

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, May 6, 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

Chair Nuzzolo thanked residents who attended the Annual Town Meeting and recognized the efforts of staff and volunteers who contributed to the event. He expressed appreciation to Town Manager Warren-Dyment, Assistant Town Manager/HR Director Julie Belliveau, and Communications & IT Manager Kara McCarthy for their planning and support. He also acknowledged Charles Sanderson, a 101-year-old World War II veteran, who was honored with the Boston Post Cane and a Quilt of Valor at the Adult Activity Center.

Public Comment

Laura Brzozoski of 21 Frances Avenue spoke as a resident and parent, urging the Board to either vote immediately to place a FY26 override on the ballot or commit to pursuing a FY27 override via a November Special Town Meeting. She cited impending staff layoffs, high school scheduling constraints, and ongoing morale issues within the schools as reasons for urgent action.

Pete and Debbie Lincoln of 46 Hemlock Drive offered thanks to outgoing Board members Jeffreys and Alonzo for their dedication and service, presenting a small gift to be opened after May 17.

Peter Beardmore of 282 Pleasant Street advocated for holding a special override election, stating that the citizen petition that passed at Town Meeting reflected public will and that further delay would increase disruption and uncertainty for school staff and administration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Nuzzolo announced the following upcoming events: Are You Smarter Than Our Sixth Graders? fundraiser on May 9, Lunenburg Business Association Vendor Fair on May 10, Yard waste days on May 10, 17, and 31 and the Classic Cruise Night on May 21.

He stated that reminders were issued regarding outstanding 2025 census forms, dog licenses, and absentee ballots for the May 17 election.

SCHEDULED MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

7:10 PM – Use Agreement for the temporary use of four classrooms at TC Passios by the Shapiro Educational and Behavioral Consultants.

Rob Shapiro, 144 Northfield Rd / 39 Main Street, requested the temporary use of four classrooms at TC Passios for a summer program supporting children with autism. Town Manager Warren-Dymont confirmed a license agreement had been prepared for June 1 through August 31 at a rate of \$500 per classroom per month. Board members voiced support for the program and discussed climate control concerns and ADA considerations.

Motion by Member Tom Alonzo to authorize the Town Manager to execute the use agreement. Seconded by Vice-Chair Michael-Ray Jeffreys. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The 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

Clerk Amanda Moore read the public hearing notice. Jiang Jun Lou was present and has requested to expand the alcohol license premises to include an 8x15 stone patio. The Board confirmed that the required documents were submitted, and support had been received from relevant departments. Alan Graham, 13 Electric Ave was present via zoom. he spoke in support of the license and stated that they have always been great neighbors.

Motion by Member Alonzo to close the public hearing. Seconded by Clerk Moore. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion by Member Alonzo to approve the alteration of alcohol license premises for Asian Imperial as presented. Seconded by Vice-Chair Jeffreys. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

Ratification of the Town Manager's Appointment of Owen Snyder as Lifeguard Motion by Member Alonzo to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Owen Snyder as Lifeguard. Seconded by Clerk Moore. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Ratification of the Town Manager's Appointment of Susan Sullivan as Assistant to the Sewer Business Manager

Motion by Clerk Moore to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Susan Sullivan as Assistant to the Sewer Business Manager. Seconded by Member Renee Emkey. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Ratification of the Town Manager's Appointment of Herlin Jaime as Acting Conservation Agent

Motion by Member Alonzo to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Herlin Jaime as Acting Conservation Agent. Seconded by Clerk Moore. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

The Town Manager reported that there was no formal update this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

Post-Town Meeting Discussion

The Board and Town Manager Warren-Dyment commended staff, Public Access, and volunteers for a well-run Annual Town Meeting. Member Alonzo stated that the meeting was organized and appreciated citizen engagement.

There was a brief discussion about the potential scheduling of a special election for a Proposition 2½ override. The citizen petition passed at Town Meeting by a narrow margin 96–94. They discussed having a special election. Member Emkey, Member Alonzo, and Clerk Moore stated that they are still not in favor of having a special election. Chair Nuzzolo and Vice-Chair Jeffreys support the special election and have the voters decide. No vote was taken.

Vote to Declare Various IT Items as Surplus Property

Motion by Member Alonzo to declare approximately 65–70 monitors, 26 desktop towers, 5–7 printers, 8 switches, and five 10X10 boxes of cables and keyboards as surplus. Seconded by Vice-Chair Jeffreys. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Vote to Accept Gift of Holiday Decorations from Dave MacDonald

Motion by Member Alonzo to accept the gift of Holiday decorations from Dave MacDonald with thanks. Seconded by Clerk Moore. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion of Sick Leave Bank Policy

Chair Nuzzolo stated that the Town Manager and HR Director have been looking into comparisons and draft procedures for a potential town-wide sick leave bank policy. The Board discussed potential thresholds, tracking by hours, and equity across bargaining units. A meeting with union representatives is being scheduled. No vote was taken.

Discussion on Acceptance of Gift Policy:

The Board reviewed draft language and suggested edits, including increasing the Town Manager acceptance threshold from \$500 to \$1,000, clarifying anonymous gift acceptance, and excluding School Department gifts. Final review and town counsel feedback are pending.

