



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Jodi Fortuna, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING MINUTES
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - RETIREE RECEPTION
Wednesday, June 3, 2026
LMHS 6:30 – Hybrid

School Committee

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

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, Eden Perrine – LHS Student

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 Ms. Brzozoski

2. Pledge of Allegiance

- 3. Public Comment Chris Sullivan, 108 Highland Street,** There was a comment made at last meeting about adding it to the agenda and there being a discussion, I am very disappointed that it is not on this agenda tonight. I think there is a concerted effort in this town to continue to see those flourish and see if there are means and mechanisms to fund the things we are losing. So just to comment I am disappointed it is not on the agenda.

Laura Barooshian, 389 Mulpus Road We are not borrowing \$47 million for the water treatment plant, in case you haven't heard, that just failed. I made a comment that we are trying to find \$10 grand to put the music program back in the program, in full transparency, I did speak with Dr. Fortuna and I spoke with Kara last week at the band concert. I would like to get an accounting of the music, specific chorus, across the district of the programs, the things that were cut. I would also as that Mr. Sheldon and Ms. McGregor and Mr. Ballister comment on what the priorities are, and as president of the Musicators, what can we do to fill in those gaps. We have such a strong program, last week there were 120 kids on the stage and tomorrow those 120 kids will be going for Trills and Thrills, 3 busses full of kids. I have my daughter at home sorting snacks and we got water, so we have some traction. We are so disappointed obviously that the override did not pass and the cuts we are sustaining. I am making a formal request, for the accounting of everything that was reduced and then working with the teachers and working with you as well. What can we fundraise for based on what their priorities are.

Peter Beardmore 292 Pleasant Street. I want to talk about money, I recognize that the defeat of the override was a lot of things, demoralizing is probably very high on that list. I think it's caused a lot of

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people to think about what do we do next? How do we approach this? Two to one majority against seems insurmountable obstacle, to think about how we fund the town and our schools over the course of the next several years. I would encourage people to keep an open mind. I think Selectmen Emkey, said very astutely last night that clearly there isn't an appetite to go back and try to run the same play again for an override, given what has happened. I look at between 700 and 800 votes on the "for side" and I think well its five or take what we got last time. There was an opposition, there was a campaign, and there wasn't a sufficient story ask message campaign on the other side to go and get this thing. We have over 1500 kids in our schools and we came up with 700 to 800 votes, I don't think we need to bring back the same proposal, in fact, I wouldn't. I think there are things we can do differently, but we cannot give up, we cannot concede. That budget that we are going to run next year is the level of service that we can continue to offer in perpetuity in Lunenburg. Your job is to represent the kids and that is going to seem a little ironic to some people who are here, who were part of the many arguments that I had with Carol Archambault over the years about what your job is. They don't have a voice, they don't have a vote, and it is really incumbent upon you to make sure that the voice is heard to our executive leaders and to our finance committee, to our town manager and to the voters at town meeting and to voters at the ballot box. Candidly there needs to be more of both. I know there has been talk about do we reopen the budget and I think that there is a developing consensus amongst members of your board, members of the select board and members of the finance committee to not do that. I wonder why. In my opinion, if things are as bad as we said they were going to be, and we said they were going to be, and here we are, then we need to be clawing and scratching for every dollar we can get. There is a Senate budget when you look at all of the sources and local aid, there is somewhere between \$350 and \$450,000 depending on how you calculate it. I haven't looked at the budget itself, but that is what I am told, that is what Lunenburg would get if that budget passed. The problem with municipal finance, of course, or state finance is that budget is very unlikely to get through conference committee passed and signed by the governor inside of the end of July right? That's probably the time frame, the second half of July. Last year was an anomaly, they actually passed it at the end of June, so it could happen, but is unlikely. So what do we do? Do we wait for an official budget and then figure out what to do with this windfall money or do we start making a plan now and do we lay the foundation in place to act upon those available funds. My opinion is the latter. You should be talking about what you would do the X amount of money. You should be making a request to the select board to schedule a special town meeting, ideally in the month of August. There should be an article that gives you some leeway depending upon the amount of money that is actually made available. There is a scenario where the state could pass the budget in July and in August we can appropriate several hundreds of thousands of dollars to the school department I recognize the fact that plans have to be made, the schedule is set for the high school, layoff notices have gone out, teachers have quit, families have decided to leave, all of this is happening right now, but I think there are impacts that we could affect across the board that we could put 3 to \$400,000 to good use if we put our minds to it. I would encourage you to think about that. Nobody is going to do it based on what I am hearing at the select board of the finance committee, unless you ask. I am asking you to ask and get organized to come up with a plan. I know the town manager would certainly be, I am speculating, but I am sure she would be ready, willing, and able to help you work through the logistics of what that could look like.

