

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Members Present: Chair Caesar Nuzzolo, Vice-Chair Michael-Ray Jeffreys, Clerk Amanda Moore , Member Tom Alonzo, and Member Renee Emkey

Members Absent: none

Also Present: Jennifer Warren-Dyment, Town Manager

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Caesar Nuzzolo called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM 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.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Board Comment

Member Tom Alonzo offered remarks in memory of John Latanzi, a well-known and long-time community member who passed away recently. Mr. Latanzi served on the Personnel Board, the Conservation Commission, and the Historical Society. He noted Mr. Latanzi's impact on the town and his children's continued involvement in the community.

Public Comment

None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Nuzzolo announced that Spring 2025 Yard Waste Days will begin at 27 Youngs Road on Saturdays through the end of May, except Memorial Day weekend. Residents are encouraged to visit the Town website or contact the DPW for details. He also stated that a Marshall Park community meeting would be held on Saturday, April 26 at 10:00 AM at the T.C. Passios Gymnasium. Additionally, a town-wide Vendor Fair will take place on May 10 from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM outside the same location.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER BOARDS

Tony Sculimbrene, 5 Island Road Chair of the Architectural Preservation District Commission (APDC), addressed the Board to clarify that his earlier comments were personal and not those of the full APDC, which had not met at the time. After a formal APDC meeting, the commission expressed disappointment with the lack of progress on Article 10, passed at the November 2024 Special Town Meeting, concerning the Brooks House. The APDC requested an update be delivered at the Annual Town Meeting in May.

SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

7:10 PM Application for Weekday Entertainment and Jukebox License for Blue Sky Golf, Pals Golf Lounge, LLC, 5 Summer Street

Darren Storms, 35 Upland Ave of Blue Sky Golf Lounge at 5 Summer Street appeared before the Board to request a weekday entertainment license, jukebox license, and automatic amusement license. Mr. Storms stated that he planned to install a jukebox and video game machines in the facility. Town Manager Warren-Dymont confirmed all paperwork was in order.

Motion by Member Alonzo to approve the weekday Entertainment and Jukebox License and Automatic Amusement license for Blue Sky Golf, Pals Golf Lounge, LLC, 5 Summer Street. Seconded by Vice-Chair Michael-Ray Jeffreys. Call for the vote: Five-aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

7:20 PM Public Hearing for an Alteration to Licensed Premises for the §12 (on-premises) alcohol license for Jiang Jun Lou Inc. D/B/A Asian Imperial, located at 5 Electric Avenue
Chair Nuzzolo stated that although noticed as a public hearing, no formal hearing will be held. The Board had a brief discussion with the applicant and contractor regarding a proposed outdoor patio addition at Asian Imperial, located at 5 Electric Avenue. The new patio would include stone walls, seating for 22, and appropriate lighting and exits in compliance with fire and building codes. Member Alonzo raised questions about jurisdiction and whether outdoor alcohol service requires additional planning board oversight.

The contractor and owner stated that they will work with the Building Department and Fire Department to meet all safety and code requirements. No vote was taken; a formal hearing will be re-noticed for a future meeting.

7:30 PM Health Insurance Renewal with Susan Shillue of Cook & Company

Susan Shillue of Cook & Company provided a detailed overview of the FY2025 health insurance renewal, which showed a significant premium increase of approximately 15%. She explained the contributing factors, including limited municipal market competition, rising costs of specialty prescriptions, and the aging municipal workforce. Clerk Amanda Moore and Vice-Chair Jeffreys expressed concerns about sustainability, high premiums, and the structure of current municipal offerings. Ms. Shillue discussed challenges in adopting three-tier pricing models and the lack of short-term cost-saving solutions, emphasizing the need for long-term plan design conversations.

7:45 PM Marshall Park Project Presentation by Anita Scheipers, Chair, Parks Commission

Anita Scheipers, Chair of the Parks Commission, gave a presentation on a revised proposal to redevelop Marshall Park. The original \$19M full master plan was scaled back to a \$13.7M proposal focused on current field and recreation areas, with a backup \$6.46M reduced version. Highlights included new ADA-compliant restrooms, renovated ballfields, parking expansions, basketball and pickleball courts, and a universally accessible playground. She described efforts to secure grants, including from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and PARC program, and noted plans to hire a grant writer. Facilities Director Chris Ruth developed a detailed maintenance cost estimate of \$53,000 annually. Board members praised the multi-generational design and discussed timelines, grant eligibility, and community benefits. A final vote will occur at Town Meeting.

APPOINTMENTS, RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Jennifer Warren-Dyment reported that the House budget includes a \$50,000 earmark intended for educational programs in Lunenburg, likely for the school district. The Flat Hill Road Bridge will remain closed indefinitely after underwater inspection revealed advanced pipe deterioration. This condition is unrelated to recent construction. The Eagle House kitchen project is nearly complete, pending punch list items. The Ritter Building roof replacement has been delayed due to the weather, but is under contract until April 30.

NEW BUSINESS

Consider Letter of Support for the Establishment of a Satellite Emergency Facility (SEF) by UMass Memorial Health (UMMH)

The Board reviewed a draft letter expressing support for the establishment of a Satellite Emergency Facility (SEF) proposed by UMass Memorial Health. This facility would offer enhanced emergency care services in the region, potentially reducing travel time for critical care and improving access for Lunenburg residents. Board members acknowledged the importance of such a facility in supporting local and regional public health infrastructure but emphasized the need for additional information regarding the long-term operational model, staffing, and anticipated service volume. While all members generally expressed support for the concept, they held off on voting, citing a desire to ensure the letter accurately reflects community expectations and aligns with regional planning. Town Manager Warren-Dyment indicated that additional communication with UMass Memorial representatives would be forthcoming before the Board takes formal action.

