



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Kate Burnham, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 19, 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: Tim Santry – LMHS Principal, Norman Yvon – THES Principal, Carla Squier – Primary Principal, Dr. Deborah Bookis – Director of Teaching and Learning, Julianna Hanscom – Director of Special Services, Dr. Susan Gilson – Director of Administration & Finance, Patty McCarthy – Guillette – Director of Community School Programs, Kevin Bigelow – Athletic Director

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 Mr. Lehtinen at 6:31

2. Pledge of Allegiance

- 3. Public Comment – Mandy Gilman, 186 Reservoir Road** I have been doing some advocacy work with our state legislators about more school funding. A group of parents and I met with both sets of legislatures, Senator John Cronin and Representative Scarsdale and Representative Kushmerek over the last few weeks, I would encourage anyone who is listening to this, if you would like to reach out to them please send them an email, tell them how devastating the budget cuts are for our school district. They are all big supporters of getting more money, but they need to hear from us, they need to continue to hear from us, they need to hear from us multiple times. Even if you have already sent them an email, send another one. It is really important because they have to go to leadership and get more support and if they can say they got 100 emails from their constituents that is more convincing. There are a few things I want to let people know about. I know these are during the day, which isn't great if you work a full time job, but I am just letting people know that there is a hearing on Monday March 24th at 11 am at UMass Amherst. This is a hearing only for invited members of state government to testify, but it is the education hearing, so there will be a lot of education officials there testifying. I am going to go, I know there are a lot of other groups including North Middlesex and Amherst that are having difficulty with funding that are going to show up. If you want to come join our Facebook group or send an email to one of the school committee members. I am happy to coordinate with people, if you are not on Facebook. Number two, there is a public hearing on

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Tuesday April 8th at 11 am in Boston at the State House. This hearing is an opportunity to actually speak. I have already been in touch with them, I am going to make some testimony, I am hopeful that maybe some other members of this committee or the select board, or the superintendent. We have been coordinating to get people, I think we have some willingness for folks to come and testify. These are opportunities for people besides our state legislators, people who are making the budget decisions to see the problems with school funding across the state. Lastly I am organizing a zoom call next Wednesday at 8, it is in our Facebook group, if you aren't on Facebook send an email to the school committee members and they can forward it to me. Something we are going to talk about is state advocacy and we are also going to talk about possible override advocacy. I know that is something that is still in the works, for those that are not aware, a group of parents did file an override ballot initiative for about \$2 million. I think some decisions need to be made. I do urge the members of the school committee to think about if the select board is thinking about. I have heard through the grapevine that the select board is also considering adding things to the override number, if we decide to file, I am not against other department in town getting money, but no one else had any problems until the moment the override got filed, so let's not make it so big that it will not pass.

Briana Proctor, 141 Gilchrest Street I am a 2011 graduate of Lunenburg High School and I also coach girls' basketball and softball at the High School. I am here to advocate to save the proposed administrative cuts to LMHS. It is incredibly shortsighted to remove an administrator from the building with the largest population of students, who have the most complex challenges as they are navigating adolescence. As a coach at the high school, I see the time the administrators spend outside of school hours to help monitor sporting events, a responsibility that administrators at the Primary and Elementary schools frankly do not have. Some of these administrators are current and future coaches for the school. Students and athletes whose coaching role would likely be lost, should they no longer be employed here. Administrators' jobs have become very complex given societal changes, and they are an integral part of supporting teachers to create a safe and effective learning environment. To cut a school of around 800 students down to three administrators, while leaving smaller schools, with less complex problems fully staffed would harm both the students and the teachers at LMHS. Should this committee not be swayed in the LMHS position not to be a saved, I hope that you at least inform the person on the chopping block, so the entirety of the staff is not living in a constant state of anxiety.

Laura Barooshian, 389 Mulpus Road I am here to advocate for the fifth grade music program cuts and salary cuts. The cut to the program is going to be devastating on our program. The upcoming fifth grade program is bigger than it has been in the past five years, it 20% bigger. The fifth grade program feeds directly into the Middle and High school band program. The kids that have allied together, the music program, the marching program have worked incredibly hard. Multiple studies are done on the impact that music has on kids as young as four years old. Their interpersonal skills, their leadership skills, their math, it impacts all academic curriculum. It is really shortsighted, it is very small amounts of money to keep our fifth grade program. I know you are wrestling a very large gap between spending and the budget, and I know it needs to come from somewhere, but I just really want you to take a hard look at some of the smaller dollar things that should maybe be used with free cash. I ask you to look at which programs are being maybe inequitably harmed.

