Town of Lunenburg
Select Board Meeting Minutes
Town Hall, 17 Main Street and via Zoom
Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Members Present: Chair Renee Emkey, Vice-Chair Brian Lehtinen, Clerk Glenn McLeod, Member Damon McQuaid, and Member Tom Alonzo
Members Absent: None
Also Present: Jennifer Warren-Dyment, 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 7:00 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:

- Early voting at Town Hall ends Thursday, October 29, 2026 at 6:00 PM.
- Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026 from 7:00 - 8:00 PM at the Middle/High School.
- Special Town Meeting will be held Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the Middle/High School Auditorium.
- The Stormwater Task Force will hold a presentation and community meeting regarding stormwater financing options on Monday, November 9, 2026 from 7:00 – 8:00 PM in the Wallace Room at the Lunenburg Public Library.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- **PUBLIC**

Nancy Beach, 31 Prospect Street, speaking for the Lunenburg Community Food Pantry, said the pantry expected to finalize the license agreement with the Town over the next two weeks. The earliest date to break ground is November 9th, which is when the 20 day appeal of their site plan approval ends. She reported that the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts awarded the pantry a $40,000 grant toward its initial modular unit purchase. Fidelity Bank awarded $2,500, and local residents have also contributed. The Board thanked her for the update.

- **BOARD**

No comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SCHEDULED MEETINGS

- **Change of Officers/Directors Application for Existing Liquor License for Global Montello Group Corporation d/b/a Honey Farms #3829 Located at 134 Leominster-Shirley Road**

This item was carried over from the prior meeting because it had not been posted correctly. Chair Emkey reviewed the requested changes. Sean T. Geary would be removed and Kristin Seabrook added as secretary. Sean T. Geary would be added as vice president and Erin Powers Brennan would be added as assistant secretary. Chair Emkey noted this was not a

public hearing and required only a vote. Member Tom Alonzo confirmed that all required paperwork was in order.

Motion to approve the change of officers/directors as submitted by Global Montello Group Corporation d/b/a Honey Farms #3829, 134 Leominster-Shirley Road, was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Brian Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

APPOINTMENTS, RATIFICATIONS, AND RESIGNATIONS

- **Ratification of the Town Manager's Appointment of Alexander McLean as Videographer, effective October 28, 2026**

Town Manager Jennifer Warren-Dyment reported that Alexander McLean, a senior at Fitchburg State University studying communications with a focus on film and video, was appointed at the recommendation of the Cable Access Director. He is an experienced camera operator with pre- and post-production experience. A second videographer candidate is being vetted for the next meeting.

Motion to ratify the appointment of Alexander McLean as Videographer was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

- **Acknowledgement of the Resignation of Steven Walker, Public Access Cable Committee**

The resignation was acknowledged.

- **Acknowledgement of the Resignation of Joeci Gilchrest, Economic Development Committee**

The resignation was acknowledged.

Member Alonzo noted that the Board previously sent letters of recognition to long-serving members who resigned and asked that the practice be reinstated for members with substantial service, such as Mr. Walker, who served on the committee for over ten years. Chair Emkey and Board agreed, and the letters will be signed at the next meeting.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Town Manager Warren-Dyment reported on the following.

Projects:

- Contractor Kodiak continues to monitor Lake Shirley water levels for the Flat Hill Road bridge replacement. Levels remain too high to begin work but are declining.
- The public safety roof bid deadline was extended to November 2nd following addenda. The sewer system operation and maintenance RFP will be advertised next week.
- The FY26 capital North Cemetery expansion IFB will be released tomorrow.

Finance:

- FY26 year-end close-out is progressing slowly because of cash reconciliation. The Town Manager said she was unsure free cash would be certified by the state before the November 17th Special Town Meeting.
- The FY28 budget planning process was formally kicked off last Friday.

Departments and programs:

- The Police Department received its first reaccreditation from the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission.

- The senior tax work-off program has ten positions which been budgeted through the Assessor's Overlay. Department Heads are currently being asked to review and update their work opportunities, and HR is updating the program brochure and application materials in anticipation of launching the program in mid-December.
- Fire Chief Patrick Sullivan is retiring, and an open house will be held November 6th from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM.
- The Town and Nashoba Valley Regional Dispatch filed a complaint for contempt in Worcester Superior Court against George and Jennifer Burden, alleging violations of a January 2026 order restricting non-emergency calls.

Reminders:

- Trick-or-treat is Saturday, October 31st from 6:00 to 8:00 PM.
- Sand for Seniors registration runs through November 13th with deliveries completed by December 1.
- The Planning Board public forum is December 1st at 6:00 PM at the Adult Activity Center.
- A ribbon cutting for Kiku Asian Cuisine is October 29th at 11:00 AM.

