

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, April 7, 2026

Members Present: Chair Caesar Nuzzolo, Clerk Renee Emkey, Member Brian Lehtinen (arrived at 7:35 PM), and Member Glenn McLeod

Members Absent: Vice-Chair Amanda Moore

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. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Nuzzolo made the following community announcements:

- Reminded residents of two ongoing photo competitions. The Lunenburg 300th Anniversary Committee's logo design competition, with a deadline of April 24. Submissions and inquiries may be directed to Chris Sullivan at chris.sullivan@lunenburgma.gov. The FY25 Annual Town Report photo contest, which will be voted on by the Select Board, has a deadline of April 10.
- Reminded residents of the public input meeting regarding 925 Mass Ave is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21 at 6:30 PM at the Lunenburg Public Library.
- Reminded attendees that the pancake breakfast is the following morning at the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center beginning at 8:00 AM.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment

John Bowen, 162 Highland Street, addressed the Select Board regarding the Town's potential Proposition 2½ override. He proposed an alternative: a one-time tax adjustment of \$1.89 per \$1,000 of assessed value based on Lunenburg's total assessed property value of approximately \$3.3 billion. He argued this targeted one-time correction could generate sufficient revenue to stabilize operations without locking in a permanent tax increase. Mr. Bowen also noted that the Town already has investment authority under MGL Chapter 203C, which could allow the revenue to generate a 3–5% return. He argued that overrides should be reserved for new initiatives or true emergencies, not used as routine fixes for structural issues. Mr. Bowen also requested that the Select Board apply a

randomized method for voting on Warrant Articles to prevent vote stacking and ensure fairness.

Ana Lockwood, 91 Main Street, raised several concerns. She first noted that the Finance Committee had completed its budget hearings but that the budget and Warrant had not yet been made publicly available on the Town website, urging that even an imperfect document be posted for public access. On the balanced budget, Ms. Lockwood expressed concern that the inclusion of a fourth shift for the fire department and a new Assistant Town Manager position while simultaneously reducing the library budget, senior center staffing, recreation, and school staff represented a misalignment of priorities. She suggested the balanced budget was designed to pressure residents into supporting the override. She cited Lunenburg's median household income of \$113,000 and noted that 50% of residents earn that amount or less, questioning whether decision-makers fully appreciate that financial reality. Ms. Lockwood also stated that the School's level-services budget would require only \$800,000 to maintain the current structure, and objected to the override request being three times that amount, calling it unfair to voters.

Michael-Ray Jeffreys, 1170 Massachusetts Avenue (appearing via Zoom), thanked Town leadership for their transparency and forthcoming communication. He acknowledged the Town's financial needs are genuine and significant, and that more revenue is required, particularly for the school system. However, he echoed concerns about the balanced budget. He called the fourth shift a critical need, citing quality-of-life and safety issues for firefighters working 72-hour weeks. He questioned the inclusion of a \$120,000 Assistant Town Manager position while simultaneously cutting teachers, paraprofessionals, the Recreation Director, the beach coordinator, the Police Department Clerk, and the library budget. He stated that these cuts would have real financial and community impacts. Mr. Jeffreys urged the Select Board to come to the voters with a request for an override that solves the problems the Town is facing and to trust voters to make the best decision, and to minimize harm in the balanced budget.

Board Comment

No public comment made by Select Board members.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SCHEDULED MEETINGS

None.

V. APPOINTMENTS, RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

1. Select Board's Appointing of Andrew Gillis as Member of the Architectural Preservation District Commission

Chair Nuzzolo invited Andrew Gillis, 7 Arbor Street, to introduce himself. Mr. Gillis described his background as a licensed structural engineer with extensive experience on historic projects, particularly in Cambridge, New York, and the broader Bedford area, spanning construction from the 1840s through the early 1900s. He noted his prior service on the Woburn Historical Commission for approximately three and a half years and his role on the Woburn 250th Celebration Committee. He expressed particular enthusiasm for Lunenburg's Architectural Preservation District, noting that the absence of such a district in Woburn had limited the commission's ability to preserve historic resources.

Chair Nuzzolo noted that all Select Board members had watched Mr. Gillis's appearance before the APDC and expressed full support for the appointment. Town Manager Jennifer Warren-

Dyment clarified that given the annual reappointment cycle, the term would be set to expire June 30, 2026, after which Mr. Gillis would need to reapply for a full term. The Chair advised Mr. Gillis that reappointment would likely be treated as routine given the circumstances, and directed him to be sworn in by the Town Clerk.