4. **Chairs Report** – Our community lost someone special this week, Haddie, you may have seen represented in the myriad of "Hope for Haddie" signs and a lot of the color green, passed away. She was an important member of this community and I would like for us to hold in our hearts her family, parents, sisters, friends, those who loved her, those who cared about her, our students and our staff, and everyone who was affected by the loss of such a bright angel. So if we could have a moment of silence. Everyone knows there is a half day on Friday, so that our staff can attend the funeral. In the last two weeks Massachusetts School Alliance featured some videos about the school committee, we have had an

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influx of interest in the school. Members have received threats, peoples said some truly vile things, and members were harassed and have had to deal with truly awful, heavily misogynist, hateful things being directed to them and harassment that directly came their way. I am so sorry this happened. This should not be the price to pay for volunteering for school committee. We have a lack of people in town willing to step up and volunteer. After this past two weeks, I worry we are going to have even less people willing. Tony was originally appointed to fill a vacancy, every one of us up ran unopposed. It should not be this difficult to find people, but it is, and I don't think that is good for democracy. I think a lack of options is terrible for democracy. The concept of our government hangs on choice and the ability to choose our representatives. Creating a culture where we don't get to have choices is bad for democracy. I want us to be able to debate and discuss options and examine other points of view and share our points of view, I want alternate options. I want people sharing their thoughts. That is the only way it is going to work, so that we can compromise and work on building systems that benefit everyone. We are a town of 11,000 people, we are a small community, we are neighbors, we are friends, we drive on the same roads, our kids might go to school together, we see each other out and about. We call the same town home, we are a community. Humans are supposed to care about each other, humans evolve to have social groups and social bonds, we evolve to take care of each other, and I am really disappointed right now in this community and the wider Massachusetts community, I am very disappointed. Our job as the school committee is to advocate for the schools, to speak for the kids, to make sure that we have an adequately funded school system that is going to give the children of Lunenburg an education that will help them achieve their goals and become happy, healthy, functioning adults. That is our responsibility that is what we are elected to do. That is our duty and it is one we all take very seriously. Our duty is to kids, they cannot vote, they can't even make a public comment at town meeting without a sponsor. They have no voice in the decisions that have been made in this town, but the decisions that were made are going to affect these kids for the rest of their lives. With the class sizes next year, there is about 100 kids or more in each grade, they are going to have class sizes of 27 to 30. That is over 400 people who in this town are very much affected by that. Asking for the override was our duty as a school committee because that is how it was going to get the kids what they need. There is going to be an election for select board, there are two openings and there is going to be a special elections, we need people to run for select board, which is on the heels of scrutiny, it is not looking very appealing to run for public office right now, but we need people to step up and run. If you are considering that please do, there will be a special election soon, you need to gather signatures to get on the ballot, please consider stepping up and serving.

5. **Student Representative Report** – Graduation is June 6th, there is a book and bake sale at the library. The last day for the district is June 18th, 5th grade graduation is June 17th and 8th grade graduation is June 18th.
6. **Review and Approve Minutes**
 - a. **Regular session 4/1/26 Ms. Young makes a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Russell seconds the motion all approve.**
7. **Review and Approve Line Items, Transfers, Warrants**
 - a. **Line Item Transfers**
 - b. **Warrants 5/19/26 to 5/28/26 \$170,395.88**
 - c. **Donations** – Turkey Hill book fair donation of \$255.38 **Ms Young makes a motion to accept the donation, Ms. Russell seconds the motion all approve**
8. **Superintendent's Report** Dr. Fortuna reports our community has had a mix of emotions in the past week, as we mourn the loss of one of our bright learners, Haddie, while also getting ready to celebrate

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our graduates on Saturday. Dr. Fortuna also expresses her appreciation of our community, parents and booster and willingness to work together, but also to be transparent, after legal consultation we want to publicly clarify legal, and ethical and management rules that govern how the funds can be used. While we do not want to discourage the incredible generosity, but to make sure every dollar raised is used equitably for all of the students. Dr. Fortuna also shares an update on the status of our students following our end of year testing.

