

Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Members Present: Chair Renee Emkey; Clerk Glenn McLeod, Member Tom Alonzo and Member Damon McQuaid. Vice Chair Brian Lehtinen arrived during the recess following the Employee Merit Awards while the Board was taking photographs.

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Jennifer Warren-Dymont, Town Manager

Public Comment Participants are listed in the minutes

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Renee Emkey called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Emkey informed attendees that the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live and would be uploaded to YouTube after the meeting. She 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Emkey announced the Fourth Annual Town Official Meet & Greet, sponsored by Lunenburg's Economic Development Committee, for Thursday, September 17 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Il Forno.

She announced the POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony at the Adult Activity Center on Friday, September 18 at 9:00 AM, followed by the monthly Veterans' Breakfast.

Chair Emkey reminded the public that the November Special Town Meeting warrant will close Thursday, September 17 at 5:00 PM and that the September Select Board Chat Session is scheduled for September 30 from 6:00 to 7:00 PM at the Adult Activity Center, with Members Alonzo and Lehtinen expected to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public

Anthony Sculimbrene of 5 Valley Road spoke as a private citizen and noted that his comments had not been vetted by the Architectural Preservation District Commission (APDC), which he chairs, or the Lunenburg Municipal Building Design Committee, of which he is Vice Chair. He stated that the Building Commissioner had classified the structure proposed at 30 School Street for the Lunenburg Food Pantry as a permanent building. He disagreed with that classification based on the Planning Board notice describing a temporary relocation, OpenGov documents describing the structure as a trailer, and the fact that the structure would be leased. He stated that he believed the matter should come before the APDC under Chapter 113 and urged the Town to determine a long-term plan for the Food Pantry before moving locations and suggested a permanent building committee.

John Bowen of 162 Highland Street discussed procedures at the September 3 Special Town Meeting. He stated that Section 81-9 of the Town bylaws requires a two-thirds vote to raise or appropriate money at a Special Town Meeting and argued that transfers should be treated similarly. He described his point of order and concerns regarding the handling of motions, vote counts, and meeting procedure. He asked the Select Board to refer Section 81-9 to the Bylaw Review Committee with a recommendation addressing transfers, ask the Moderator to adopt written practices for electronic voting, and ask that points of order and motions be heard before being ruled upon.

BOARD None.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Presentation of Merit Award Honorees

Town Manager Jennifer Warren-Dyment presented the Town's annual Merit Awards, which recognize employees in the categories of Pinnacle of Excellence, Efficiency, and Communications.

Pinnacle of Excellence, Chief Patrick Sullivan

Town Manager Jennifer Warren-Dyment spoke upon the Pinnacle of Excellence criteria. Police Chief Thibodeau read his nomination of Fire Chief Patrick Sullivan mentioning that Chief Sullivan has been a mentor and leader for the Town, speaking of how great their work relationship has been. Chief Thibodeau recognized Chief Sullivan's decades of service, leadership, mentorship, institutional knowledge, and strong working relationship with the Police Department and other Town departments.

Town Manager Warren-Dyment spoke to Chief Sullivan's advocacy for his team, especially advocating for departmental needs during a particularly difficult budget year.

Chief Sullivan accepted the award crediting his staff and the strong collaboration among Town departments also commenting how much has been accomplished over the years.

Chair Emkey stated how lucky Lunenburg has been to have Chief Sullivan leading the Fire Department.

Member Tom Alonzo stated in order to lead a department it's important to know when your role is to step forward and take charge and when to step behind and let your team take charge. Member Alonzo stated that Chief Sullivan has balanced this perfectly.

Member Damon McQuaid and Clerk Glenn McLeod also sent their congratulations.