Motion by Clerk Renee Emkey to appoint Andrew Gillis as a member of the Architectural Preservation District Commission, with a term to expire June 30, 2026. Seconded by Member Glenn McLeod. Call for the vote: Three-aye. The motion passed unanimously (3-0-0).

2. Ratification of the Town Manager's Appointment of Xzacheon Fowler as Seasonal Cemetery Laborer effective April 13, 2026

3. Ratification of the Town Manager's Appointment of James Versoi as Seasonal Cemetery Laborer effective April 13, 2026

Items V.2 and V.3 were considered together. Town Manager Warren-Dyment noted that this would be Xzacheon Fowler's second season with the Town and James Versoi's third season, expressing enthusiasm about having returning staff familiar with the Town's cemetery operations.

Motion by Clerk Emkey to ratify the Town Manager's appointments of Xzacheon Fowler and James Versoi as Seasonal Cemetery Laborers effective April 13, 2026. Seconded by Member McLeod. Call for the vote: Three-aye. The motion passed unanimously (3-0-0).

4. Acknowledgment of the Resignation of Kennedy Jackson, Police Executive Assistant, effective May 15, 2026

Town Manager Warren-Dyment reported that Kennedy Jackson, who began her career as an Administrative Assistant with the Police Department and worked her way up to the Police Executive Assistant position, had submitted her resignation effective May 15, 2026. She is relocating to the Carolinas. Select Board members wished her well.

VI. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Warren-Dyment provided the following updates:

925 Mass Ave: The Town has received \$4,500 in funding support through MRPC's Brownfield Steering Committee to reengage Beta Group, the firm that conducted prior environmental work on the property. Beta Group will provide a recommended cleanup strategy with associated cost estimates and potential funding sources. A new appraisal has also been commissioned from an appraiser experienced with contaminated properties, as the prior appraisal did not account for environmental conditions in determining highest and best use. The public input forum remains scheduled for April 21 at 6:30 PM at the Lunenburg Public Library.

FY25 Audit: The audit is underway with the new auditor, CBIZ.

Teen Center: The Facilities Director and Town Manager met with Teen Center leadership to discuss the impending closure of the TC Passios building, which houses the gymnasium heavily relied upon

by the program, particularly during inclement weather and winter months. Teen Center leadership is exploring temporary options such as a tent or athletic dome, and may appear before the Select Board to request space for such a structure.

Flat Hill Road Bridge Invitation For Bid (IFB): The IFB has been completed with updated costs and engineering and will be available as of 10:00 AM the following morning. Bids are due May 14 at 12:00 PM.

Adult Activity Center and Teen Center Flooring IFB: This IFB will also be released the following morning. The project covers removal and replacement of floor coverings in both buildings, with \$41,000 budgeted for the Adult Activity Center and \$35,000 for the Teen Center under the FY26 Capital Plan. Bids are due May 6 at 10:00 AM.

Recruitments: The Young Adult Librarian position has been placed on hold due to the budget. Open positions include the 9-hour/week Dietary Aide, the Police Executive Assistant (40 hours/week), and the Outreach Coordinator (36 hours/week).

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Request of Treasurer and Collector to Author Advocacy Letter to State Delegation Regarding Legislation to “Eliminate Marking System as Enforcement Mechanism for Collecting Excise Taxes and Parking Citations”

Chair Nuzzolo introduced S.2874, An Act to Increase Opportunity by Ending Debt-Based Driving Restrictions, and read the full text of a letter drafted by the Treasurer/Collector opposing provisions of the bill that would eliminate the motor vehicle excise tax hold at the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV). The letter outlined that the RMV hold is currently the only effective enforcement mechanism available to municipalities for excise tax collection, and that without it, collection rates would decline further, placing additional burden on property taxpayers. It was noted that Lunenburg's current 2025 excise tax collection rate is 94.11%, representing approximately \$2 million in revenue, and that the uncollected 6% is expected to be recovered through future RMV holds.

Treasurer/Collector Myleen Mallari (via Zoom) elaborated on the implications of the Bill, noting that it would create an immediate impact on the Town's cash flow, as the current marking system allows the Town to collect all delinquent excise taxes before releasing an RMV hold, which provides important leverage that is absent in other tax collection mechanisms. She described the current notification process which includes a 30-day initial notice, 14-day demand notice, two additional 30-day service of warrant notices, and a final 14-day notice that precedes any RMV marking.