Ms. Brzozoski I have been really uncomfortable since our last meeting with the select board. The decision to wait a year for an override has not been sitting well with me. As we have continued to closely examine the cuts it has been more and more painful and it has been getting more and more uncomfortable. It makes sense to wait from a holistic and a strategy view, and I see the Town Manager and the Select Boards reasoning. There is no way they can get the override numbers together for a holistic override this year. I understand the reasons why, but I cannot stop thinking since our meeting yesterday is that we weren't elected to represent the interest of the whole town. We are the school committee, and it is our job, our duty to fight for the students and what the

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students need. I am not sure we are doing that duty if we wait another year. My motivation was to hold out for the free cash, but that money is not guaranteed and the amount keeps going down. There was a discussion about putting money into the paving, they don't want to reduce that amount while I am sitting watching and we are laying off 10% of our staff. I said it last week and I am going to say it again, these are the kids that have lived through covid, they have not had a normal childhood, they've already had to go through so much. Why are we in Lunenburg, insisting on making things harder for our kids? Why can't we give them the basics of a quality education? I can't understand why we are choosing to do this to our students. I have faith in our staff and teachers and I think we can make it through a rough year, but I can't understand why we are doing it when we have other options. I want people who don't have kids to understand what an entire year of child's life is developmentally, how much they grow and change. How much teachers are trying to cram in their head in a single year. I don't think people who do not have kids are understanding what waiting a year means for a kid in first grade. It means a kid in high school isn't getting to take a class they need before graduation, it means students are missing out on supports they need to reach their full potentials as humans, as adults, which is our end goal. Last night at the select board meeting they did discuss going for a town wide override now that there is a citizen's petition for a school wide override. I don't understand why the urgency now? Back then we were still cutting 10% of the staff and looking at class sizes of potentially 30 kids, facing these devastating cuts and it wasn't met with urgency then. I am grateful there is a citizens override on the ballot, I am grateful there is hopefully going to be an option to vote for it and I am going to fight for it.

Mr. Beardmore I share all of the concerns that Laura spoke of, however, my position on the override has not changed. I said that we need to go for a town wide, a well-considered and well vetted town wide override next year. That being said if a school override lands on the town meeting warrant and the ballot for this year, I will absolutely support it and help to whatever means that I am able to. I spoke to the chair of the select board earlier today and I am very concerned that the plan seems to be an influx as a result of the citizens' petition. I am concerned the new numbers are going to be brought from the town and have not been vetted to any extent. I am very concerned this may end being a poison pill. I don't know that is the intent, but it certainly may be the intent it could be the effect and I just want to voice my concern. Certainly for all of the reasons that Laura stated if this does end up on the warrant, and ballot, I do intend to support it.

Ms. Archambault I am planning on attending the March 24 meeting with the Ways and Means committee in Amherst. If anyone has letters or concerns about our budget, this is the time to do it I have reached out to three legislators and heard from three of legislators stating that they are going to push what they can to get additional funding for our schools in legislative session. I have also reached out to the chairperson of the education committee in the Senate as well as in the House and I suggest everybody do that, the more letters they get the more they will pay attention to what we need. I have never been to a hearing like this before so I'm quite curious about it. I am happy to go and will bring my thoughts. I have no idea if I will have a chance to voice them or share them, but I will bring our thoughts that we are getting crushed here and that the state needs to do something.

John Bowen Jr. 162 Highland Street I gave this speech last night at the select board meeting but I am going to give it here to. I am speaking tonight about Lunenburg schools I recently moved here to Lunenburg with my dad, John Bowen, in January of last year because I was in a bad environment which caused me a lot of difficulties in my life mentally, emotionally, socially, and academically. Every school I attended which was three last year alone and seven schools over five years was a real challenge. I had no support from people I was living with and I was abused, not physically but mentally and was told my father didn't love me. I did not know that my father was in a bitter legal fight for more than 10 years all of this was before I came to Lunenburg to live with my dad. In my previous living situation I was told I should know what to do with homework assignments and with regular life skills. This was my whole life and I felt trapped, whenever I got upset because I was

