



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Jodi Fortuna, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 18, 2026
LMHS 7:00 – Hybrid

School Committee

Anthony Sculimbrene Chair - Present
Laura Brzozoski, Vice Chair - Present
Mandy Gilman, Secretary – Present
Emily Young, Member - Present
Member, TBD

Superintendent

Dr. Jodi Fortuna

Recording Secretary

Courtney Fuller

Guests: Christopher McNamara – Business Administrator, Carla Squier – Primary School Principal, Tim Santry, LMHS Principal, Norman Yvon – THES Principal, Christopher Stevens – Director of Facilities

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 at 7:00 by Mr. Sculimbrene**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Public Comment Ms. Brzozoski** We need people to run for office, I'm not just talking about school committee. I'm talking about town wide. Up for election this year is select board, sewer commission, board of health, assessors, school committee, park commission, commissioner of trust funds, cemetery commission, library trustee, planning board, and housing authority. Some of those positions have nobody running for them. I know for us there are three seats up for election for school committee and there are only two people running for three seats. So we need people to run. You have until March 26, which is next week, to pull the papers. You go to the town clerk's office, get a form, you collect 50 signatures, you return it by Saturday, May 28th at 5:00 p.m., and then your name will be on the ballot. That's the easiest way to do it outside of caucus, which has already happened. If you need help getting signatures, you can email me and I will help you. And there are other people in town who will help you get 50 signatures if that sounds like a large task. This town is run by volunteers. If you're unhappy about how things work, you can make changes. This is a concrete action that you can take in your local community. I highly recommend that if you're watching tonight and you're upset by things, to consider running for office. Number two, tonight is going to stink. No one will be happy. We will all be upset. We sustained massive cuts last year. Cuts that affected our students in concrete, demonstrable ways. Cuts that put immense strain on the reduced staff. I cannot understand how we're going to possibly cut more. But we have to look at a balanced budget. That is our responsibility. We have to do it. The important thing I wanted to say was I am so grateful for our Lunenburg teachers and staff. This is what makes Lunenburg schools great. You guys are the reason we have managed this long with so little. Your

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

creativity, your dedication, and your caring for our students and for each other, is much appreciated. And I'm saying that as me, a school committee member, who is constantly impressed with what I see, and as a parent who has seen firsthand how talented and dedicated you all are. Third thing and last thing is that May 2nd is town meeting. You must go. Do not depend on other people showing up for you. This is not going to be an easy thing to get passed. No, it's not fun. It is always, for some reason, beautiful weather and the nice first Saturday in May. As parents, for some reason, it is a day that is constantly filled with every child having activities. It is a hard thing to attend. That is why historically parents don't go. But it is important you go. It is too important for you to sit out and hope for the best. You are the best hope. This is directly a way that you can make the town better. You can make our kids' lives better. This is one of the few times that we as citizens have a vote that very much counts. Saturday, May 16th is the town election. You must show up and vote in that election. You have to. An override needs to pass at town meeting and then it needs to pass at the polls. It needs to meet both of those obstacles in order to pass. It barely passed last time. Your individual vote will matter. Those individual votes absolutely mattered. So, I want everyone to put the dates in your calendar now. Saturday, May 2nd and Saturday, May 16th, put them in your calendar. May 2nd is the not fun day. That's going to take a lot of hours. May 16th, you just need to be in town and spend a few minutes voting. But both of those things are really important. You need to spread the word too because not a lot of people watch this as compared to who we need to show up.

4. **Chairs Report** – I want to make everyone aware all of the committees are working together, behind the scenes to try and things ready. We are working really hard to get everything ready for our side, so when we have the next tri-board meeting, we will be ready to go. I know the select board is working very hard. One of the things I want to highlight is that according to the budget presented last Monday, the fourth shift fire department two days ago, has moved from an override item to a regular budget item, while I understand the necessity of that, from my perspective as chair, it greatly weakens the ability for the override to pass. I wish that wouldn't have happened, I understand why it happened, I understand the fire department still has needs, but it is hard to be this late in the process and have that big of a change. I am concerned that it will impact turnout and the vote count in a way that is bad. I am also a little concerned that this structure of the override has not been set, the amounts have not been set, hopefully, and when we finish tonight everything will be in. This is been a very difficult process and I am more concerned now than before.