Chair Nuzzolo stated that after researching the topic, he personally supports the underlying Bill, expressing concern that people should not lose driving privileges simply because they cannot pay fees, which he argued makes it harder to work and ultimately to pay the debt. He noted that the Bill proposes income-based payment plans as an alternative, which he found preferable. He clarified, however, that he would vote to send the letter on behalf of the Select Board while declining to personally sign it.

Member McLeod observed that the Bill is inconsistent with other state initiatives such as the Municipal Empowerment Act and characterized it as another example of the state creating problems

worse than those it attempts to solve, noting that when tax revenue is denied to a municipality, the burden falls on those who do pay.

Clerk Emkey asked Treasurer/Collector Mallari to clarify the alternative mechanism under the Bill and how the RMV would be notified of delinquency. Treasurer/Collector Mallari confirmed that the current system allows the town to both mark and unmark taxpayers and that payment agreements can be established for residents in difficult financial circumstances, allowing an unmark upon entering a payment agreement and a re-mark if the agreement defaults.

Member Brian Lehtinen, having arrived during the discussion (35 minutes into the meeting), stated he would support sending the letter in support of the Town's employees.

A minor grammatical correction to the letter, a verb tense issue on page two in the paragraph beginning "By way of example", was noted and corrected in the document prior to the vote.

Motion made by Clerk Emkey to send the advocacy letter as read, with minor grammatical corrections. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

2. Approve May 16, 2026 Annual Town Election Warrant

Chair Nuzzolo presented the Annual Town Election Warrant for the May 16, 2026 Annual Town Election, noting it includes all ballot vacancies and two override questions. Chair Nuzzolo noted that the School Committee voted to co-sponsor the warrant article but did not vote on the override questions themselves. He clarified that this election warrant is distinct from the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and will be posted at five locations around town. Select Board members agreed to physically sign the five printed copies following the meeting.

Motion by Clerk Emkey to approve the May 16, 2026 Annual Town Election Warrant was made. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

3. Discuss Town Manager Review Process and Timeline

Chair Nuzzolo noted that he had inquired of Town Manager Warren-Dyment whether she preferred to postpone the annual review process given the demands of the budget season, and that Town Manager Warren-Dyment expressed willingness to proceed on the normal timeline. Under the standard process, the Town Manager's self-evaluation is due by April 15, and Select Board members' individual evaluations are due by approximately the end of April, allowing two weeks for compilation and completion before the Annual Town Election. Chair Nuzzolo indicated that if the Town Manager encounters difficulty completing the self-evaluation given current workloads, the Select Board could revisit the timeline at the next meeting.

No vote was required. The Select Board agreed to proceed on the standard timeline.

4. Vote to waive selected requirements for Special Event Application for Girl Scouts Family Picnic and Bridging Ceremony

5. Vote to waive selected requirements for Special Event Application for Lions Cruise Night

Items VII.4 and VII.5 were considered together. Chair Nuzzolo explained that while the Town is still

in the process of redrafting the Special Event Policy to streamline requirements for applicants, two event applications have been received. Both events, the Girl Scouts Family Picnic and Bridging Ceremony and the Lions Club Cruise Night, are understood to take place at the TC Passios location. Town Manager Warren-Dymont noted that the Lions Cruise Night, at minimum, had not previously gone through the formal application process under the current policy, making this an added step for this year.

The Select Board agreed to waive the printed publication notification for the Public Hearing, the notice to abutters, and the certificate of insurance requirement for both applications.

Motion by Clerk Emkey to waive the printed publication notification for the public hearing, the notice to abutters, and the certificate of insurance requirements for the Girl Scouts Family Picnic and Bridging Ceremony and the Lions Club Cruise Night special event applications. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

6. Review Annual Town Meeting Booklet

Town Manager Warren-Dymont summarized the contents of the Annual Town Meeting Booklet, which cannot be fully finalized until after votes taken this evening. Contents include: the Election Warrant, a letter from Chair Nuzzolo on volunteerism, a letter from the Town Manager explaining the override structure, a draft Finance Committee report, the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and article index, Moderator's ground rules, a multi-year budget comparison (FY24 expended through FY27 Balanced, Tier 1, and Tier 2), a revenue and expenditure balance sheet, and several inserts including the SAP pay plan, Sewer and PACC Enterprise summaries, and an MS4 stormwater compliance mailer. The Town Manager noted that the booklet must be delivered to the printer by April 8.

Clerk Emkey noted that the Finance Committee had requested that references to the Finance Committee report and budget websites be added to the summaries for Articles L and M, and confirmed that this had already been incorporated. She also suggested adding a page number reference to the Finance Committee report within the booklet to help residents locate it.