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frustrated with understanding everything. My mother would force me at the four hospitals between the ages of 9 and 15 all the time telling me I am the problem and I am no different than my father which she characterized him in a negative light to me and my sister daily. However, I am speaking with you today because of my father, and because of Lunenburg High School. I never thought I could do this a year ago. Why am I sharing this with you? My father has shown me having one voice and one vote is important! That I should always speak up this is how I heal from my traumatic path I am who I am today by speaking up and speaking out. I want you to know that because of people here in Lunenburg, my dad, of course, my stepmom Jean Marie Price, and from school Joshua Koziol, Juliana Hanscom, Lori Shea, James Sweeney, Coach Hausler, Jennifer Miller, Stacey Canfield, Timothy Santry, and all my other teachers and mentors and friends at Lunenburg High School including Mr. and Mrs. Eberhardt, Mrs. Foyle, and Mrs. Maillet and all my friends and the entire class of 2027 for voting me to ride the float with Kendra Eberhardt at homecoming this was a great honor. There are so many others I want to name just not enough time, all of these people have helped this person, me, who stands before you today who has had an IEP his whole life and today I do not have any special needs requirements because of a good plan that Lunenburg High School formulated for me and working with my father. Since coming to Lunenburg high, my first semester here I made honors, my second semester here I made High honors, in this past semester I made special honors, and it appears I am keeping the ship steady. This is because of the program that Lunenburg high school has for kids with special needs including kids like me who come from difficult homes or abusive homes. I have excelled because of the special needs assistance and the professionalism of how Lunenburg High School worked with my father and with me. They helped me make my life better academically and socially. I have failed every grade since seventh grade and I was just passed along by other schools. I thought no one cared however, not today, today I have a direction, I am planning on law school and then the Marine Corps. I also intend to run for president of the class of 2027 at Lunenburg high school and I will be looking for signatures. What I'm really here today to say to you is, you have difficult decisions to make about the schools but the one thing you should support 100% is the special services needed for all the kids in Lunenburg schools. I play sports and I love sports but if you cut that I am okay with it happening. If you have to cut any other after school activity I will be ok with that too. I just want to be heard that cutting any program or assistance for people with educational or social difficulties, maybe some with my situation of an abusive home life with no support, as a survivor myself, I know there are many out there and you cannot have them slip through the cracks. Cutting special needs education or the professionals' attached to the education in Lunenburg schools is like removing life support from a patient who can't live without the assistance.

Mr Sculimbrene I just want to say that was an amazing speech.

Ms. Brzozoski I just want to follow up on Carol's comments. If you were writing letters to our elected officials, they should have your address, your full address and the address where you are registered to vote at the bottom. It makes it more official for them.

4. **Chair's Report** The select board is meeting at Town Hall in 7 minutes. They are discussing the FY 25 budget, FY26 budget capital plan and annual town meeting warrant articles and most likely will be discussing the override. State House news service this morning stated that two weeks before the policy is set to expire, House democrats moved Monday to temporarily extend pandemic era laws allowing public meetings to offer remote access. The House Ways and Means Committee began advancing a bill that would keep in place the language granting public bodies flexibility to hold meetings virtually or in hybrid formats, as well as measures lowering the number of people necessary for a quorum at Town Meeting, and allowing representative town meetings to be held with remote participation. Those policies are set to expire March 31st the house bill would push that sunset date to June 30, 2027. There is a citizen's petition for an override that was submitted by TJ

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Loughlin signed by many citizens, the language of the warrant article to see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate \$2,099,337 to supplement Lunenburg Public Schools budget for fiscal year 2026 contingent upon the passage of a proposition 2 ½ ballot questions. The number was calculated by the difference between the level service budget and the town managers budget. Additionally the Joint Committee on Ways and Means FY26 public hearing is on Tuesday April 8, 2025, the hearing begins at 11 am at the State House. You can join educators and public education supporters from across the Commonwealth as they advocate for the FY26 funding for schools, colleges, and universities. The MTA is also organizing this, but they are looking for written testimony and we will be talking about later also.

5. Student Representative Report - None

6. Review & Approve Minutes

a. Regular Session - None

7. Review & Approve Line Item Transfers, Warrants, & Donations

a. Warrants 3/3/25 to 3/12/25 \$138,511.41 signed by chair

b. Donations a donation of \$105 from a Lunenburg family, this is for the Turkey Hill Music Department and will be deposited into the gift account. **Ms. Archambault makes a motion to accept the donation with our gratitude, Mr. Sculimbrene seconds the motion, all approve via roll call.**

c. Line Item Transfers a request to consolidate substitute lines and applying a high school paras with excess in English text books and Middle School overtime secretarial Custodial will be collecting all unused supply funds to turn and buy toilet paper, paper towel, and cleaning supplies. A transfer for contracted services of \$1,374 to target the contracted services at the high school level. Special ED evaluation line needs \$1200.10 so we are using Special education general supplies and Ace Program general supplies and home hospital tutoring account. **Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to accept transfers, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion all approve via roll call**

8. Superintendent's Report Our Pre-K registration is currently open and closes on March 28th, summer extended day opens April 28th, before and after school opens May 5th and the Early Learning Center opens on April 2nd. We hired a Facilities Director, they will be starting on April 2nd.

