

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Members Present: Chair Caesar Nuzzolo, Clerk Amanda Moore, Member Tom Alonzo, and Member Renee Emkey

Members Absent: Vice-Chair Michael-Ray Jeffreys

Also Present: Jennifer Warren-Dyment, Town Manager

Public Comment Participants are listed in the minutes

I. 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 advised those present that the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live over the Lunenburg Public Access Channel, on Facebook Live, and would be uploaded to the Lunenburg Access YouTube Channel following 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.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public

No public comments were received in person or via Zoom.

Board

Member Tom Alonzo announced that May 9th's "Are You Smarter Than a 6th Grader?" event would be held at the high school auditorium, benefitting the Club of Lunenburg. He noted it was the 13th year of the event, though only the 11th time it had been held due to two missed years during COVID, and that he would again serve as emcee. Doors open at 6:30 PM with the event beginning at 7:00 PM.

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Nuzzolo offered the following announcements:

- Annual Town Meeting will be held Saturday, May 3 at 9:00 AM at the Lunenburg Middle-High School auditorium. All registered voters may attend and vote on warrant articles, which include two excluded debt articles for Marshall Park and municipal buildings, and a citizens' petition for an override.
- Clerk Amanda Moore noted that the last day to register to vote for Town Meeting was the following day, April 23.
- The Parks Commission is holding a community meeting on Marshall Park on Saturday, April 26 at 10:00 AM at the TC Passios Gymnasium.
- Spring 2025 Yard Waste Days: The landfill at 27 Youngs Road is open every Saturday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, except Memorial Day weekend, through the end of May.

- The All Vendor Fair will be held May 10th from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM outside TC Passios.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER BOARDS

No representatives from other boards were initially present. The Select Board revisited this item later in the meeting to receive a report from the Green Communities Committee Chair (see below).

Green Communities Committee Report

David Blatt, Chair of the Green Communities Committee, appeared before the Select Board to address two items: an update on the Primary School heat pump grant project, and a proposed change to the Committee's charge.

Heat Pump Grant Update: Mr. Blatt explained that the Committee had become involved in the school's heat pump project to help secure grant and rebate funding from the state's Green Communities program and Unitil/Mass Save. He clarified that the total project cost was approximately \$480,000, of which \$310,000 comprising \$200,000 from Green Communities and \$110,000 from Unitil was contingent upon the installation of a central building control system. The remaining Town/school share would have been approximately \$170,000. Mr. Blatt emphasized that the central control system was a prerequisite for any incentive funding, and that all parties including Green Communities, Unitil, and Mass Save had made this clear to the schools from the outset. Select Board Member Alonzo sought clarification on when the schools were made aware that the two elements were linked, and Mr. Blatt confirmed that the requirement had been communicated early and reiterated when there was any suggestion of delaying the central system. Mr. Blatt further noted that completing the current grant round was necessary before the town could apply for any future Green Communities funding.

Mr. Blatt also reported that the Committee is working with a Unitil representative to arrange free energy audits through Mass Save for Turkey Hill School and the Public Safety Building, in order to identify weatherization and HVAC improvement opportunities ahead of future capital planning cycles.

Proposed Change to Committee Charge: Mr. Blatt requested that the language in the Committee's charge be updated to replace the designation of "associates" with "alternates," so that those members may serve as voting members when needed to achieve a quorum. He noted this would also serve as a better incentive for recruiting new members. Member Alonzo suggested the change be reviewed by Town Counsel to confirm legality, and Chair Nuzzolo indicated he had no objection to the update. The Select Board agreed to move forward with the change, pending Town Counsel review. Mr. Blatt also noted he expected to bring a candidate for appointment to the Committee at the next meeting.

Board Directives: Member Alonzo commended Mr. Blatt and the Committee for their long-standing work, citing savings on street lighting as a notable example, monthly streetlight costs having been reduced from over \$10,000 to approximately \$1,500 per month following the LED conversion. He called on the Town Manager to schedule a summer meeting with key department heads to ensure they engage the Green Communities Committee early in any capital project planning process. Member Emkey suggested incorporating a Green Communities consultation check into the capital plan submission process. The Town Manager concurred that both approaches were warranted.

V. SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

There were no scheduled meetings or hearings.

VI. APPOINTMENTS, RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

There were no appointments, ratifications, or resignations.

VII. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

The Town Manager provided the following updates:

- **Chief Thibodeau Swearing-In:** The pinning and swearing-in ceremony for the new Chief was held the prior Friday evening. Chair Nuzzolo served as emcee and was commended for his role. The Town Manager acknowledged that both she and several Select Board members were unable to attend due to prior commitments, but noted that Lunenburg Public Access Cable (PACC) filmed the event and a video would be released to the community shortly.
- **State FY2026 Budget:** The House of Representatives is scheduled to begin debate on the FY2026 budget on April 28. The House Ways and Means Committee recommended a 6.7% increase in Chapter 70 funding and level-funded unrestricted general government aid. The net projected increase for Lunenburg relative to prior planning figures is \$124,310. No budget changes are being made at this time; adjustments, if any, may be addressed at a Special Town Meeting.
- **Council on Aging:** Boston Post Cane: The Lunenburg Council on Aging will celebrate Charles Sanderson, a 101-year-old World War II veteran, with a Boston Post Cane presentation and Century Club welcome on Monday, May 5 at 1:00 PM at the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center.
- **Annual Town Meeting Preparations:** Town Meeting booklets have been mailed to households, posted online, and will be available at Town Meeting. Large-print budget copies will be available as handouts at the meeting; residents may also request them in advance from the Town Manager's office. Pre-bagged lunches will again be sold by the school department for \$8.00 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, first-come, first-served, with vegetarian options available; town officials should respond to a reservation email by May 1.
- **Annual Town Report:** Due to the recent departure of the Executive Assistant, the Annual Town Report has not yet been sent to the printer. The Town Manager expressed hope that compiling would be completed during the current week, making the report available online prior to Town Meeting, though hard copies are unlikely to be ready in time.
- **Flat Hill Road Bridge:** MassDOT's underwater inspection team identified additional section loss and recommended the bridge remain closed. Town Counsel is reaching out to the contractor to explore any interim solution permitting limited vehicle access pending full repairs.
- **Ritter Building Roof and Gutter:** Work has been slow to start; the contract has been extended through April 30th. The Town Manager indicated that the contractor must commence work before the deadline or a further extension will not be granted.
- **Adult Activity Center Kitchen:** The kitchen renovation is nearly complete; a plumber is scheduled to reweld the sink as the most efficient repair option.
- **Access Control Project:** Commencement is approximately one month away, pending arrival of parts from the vendor.

- **Vacancies:** Six candidates were interviewed for the Executive Assistant position; three have been invited back for a practical skills assessment. A hire is anticipated before the end of May. The part-time Sewer Business Manager assistant position is pending reference checks. Beach director and lifeguard appointments are expected at the next meeting. The Conservation Commission recording secretary position has been reposted externally.
- **Sewer Commission:** The Town Manager issued a public call for residents interested in serving on the Sewer Commission, noting the Commission is in jeopardy of being unable to operate due to a lack of members.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- **Review Annual Town Meeting Consent Calendar**

Chair Nuzzolo reported that, following the pre-Town Meeting session with the Town Moderator, several articles were to be removed from the consent calendar for individual consideration, as they are new to the town: Article 2 (Borrow in Anticipation of Revenue), Article 3 (Expend Funds in Anticipation of Reimbursement of State Highway Aid), and Articles 19 and 20 (Compensated Absences Reserve Fund). The Moderator also concurred with adding Payment of Prior Years' Bills to the standard consent calendar.

Member Alonzo noted that including Payment of Prior Years' Bills in the consent calendar would raise the voting threshold for the entire consent calendar to a four-fifths majority. The Town Manager indicated she had submitted this question to Town Counsel and noted that if the motion were to pass over the article given there are currently no prior fiscal year bills a simple majority might suffice.

Member Emkey raised a question about Article 27 (PEG Access and Cable), expressing some concern that it could draw discussion from the floor and might be worth removing from the consent calendar. The Select Board discussed that any member of the public could pull an individual article from the consent calendar during the meeting, and ultimately agreed to leave Article 27 on the consent calendar as presented.

