all the parents have raised their kids through youth sports and paid for everything. Once you get to high school it's a different story. We went with the approach I don't need the school's money because people are used to paying for this stuff. I just talked with the athletic director and I think what happened is they forgot to say hey here's how much extra money you owe and if we go back to that I think in a minimum you can save \$7,000. Yes sounds great and that would leave some money for the coach Jay Conroy. He had his kid on the team and he wanted to do something, he was retiring as a prison guard and he thought this would be great because he could get to work with people that didn't want to kill. He became the head coach and I think that the school recognized and probably had good budget times that they decided to give him a certain stipend and he said okay. I don't think he ever asked for it. That's the way to solve the problem and I can help you do it

Chris Sullivan, 108 Highland Street I just want to come up and talk ski as well. My son's a freshman on the ski team this year. First time doing it, I was certainly under the impression that with multiple schools involved and multiple schools are contributing to the program so that's one of the reasons why I brought that up. There are four kids from Lunenburg on that program, four kids - 100% four kids should not be spending \$11,000. The list is wrong there are about 20 kids in the ski team this year not 14, so there were 18 alone at the banquet last night. I had actually reached out to Jay this morning when I kind of heard rumblings that this might come up tonight. I have the bills its \$10,400 .The bigger bill is from Nashoba. The issue is there is not a Mid-watch ski league if we could all ski and race at Wachusett it would be a lot cheaper. I would also encourage Kevin to reach out to all the parents having a group conversation exactly kind of what you're saying, that you know this is this is what it is and fees need to come into this program to continue.

Tim Santry, LMHS Principal It is my responsibility to advocate for the students and the staff in my building. We are going on 13 hours of debate and discourse over this budget. In that time not one mention of the impact of the cuts will have in our High School. We as educators, we understand the importance of learning to read, no one will dispute that, but our responsibilities to students in this district don't end there. We have the responsibility for all students in the district. That means it's as important to prepare students for college and career as it is to teach them to read. The cuts that we are going to experience are going to hurt us, every student, and every classroom. I think we are gambling on the fact that myself and my faculty are going to be able to pull a rabbit out of our hat and we're going to be able to pull this together. There's a 0% chance of our schedule looking like it did last year, I want people to be aware of that there's going to be a major impact to our high school. I implore you that if you did get any free cash even though it would be a Band-Aid that you look to the high school to restore some of those positions. Some of those class offerings that we've cut, we now cut 27 class offerings from our high school schedule over two years. It's going to have a major impact on our students. I had a discussion with a student at in lunch today, she is my her self-proclaimed my favorite student, I've written several letters of recommendation for her for private schools and checking in and how those were going and always saying you know why don't you stay here at Lunenburg high we always want you here. She said to me that she was looking at choosing out if her private school choices didn't come through. I think that's going to be the reality that we have if we're not able to offer our student choices they are going to hemorrhage out of the high school so please I implore you to look at that free cash and restore some positions at the high school.

Tom Woodward 221 Leominster Road I don't know if you guys are familiar with the road its going to be toward charging kids to go to school. I really appreciate you, I can see it is hurting you in this way. You know how many kids are injured or killed walking to school a year -67,124 kids. It is not going to be your fault but what if a Lunenburg kids, because maybe a parent couldn't afford the fee, or maybe they only have one car, but what happens if that kid is walking to school one day and gets injured or killed. Are you going to be able to look at yourself and say – it was the right choice? You guys want a town override, I understand that, but the town was able to fund \$20 million or so for the new town hall, we could have done an override this year to make a little less of a deficit. Most of this community might not have kids, I don't know the percentage, but if we don't choose to make huge cuts this year, which makes us all hurt in a different way. I think we failed our kids and it is going to hurt because like some of them said, a lot of kids are going to leave. I moved to Lunenburg for the reason of the school system, it was great three years ago. Obviously we had a little

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bit of lower numbers, I come from a city where we are fully funding, obviously great stuff I want to be able to give my kids a better life, and right now it's not better and it hurts. My biggest thing is that you guys are going to charge kids to go to school, it is not fair, you are going to hurt families in a lot of ways, you are going to put them in collections, which puts them in debt, which puts them at credit. You guys have kids, you've talked about the athletics, and track team and how good they are. But we need to be Lunenburg strong, we need to stick together and we are not doing that.