Current recruitments:

- Data Collector – 19 Hours
- Assistant Library Director – 37 Hours per week - The position is posted, and applications are coming in. Applications are due October 29th
- Videographer –Candidate is being vetted.
- Intermittent Heavy Equipment Operator
- Heavy Equipment Operator – To be posted.
- Assistant Town Manager – Position to be reviewed by Personnel Committee.

Board, committee and commission vacancies exist on:

- Conservation Commission, Appointed, 1 Vacancy
- Cultural Council, Appointed, 1+ Vacancy
- Economic Development Committee, Appointed, 1 Vacancy
- Green Communities Committee, Appointed, 1 Associate Member
- Historical Commission, Appointed, 2 Vacancies
- Personnel Committee, Appointed, 2 Vacancies
- Public Access Cable Committee, Appointed, 2 Vacancies
- Sewer Commission, Elected, 1 Vacancy
- Trust Fund Commission, Elected, 1 Vacancy
- Zoning Board of Appeals, Appointed, 2 Associate Members

NEW BUSINESS

- **Discussion on October 27th Select Board Chat Session and Schedule Next Chat Session**

Chair Emkey reported that one resident attended the chat session at the Adult Activity Center and asked about the Flat Hill Road bridge project. Chair Emkey proposed holding a single session in early December rather than two during the holiday period. Members agreed the sessions are a worthwhile goodwill gesture. Member Alonzo and Vice-Chair Lehtinen are available in the evening, and Member Damon McQuaid is available during the day. The Board agreed to hold the next session in the evening at the Library and Member Alonzo will coordinate the date and time with Vice-Chair Lehtinen. A flyer will be posted and the session publicized on the Town website and Facebook.

- **Introduce Draft of Flag Policy with Modifications**

Clerk Glenn McLeod and Vice-Chair Lehtinen introduced their draft flag policies for discussion. Both drafts rely on a KP Law memo describing two options under the Supreme Court's Shurtleff decision:

- Option A: The Town declares its flagpoles a nonpublic forum reserved for government speech, with only approved flags flown.
- Option B: The Town accepts requests from the public while remaining content-neutral.

Clerk McLeod's draft is based on KP Law's Option A and modeled on Wellesley's policy. Vice-Chair Lehtinen's draft adds a request process under which the board may consider written requests at a public meeting, with display not to exceed 30 days, while preserving the principle of government speech. Vice-Chair Lehtinen favored allowing requests to encourage civic participation and recognize community events. Member McQuaid favored the simpler approach, citing practical concerns that any flag decision would prompt controversy. Member Alonzo supported either approach as long as it was legally sound, and said the policy should make clear that all flags flown are the Town's own speech. Town Manager Warren-Dyment read prior guidance from Town Counsel that a flag is government speech when the Board actively decides to fly it, and that flying any flag requested, or allowing public use of the poles, could create a public forum. Clerk McLeod favored the simpler policy as avoiding difficult viewpoint-related decisions. Chair Emkey suggested the flags on the front of Town Hall might serve as an alternative display location and noted the existing policy on half-staff flags should be retained. Members discussed excluding campaign or ballot-question flags. The Board agreed to refine the draft before seeking Town Counsel's review and to consider holding a workshop on the draft at the November 10th meeting. No vote was taken.

- **Special Education Reserve Fund Policy**

Chair Emkey explained that the Special Education Reserve Fund was created at the fall 2025 Special Town Meeting without funding. Statute caps the fund at 2% of net school spending and requires a majority vote of both the School Committee and the Select Board for withdrawals. Funding sources, withdrawal criteria, and other rules are not defined by law. Some Finance Committee members have said they will not support funding the reserve without a policy. Sample policies from four towns were distributed. Members generally supported having a policy. Members debated whether the Town Manager, a cross-committee working group or the School Committee should prepare the first draft.

Motion to charge the Town Manager with creating the first draft of the Special Education Reserve Fund policy was made by Member McQuaid and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Following discussion, in which Member Alonzo stated he would oppose the motion and Vice-Chair Lehtinen said the School Committee should take the lead, the motion was withdrawn.

Chair Emkey will ask the School Committee Chair to consider placing the matter on that committee's agenda, and the Board will revisit the item at an upcoming meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Special Town Meeting, November 17, 2026**

The Board reviewed the latest draft warrant, which includes two edits from Town Counsel in Article 7.

- **Select Board Recommendations on Articles**

Article 1 (Hear reports):

Motion to recommend approval of Article 1 was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Articles 2 (Amend FY27 Omnibus Budget) and 3 (Payment of Expenses from a Prior Fiscal Year):
Town Manager Warren-Dyment presented a working draft of available revenue and proposed expenditures. Available funds total $58,606, made up of $53,065 in remaining state aid and $5,541 in winter recovery assistance. Proposed uses include a part-time (19-hour) teen room librarian, two 10-hour account clerks in the financial departments, $10,000 for MUNIS training for Town and school staff, and the remaining balance for expense lines or the Finance Committee reserve. She recommended deferring a recommendation because the figures are not final and an additional prior-year bill may arise.
Motion to defer Articles 2 and 3 to the Special Town Meeting was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Article 4 (Transfer to Special Education Reserve Fund, $300,000 from certified free cash):
Members cited uncertainty over certification of free cash, concern about committing free cash at a special town meeting before the year's capital needs are known, and the absence of a policy governing the fund.
Motion to recommend disapproval of Article 4 was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Clerk McLeod. Call for vote: Four – aye. One – nay (Vice-Chair Lehtinen). The motion passed (4-1-0).