Motion by Member Alonzo to approve the Annual Town Meeting Consent Calendar. Seconded by Clerk Moore. Call for Vote: Four – Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

IX. OLD BUSINESS

- **Discussion on Sick Leave Bank Policy**

Not discussed.

- **Discussion on Acceptance of Gift Policy**

Not discussed.

- **56 Carr Ave: Sell or Hold**

Not discussed.

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

Chair Nuzzolo noted the Select Board would focus solely on Town Meeting-related items. Two topics were addressed:

Motion Sheet – Non-Select Board Members Making Motions: Chair Nuzzolo raised the question of

whether non-Select Board members should be permitted to make motions on warrant articles appropriately within their purview. Member Alonzo expressed strong support, noting that elected bodies such as the Planning Board and Sewer Commission have historically introduced their own articles, and that this had moved away from that practice in recent years. The Select Board agreed that the Marshall Park article should be moved by the Parks Commission Chair, the Free Cash transfer to the school should be moved by the School Committee Chair, and Planning Board articles should be moved by the Planning Board Chair. Additionally, Member Alonzo and Chair Nuzzolo agreed that citizens' petitions should be moved by the petitioners themselves; if no petitioner is present, the article would not be moved. The Town Manager noted that Town Counsel was traveling but was expected to review the motion sheets shortly.

Pre-Town Meeting Select Board Session: Chair Nuzzolo proposed scheduling a Select Board meeting at 8:30 AM on the morning of Town Meeting, May 3, to vote on any articles that had been deferred. These include Payment of Prior Years' Bills, FY2025 Budget Adjustments and Close-Outs, and the Capital Program. The Select Board agreed to schedule this meeting, with the understanding that it would be cancelled if not needed. Member Alonzo also noted that, to his knowledge, the Capital Planning Committee had not been called upon to review any outstanding items.

The Town Manager noted a minor change to the sewer enterprise budget related to indirect costs that had been corrected in the individual article sheet within the Town Meeting booklet, though the warrant summary reflects the older figure.

X. MINUTES/WARRANTS/ACTION ITEMS

There were no minutes or warrants to act upon.

Regarding action items, Member Emkey raised the outstanding tax investigation report and the ten questions that had been submitted in connection with it, noting that only two Select Board meetings remained before the municipal election. Chair Nuzzolo indicated this matter was scheduled for the May 6 meeting.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Member Emkey reported that the School Committee met the prior week and discussed the planned use of \$500,000 in free cash should it be approved at Town Meeting primarily for staff replenishment. The Committee also reviewed a draft ADA study for Turkey Hill School, which identified priorities including the building envelope, roof, windows, and doors. Preliminary figures to carry the building forward 20 to 30 years were estimated at approximately \$16 million. Additionally, four superintendent candidates are scheduled for interviews beginning the following week, with a vote on a finalist anticipated during the week of May 5–9. Member Emkey also noted that the Stormwater Task Force was meeting Thursday of that week.

Clerk Moore reported that the Master Plan Committee was meeting the following day, and the Economic Development Committee was meeting on May 1. She noted that an Economic Development Committee report was outstanding and would be provided at the next meeting.

Chair Nuzzolo and Member Alonzo had no committee reports.

XII. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE

- Annual Town Meeting: Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 9:00 AM, Lunenburg Middle-High School Auditorium
- Select Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 6, 2025

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

• PUBLIC

David Blatt, 411 Goodrich Street, offered public comment expressing concern that holding Town Meeting on a Saturday creates barriers to participation for residents with religious observances or family commitments, and called on the Select Board to consider alternative scheduling in the future.

• TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Warren-Dymment had no additional comment.

• BOARD

Member Alonzo, speaking in the spirit of public comment, encouraged broad community participation at Town Meeting, describing it as "the purest form of democracy you will find in America." He noted the significance of the articles before Town Meeting this year, including a \$49 million-plus omnibus budget, a \$22-plus million municipal building project, and a \$13-plus million Marshall Park plan, and urged residents to attend and participate regardless of their position on the articles.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 7:49 PM was made by Member Emkey and seconded by Clerk Moore. Call for Vote: Four – Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Renee Emkey

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Select Board on: Tuesday, September 15, 2026