Discussion on Sick Leave Bank Policy

The Board reviewed the current Sick Leave Bank Policy, which provides eligible employees the option to donate accrued leave for use by colleagues experiencing extended medical hardship. Members reviewed the policy's enrollment procedures, governance, and approval process. Concerns were raised about clarity in language, particularly regarding eligibility thresholds, caps on donations, and decision-making authority. Suggestions were made to more explicitly define the role of the Sick Leave Bank Committee and streamline the request process. Town Manager Warren-Dyment noted that a revised draft incorporating these changes would be brought back for further review.

Discussion on Merit Award Policy

The Board discussed updates to the Town's Merit Award Policy, which outlines procedures for recognizing employees for exceptional performance through monetary or symbolic awards. The conversation centered on refining eligibility criteria and ensuring an equitable, transparent nomination process. Board members emphasized the importance of defining what constitutes "above and beyond" service and avoiding subjective interpretations. Questions were also raised about funding sources for awards and the frequency of recognition cycles. Town Manager Warren-Dyment agreed to revise the draft based on input and present a final version at a future meeting.

Discussion on Acceptance of Gift Policy

The proposed changes to the Acceptance of Gift Policy were reviewed. This policy governs how monetary and non-monetary donations to the Town are evaluated, approved, and acknowledged.

Board members discussed ensuring alignment with state ethics laws, especially around naming rights, gift valuation, and donor recognition practices. Town Manager Warren-Dymont was asked to clarify language about departmental responsibility for tracking in-kind donations and how such gifts are reflected in annual financial reports. Members also suggested including a provision for transparency when gifts are intended for a specific purpose or project. Further revisions are expected before a formal vote.

Acceptance of cash gift from Peter and Deborah Lincoln for the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center

The Board voted to formally accept \$6,900.00 monetary donation from Peter and Deborah Lincoln, designated for the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center.

Motion by Vice-Chair Jeffreys to accept the cash gift in the amount of \$6,900.00 from Peter and Deborah Lincoln for the installation of blinds at the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center in accordance with MGL ch.44 section 53A. Member Alonzo seconded the motion. Call for the vote: Five-aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Discussion on Updated Charge for Budget Task Force

The Board reviewed a revised draft of the Budget Task Force charge, the document that outlines the committee's composition, scope, and meeting structure. Proposed updates included clarifying member roles, expectations for public communication, and the process for developing multi-year fiscal projections. Vice-Chair Jeffreys stated the importance of explicitly outlining the Task Force's advisory capacity and relationship to the Select Board and Town Manager. It was agreed that the final language would be refined to reflect these concerns. The updated charge will be reintroduced at a future meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion on 56 Carr Ave Sell or Hold

The Board revisited the question of whether to retain or sell the Town-owned property located at 56 Carr Avenue. Town Manager Warren-Dymont provided a brief update, noting that there had been no significant changes since the last discussion. Chair Nuzzolo suggested further evaluation of the site's development potential and alignment with broader planning goals before a final recommendation is made.

Discussion on FY2025 Budget, FY2026 Budget, Capital Plan, and Annual Town Meeting Warrant articles

Town Manager Warren-Dymont provided the Board with updated projections for the FY2025 and FY2026 operating budgets, including revised line items and updated revenue assumptions. A central concern raised during the discussion was the anticipated 15% increase in health insurance premiums. Vice-Chair Jeffreys and Member Alonzo both voiced concern about the sustainability of such cost increases, especially when paired with ongoing contractual obligations and service demands. The Board discussed the importance of balancing immediate departmental needs with long-term financial planning. Chair Nuzzolo asked whether the use of stabilization funds or grant sources might help offset cost pressures. Member Renee Emkey emphasized the need to prioritize essential capital items, particularly for public safety and infrastructure. The Capital

Improvement Plan was reviewed in that context, and questions were raised about timelines for equipment replacements, facility upgrades, and roadway projects.

During review of the Annual Town Meeting warrant articles, Clerk Moore inquired about ensuring clarity in the article language and consistency with budget figures. Town Manager Warren-Dymont confirmed that minor edits were in progress and would be finalized by Town Counsel prior to posting and printing. The Board also discussed whether to mail the Annual Town Meeting warrant to all households, rather than relying solely on physical posting and online distribution. Several members expressed general support for mailing the warrant, citing the importance of transparency and public engagement. Town Manager Warren-Dymont agreed to look into printing and mailing costs and report back at a future meeting before any final decision is made.

MINUTES, WARRANTS, AND ACTION ITEMS

The Board reviewed the draft meeting minutes from the Select Board's January 30, 2024 meeting.

Motion by Member Alonzo to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of January 30, 2024. Seconded by Vice-Chair Jeffreys. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

The Board reviewed and signed the Town's accounts payable warrant. Chair Nuzzolo stated there is an accounts payable warrant in the amount of \$1,562,534.57.

Action Item: Member Alonzo stated that he would like to get a report on the Village at Flat Hill now that the drainage basin has been redone.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE

The next scheduled Select Board meetings are on April 22, 2025, and May 3, 2025. The May 3 meeting is the Annual Town Meeting and will begin at 9:00 AM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Town Manager Comment

None

Public Comment

None

Board Comment

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Chair Nuzzolo to enter Executive Session and not return to Open Session, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A §21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, and §21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions for negotiations with nonunion

personnel (Police Chief). Seconded by Vice-Chair Jeffreys. Roll Call Vote: Member Emkey – Aye, Member Alonzo – Aye, Clerk Moore – Aye, Vice-Chair Jeffreys – Aye, Chair Nuzzolo– Aye Five - aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 PM following the Executive Session vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca Johnson,
Minute Clerk

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Select Board on: Tuesday, September 29, 2026