TJ Loughlin 207 Rolling Acres Rd. I learned a lot about municipal budget in the last two years. I hope I understood it correctly. At this point I understand the logic behind waiting for another year for the override. It is the same playbook as last year, same argument, all the same justification. What I want to make clear to the public is depending on how the override is pitched next year, we may still have this cut deficit build into the Lunenburg budget forever. If you go forward and decide to put forward an override for the future this set of cuts, which you heard Mr. Santry say is going to be painful, is that pain is going to be baked in our school system unless the override accounts for this year too. No matter what you have to account for this year's deficit moving forward, which is also going to be a weird ask for the town, because it is going to back projecting. The next thing a few of us have said, the select board meeting last night, the joint meeting, is the same playbook. Everyone wants the same, town wide override, account for all departments, we need long-term projections, we said that last year and again, just like Ms. Brzozoski said it didn't happen. How are we as tax payers and citizens supposed to believe that is going to happen this year? What is going to be put in place to know that is actually going to happen? We need a holistic view, we need to understand our town finances, and we will be here again. How do we know this is actually going to take place?

Sandi Orni 365 Sunny Hill Road first thank you all, I know this is hard and I know it is getting late, so I appreciate all of the diligence you are putting into this. First comment I have is around the bottom of the list of restored teachers, if I look at that list, I have a middle school and high school students and I see 6.5 out of 13 of those restored positions going to the Primary School. While only 1 ½ are going to the high school. I very much want our kids to be able to read and I want them to be in small classes, but once they learn to read, I also want them to have the best opportunities they can to get into college. I would like you to consider that as we continue to cut the offerings at the high school. Second comment is around the ski team. You know I was a little disappointed to hear just today that we had a little lead time to get some of the kids on the ski team to come and speak in front of about their experiences with the ski team. I am happy with your comments today and where we have landed but, my son was on the ski team for our years, my daughter was on the ski team for two years and was unable to participate this year due to a sports injury but would have been the fifth child on the team. I think we want to look at this comprehensively. I agree we need to pursue funds from other schools that is absolutely the right thing to do. But I think we should also look at the history, we keep throwing out that there are four kids in the program from Lunenburg, this is a low year. If we go back historically during Covid, there were six freshman boys alone, because it was a great offering and inclusive. Obviously there is speed just like any other sport but there are no try outs, Coach Jay says I don't care if you are a competitive skier or you're just learning to ski I will teach you, you will learn, you will be better than you were before. It is a really nice alternative to sports that have strict cut offs for members. I'd also like you to consider that as you look at the ski program going forward.

Mandy Gilman 186 Reservoir Road I want to thank you for your work tonight. I know this is not easy and not fun. I just want to leave this meeting with the impression that we shouldn't have to live like this. Last year when I started to fight for the override, I took a very aggressive stance with the committee, and told people we didn't have to live like this. Last year we fought for an override of \$1 million dollars. Is very scary to think about where we would be if we hadn't gotten that million dollars. There has been a lot of talk that this is not the year for an override. I am very conflicted about that, last year I basically didn't take anyone's advice and just told you all we were going to do an override. It is not all about me, but I feel like that's what happened. I am scared that next year are going to be in this huge hole, and the economy could go down. I volunteered, I am running for the school committee, so lucky me I get to sit up there maybe next year and listen to everyone complaining. We need to start in June. I am disappointed that we did not look at this last June. I know that the teacher contract wasn't finalized, I know there were a lot of moving parts, but I am disappointed that we waited this long. I know we were waiting for the state to save us, that wasn't going to happen. I had a good meeting with Senator Cronin last week. I have a meeting coming up with Kushmerek and Scarsdale. I think eventually there is going to be something there, but we have to limp through until then. They are not going to be able to fix every problem, so I haven't come up here with a plan of what to say, but I think we need to start planning in June. If this committee doesn't think this is the time for the override that is fine. The only good thing I have really gotten from this whole thing is that if you are active on social media, there are many parents in this town who you been getting their emails who are incredibly fired up. I just want to implore the public to stay engaged because you are only governed by people who volunteer. It is government, it is not about every single person, and government is about those who show up. That is the reality of the way the system works.

