

Town of Lunenburg

Finance Committee:
Mark Erickson, Chairman
Brian Laffond, Vice-Chairman
Terri Burchfield, Secretary
Jason Smith
John Male
Scott Gile
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Mark Erickson
11/8/12

Lunenburg Finance Committee Minutes 10/25/2012

Location: Town Hall
Present: M. Erickson, B. Laffond, J. Male, S. Gile, J. Smith, S. Raboin, T. Burchfield
Also Present: K. Speidel

1. Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.
2. Communications
 - No public comment.
 - TB attended the Association of Town Finance Committees meeting on 10/20 and distributed the new handbook. The meeting was a great experience, and Lunenburg appears to be using best practices as financial processes go. One question that came up was regarding the town's financial policies. KS reported that ours need work, and are part of the policies the Board of Selectmen are addressing. FinCom will have them for the budget process.
3. Minutes

BL made a motion to accept the minutes for the October 11th meeting, amended to reflect that it was JM who raised the question of whether the Town was approaching foundation budget figures for the schools. SG seconded, approved 7-0.
4. Committee/Department Updates
 - BL informed the Committee that the new Library Director is Martha Moore. He also expects to be asking what services have been added back given the additional funds approved at the special town meeting.
 - JM will be researching the issues around sewers and town buildings.
 - In an update regarding service levels, it was noted by Gregory Berthiaume, in the audience, that the School Committee had begun budget discussions, and Finance Committee members were welcome to observe. The School Committee also has been working on capital plans, and a concern that the cafeteria floor at the Primary School is failing. JM wondered if a tour of the schools by FinCom members would be possible.
 - ME reported that the School Building Committee has an approved contract with an OPM which should be ratified by the MSBA on November 5th. Fall 2013 is target to bring design to Town Meeting.
 - SR reported that there has not been a Capital Planning Committee meeting.
5. Letter to Kevin Blanchette and the Worcester County Retirement Board

ME shared the letter he is sending on behalf of the Committee to Mr. Blanchette expressing concern over the 3% cost of living adjustment that was approved for retirees when the social security adjustment was so much lower and municipal budgets are stressed. Discussion regarding contacting state representatives as well ensued.
6. Service level discussions

SR reported on the questions the subgroup would like to raise with department heads before we get into the budget season. In addition to the reviews brought back by liaisons from their external committee assignments, we would also like to hear from some departments with the whole group, especially as we have so many new members and there are new department heads as well. Mark and Kerry will invite Fire, Police and DPW to a November 29th meeting.
7. Town Manager Updates
 - There are 2 solar projects ongoing, on Electric Avenue and Chase Road. As the projects move forward, the Town is anticipating saving \$200-225,000 per year when the credits begin. There is still some back and forth with Unitil as to the amount (17.1 or 18.1 cent) of the credits.
 - As a result of the Verizon tax abatement case, the Town will owe \$48,000 dollars plus about \$18,000 interest. The Board of Assessors will review to determine actual numbers, and Kerry will report them at the next meeting. As interest compounds daily, she hopes to make payment soon.

- The Town is still awaiting FEMA reimbursement from the October storm last year. We have received \$400,000 and have \$157,000 to go. The state DoR is requiring the town to fund the deficit, which affects the Tax Recapitulation. Right now it is an accounting problem, but we may need to borrow money to fund it.
 - MEMA has started conference calls in advance of the upcoming storm.
8. Next meetings
November 8th, Sewer and Health Insurance?
November 29th, Service levels discussion
December 13th, Tax ReCap

JM will forward a link he follows for statistics; benchmarks

ME will forward GASB 45 information

Kerry will forward fiscal policies.

9. JM motioned to adjourn at 8:56. SR seconded, approved 7-0.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Terri Burchfield.