

# Town Manager Report


Town of Lunenburg-August 18, 2020





## Contact Information

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## Announcement on Existing Vacancies:

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

- Americans with Disabilities Act Commission (1 vacancy)
- Architectural Preservation District Commission (3 vacancies)
- Capital Planning Committee (1 vacancy)
- Historical Commission (3 vacancies)
- Library Board of Trustees (1 vacancy)
- Senior Center Property Tax Work Off Committee (1 vacancy)
- Zoning Board of Appeals ( 2 Associate vacancies)

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

## Request to Rename a Tributary off of Mulpus Brook:

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names (BGN) has received a proposal from a resident of Lunenburg to apply the new name Balish Brook to an officially unnamed stream that flows into Mulpus Brook in Cowdrey Nature Center.

The Board of Geographic Names is responsible by law for standardizing geographic names for use by the Federal Government and accepts proposals to name unnamed geographic features or change the names of already named geographic features. Because the Board of Geographic Names places importance on local opinion when it votes on these proposals, local governments who are elected to represent its citizens who might have an interest in the naming are asked for their input. This request was received by both the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission.

The stream currently has no name that is official for Federal use. The proponent wishes to honor his great-uncle Harry Balish (1915-1980), who was born in Pennsylvania and died in Oregon; Mr. Balish has no connection to Lunenburg or Massachusetts. He had a long military career, serving in World War II and the Korean War and was stationed in New Mexico, San Francisco, Germany, and Turkey. The proponent acknowledged that Mr. Balish had no connection to the area but believes that he should be commemorated for his military service.

The Conservation Commission will be meeting tomorrow evening and will be discussing this. This will be placed on the September 1st Selectmen's agenda for a vote.

## Fall 2020 Elections:

The Town Clerk's Office has posted a comprehensive Voter Options Guide for the Fall 2020 Elections on the town website with everything voters need to know including their voting options, deadlines for registering to vote and deadlines for mailed ballots. [This](#) can be found by going to the Town Clerk's page and clicking on the link at the bottom titled "Fall Voter Information 2020". Early voting for the September 1st State Primary will begin on Saturday August 22nd and run through Thursday, August 27th. Early voting on the weekends will be at Town Hall and will be at Parish Hall at 39 Main Street during the week.

## Request to Purchase Town Owned Land at 671 West Street:

An abutter to the town owned land at 671 West Street has inquired about purchasing a 100 x 150 foot parcel to extend their current lot. This parcel was acquired by the Town in 1957 for the erection of a school. In October of 2002 the Town voted to rescind the 1957 vote designating the land be taken for school purposes and transferred it to the Board of Selectmen for general municipal purposes and authorized them to sell all or portions to various abutting landowners. Our records indicate that 5 portions of the property were sold in 2010.

I also notified Conservation and Open Space about this inquiry and if either Committee had interest in this parcel and the Open Space Committee will be having a meeting this Thursday with this topic on their agenda. The Conservation Commission has expressed an interest in this parcel, as well as five other town owned parcels under the care of the Board of Selectmen that they may be requesting be transferred for conservation purposes.

## November Special Town Meeting:

At the September 1st Selectmen's meeting, the Board will vote on setting a date for the fall Special Town Meeting and the opening and closing of the warrant. In order to plan well in advance, I would ask the Board to also discuss the safety precautions that will be in place for the November Special Town Meeting at the September 1st meeting so that this can be advertised well in advance and included in the Special Town Meeting warrant booklet.

## DPW Update:

We continue to advertise for three Equipment Operator/Laborer vacancies and conduct interviews but to date have had no success in filling those positions, primarily due to the lack of qualified candidates and the low rate of pay. The Highway Division is down 50% right now and this staffing shortage has put the DPW at a significant disadvantage in completing all the necessary work to maintain our roadways.

Not only are we significantly understaffed, but the Highway Division has spent a significant amount of time in the last few months in assisting the Cemetery Division and Parks Division to maintain those properties. The LUK program kids were a significant help during June and July but now that two of the three kids have left and the third is leaving at the end of the month, we will no longer have this supplemental help.

As a result, day to day operations of the Highway Division have fallen behind and not having sufficient staff has created a backlog of work. The DPW still continues to receive daily requests for services with the expectation that the request be addressed in a timely manner. As we actively search to fill the existing vacancies and look into outsourcing functions until we become fully staffed, I ask residents to be patient. Our staff is working hard and the administration is working towards solving this staffing shortage.

## Meetings, Events and Other Announcements:

- The Conservation Commission has a meeting on Zoom on Wednesday, August 19th at 7:00 p.m.
- The Open Space Committee has a meeting on Zoom on Thursday, August 20th at 6 p.m.
- The Library Board of Trustees has a meeting on Zoom on Thursday, August 20th at 6:45 p.m.
- The Planning Board has a meeting on Zoom on Monday, August 24th at 6:30 p.m.
- Town Counsel will hold office hours on August 26th from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

