

Town Manager Report

Town of Lunenburg- October 12, 2021





Contact Information

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Announcement on Existing Vacancies:

The following is a list of current vacancies on the following committees:

- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 vacancy- representative from Historical Commission)
- Commissioner of Trust Funds (2 vacancies-joint appointment between CTF and BOS until next ATE)
- Economic Development Committee (1 person recommended by the Open Space Committee, 1 citizen at large, and 1 ex-officio member that is business owner)
- Green Communities Committee (1 regular member vacancy and 2 Associate vacancies)
- Personnel Committee (1 vacancy)
- Zoning Board of Appeals (1 Associate vacancy)

Interested persons can find application forms on the Town Website and completed forms can be sent to the Select Board's Office.

Current Employment Opportunities with the Town:

The following is a list of current employment opportunities with the Town:

- Assistant Accountant (Part Time Benefitted)

- Board/Committee Clerk (Part Time Non-Benefitted)
- Digital Services Staff Librarian (Part Time Benefitted)
- Assistant to the Sewer Business Manager (Part Time)
- Trash and Recycling Coordinator (Grant Funded, Part Time Non-Benefitted)

More information on each position can be found on the job postings, which are located on the town website.

Unitil Winter Rate Price Increase

Unitil filed their proposed winter Basic Service rates (effective December 1, 2021 until May 31, 2022) with the DPU on October 1st. The proposed rate would increase the residential rate to \$0.1988 kWh. The Attorney General filed comments with the Department of Public Utilities to request a 50% reduction in the proposed increase. It is expected that the DPU will make a determination on the rates this week.

In the meantime, the Municipal and Community Services Representative from Unitil, John DiNapoli, reached out to me to work with us on contacting residents that have opted out of the Municipal Aggregation Program that they would have the option of opting into the program. Our locked in rate for 3 years is \$0.11210 kWh.

Legislative Updates:

I recently reached out to Senator Cronin, Representative Sena, Representative Kushmerek and their staff for updates on any pending bills that would affect Host Community Agreements, Property Tax Relief legislation for seniors, any possible legislation that would impact formula funding changes related to Chapter 70 and Chapter 90, the State supplemental budget bill, the State's plan for ARPA funding and the status of the Bond Bills that have funding earmarked for Lunenburg. We had a Zoom call last week and they provided the following updates:

- The legislators confirmed that any bills on Host Community Agreements will not be acted on this fiscal year, nor is there any impetus to move it forward.
- Senator Cronin was not aware of any bills that would adopt Tax Relief for Seniors and did not believe the Senate had any appetite to act on such bills. The House has two bills that Representative Sena co-sponsored but they are not moving forward.
- The legislators did not foresee any changes to the funding formulas for Chapter 70 and Chapter 90 this fiscal year but do expect a Chapter 90 funding formula bill in the future.
- The Votes Act passed in the Senate and the House is expected to take act on this during this session.
- The legislators should have received the reprecincting maps this past Friday and will have 21 days to review. At the time of speaking with them, they did not know if there are any changes for Lunenburg.
- Debate on the State supplemental budget bill occur before November 17th as formal session ends by this date and resumes in January. Realistically, when requesting earmarks, we should ask for projects that are between the range of \$10K-\$50K. It is highly unlikely we would receive an earmark for anything greater than \$50K. An upcoming agenda will provide my recommendations for earmarks to request in the supplemental budget bill.
- The State is currently in the process of holding hearings on the use of ARPA funds but are also in a holding pattern waiting for the federal government's infrastructure bill so there will not be duplication on the use of funding. I plan on putting together projects that are high priority to the Town, such as the Flat Hill Culvert project, to submit to the legislature as they are formulating on how best to use the state ARPA funds.

- In regards to the three Bond Bills that projects for Lunenburg were included in, the legislators were up front that we will never see that funding. Not only do we have a freshman delegation, but there have been zero projects for small towns that funding in Bond Bills has been released. I plan to extract the projects that were included in those bond bills that have not been completed and add them to our list of budget priorities that will be up for discussion, if they are not already.
- The Senate will be taking up a Mental Health Omnibus Bill between now and November 17th. This bill addresses mental health insurance reform and is not an appropriation bill.

The delegation has been invited to an upcoming meeting in November to meet with the Board and once I hear back from all three we will announce the date.

Budget Updates:

The Finance Director submitted the FY 2021 balance sheet to DOR last week and free cash was certified on Friday, October 8th. The General Fund Free Cash was certified at \$2,666,962, the Water Enterprise Retained Earnings was certified at \$54,544, the Solid Waste Enterprise Retained Earnings was certified at 49,413, the Sewer Enterprise Retained Earnings was certified at \$1,828,706, and the PEG Access Enterprise Retained Earnings was certified at \$835,969.

COVID-19 Update:

The weekly update from the Board of Health on the total number of new cases reported as of October 2nd was 80. The current positivity rate for Lunenburg as of October 2nd was 6.94%.

Meetings, Events and Other Announcements:

- Halloween Trick or Treat hours will be on Sunday, October 31st 6-8 PM
- The fall Special Town Meeting will be Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 7 PM

