

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, May 5, 2026

Members Present: Chair Caesar Nuzzolo, Clerk Renee Emkey, Member Brian Lehtinen, 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 offered several announcements: thanks were extended to all staff, department heads, and volunteers who participated in the recent Town Meeting, as well as acknowledgment of the Tri-Board collaborative budget process involving the Select Board, School Committee, and Finance Committee. Chair Nuzzolo reminded residents that the Annual Town Election is Saturday, May 16th, with in-person voting at TC Passios and absentee voting currently available at the Town Clerk's Office. Chair Nuzzolo also announced the dedication of the Lincoln Pavilion at the Lunenburg Adult Activity Center on Tuesday, May 12 at 11:00 AM, and the Annual Lunenburg Spring Fair hosted by the Lunenburg Business Association on May 30 from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the TC Passios green space.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment

John Bowen Jr., 162 Highland Street, addressed the Select Board regarding the annual Memorial Day flag staking event, in which flags are placed on veterans' graves in advance of the holiday. Mr. Bowen noted that in past years the effort had been limited to only three participants; himself, Cemetery Superintendent Todd Hohman, and one DPW employee and urged broader community involvement this year. He requested that the Town post a flyer on the Town website to publicize the event. He confirmed that the event will take place on Saturday, May 16 beginning at 12:00 PM, starting at the North Cemetery and proceeding to the South Cemetery. Mr. Bowen also noted that participation qualifies for National Honor Society service hours. The Chair confirmed the flyer would be posted on the town's website. Mr. Bowen additionally shared that he had run for president of the Class of 2027 at Lunenburg High School and spoke briefly about his goals if elected, including making student government more inclusive and planning a school dance in partnership with the Lunenburg Business Association.

Board Comment

Member Glenn McLeod stated that his position on the override remains unchanged and that he intends to vote no on the ballot questions, characterizing the proposed overrides as both unaffordable and unsustainable, and attributing the Town's budget challenges in significant part to insufficient state local aid.

Member Brian Lehtinen encouraged residents who did not attend Town Meeting to view the recording on the Lunenburg Public Access YouTube channel.

Clerk Renee Emkey extended thanks to all staff, volunteers, and residents who attended and participated in Town Meeting.

IV. PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SCHEDULED MEETINGS

7:05 PM Presentation by Jen Higgins and Angie Richards on Project for Civic & Community Engagement Class

Jen Higgins, 442 Howard Street, and Angie Richards, 48 West Acres Drive, students in Mr. Stevenson's Civic and Community Engagement class, presented a proposal to host a community art show as part of their civics coursework. The students requested use of the field located behind the library, adjacent to the playground, for the event, which would feature student and local resident artwork displays with potential sales, as well as acoustic musical performances by student musicians. The proposed date was Saturday, May 30 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

Chair Nuzzolo noted that May 30 is the same date as the Lunenburg Spring Fair, which is also planned for the same general area, and suggested that integrating the students' event into the larger Spring Fair may be a preferable path. Town Manager Jennifer Warren-Dymont asked the students whether a standalone event was required for their coursework or whether integration with an existing event would be acceptable for grading purposes. Ms. Richards indicated that integration would likely be acceptable, as the project's core requirement is community engagement. Member Lehtinen expressed support for connecting the students with Spring Fair organizer Josie Gilcrest. Chair Nuzzolo committed to making that introduction by email following the meeting and indicated he would work to facilitate integration. Chair Nuzzolo also noted that should integration prove infeasible, an alternate date would need to be identified.

The Select Board approved the request, contingent upon successful integration with the Lunenburg Spring Fair.

Motion by Clerk Emkey to approve the request for the Civics project event by Jen Higgins and Angie Richards, contingent upon successful integration with the Lunenburg Spring Fair. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for Vote: Four-Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

7:10 PM Discussion of Lease on small area of APR Land for Lanni Orchards at Lanni Orchards APR Land at 300 Chase Road

Jerry Lanni appeared via Zoom to request the Select Board's approval for the lease of a small triangular parcel of Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) land located on Route 13, estimated at between one-quarter and one-half of an acre. Mr. Lanni explained that the parcel has never been

farmed and has been used informally as overflow parking. A Leominster-based business approached him seeking a visible roadside location to display sheds. Mr. Lanni noted that the parcel straddles both APR and non-APR land, and that the APR land would not be disturbed and the use would consist only of placing sheds on the site. He further noted that state regulations prohibit signage on APR land, but any signage could be placed on the adjoining non-APR portion. Mr. Lanni indicated he had already contacted the state APR office, which indicated the request did not appear to be a significant issue, but that the process requires local approval before proceeding to the state permit application.