Renee Emkey, 6 Iris Court – Speaking as myself, I want to clarify one thing about the fourth shift fire that is in the no override budget, The fourth shift is included in the override budget, the full ask of the fire department is not. The per diems were cut in half that impact is that we cannot man two ambulances in the no override budget, so that is the missing piece. This impacts safety and services of the town.

5. **Student Representative Report** – Primary School and Turkey Hill hosted STEM nights, MCAS are also coming up for Turkey Hill, Middle School, and High School. Prom tickets went on sale Monday and will be on sale for 2 weeks. Course registration has just opened for the high school. Kids are scared again about the budget. Districtwide, we are currently hosting a food drive
6. **Review and Approve Minutes**
 - a. **Regular session 1/21/26 Ms. Gilman makes a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Young seconds the motion, Ms. Brzozoski abstains, motion passes.**
7. **Review and Approve Line Items, Transfers, Warrants**
 - a. **Line Item Transfers - None**
 - b. **Warrants 2/25/26 – 3/11/26 \$298,408.51**

- c. **Donations – Beth Curtis Scholarship** This scholarship was awarded to two, 2025 graduates, it was \$500 each, this works out to be a payment to the student, as it different than the usual scholarship donations. Town Hall wants approval to pay this out, and we need your signatures for that to happen **Ms. Gilman makes a motion to approve the donation/award to be paid out, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion all approve.**

8. **Superintendents Report** The high school very nicely created a schedule that would not require the movement of graduation due to the terrifically wonderful winter wonderland we had this winter. So this will keep our graduation on the 6th and keeps us within guidelines for the 12 school days between senior dismissal and district dismissal. The schedule would be senior's last day will be Tuesday, June 2nd, Wednesday, June 3 would be the motorcade, Thursday, June 4th would be rehearsal, senior awards and dinner, Friday, June 5th is senior sunset, and Saturday, June 6 is graduation. Obviously, we didn't want to move to graduation because of the number of snow days, even though we had that option. So, I really want to thank um Mr. Santry and Ms. Tousignant for us, working out a flexible schedule so that we could keep graduation on the 6th. One more thing that I wanted to make sure that you are aware of for our handbooks and registrations for summer programs and our early learning center, and extended day. For summer camp, the application is going to be put up around 5:00 p. p.m. on April 27th. For extended day, 5:00 pm on May 11th, and for early learning center, 5:00 pm on May 18th. These are all Mondays. Extended day will run as it ran this year, the early learning center is located at Primary school and summer camp at the Primary school. And then you have some images that were just in our folder of students enjoying decodable readers, which you approved the grant funding for. So, we wanted to show you that they are being used and how much our students are enjoying them.

9. New Business

Action

- a. **Final Approval Greece Trip** Ms Ayer represents tonight for Ms. Yourk and gives a summary of the agenda. **Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion for final approval for the trip, Ms. Gilman seconds the motion, all approve**
- b. **FY 27 Extended Day and ELC Handbooks** Ms McCarthy-Gillette reports information is all the same, the only changes are days that the Lunenburg School calendar changed. **Ms. Gilman makes a motion to accept the handbooks, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion all approve.**
- c. **PEC Health Insurance Opt Out** Negotiations between the town and PEC are coming to an end, which includes an enhancement to the Opt out program, Right now employees must enroll in the town's health insurance for at least two years and then are eligible to opt out, when they opt out the receive a one year incentive of \$2,000 for individual plan and \$4,000 for a family plan. For the new proposed program, employees must enroll in the town's health insurance for at least one year and then they are eligible to opt out, and will receive a \$3000 for individual and \$6,000 for family incentive payment. **Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to approve the Superintendent to move forward with the opt-out program, Ms. Young seconds the motion, all approve.**

10. Old Business

Action

- a. **FY Budget** The superintendent goes through the reductions and increases that have been made in the proposed budget, with explanations. The committee discusses their override structure preferences. **Mr. Sculimbrene makes a motion to provide the selectboard with one number for the override, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion all approve.** The committee will draft a letter to clarify they believe it is in the best interest to have one number for the override, and for that number to be \$1,601,140. **Ms. Gilman makes a motion to accept the core budget as our suggestion to the select board for the override number, Ms. Brzozoski seconds the motion**

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

all approve The committee continues to discuss the projected reality budget, which will be the results is there is no override. The list of cuts and consequences are reviewed. The committee decides they do not accept the budget as it has been presented **Ms. Gilman makes a motion to accept the balanced budget as proposed minus the athletic transportation, which the team will then make a recommendation that will accept. Ms. Young seconds the motion all approve**