Member McLeod noted that the language in the Finance Committee report section describing the Fire Department fourth shift and per diems remained confusing, but Town Manager Warren-Dymont clarified this was the Finance Committee's voted report and not within the Select Board's lane to edit, though she noted the Finance Committee Chair and Vice-Chair had been given authority to continue refining the report.

Town Manager Warren-Dymont noted a change related to the PACC Enterprise: the operating budget and capital budget articles, previously combined, were being separated into two articles (X and X1) at the recommendation of Town Counsel, in part because the PACC Director requested the capital purchase of a new CASTA broadcast server for approximately \$77,000 be authorized as an FY26 project rather than FY27 to avoid a potential 15% price increase effective July 1.

Motion by Clerk Emkey to approve the Annual Town Meeting Booklet as presented, allowing for the inclusion of the warrant and any changes to the Finance Committee report. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion and Potential Votes to Recommend Approval on Annual Town Meeting Articles

The Select Board reviewed and voted on recommendations for Annual Town Meeting warrant articles. Town Manager Warren-Dyment noted that application of actual Enterprise Fund costs to the Omnibus Budget had yielded a small surplus of \$41,398.20, which she recommended be used first to pay prior-year bills, with the remainder directed to the School Department. She clarified this was not new money but rather a reconciliation of previously estimated figures.

Member McLeod raised the question of whether the Select Board had appetite to revisit specific line items in the balanced budget, specifically the Assistant Town Manager position. Chair Nuzzolo responded that the Select Board had conducted extensive budget workshops and gone through the budget line by line, and that reopening it the night before it goes to the printer was not appropriate or practical. He acknowledged that all members have items they would have handled differently, but stated the Select Board must move forward with the product of the collaborative process. Member Lehtinen agreed with Chair Nuzzolo.

Clerk Emkey noted that the \$120,000 Assistant Town Manager position is offset in part by the elimination of the Information Technology and Communications Director position (\$59,459.33), making the net addition smaller than characterized. Town Manager Warren-Dyment confirmed this, adding that the IT /Communications Director position was cut entirely to help fund the Assistant Town Manager at full year rather than the originally proposed half-year. Clerk Emkey also noted that level-services budgeting does not always reflect the Town's current needs because some positions have been made more efficient through technology while new needs have emerged and characterized the budget as a strategic reinvestment in alignment with how the Town has evolved. Member Lehtinen expressed support for the balanced budget as the outcome of a thorough group process.

Member McLeod maintained his concern around affordability and the trajectory of the override requests, and expressed general discomfort with adding staff positions in what he characterized as difficult financial times. However, he confirmed support for the balanced budget as a concept. Town Manager Warren-Dyment also responded to the earlier public comment characterizing the budget cuts as intentionally painful, stating firmly that decisions were made around supporting the core functions of town government first, in consultation with staff and specifically with the Parks Commission Chair regarding recreation. She stated that if the intent had been to create fear, she would have proposed closing the library or senior center entirely.

Article L – FY27 Omnibus Budget (Balanced Budget)

Motion by Clerk Emkey to recommend approval of Article L. Seconded by Member McLeod. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Article M – Override (Tier 1 and Tier 2)

Chair Nuzzolo noted that the Town Moderator had recommended a structure at Town Meeting whereby a general discussion covering both the balanced budget and both tiers of the override would occur prior to the vote on Article L, with Article M then proceeding directly to two separate motions,

one for Tier 1 and one for Tier 2, without a full re-presentation. The Select Board found this structure efficient and agreeable.

Chair Nuzzolo noted the School Committee had voted to co-sponsor the Warrant Article but had not voted on the override itself. Given the printer deadline, there was no time to obtain a formal School Committee vote.

Motion to recommend approval of Article M, Tier 1, was made by Clerk Emkey. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. The motion carried 3-1, with Member McLeod opposed.

Motion made by Clerk Emkey to recommend approval of Article M, Tier 2. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. The motion carried 3-1, with Member McLeod opposed.

Article X – FY27 PACK Operating Budget

Town Manager Warren-Dyment reported the FY27 PACK operating budget at \$217,847.55, with \$177,000 from anticipated revenues and \$40,847.55 from retained earnings.

Motion made by Clerk Emkey to recommend approval of Article X. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Article X1 – FY27 PACC Capital Budget

Motion made by Clerk Emkey to include in the Warrant and recommend approval of Article X1. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Article Y – Solid Waste Disposal Enterprise Fund

The article authorizes \$500,000 from solid waste disposal enterprise revenues to operate the enterprise fund.