Clerk Emkey noted that similar shed display arrangements exist elsewhere in the region and observed that both businesses typically benefit from such arrangements.

The Select Board approved the use of the APR land for the purposes described, allowing Mr. Lanni to proceed with his state permit application. Town Manager Warren-Dymont advised Mr. Lanni to visit the Select Board office to collect the necessary documentation for submission to the state.

Motion by Clerk Emkey to approve the use of the APR land for the purposes described. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for Vote: Four-Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

V. APPOINTMENTS, RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

• Select Board's Appointment of Maura Lizek to the Lunenburg 300th Anniversary Committee

Maura Lizek, 747 Page Street, introduced herself as a lifelong Lunenburg resident who has been attending the 300th Anniversary Committee meetings since approximately January. She expressed strong interest in formally contributing to the committee's work, noting she felt she had already made meaningful contributions as a non-member attendee. The Chair concurred with that assessment. Select Board Member Emkey thanked Ms. Lizek for volunteering. Ms. Lizek was directed to be sworn in at the Town Clerk's office.

Motion to appoint Maura Lizek to the Lunenburg 300th Anniversary Committee was made by Select Board Member Emkey and seconded by Select Board Member Lehtinen. Call for Vote: Four-Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

• Ratification of the Town Manager's Appointment of Jonathan Francis as Outreach Coordinator

Town Manager Warren-Dymont announced the appointment of Jonathan Francis as Outreach Coordinator, filling the position vacated by Pauline Roy. Mr. Francis brings nearly a decade of social services experience, including work with developmentally delayed populations through Work Inc., Advocates Inc., and the Arc of Opportunity; case management processing SNAP benefits through the Department of Transitional Assistance; and more recent work with an agency partnering with DCF. Town Manager Warren-Dymont expressed confidence that his broad social services background would be an asset to the Town's Elder Services. His anticipated start date was noted as either the following Monday or the Monday after.

Motion by Clerk Emkey to ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Jonathan Francis as Outreach Coordinator. Seconded by Member Lehtinen. Call for Vote: Four-Aye. The motion passed unanimously (4-0-0).

VI. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Warren-Dyment delivered the following updates:

925 Mass Ave: Following a community forum held on April 21 attended by approximately 20 residents, the greatest interest was expressed for a café use (approximately nine votes), followed by equal interest in a park, brewery, food pantry, or green space (approximately five votes each). The working group has incorporated café use as a highly advantageous response in the forthcoming RFP. An appraisal report was received the previous day, concluding that the property's current value is - \$78,000, due to remediation costs exceeding estimated market value once cleaned. The Town Manager noted that this information will be publicly available to prospective RFP respondents. She indicated the Town will proceed with issuing the RFP and may need to pivot depending on what proposals, if any, are received. Clerk Emkey inquired about available remediation grants; Town Manager Warren-Dyment explained that a municipal owner is more likely than a private developer to access such funding, and that time, allowing the site to naturally cure, is another option though not ideal given the RFP's responsiveness criteria around speed of development.

Municipal Building Design Committee: Town Manager Warren-Dyment met with David Blatt of the Municipal Building Design Committee. An updated space needs survey will be distributed to departments, with findings to be reported back to the Select Board sometime this summer.

Annual Town Report: The 2025 Annual Town Report is available online and as physical copies in the Select Board office.

IFBs: Bids for the Flat Hill Road bridge and the Adult Activity Center and Teen Center flooring have been advertised. Flooring bids were due the following day; the Flat Hill Road bridge bids are due May 14, with significant interest reported in that project.

Recruitments: An offer has been accepted for the Police Executive Assistant position, with the candidate expected to appear on next week's agenda for appointment. Ongoing searches include two to three beach staff positions and one seasonal cemetery laborer. The Staff Librarian and Dietary Aide positions remain on hold pending the outcome of the Annual Town Election.