Efficiency, Leigh Bain

Town Manager Warren-Dyment announced Leigh Bain, Administrative Assistant to the Planning Department, as the recipient and read the nomination submitted by Planning and Economic Development Director Stephen Wallace. The nomination recognized Ms. Bain's management of budgets, invoices, 53G accounts, website content, hearing notices, applicant coordination, and front-office responsibilities. The Town Manager also recognized Ms. Bain for assuming Zoning Board of Appeals administrative duties during a staffing transition. Ms. Bain declined to speak upon her attributes.

Member Alonzo commented on being with the Town under a year and receiving the efficiency award is a great accomplishment.

Communications, Detective Bradley McNamara

Resident John Stackhouse, who nominated Detective Bradley McNamara, was in attendance and read his nomination of Detective McNamara, recognizing his communication with victims, witnesses, officers, and community members; his ability to explain complex situations and de-escalate tense encounters; and the quality of his reports and investigations. Town Manager Warren-Dyment also noted Detective McNamara's work with youth as School Resource Officer. Board members congratulated him.

The Board took a short recess for pictures and congratulations with the Merit Award Recipients. At this time Vice-Chair Brian Lehtinen joined the meeting.

Introduction of Jessica “Jak” Miller, Assistant Town Manager

Town Manager Warren-Dyment introduced Jessica “Jak” Miller as the Town's new Assistant Town Manager. She summarized Ms. Miller's professional and educational background, military service in the United States Army Reserve, and connection to Lunenburg. Ms. Miller stated that she was enthusiastic about the opportunity to grow professionally while serving a community in which she and her family are invested.

Chair Emkey welcomed Ms. Miller to her role and stated she looks forward to working together. Other Board members welcomed her as well.

Earth Removal Application Renewal for 780 Northfield Road by Jim Lattanzi

The Board considered renewal of the earth removal permit for 780 Northfield Road. The applicant stated that approximately 600 cubic yards of sand remained to be removed and that this would likely be the final renewal because a buyer had been identified for the remaining material. Staff indicated the application and inspection were in order.

Member Alonzo moved to approve the earth removal permit as described at 780 Northfield Road. Seconded by Vice Chair Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

At the Chair's suggestion, and with Board concurrence, this item was taken out of order to accommodate attendees present for the discussion.

Discussion on Lunenburg Food Pantry (taken out of order at the discretion of the Board)

Nancy Beach, President of the Lunenburg Food Pantry, and Ann Nelson, Food Pantry Board member, updated the Board on the temporary relocation to 30 School Street. They reported that Dillis & Roy was preparing the site plan application for Planning Board review and that a zoning variance would be required. Powell Stone and Gravel had offered to construct a 40-by-80-foot pad for the proposed 24-by-64-foot mobile unit and the Food Pantry trailer, with Dustin Powell managing the work and Jeff Sullivan serving as general contractor. The Food Pantry also reported on the existing septic system, temporary electrical service, water hookup, parking lot conditions, and ongoing discussions with Triumph regarding the mobile units. The Town Manager stated that DPW and Facilities had already been contacted regarding temporary pothole patching and noted that full parking lot reclamation would be a significant future expense.

The Town Manager explained that Town Counsel recommended a license agreement rather than a lease because a lease would require Town Meeting approval. A license agreement does not have any interest in the property itself and can be terminated as needed, unlike a lease. The draft license would address the term, insurance, indemnification, and site restoration, among other matters. The Board discussed the need for a term longer than one year and the expectation that the Food Pantry continue working toward a permanent location.

Member Alonzo moved to authorize the Town Manager to proceed with the license agreement with Town Counsel for the property at 30 School Street. Seconded by Vice Chair Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

The Town Manager advised that the Select Board had authority to waive certain Building Department fees associated with the project, including building, wiring, plumbing, gas, sheet metal, and technology fees.

Member McQuaid moved to waive the building, wiring, plumbing, gas, sheet metal, and technology fees associated with the Lunenburg Food Pantry project at 30 School Street. Seconded by Vice Chair Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Member Alonzo voiced his support for the Food Pantry and states it was always known to the Town that the Food Pantry's move to T. C. Passios was temporary. Member Alonzo also stated that a permanent placement needs to be found during their three years at School Street so that there is no scrambling last minute and suggested placing a hard deadline on finding a permanent location.