Discussion on Select Board and Town Manager Goal Setting Process:

Members agreed to revisit this item with the new Board following the election.

Tax Investigation Report:

Vice-Chair Jeffreys presented a detailed summary of findings from the Board's investigation into FY23 lakefront property tax increases. The report concluded that although assessments followed DOR standards, they resulted in disproportionate impacts due to a narrow data set and lack of oversight. The Board discussed the need for stronger data controls and supervision of assessing operations going forward.

56 Carr Ave: Sell or Hold:

Discussion was deferred to a future meeting.

Discussion on Budget Task Force Charge:

Chair Nuzzolo stated that they left off discussing membership. The Board discussed revisiting the original purpose and responsibilities of the Budget Task Force to determine whether its current structure remains effective. There was a discussion on the need to clarify the charge, timeline, and reporting expectations of the group, particularly in light of evolving financial challenges. The Board had a discussion regarding the makeup of the committee and agreed to one Select Board member, one School Committee member, two Finance Committee members, and one at-large member. Town Manager Warren-Dyment proposed reviewing past documentation and drafting potential revisions to the charge for future review will be brought back at a future meeting once additional information and input from relevant stakeholders are gathered.

MINUTES, WARRANTS, AND ACTION ITEMS

The Board reviewed the draft meeting minutes from the Select Board's March 11, 2025 meeting.

Motion by Member Alonzo to approve the Select Board meeting minutes of March 11, 2025.

Seconded by Vice-Chair Jeffreys. Call for the vote: Four-aye, One - Abstention, Clerk Moore. The motion passed (4-0-1).

The Board did not vote on or execute any new warrants during the meeting.

Vice-Chair Jeffreys requested an organizational chart.

Chair Nuzzolo stated that he will be doing a purge of the shared drive. He would like to have a discussion regarding Board-specific handbooks and create a goal for the upcoming year.

Town Manager Warren-Dyment informed the Board that standard vendor and payroll warrants had been processed as part of routine operations, and that a full list of executed warrants would be provided at the next regularly scheduled meeting for public transparency and recordkeeping. The Board agreed to resume warrant review at that time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Member Emkey stated that the School Committee had recently conducted interviews with four candidates for the superintendent position. Three interviews had already taken place, and the fourth was scheduled for that evening, with the Committee expected to make a decision the following day. Member Emkey added that the Stormwater Task Force would be meeting in the coming weeks and that the Stormwater Committee was meeting concurrently with the Select

Board. Other members stated they had no formal committee reports, noting that many updates had already been shared during the Annual Town Meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE

Chair Nuzzolo referenced upcoming events and reminded residents of the May 17 election.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Town Manager Comment

None

Public Comment

TJ Laughlin, 207 Rolling Acres Road was present via zoom, he asked for clarification about the impact of \$1.5 million in abatements referenced during the meeting, seeking to understand whether the Town's tax levy had increased. Member Alonzo responded that the abatements resulted in uncollected revenue but did not affect the tax levy. Mr. Laughlin then expressed concern that the Board was not acting in accordance with the will of Town Meeting voters who supported a citizen petition related to the override. He asserted that the Board, as the executive body, has a responsibility to execute the decisions of Town Meeting and not override them based on its own preferences.

Julie Long was present via Zoom. She emphasized the importance of respecting the voices of the 96 Town Meeting voters who supported the override petition, stating that dismissing their input undermines civic engagement and discourages participation. She urged the Board to place the override on the ballot so that the broader community could weigh in through a special election.

John Bowen, 162 Highland Street, echoed concerns about Board discretion overriding citizen input. He expressed frustration over what he described as a pattern of resident suppression in town governance and emphasized that decisions regarding financial matters should remain with the people, not solely with the Board.

Dave Passios, a former Lunenburg resident now residing in New Hampshire, praised the cafeteria staff for their support during Town Meeting and urged the Select Board to take ownership of long-term budget planning. He encouraged the Board to rely on its own administrative and financial resources rather than delegating critical tasks to committees, emphasizing that oversight of budget development is the Board's responsibility.

Board Comment

Member Emkey acknowledged that this was her final meeting alongside outgoing members Jeffreys and Alonzo. She thanked them for their years of service, dedication, and contributions across numerous boards and committees.

Clerk Moore addressed concerns raised during public comments, stating that Select Board members are also residents who volunteer their time in good faith. She reiterated her position that while the Town Meeting vote was meaningful, a non-binding resolution does not replace the Board's obligation to exercise due diligence before placing a permanent tax increase on a ballot.

She emphasized the importance of coordinated planning and broad community support before advancing an override.

Vice-Chair Jeffreys further clarified that although citizen petitions can initiate conversations, they do not automatically place items on the ballot. He explained that it is the Select Board's statutory role to approve ballot questions and provide oversight in accordance with local governance structure. He added that if residents wish to change the balance of authority within local government, participating in a charter review process would be the appropriate channel.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Chair Nuzzolo to enter into Executive Session and not re-enter Open Session after exiting Executive Session pursuant to MGL c. 30 §21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body (National Prescription Opiate Litigation). Seconded by Clerk Moore. 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

Meeting adjourned at 9:36 P.M. 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