9. New Business Action

- a. **Physical Education Credits** High School student Eden Perrine brings attention to the discussion regarding a waiver for PE credits in exchange for Varsity sport participation. Mr. Santry explains some of the reasons regarding not supporting the waiver. Topic is waived until the full committee is present to discuss
- b. **Elementary School Report Cards** Ms. Squier has provided the committee a new proposed report card and an outline of how they came to this decision. This would be a standards based report card and would be for kindergarten through 5th grade.
- c. **FY 27 School Handbooks** The principals discuss all sustenance changes in each handbook **Ms. Young makes a motion to accept the FY 27 handbooks, Ms. Russell seconds the motion all approve**
- d. **5th Grade Band Proposal** Mr. Ballister has developed a proposal to have the fifth grade band meet before school on Tuesdays and Thursdays and charge \$100 per student, with a goal of 20 students. **Ms. Young makes a motion to approve the proposal, Ms. Russell seconds the motion all approve.**

10. Old Business Action

- a. **2025-2026 School Improvement Plan** Ms. Squier has provided the committee with a comprehensive four page update on the progress of their three goals. Mr. Yvon also provided the committee with an updated school improvement plan. Mr. Santry shares the update for the Middle and the High School
- b. **Facilities and Grounds Report** Chris Stevens updates the status of projects and plans throughout the district **Ms. Young makes a motion to accept the facilities and grounds report, Ms. Russell seconds the motion all approve**

11. **Public Comments for issues discussed tonight Mr. Sullivan** Softball won tonight, they move on to the Elite 8 for the first time in history, 10 to 6, lacrosse did not fare as well unfortunately. As a parent to two student athletes, my daughter is graduating after 6 years of varsity track in the spring and winter and four years of varsity soccer, the opportunity for her, if she had a waiver in any capacity would have given her the opportunity to take a different academic program, the first part of her senior year she had gym, which my understanding is probably not an enjoyable experience as a senior with the freshmen. I would encourage you to consider that. I would say to look at the encouragement of more participation in high school sports, if it's a sport that may have cuts, like basketball or soccer, there is an opportunity for cross country or track. This fall we had 48 seniors participating in sports, that's 41% of the senior class participated in sports, 8 seniors on the boys basketball team, 4 seniors on the girls basketball team, 18 seniors in spring and indoor track and 12 boys on the lacrosse team, 5 seniors on the baseball team and 4 girls on our softball team. The more you can participate, you can encourage kids to participate in sports, I think a waiver would possibly do that in some of these sports. Mr. Santry talked about the chronic absence of students, this would not solve everything but if kids participate in sports they have to be in school. I am now the chair of the parks commission, and I want to start in some capacity a better

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relationship with the school committee and superintendent's office regarding scheduling and use of fields and so forth. We need to work collaboratively in a timely manner to get facilities scheduled so we can run the summer programming, the same capacity that we need to work with the schools and athletic director to make sure that our fields are up and running for baseball and softball. We can't wait a month to get access to the scheduling program. We are in a crunch where school is ending in a few weeks and we don't have field use yet to be able to run summer programming. If there is anything I can do to help or anything we need to figure out, we can meet together and sit down and talk. We need to make sure we are squaring that away as soon as possible.

Jared Perrine, 18 Whitetail Crossing I want to reiterate in terms of summer programming for the kids, we tend to book our summer camps in April for our family, in fact our summer is booked up now, so even if the town did offer something, we are full, this happens every year. As a town we really should have those things in place for people to schedule during April break. Regarding the waiver for PE credits, there are many communities in the state that offer this, they don't call them waivers they call them credits. They offer PE credits for sport, if I can help in any way let me know. I have been on parent advisory councils for 10 years, I am on the middle school council now, I just follow my kids up, and if you need help rounding up policies or anything I can do to help. Ash/West and Littleton are two local districts that offer this. This is in no way discriminatory, the policy would be giving credit to the sports that we offer to the kids, I don't think title IX is a good reason to not offer PE credit for kids that want to take other classes. We offer other opportunities to our kids or at least in my district where I work offer early college and all these AP classes and I think any anything that we can do to keep kids in school, to keep kids active. We cut middle school sports, we have to drive kids to every game. You know, most people don't get out of work until five o'clock. I don't know how that's going to work for families and neither do you. I understand we're all on the same page here, but, anything that we can do to get kids involved with sports and to get kids coming to school, kids don't come to school to go to history class. Kids come to school to see their friends, to play sports so, however I can help, I'd be happy to do that.

12. **Reports from Sub-Committees** Ms. Brzozoski reports the Municipal Building Design Committee met on Monday and we are stuck right now because of finances in the town. The town manager had mentioned that we could go back and look at TCP plot, which is where we started. We do have a survey that got sent out this week to all department heads to talk about space needs so we can assess space needs vs space wants.

Kara Harunkiewicz Student council has a fundraiser next Wednesday at Cherry Hill, we have raffle baskets and ice cream. It is on June 10th from 4 to close.

13. **Topics for Future Discussion** override request, athletics,

14. **Adjournment** Ms. Young makes a motion to adjourn at 8:52, Ms. Russell seconds the motion all approve.

Submitted Respectfully,

Courtney Fuller