Board and Committee Vacancies: Town Manager Warren-Dyment read the full list of current vacancies, noting that while new applicants are being seen, members whose terms are expiring and have not indicated interest in reappointment will be contacted. Vacancies exist on the following bodies: Agricultural Commission, Architectural Preservation District Commission, Cable Advisory Committee (the Town Manager specifically emphasized the importance of this committee's work in conducting the ascertainment process for cable license renewal), Conservation Commission, Cultural Council (2 vacancies), Green Communities (2 associate vacancies), Historical Commission, Parks Commission, Personnel Board (5 vacancies), PACC (1 vacancy), Zoning Board of Appeals (1 full member, 1 associate), and Lunenburg's representative to the First Middlesex Small Towns Collaborative. Elected vacancies exist on the Planning Board, Sewer Commission, Trust Fund Commission, and School Committee.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on Right of First Refusal for 35 Leominster Road. Removed from Chapter 61 on July 1, 2025

Chair Nuzzolo noted that the Select Board is still awaiting a recommendation from the Open Space

Committee, which is meeting the following week. Town Counsel has confirmed all other aspects are in order, and all other relevant boards and committees have recommended not exercising the right of first refusal. The Select Board has until July to make a final decision. Town Manager Warren-Dyment highlighted that the Agricultural Commission has requested the Town begin setting aside funds to provide financial flexibility when properties like this arise, allowing the Town to react outside of a Town Meeting cycle. Chair Nuzzolo expressed agreement, noting that the Select Board is often in a reactive position when these situations arise. The matter was held pending the Open Space Committee's recommendation.

2. Town Meeting Recap

Chair Nuzzolo reported that he had followed up with Nancy Beach of the food pantry following Town Meeting discussions on that topic, and that the food pantry is close to finalizing a rental agreement for a location within town. Chair Nuzzolo expressed his intention to bring a Warrant Article in the fall to help support those costs.

Clerk Emkey raised a technical concern regarding the Town Meeting recordings currently available on YouTube, noting that the Town Moderator's lapel microphone appeared to have overridden the podium microphone at certain points, resulting in portions of the Town Manager's budget presentation being inaudible in the recording. She suggested that for future Town Meetings, consideration be given to relying solely on the podium microphone to avoid this issue. She also noted that the Town Manager's presentation received strong positive public feedback.

Member Lehtinen praised the Town Manager's presentation as appropriately thorough, noting that it preemptively addressed many questions residents might have had, and commended Town Moderator Timothy Murphy for ensuring all attendees had an opportunity to speak. Chair Nuzzolo observed that the turnout at this year's Town Meeting was notably higher than at the prior override Town Meeting, and attributed this in part to the Town's improved community communication and public education efforts.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Vote to Sell or Hold 250 and 356 Hollis Road

Chair Nuzzolo indicated that this matter remains under review and that he had not yet had the opportunity to review the Planning Board's discussion of the properties, which he noted included detailed commentary from Adam Burney distinguishing between the two parcels. Town Manager Warren-Dyment confirmed she had sent the relevant timestamp for the Planning Board's discussion. The Select Board agreed to hold the matter for one additional week pending that review.

2. Review of Employee Survey Questions

The Select Board reviewed the draft employee survey. Clerk Emkey asked whether questions would be mandatory; Town Manager Warren-Dyment confirmed all questions are optional and that the survey's introduction already notifies respondents that open-ended questions are optional and that some answers may indicate their department. Clerk Emkey requested that a "Not Applicable" (N/A) option be added to the scaled response questions where relevant, which Town Manager Warren-Dyment agreed to incorporate. Member Lehtinen noted the absence of a legend for the response scale abbreviations; Town Manager Warren-Dyment clarified that when deployed in Microsoft Forms, the full text of each response option will be displayed. Town Manager Warren-Dyment indicated the intent is to distribute the survey this week and allow two weeks for responses, with

results anticipated for Board review by the end of the month. No vote was required.

IX. MINUTES*/WARRANTS/ACTION ITEMS

Minutes

No minutes were available for approval. Town Manager Warren-Dyment noted that a concerted effort to catch up on outstanding draft minutes would resume following the conclusion of Town Meeting preparations. Chair Nuzzolo noted he would draft minutes for the Pre-Town Meeting meeting.

Warrants

One Accounts Payable warrant in the amount of \$1,067,626.28 was presented and signed.

Action Items

None.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Member McLeod reported none. Member Lehtinen noted he needed to catch up on committee activity following vacation and Town Meeting. Clerk Emkey and Chair Nuzzolo reported none.

XI. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE

The Board noted that the next Select Board meeting is scheduled for the following Tuesday, May 12.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

• PUBLIC

No public comment was received from members of the public in the room or on Zoom.

• TOWN MANAGER

Town Manager Warren-Dyment offered no additional comment.

• BOARD

No comment by the Select Board.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Member Lehtinen to adjourn at 7:45 PM. Seconded by Clerk Emkey. Call for Vote: Four-Aye. The motion passed (4-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Renee Emkey

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Select Board on: Tuesday, September 1, 2026