Upcoming Dates

March 28 Early Release day for students and full PD Day

April 2 School Committee meeting Town Hall 6:30 – In person

April 16th School Committee meeting LMHS at 6:30

9. Presentation None

10. New Business

Action

a. FY26 Extended Day & ELC Handbooks the only changes in the handbooks are updated dates and the change of location. Early Learning Center will be moved to the Primary School. The before school program will be at Turkey Hill, Primary School kids will be bussed to the Primary School. The after school program will be at the Primary school and the Turkey Hill kids will be bussed to the Primary School. The summer program will be at

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the Primary School pending any changes with the AC install. **Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to approve the handbook, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion, all approve via roll call**

- b. Grants** Dr. Bookis explains what the grants are and how they will be used. **Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to move forward and apply for the grants, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion all approve via roll call.**

11. Old Business

Action

- a. FY25 Quarterly Budget Report** report in the folder **Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to accept the report, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion all approve via roll call**
- b. Unaffiliated Salary Schedule (FY26-28)** there is a 4% increase next year and then 2 ½ % increases for the following two years. This mostly is the staff of the extended day, ELC staff and is primarily paid out of the revolving account **Ms. Archambault makes a motion to accept the salary schedule, Mr. Sculimbrene seconds the motion all approve vis roll call**
- c. FY26 School Calendar** Ms Archambault makes a motion to approve the calendar as proposed, **Mr. Sculimbrene second the motion, all approve via roll call vote**
- d. Athletic Camp Proposal** Concerns are shared and it is recommended that there is communication with the Town Rec Department **Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to move forward with camps, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion all approve via roll call**

Discussion

- e. Parent-Teacher Conference Pilot 2025-2026** The high school has proposed a new conference model for the 25/26 school year that will have 3, 2 hour blocks which allows for the conferences in the beginning of the year, but also leaves the option for a conference later in the year.
- f. FY26 Budget** We will present to the Finance Committee again tomorrow with a few line changes. Dr. Burnham shares an explanation regarding questions from the Finance Committee and changes that have occurred since the last presentation.
- g. Superintendent Search** The initial meeting with MASC rep went over guidelines, privacy disclosure agreements and set an agenda for the rest of the screening committee. The next meetings will be 3/25, 3/27, 3/28 and 3/31 if needed
- h. State Funding & State Delegation** Mr. Lehtinen has drafted a letter and is available in folder that we can could send to legislatures. School Committee agrees to use school email to reach out to community and send letters. Mr. Lehtinen will draft the information and guidelines and run by Ms. Archambault and Dr. Burnham.

12. Reports

Ms. Brzozoski PACSAL met on March 6th via zoom and discussed the ACE program and talked about the updated IEP form

Ms. Archambault FinCom met, they are listening to all of the department budget requests. They have stated that last year other departments were not given money and that money was given to the school department that will not happen again this year. School choice and Charter school was discussed

Mr. Sculimbrene PTO fundraiser at launch tomorrow 3:30-7:30.

Mr. Lehtinen LMBDC met and are working on a presentation to give at Town Meeting

Mr. Beardmore Capital Planning will meet tomorrow after the Finance Committee meeting. They plan to discuss funding plan and final recommendations, and warrant articles from the Town Manager for FY26

13. Public Comment

Mr. Beardmore I want to acknowledge a comment made by Mr. John Bowen Jr, frankly I am taken aback by it. I am thoroughly impressed and dare I say choked up. I think it was very thoughtful, poignant, and brave for a student to come forward with that type of commentary. I think his commentary tonight was an enormous credit to his family, himself, and our schools. I am very appreciative of it and I think I was probably one of the most poignant public comments that I have heard in my three years on the school committee and I want to thank him.

14. Topics for Future Discussion

15. Adjournment Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to adjourn 8:51 pm, Ms. Archambault seconds the motion, approved unanimously via roll call vote

Respectfully Submitted

Courtney Fuller