Article 5 (Planning Board corrective zoning amendments):
Motion to recommend approval of Article 5 was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Article 6 (Stormwater bylaw amendment giving the Planning Board authority to set the fee schedule):
Motion to recommend approval of Article 6 was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Articles 7 (Non-binding vote on pursuing demolition of the T.C. Passios building) and 8 (Non-binding vote on funding mechanism for stormwater maintenance and MS4 compliance):
Member Alonzo, joined by Member McQuaid and Vice-Chair Lehtinen, said the board should not influence the outcome of a non-binding straw poll. Clerk McLeod disagreed. He said the Board represents residents who do not attend town meeting. He also said voters lack cost information and a master building plan, and that the question was not reviewed by the Municipal Building Design Committee.
Motion to take no position on Articles 7 and 8 was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Four – aye. One – nay (Clerk McLeod). The motion passed (4-1-0).

Article 9 (Middle/High School Track and Field Engineering and Related Services, $195,830):

The School Committee identified certified free cash as the likely funding source, but certification is uncertain and stabilization funds have been raised as an alternative. The vote required will be listed as "two-thirds or majority, depending on funding source."
Motion to defer Article 9 was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).
The Board will meet at 6:30 PM on November 17, before Town Meeting, to vote on the deferred articles.

Motion to approve the warrant was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).
The warrant will be signed after the meeting once printed.

- **Update on food pantry relocation and license agreement**

Chair Emkey noted the update from Ms. Beach during public comment. The pantry indicated it can wait until the November 10th meeting for the final license agreement, which should be presented then. The appeal period for their site plan approval expires November 9th.

- **Discussion on Lunenburg municipal buildings**

In response to Clerk McLeod's question about a joint meeting, Chair Emkey reported she spoke with the Lunenburg Municipal Building Design Committee (LMBDC) Chair. He agreed the committee will proceed with the space study and RFP before meeting jointly with the Board. No joint meeting is scheduled. The LMBDC meets next Monday.

MINUTES/WARRANTS/ACTION ITEMS

- **Minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes of October 1, 2024 and October 20, 2026 was made by Member Alonzo and seconded by Vice-Chair Lehtinen. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Motion to approve the minutes of July 7, 2026, July 14, 2026 and July 21, 2026 was made by Vice-Chair Lehtinen and seconded by Chair Emkey. Call for vote: Three – aye. Two – abstain (Member McQuaid and Member Alonzo). The motion passed (3-0-2).

- **Warrants**

Chair Emkey presented an accounts payable warrant in the amount of $576,020.25 for signature.

COMMITTEE REPORTS
Member Alonzo will attend the Assessors meeting tomorrow.

Member McQuaid asked about a Capital Planning Committee meeting date, and Town Manager Warren-Dyment said all members have been sworn in and she is following up with the senior member to schedule the reorganization meeting.

Clerk McLeod had nothing to report from the MPO or Library Trustees.

Vice-Chair Lehtinen reported that the Municipal Building Design Committee lacked a quorum Monday and will meet next Monday. He said the School Committee discussed its

capital plan, including the turf field and track, the primary school driveway and playground, and technology upgrades.

Chair Emkey reported that the 300th Anniversary Committee has formed a Friends of the 300th group for fundraising and is seeking volunteers. The group is close to completing its 501(c)(3) paperwork. The traveling wooden birthday cake was found to be beyond repair, and the committee is seeking ideas for an alternative display. The committee is also pricing banners, lawn signs, and a calendar, and has endorsed approaching McDonald's for a sponsored commemoration of the Burbank potato. The committee meets again November 30th. The Finance Committee will vote on articles at its November 12th meeting, and the Stormwater Task Force meets Thursday.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS SCHEDULE
The next Select Board meeting is November 10th, and Chair Emkey proposed using it as a workshop on the flag policy and the Boards, Committees, and Commissions Handbook, chapters 7 through 12.

The Special Town Meeting is November 17th, with the Board meeting at 6:30 PM beforehand.

Chair Emkey noted that tax classification is scheduled for November 24th, Member Alonzo stated that he will be unable to attend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- **PUBLIC**

None.

- **TOWN MANAGER**

None.

- **BOARD**

None.

ADJOURN
Motion to adjourn at 8:53 PM was made by Vice-Chair Lehtinen and seconded by Member Alonzo. Call for vote: Five - aye. The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Renee Emkey

These Minutes were reviewed and approved by the Select Board on: Tuesday, November 10, 2026.