Motion made by Clerk Emkey to recommend approval of Article Y. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Article Z – Water Enterprise Fund

The article authorizes \$120,000 for the Water Enterprise Fund.

Motion made by Clerk Emkey to recommend approval of Article Z. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

Article Z2 – Sewer Enterprise Fund

The article reflects a total budget of \$1,981,993.60 against estimated revenues of \$2,008,047.

Motion made by Clerk Emkey to recommend approval of Article Z2. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Four-aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

The Select Board also confirmed the ordering of Warrant Articles, noting that capital Articles had previously been moved below the budget Articles, with no further reordering proposed.

Town Manager Warren-Dyment reviewed the proposed Consent Calendar, which had been reviewed by the Town Moderator Timothy Murphy. The following Articles were recommended for the Consent Calendar: borrowing in anticipation of revenue and spending in anticipation of Chapter 90, revolving fund spending limits, prior year bills, solid waste enterprise, water enterprise, sewer OPEB, and the sewer enterprise. Town Moderator Murphy had recommended that Articles related to transfers to

OPEB and Stabilization Funds be discussed briefly outside of the Consent Calendar to highlight their importance to Town Meeting attendees. The Select Board concurred. Town Manager Warren-Dymont also noted that the Trust Fund Commission had expressed interest in giving a report at Town Meeting.

2. Discussion on FY2026 Budget, FY2027 Budget, Capital Plan, and Annual Town Meeting Articles

Chair Nuzzolo noted that much of this discussion had been incorporated into the Warrant Article review above. No additional discussion was raised.

IX. MINUTES*/WARRANTS/ACTION ITEMS

Minutes

Draft of regular session minutes for March 31, 2026 were distributed. As several Select Board members had not yet reviewed them, the Select Board agreed to hold approval to a subsequent meeting. Clerk Emkey also noted that there remains a backlog of older minutes awaiting approval, some approximately two years old, and asked that the members of the Select Board make a concerted effort to begin working through that list now that budget season is winding down.

Warrants

No warrants were presented.

Action Items

Member Lehtinen noted that the Select Board has been receiving online committee interest form submissions through the Town's website and asked to confirm that staff are following up with those individuals. Chair Nuzzolo confirmed that recent applicants, including Mr. Gillis for the APDC and a member of the 300th Anniversary Committee, had been engaged, and that others would be incorporated into the upcoming annual reappointment process. Town Manager Warren-Dymont indicated she would confirm whether the system sends an automatic acknowledgment to applicants.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Member Lehtinen reported that the School Committee met the prior week, voted to retain the bus fee for the coming school year, and received a facilities and grounds report. He also noted the Board of Assessors would be meeting the following day.

Clerk Emkey reported that the Finance Committee met the previous evening to finalize votes on Warrant Articles and present their report. Their next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 23, though whether that meeting will be needed remains to be determined.

Chair Nuzzolo had no additional committee report.

XI. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE

The Select Board discussed scheduling a FY27 Budget Public Information Meeting for community members to engage directly with Department Heads in an open house format. An initial suggestion

of April 23 was set aside after it was noted that this falls during school vacation week. The Select Board settled on Tuesday, April 28 as the preferred date. Town Manager Warren-Dyment described the envisioned format as a combination of a brief formal presentation with an open house component, allowing residents to approach Department Heads directly with questions in a more conversational setting, rather than a formal public hearing structure. Chair Nuzzolo noted that the April 28 date provides approximately three weeks of advance notice and avoids placing the event too close to Annual Town Meeting on May 2.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

• PUBLIC

No additional public comment was offered.

• TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Warren-Dyment had no additional comment.

• BOARD

Member McLeod inquired whether the Select Board had interest in sending a letter to the Governor in support of an audit, similar to a letter sent by the Town of Reading. Chair Nuzzolo declined, stating he prefers to limit advocacy letters to matters that are specifically Lunenburg-related or pertain directly to municipal funding. He noted that while he has personal opinions on the matter, he does not believe a letter from the Select Board would provide meaningful benefit to residents and characterized the issue as divisive.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Nuzzolo moved to enter into Executive Session and not re-enter Open Session after exiting Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30, §21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, the Chair so declared regarding Teamsters Union Local 170 (DPW). Seconded by Clerk Emkey. Roll call vote: Member McLeod – Aye; Member Lehtinen – Aye; Clerk Emkey – Aye; Chair Nuzzolo – Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The Board entered Executive Session at the conclusion of the open session at 8:44 PM and stated it would not reconvene in open session thereafter.

Respectfully Submitted,
Renee Emkey

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Select Board on: Tuesday, August 4, 2026