Amy King, 3 Gabes Place I echo what Mr. Santry and what Sandi had to say about the high school taking huge hits here. The ability for our kids to have the experience they need to get into college. I implore the school committee and the future school committee that as a finance professional the manner in which we put this budget together and that we look for trends for expenses and revenues. Splitting everything into revolving funds is not a good way to manage finances. We need to lay out all revenues and all expenses. We need to understand what those expenses are, how they

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increase and decrease and where the funding is coming from so that the public has the full transparency of where all of the money is going. Someone just mentioned the parking fee that we pay doesn't even go to the school, why not, isn't it because they supposedly plow the parking lot, I mean the \$50 parking fee, every one of those kids almost fell in the parking lot on the ice this year. I really think we need to do a better job as everyone has said, in how we are managing our finances. I would love to see something done with the curriculum director to get more money into the high school. I think that is a position, that while it is nice have at the state we are in, this school system we need teachers, we need offering for these kids. We have done a great job improving the curriculum over the years. Can we take a break for a few years and give the high school kids a little bit more options.

Mr. Sculimbrenne I think what TJ said is right, we need to have a long-term plan. I think that one of the things we would do as a school committee next year is immediately start working on the long term plan. One problem I see and I keep coming back to is we don't do this budget discussion correctly. No one brings forward a case about what impact this will have on student achievement. What I want to know is the dollar value of every impact on student achievement. We have people come up and say I love this or that, I don't want this to go, and my kid does this. But we don't even know how to quantify student achievement in a predictable way that allows us to do a forecast. We need to have that data, we need to have a utilitarian approach because if all we do is constantly listen to people making good cases for things. Everyone loves their children, all of these things are good things, we could make a case for any of them, but if we don't have a way of figuring out which ones count more, which ones are worth more, which ones have a bigger impact, we are going to perpetually be in a budget cycle that is based on emotion not fact. First thing we have to do is answer TJ's question is we need to create a rubric to decide budget decisions to make calls about student impact. The second thing I think that we need to do whether it is as a parent or group, we need to understand how legislation changes. We are not in the 1700s version of the United States, a citizen request is not going to change the agenda. I testified two weeks ago in New Hampshire, I was the only non-lobbyist in the room and I was a lawyer. There were no citizens' there at all. It was a decision that impacted hundreds of millions of dollars. It was for the insurance, it impacted hundreds of millions of dollars, the reason the hearing happened was because people with money coordinated together and got a lobbyist, we keep talking about this, we keep saying our legislative delegation isn't coming to our aid. That is true, but we haven't approached them in a way that people do now. If we expect the 17th century version of all of us get on horses and ride to Boston to work, it is not going to work. The last thing I would point out is I understand the concern about not going for an override. I do think that there was a little bit of politics last night in the presentation about why don't you go for an override, when the groundwork that it took to get the override last year was already months underway by this point. You don't go to the bank and get a loan to start a business in an un-pressed shirt and none of your tax records, we need to have that level of preparation when we go and ask for a big amount of money. We can show the town that we have done our homework. This is the only options and we need it because of the way inflation has impacted municipal finances. My guess is given the people that said we should do it now, they know that we would fail and cannot fail for the kids. Doing it now at the cost of doing it later better, doesn't seem the best. I think that we should as soon as this is done, start planning for next year. We should have a vision and a vision should be based on real concrete information, dollars, data, student achievement, we can't keep doing this on an emotional level