11. **Public Comments for issues discussed tonight Renee EmKey, 6 Iris Court**, speaking on behalf of myself, I first want to publicly thank the superintendent, Chris, and the town manager all who spent a lot of time Friday and over the weekend, looking at line items, expenses and looking into Munis and a lot of it was incorporated into the budget. Coming back to the fire conversation, I want to make it clear that in the no override budget that was discussed on Monday, it was a decision that the fire fourth shift career fire was a priority and we cut several departments to make that happen, library, additional fire, DPW, police, parks and rec, council on aging all took cuts. I want to be clear no one is happy with the no override budget. This is not what anyone wants. It is so critical that this override passes. We are not asking for money for frivolous things, we are not padding the budget. This year with all the new staff in place, it was a lot more work, but the work got done. I want the public to know that and to feel comfortable, the override that is presented is the override that is needed. If we go with the two tiers, it could be needed and then plus what we want. Public education is critical, this is a matter of priorities. We have to go to town meeting with a no override budget and present it, but we need to be very clear of what is lacking.

Sarah Camer, 304 Lancaster Ave I wanted to speak here to parents who might be listening now. May 2 is a big sports day for a lot of people. I hope you are having a conversation with your student about how you might have to miss one of their athletic events. My daughter is going to states, I am not going, I have to go to town meeting. On average there are about 1540 students in Lunenburg, that means that every house sends 2.7 kids to school, that gives about 570 families assuming everyone is a single parent that means 570 parents need to be at town meeting and they need to vote for the budget and they need to get their extended family that live in town and they need to go to town meeting. The one at the beginning of the meeting, not the one that is causing all of us to tear up in this room tonight. I do find it really hard to believe that all the rest of the people in this town who may not be parents would jump on board with that budget either, maybe I am an optimist, I am an educator so I have to be optimistic. I have been working in climate change for a long time and I still think we can do something about that too. Having to talk about that balanced budget, the word “balanced” is wrong, that is the budget of no override, the budget of despair. We really as a town need to do better than that. We need to carry forward from your meeting today is what budget is essential, and that is what we need to talk about with the town, not the failures people have had in the past with overrides. It is not this group vs that group, it is what the whole town needs. I do believe that was part of the discussion at the select board with what the town needs budget-wise. Nobody wanted that first budget either, if you listen to that meeting they want the override also. We need to get this right the first time, this C budget is a good number, it is well designed and transparent and obvious that is what we need.

Laura Barooshian, 389 Mulpus Road, here as a parent and as the president of the MusicGators. I want to thank you for everything you are doing. I think there is a different feel this year and how you are all working together and the conversations you are having. There is transparency, I don't have to search for the budgets, and there is a hub on our town website that gives people, committees, and groups everyone's budget, I think this is phenomenal for the public. We are at a crossroads, push has come to shove. These are the cuts that we are talking about at the end of 4 hours, 4 days later, and they will be the same thing next year. This is a rinse and repeat budget that is what is going to happen. This is the tip of the iceberg of what is going to happen. This impacts all of us, whether you have students in the school system now or in the past, you have benefited from your property tax, your property values go

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

up. Look at the properties that are selling, I have a neighbor and saw the house for sale, we saw little kids and thinking, there is the next generation of Lunenburg. That is why we are here, whether we are here for music or chorus or arts or athletics, whatever it is, well-rounded students who go on and productive member of society, who can come back to our town and start that over again. That is our goal. We need to get there and this budget proposal that helps us get there and meet that goal. We need to be taking care of our kids. I have three other things on May 2nd but I will be sitting in the auditorium all day with the clicker and on the 16th, you just have to be there. The MusicGators appreciate this too, thank you for the restoring the music teacher back in, I will commit with my fellow officers to helping balance and make up for supplies, transportation and other needed things.

Sarah Call, 11 Easterbrook Road I work at the Primary School and I am a parent of two high schoolers and a homeowner in town. The one thought that keeps coming back to me is last year we suddenly found almost \$600,000 but then lost it and went to the town, I feel like before we move forward with another override, we should address how that money was lost and if there is a chance of getting it back.

12. Reports from Sub-Committees

13. Topics for Future Discussion

14. Adjournment Ms. Brzozoski makes a motion to adjourn at 10:46, Ms. Young seconds the motion all approve.

Submitted Respectfully,

Courtney Fuller