APPOINTMENTS, RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

Acknowledgment of the Resignation of Denise McCue, Data Collector for the Assessor's Office effective September 10, 2026

Town Manager Warren-Dyment acknowledged the resignation of Denise McCue, Data Collector for the Assessor's Office, effective September 10, 2026, and thanked her for her service during a period of significant transition in the office. The Town Manager stated that the 19-hour-per-week position had been approved by the Personnel Board and posted.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Warren-Dyment reported that no proposals were received for 925 Massachusetts Avenue. It was a prerequisite of the RFP to attend a site visit and a few parties attended, but did not submit proposals. Conversations are in progress with Planning and Economic Development Director Stephen Wallace to research and discuss possible next steps for the property. Alternative paths forward for the Select Board include potential additional environmental grant work, demolition, or other options, with a report expected before the end of the calendar year.

The Town Manager reported that Town continued to work on the FY26 closeout, including cash reconciliation and cleanup of transactions among the operating budget, special revenue funds, and grant funds. She anticipated completion within approximately two to three weeks.

The Town Manager reported that Colonial Power had received approval for the Town's municipal aggregation program and postcards are scheduled to hit mailboxes on September 30. Residents would have an opportunity to opt out before the November 1 program start.

The Town Manager encouraged members of Boards, Committees, and Commissions to attend the September 23 Municipal Law training at the Adult Activity Center covering Open Meeting Law, Conflict of Interest Law, and Public Records Law

The Town Manager provided recruitment updates. Internal Fire Chief interviews had been completed and an offer was expected to be negotiated and brought to the Board for consideration. A Patrol Officer candidate had accepted an offer and was expected to appear on the next agenda. The Data Collector position had been posted. The Public Access Cable videographer position had become critically short-staffed following a resignation, and interested residents with camera experience were encouraged to apply.

The Town Manager listed vacancies on several boards, committees, and commissions, including the Conservation Commission, Cultural Council, Green Communities Committee, Historical Commission, Personnel Committee, Public Access Committee, Trust Fund Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals. She also committed to providing a Flat Hill Bridge update at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Follow-Up from September 3rd Special Town Meeting

The Board discussed the September 3 Special Town Meeting, including the audio problems experienced during the meeting. The Town Manager thanked Kara, a student volunteer who operated the audio equipment, and Walter, a former student who assisted with the audio issues. The Board discussed the need for backup planning for future meetings. The Town Manager reported that legislative earmark funding had been obtained for projector and audio upgrades, although improvements were not expected before the November Special Town Meeting. Members also discussed attendance and concerns raised by residents regarding delivery of the warrant booklet. The Town Manager stated that the Town had met its obligation to deliver the mailing to the post office and that subsequent delivery was outside the Town's control.

Chair Emkey thanked all involved in prepping and holding the Special Town Meeting. Including getting warrants out, testing clickers, and all those who helped with the State Primary election and the Deputy Town Moderator.

Special Town Meeting, November 17, 2026

Refer Articles Submitted by the Planning Board and Director of Planning and Economic Development to the Planning Board

The Town Manager explained that zoning-related warrant articles must be referred to the Planning Board under M.G.L. c. 40A, § 5 so they can hold their Public Hearing. The articles included "Corrective Zoning Amendments," addressing several terminology and cleanup changes in the zoning bylaw, and "Stormwater Management Bylaw Fee Structure," which would replace specific fee amounts in the bylaw with reference to the Planning Board fee schedule, as amended from time to time. The Town Manager emphasized that referral was procedural and did not constitute a Select Board position on the merits.

