

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Members Present: Caesar Nuzzolo, Michael-Ray Jeffreys, Tom Alonzo, Renee Emkey

Members Absent: Amanda Moore

Also Present: Jennifer Warren-Dyment, Town Manager

Public Comment Participants are listed in the minutes

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Caesar Nuzzolo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Nuzzolo informed attendees that the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live and would be uploaded to YouTube after the meeting. He explained that the agenda listed topics that may be discussed, but not all items may be addressed and other items not listed could be brought up as permitted by open meeting law.

BOARD COMMENTS

Member Alonzo announced he would not be seeking re-election to the Select Board this year and encouraged candidates to run for his seat. He also announced the Town Caucus will be held on March 10, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Glenn McLeod of 436 Reservoir Road commented on the municipal building design update agenda item and expressed concern about the town's management of existing buildings and their issues.

George Burden, 39 Cortland Circle, raised several concerns regarding not being able to attend the Finance Committee Appointing Committee Meeting that was held this evening. He commented he was not sent the Zoom details and could not attend the meeting. He elaborated on issues with public record requests and the Town's relationship with a company based out of New York that has human rights violations. He expressed concerns about feeling attacked after raising concerns about tax assessments, and his taxes went down 33% and the value of his home went down.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER BOARDS

None.

SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

None.

APPOINTMENTS, RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

Acknowledge the resignation of John E. Baker, Constable, effective May 2025

Chair Nuzzolo read a resignation letter from John E. Baker, the town constable, effective May 2025. Mr. Baker, who has served Lunenburg in various capacities since 1969, expressed his decision to step down from the position to allow "some young blood to fill this position." He noted in his letter that it has been his honor to have served this town all these years. Board members took a moment to express their gratitude for Mr. Baker's long service. Member Alonzo personally thanked Mr. Baker, recalling his years of service, not only as a constable but also for his involvement with the police force and other committees. Chair Nuzzolo echoed these sentiments, appreciating Mr. Baker's decades of dedication to the town. It was noted that the constable position is an elected role, responsible primarily for posting town meeting and election warrants.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Warren-Dyment provided her report to the Board, beginning with project updates. She reported the replacement of the floors in the Library teen room and story room is complete. Phase 2 of the project will commence once the doors for the Library Director's office have arrived and the director has relocated. The Town Hall roof replacement and chimney restoration project has not seen any updates due to unfavorable weather conditions. She stated the Invitation for Bids for cleaning services for municipal buildings was released today. She also reported that the Town has entered into a contract with BETA Group for design and engineering services to develop sidewalk design plans along Northfield Road and Highland/Chestnut Street. The contract also includes an assessment of sidewalk and ramp replacements and repairs as identified in the Town's 2020 ADA Transition Plan. The total contract amount is \$119,010, which is funded through Chapter 90.

The Town Manager reported that the Division of Local Services has informed the Town that the Schedule A for Fiscal Year 2024 has been processed and approved. She provided an update on the long-duration winter storm impacted the community this past weekend. The Public Works Crew worked tirelessly for thirty-three consecutive hours to ensure public safety. She also updated the Board on a conference call with Congresswoman Trahan, Department Head meetings, and her visits to various Town Departments. She also stated she is considering closing public-facing offices for two to three hours on March 17, 2025 for a staff engagement event. She also provided an update on current vacancies.

OLD BUSINESS

Action Re: Sell or Hold 56 Carr Avenue: The Board discussed the timeline for making a decision on this property. They agreed to table the matter until spring when an assessment could be done without snow cover, targeting the first meeting in April.

Review Draft of Cannabis Control Commission Host Community Agreement for Bliss

Cannabis: The Board reviewed the draft agreement with Bliss Cannabis. Vice-Chair Jeffreys expressed concerns about some of the hiring practice language required by the state but said he supports the business coming to town.

Member Alonzo moved to authorize the Town Manager to execute the host community agreement with Uma Flowers on behalf of the Select Board. Seconded by Member Jeffreys. Call for vote: Three-Yes. One-No (Jeffreys). Motion passed (3-1-0).

Discussion on Workplace Climate Survey Policy: The Board reviewed the redlined version of the policy contained within their packet.

