

# Town of Lunenburg

## Finance Committee:

Terri Burchfield, Chairman  
Michelle Walton, Vice-Chairman  
Peter Beardmore, Secretary  
John Henshaw  
Jay Simeone  
David Passios



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## Lunenburg Finance Committee January 9, 2020 Meeting

Location: Town Hall  
Present: Terri Burchfield, John Henshaw, Dave Passios, Jay Simeone, Peter Beardmore, Michelle Walton  
Absent:

### 1. Call to Order

- Terri Burchfield, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00pm (all expected members were in attendance).

### 2. Communications

- **Public Comment**
- Michelle Walton reported that Dr. Burnham will present her budget to the School Committee on Jan 22.
- Dave Passios reported that the RFQ's for TCP had closed on Jan 7<sup>th</sup>. There were three proposals. Interviews are being planned.

### 3. Minutes – none

### 4. Town Manager, Finance Director Report

- The town manager reported that the snow removal budget was projected to move into the red for the current FY.
- Jay Simeone asked questions relating to the budget for snow removal for the school department. There is still no resolution on school department contribution to the snow budget.
- The town had been awarded the complete streets grant for upgrades to the town center sidewalks and Oak Ave intersection.
- The gas station project has been approved for Phase 2 site evaluation and environmental review, we are now eligible to apply for clean-up costs.

- 5-year forecast will be presented on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Dr. Burnham will also present the School Department portion of the forecast.

## **5. Open items, goals, definitions, committee reports**

- John Henshaw reported that the capital planning committee met on Jan 7. 21 requests total \$1.329M. Previous requests were \$1.45M and \$1.68M in previous two years. Vertex items are not included.
- Peter Beardmore reported that at the School Committee meeting in December, Dr. Burnham did present a forecast of new positions.
- A discussion ensued as to the difference between “Level Funding” and “Level Service”. The town manager explained that the target budget will reflect a blend, due primarily to contractual increases. Jay Simeone and Peter Beardmore disagreed as to whether adding a police officer represented an increase in service when staffing still fell below recommended ‘foundation’ staffing given our population. Terri Burchfield recommended focusing on ‘met’ and ‘unmet needs’. The committee agreed that it will hold each other accountable when using these terms and will specify exactly what previous levels we are referring to.
- The term “target budget” was discussed extensively. The town manager defined it as a “baseline for the budget process” and a starting point for discussions with departments for getting to the final budget.

## **6. Alternative funding for capital**

- Dave Passios lead a discussion on alternative funding for capital, which was initially prompted by the Saliba property, and whether we should be looking at one-time capital exclusions, rather than non-excluded borrowing. In the case of the Saliba property, we could potentially save \$35-38K in interest over five years, will also saving \$30-50K in the operating budget. Mr. Passios was unclear as to specifically what could be done at this point with respect to the Saliba property.
- Mr. Passios noted that the Town of Ashby uses this approach for all capital, rather than funding capital through the regular budget.
- The Town Manager noted that there is existing debt maturing, but that there are expected expenses coming relating to TC Passios, and Turkey Hill that we need to keep in mind.
- The committee discussed the pros and cons of exploring such a policy at length, and how this could be brought to the town via a warrant article.
- Peter Beardmore expressed general support for bringing forward a proposal, whereas Michelle Walton and John Henshaw expressed reservations for supporting this on behalf of the finance committee.

**7. Public Comment** - none

**8. Next meeting**

- **January 23 -**

**9. Adjournment**

- John Henshaw motioned/ Jay Simeone seconded; unanimous approval

**RECEIVED**

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TOWN CLERK