Ms. Brzozoski I will be honest, I came home from the meeting last night thinking what the heck did I do. We were not going to go for an override, this doesn't quite sit right with me, because these cuts are so difficult. But like Tony said we need a comprehensive plan. I am trying to balance it against what the town is going to need in the future. The town is not ready to present what their needs are going to be. I said it last night too, I don't think we are going to get three years in a row of overrides, I don't think Lunenburg tax payers are going to be wild about voting three years in a row for overrides. I just don't. I wish they were because I think that would be great and I think overrides exist for a reason especially when inflation is high. I don't think we could sell it and I have to live in the town too. I would like us to have a functioning fire department and the things that would bring that they are going to ask for next year. It is a calculated risk, is it the right answer? There is no right answer because all the options suck. This is awful, this is terrible and I hate it. I hate that it affects our kids, which makes it terrible. I wish this was a board that didn't affect our children, but I think this is what we keep saying – the least bad option. I think we are going to have a rough year, I think that we have managed to make a budget that we are going to have a rough year, but it is not going to be a disastrous year. I think that we have built structures in place that we are going get by. Lunenburg has a very strong staff and teachers that are going to make it work. We have fantastic staff and teachers, I think we are going to make it work for the year. I don't think we are going to make it work long-term under this staffing, but I think we can make this work for a year. Then we are going to figure this out next year starting soon. We are going to go up from there and fight for an override next year.

Mr. Beardmore I am not going to belabor my reasoning that I outlined last night about the override. I am still very comfortable with that reasoning and I understand that you can't make all the people all the time. This is a difficult decision, I do want to say that these are really difficult challenges I volunteered for the finance committee six years ago. I have spent almost three years on the school committee, it is getting harder and harder and frankly I am out of answers. Which is part of my decision to leave the school committee at the end of budget season. I am exhausted by it. That being said what has been represented through the last several weeks by people who have come and spoken and by to conversations that we have had here, some of which have been very spirited debates and we have certainly disagreed on

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some issues is ultimately the way to come to those solutions. We have some good energy in the community, we have good ideas and to the extent that I can I will continue to support the schools. Please keep in mind, while we are governed a little bit differently we are a department in the town of Lunenburg and we all live in the town of Lunenburg. I am not particularly happy with the way the town has been run. I think it is run way too lean, but we have got to give our new select board, town manager, and new school committee the opportunity to envision what that is going to look like and ideally support them to move them in the right directions. I am hopeful that the leaders that have stepped up and our new leader, and our town manager, and that we can hire a really good leader to help us in the schools and figure this out over the course of the next several months.

Ms. Archambault I just want to say that despite all the gray weather her and the blizzard that we are maneuvering through, I see a really good silver lining. The silver lining is the engagement of so many people. As long as so many people stay engaged we will find a way out of these difficult issues. We have found a way out before and we will find a way out of this one. I want to thank the people for their thoughts and their difficult nights of not sleeping, because they are worried about this. I want to thank the staff for hanging in there because having been on that side many times, not knowing if my job was going to be cut or not is torturous and I thank them for hanging in there, it is not easy to do. Moving forward next year you will get this figured out and I think Tony will still be with you and has committed to hanging in there and finding a plan.

Mr. Lehtinen I want to thank the students, the children of Lunenburg, the parents, and the staff for being constantly involved and giving feedback. I want to thank Dr. Burnham and her team for all this work and thank the fellow committee members too. I think we did it as a team, we did it as a community, it's not great, but it is the best we could do. I think having all those voices and emails and public comments made the difference and it gave a full picture of what we needed to do and how best we could serve the Lunenburg Public School. I want to thank everyone for staying engaged and going to town meeting, voting, and running for office. Volunteer and be part of the community.

5. **Adjournment Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to adjourn at 9:16 pm, Mr. Beardmore seconds the motion, all approve.**

Respectfully Submitted

Courtney Fuller