Member Alonzo moved to refer the Special Town Meeting articles titled "Corrective Zoning Amendments" and "Stormwater Management Bylaw Fee Structure" to the Planning Board for review and public hearing. Seconded by Member McQuaid. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Report to Town Meeting Under Article 1: Reports to Town Meeting- Regarding Article 10 of the November 2024 Special Town Meeting “Request to Select Board Re: The Brooks House”

The Chair noted that Article 10 of the November 2024 Special Town Meeting directed the Select Board, through a nonbinding vote, to report on the long-term sale or lease of the Brooks House. The matter had subsequently been referred to the Municipal Building Design Committee. The Board discussed having the Planning and Economic Development Director and Facilities Director prepare a report for the November 17 Special Town Meeting to close the loop on the 2024 directive.

Donation of Boulder to be Located in Front of Town Hall. Boulder donated by Robert Proctor Excavating, Engraving Donated by Leominster Monument Company and the Install /Coordination Work is Being Donated by Lakeview Landscaping

The Board discussed a proposal to replace three dead or dying bushes in front of Town Hall with a donated granite boulder. The Town Manager explained that Robert Proctor Excavating would donate the boulder, Leominster Monument Company would donate engraving of the Town seal on both sides, and Lakeview Landscaping would donate installation, site preparation, and coordination. The Board discussed size, placement, visibility, and safety.

Member McQuaid moved to accept the three donations for the Town Hall boulder project: the boulder from Robert Proctor Excavating, engraving from Leominster Monument Company, and installation/site coordination from Lakeview Landscaping. Seconded by Member Alonzo. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Discussion of Opioid Settlement Funds: Use for AEDs in All Town/School Buildings and Police/Fire Vehicles

Chair Emkey had a conversation with Police Chief Thibodeau and the Chief stated many of the AED’s need to be replaced. The Board discussed potential use of opioid settlement funds to replace Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in Town and School buildings and Police and Fire vehicles. The preliminary discussion contemplated a significant number of units and a potentially six-figure total cost. Members supported researching the number, age, and condition of existing AEDs and the cost of replacement. Member Alonzo also suggested reviewing Narcan supplies and expiration dates. Staff was asked to return with additional information for a future vote.

Status of Edits to Policies- Appointment Policy

This policy was amended in the last year, but there were areas that were unclear. The policy currently states vacancies are advertised on Town website and social media by April 1 and applications submitted by May 15th. The Board discussed moving the application deadline from May 15th to May 1st. The Town Manager noted that earlier deadlines could provide prospective applicants more time to attend meetings of boards they are interested in joining. Chair Emkey also mentioned the policy states that applicants to be interviewed should be identified by May 25th, but the Board does not start review until June 1st so the May 25th date should be removed. Member Alonzo mentioned that reappointment applications should also be received by May 1st.

Introduce Boards, Committees, and Commissions Handbook and Next Steps

The Chair introduced the draft Boards, Committees, and Commissions Handbook, which has been in development since approximately 2023. The Board agreed to review the document in sections, beginning with Chapters 1 through 6, and to reserve the remote participation chapter for later discussion because of the additional issues associated with Zoom and hybrid meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion on Lunenburg Municipal Buildings

The Board discussed the future of the TC Passios property, including a potential affordable senior housing feasibility grant, possible school use connected with future Turkey Hill Elementary School planning, demolition, community use, and other alternatives. Vice-Chair Lehtinen mentioned senior housing at the TC Passios location was discussed during a recent Municipal Building Design meeting. The Town Manager reported that staff had discussed whether to pursue a current grant opportunity but concluded that the Town lacked sufficient time for the public dialogue needed before applying. Members discussed the scope of the Municipal Building Design Committee, prior efforts to identify uses for the property, the potential value of testing private interest through an RFP, and the need for a broader public process before determining the property's long-term direction.

Member McQuaid mentioned in prior years that the discussion of taking Town property for a private use did not go well. Member Alonzo mentioned that the Municipal Building Design charge was to discuss municipal uses for buildings. He also commented that these type of projects in other communities are funded with private money, not town money.