Vice-Chair Jeffreys moved to approve the Workplace Climate Survey Policy, to be identified as section 2.13 of the Select Board policies and procedures. Seconded by Chair Nuzzolo. Call for vote: Four-Yes. Motion passed (4-0-0).

Member Emkey noted the need to get the Personnel Committee in place, stating the position has been vacant for nearly a year.

Discussion on Select Board and Town Manager Goal-Setting Process: The Chair passed over this item.

Review and Discussion on Budget Task Force Recommendations: Member Emkey discussed the recommendation to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and discussed the timing of when to bring the matter to a Town Meeting. She discussed other projects that may have an impact on taxpayers.

Municipal Building Design Update: Vice-Chair Jeffreys provided an update on the municipal building design project and stated that the Committee has not met since last presenting to the Select Board. He stated that discussions have started with Bond Counsel and finance staff on borrowing details. The Committee is preparing their presentation for Town Meeting and is considering holding tours of Town buildings. The Board discussed receiving any additional staff feedback by the March 11th Select Board meeting when the Committee will give their next update.

Discussion on FY2025 Budget, FY2026 Budget, Capital Plan, and Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles: Chair Nuzzolo stated the Town Manager planned to give her budget presentation on February 27th. Board members discussed the potential \$3.5 million deficit in the School budget. Members stated they need to see more information and details before fully forming their opinion and expressed interest in meeting jointly with the School Committee and discussed potential scheduling options including holding a special meeting. Member Emkey expressed concerns with the timing.

The Board then turned their discussion to reviewing the Town Meeting Warrant articles and discussed a schedule for reviewing and approving the Warrant. The Board discussed having proponents of warrant articles appear before the Select Board.

Review ARPA Press Release: The Board reviewed the draft ARPA press release and suggested changing the phrase "Munis and Web Deployment" to "Munis and Cloud Deployment" and correcting the "Village of Flat Hills" to "Village of Flat Hill".

Member Alonzo moved to approve the ARPA press release with revisions as discussed. Seconded by Chair Nuzzolo. Call for vote: Four-Yes. Motion passed (4-0-0).

CURRENT BUSINESS

None.

MINUTES/WARRANTS/ACTION ITEMS

The Board passed over the review of the regular Session Minutes for January 15, 2025, February 4, 2025, and February 11 2025. The Town Manager stated the January 21, 2025 minutes listed on the agenda had already been approved. The Board reviewed an accounts payable warrant for \$408,887.23.

Board Members discussed action items, with Chair Nuzzolo stating he had created an action item tracking sheet. The Board discussed creating Board and Committee specific handbooks, an organizational chart tagged with job descriptions, a State of the Organization report which would summarize staff departures, organizing the shared drive, obtaining the full results from the workplace survey, and addressing meeting room temperature issues.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee: Member Alonzo reported that the Finance Committee Appointing Committee, which had convened earlier in the day, successfully appointed two new members, Ana Lockwood and Michael Rupp, to the Finance Committee. He added that the Committee was under some time pressure to fill these vacancies, as they were critical for the Finance Committee's continued operation. Both appointees were expected to attend their next meeting after getting sworn in.

Board of Assessors: Member Alonzo mentioned that he would be meeting with the Principal Assessor, a member from the Board of Assessors, and Lou Franco to discuss the mechanics of implementing the senior tax abatements, which were a result of recent special legislation. He noted the importance of this meeting in establishing a systematic process to inform seniors in the community about the tax abatement opportunities available to them.

John Bowen of 162 Highland Street interjected from Zoom. Due to a glitch, he had become Zoom "host".

UPCOMING MEETING/EVENTS SCHEDULE

Chair Nuzzolo announced the Board is meeting on March 4, 2025 and March 11, 2025

TOWN MANAGER COMMENT

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Bowen of 162 Highland Street commented on federal funding for students and expressed concerns about voting procedures at Town Meeting.

BOARD COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Alonzo moved to adjourn. Chair Nuzzolo seconded the motion. Call for vote: Four- Yes. Motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

The Board adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Annie Aubrey,
Executive Assistant to the Town Manager

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Select Board on:
Tuesday March 11, 2025

Member Emkey made the Motion to Approve the minutes from February 18, 2025. Seconded by Clerk Moore. Call for the vote: Five-aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).