MINUTES*/WARRANTS/ACTION ITEMS

Vice Chair Lehtinen moved to approve the minutes of November 13, 2024, March 18, 2025, and April 22, 2025. Seconded by Member Alonzo. Call for the vote: Four-aye. One-abstain (Member McQuaid) The motion passed (4-0-1).

Chair Emkey moved to approve the minutes of September 9, 2025; September 15, 2025; October 7, 2025; October 14, 2025; October 21, 2025; and November 17, 2025. Seconded by Vice Chair Lehtinen. Call for the vote: Three-aye. Two-abstain (Members Alonzo and McQuaid) The motion passed (3-0-2).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Member Alonzo reported on the Bylaw Review Committee and a procedural question concerning whether a former Select Board member's resignation from the Board also vacated that individual's position as the Board's designee to the Bylaw Review Committee. He stated that clarification was needed before his own appointment could be treated as filling a vacancy. He also noted that he had no report from the Board of Assessors.

Member McLeod reported that the Open Space Committee met recently and discussed open space acquisition criteria and potential revisions. He also reported on the Council on Aging whom introduced the new Outreach Coordinator, Jan Robbins, and spoke on upcoming events including the Annual Tea Party on October 26th (volunteers and donations sought) and a trip to East Hill Farm in Troy, NH. The Eagle House Supporters highlighted their Toll Booth on October 24th, and the Second Annual Festival of Trees from November 19th–21st. Member McLeod state the Library Board of Trustees will meet on September 17th and the Metropolitan

Planning Organization's meeting this month is cancelled. Nothing to report for the Agricultural Commission and Economic Development Committee.

Member Lehtinen reported on the School Committee, including school open houses, homecoming on October 17th, parent-teacher conferences, the School Business Administrator recruitment, a Girl Scout troop donation for a memorial bench for Hadley Boucher, and discussion of continuing Triboard communications and meetings.

Chair Emkey reported that the Finance Committee had not met since the last Select Board meeting. She reported that the Stormwater Task Force had met to work on a nonbinding Special Town Meeting article presenting two potential funding mechanisms for MS4 stormwater compliance: a utility model and an operating budget model. The Task Force planned presentations to the Finance Committee and Select Board in October and a public information session before the Special Town Meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE

The Board discussed whether to operate on a true every-other-week meeting schedule or continue reserving Tuesdays and cancel meetings when there was insufficient business. Members noted that time-sensitive appointments, licenses, and other matters can make a strict biweekly schedule difficult. The Board generally favored maintaining Tuesday availability and canceling meetings as appropriate rather than formally adopting a rigid biweekly schedule.

The Board confirmed a meeting for September 29, with a liquor license public hearing and two earth removal renewals anticipated. The Chair stated that she would return with a proposed schedule leading up to the November 17 Special Town Meeting. The Board also discussed occasionally meeting at more accessible locations and the tradeoffs created by audio and broadcast limitations outside the Bilotta Meeting Room.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment

John Bowen of 162 Highland Street returned to correct figures he had stated at the September 3 Special Town Meeting concerning school athletics. Citing state end-of-year reports, he stated that athletics expenditures increased from approximately \$358,000 in FY2017 to approximately \$575,000 in FY2025 while the share covered by athletic fees declined. He also discussed growth in transportation costs. Mr. Bowen stated that he supported core educational positions funded at the Special Town Meeting but believed extracurricular activities should be supported to a greater degree by participating families, boosters, and youth organizations, with waivers for families in financial need. He connected these comments to his earlier request concerning the vote threshold for transfers at special town meetings.

TOWN MANAGER None.

BOARD

Member Alonzo commented on early indicators for the upcoming budget season, including fuel prices and projected health insurance increases, and cautioned that the next budget cycle could be as difficult as the prior year.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Lehtinen moved to adjourn at 9:19 PM. Seconded by Clerk McLeod. Call for the vote: Five-aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Meeting adjourned at 9:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melissa Richard,
Executive Assistant to the Select Board and Town Manager

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