

Location: In-person at Lunenburg Town Hall and broadcast on Zoom

Present: In person: Vice-Chairperson Chris Menard, Tom Gray, Tom Balish, and Caesar Nuzzolo. Attending remotely: Chairperson Evan Watters, and Jay Simeone.

Guests: Council on Aging Director Susan Doherty, Land Use Director Adam Burney, Library Director Muir Haman

1. Call to Order

Mr. Menard called the meeting to order at 7p.m. and read a statement concerning the Open Meeting Law, and how all public meetings are legally being held remotely.

This meeting was recorded and is viewable on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/mA3U0wo2SPw>

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Announcements:

4. New Business:

- a. **COA Budget Presentation:** Ms. Doherty is requesting \$29, 338.53 more than last year in order to hire a part time outreach assistant (10 hours per week), an additional 9 hours for the outreach coordinator, and to shift the funding source of the assistant meal site manager from the Formula Grant to the municipal budget. The entire FY24 budget request amounts to \$224,306.85. Ms. Doherty explained that there is much more demand for the services that outreach offers, and an additional person on staff will help keep the doors open later in the evening for those who are still in the workforce, and need outreach assistance.
- b. **Land Use Department:** Mr. Burney explained that the Land Use Department budget is mostly comprised of people’s salaries. The Land Use Department entails the Planning Board Office, Building Department, Conservation Commission Office, and the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Land Use Department is also responsible for the development of the town’s Master Plan. Mr. Burney informed the committee that the Planning Board is in the process of interviewing those who’ve responded to RFPs (Request for Proposals).

Mr. Burney pointed out his budget changes from FY23 to FY24 as follows:

Line Item	Difference	Reason
171-511000	-\$11,134.52	Retirement of long-term employee and replacement at lower grade
171-511001	+\$1,613.54	Step Increase for employee
171-573000	-\$60	Budgeted to match actual cost of membership
175-531017	-\$200	Purchase of publications has been lowered recently
175-534200	+\$200	To cover printing needs for the Master Plan process
175-573100	-\$150	Budget has been unspent in past years
241-531017	+\$100	This should cover the actual cost of the book set for the new building and associated codes.
241-573100	-\$100	Commissioner has attended many fee trainings and the balance was moved to Publications

Mr. Burney also drew attention to the advertising line in the FY23 Conservation Commission budget, and explained that with the change of administrators in the past year there has been some apparent confusion as to how to pay for advertising. Mr. Burney will use other underspent line items to cover the cost.

Mr. Menard asked how storm water would affect the budget. Mr. Burney replied that in the future, it may require hiring a part-time planner to monitor storm water drainage systems, which could come from the planning budget, or possibly DPW, as people with those skills could also be employed there, or if a storm water fund is developed in the future that employee could be covered under that fund.

- c. **Library:** Mr. Haman has requested \$561,626 for FY24. The Town Manager has recommended \$539,126 (\$35,171 more than FY23) for the library in FY24. Mr. Haman explained that the library relies heavily on outside funds to succeed. Currently the Friends of the Lunenburg Public Library pay for the cost associated with owning and operating the copy machine, along with other office supplies, furniture, collections, and other library materials. Mr. Haman's requests for FY24 entail creating a new Assistant Director position at the library, which accounts for \$8,000. Mr. Haman is also requesting the copy machine be funded by the municipal budget, as well as updating the security cameras, and other technology upgrades, along with increasing the dollar amount on the program and supply line. Postage, library materials, such as certification, and money for training and mileage are also included in the FY24 request.
- d. **Town Meeting Finance Committee Report:** Deadline for the letter is April 4, 2023. Mr. Watters expressed that he prefers to demonstrate the general position from a finance standpoint regarding the latest tax assessment/abatement issue. Excludable debt, as well as the actual debt ceiling and how that money can be spent, should also be included in the report. Mr. Menard added that the committee should also include a look into the future. Mr. Menard suggested creating an updated document to be handed out at Town Meeting, as information regarding the tax assessment/abatement issue will still be unfolding.

5. **Town Manager/Finance Director Report:** none

6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Capital Planning:** The Select Board approved the request to spend ARPA funds on the ambulance and 2 dump trucks that were in the FY24 Capital Plan requests. This decision will give the departments a head start in ordering the vehicles they need.
- b. **Tax Abatement/Assessment:** Mr. Menard expressed concern over the timeline regarding the use of free cash as it's being reserved to process at least 420 abatements, which need to be approved or denied by the Board of Assessors that only consists of three people. The BOA has 90 days from February 1 to process the abatements. Town Meeting is May 6.
- c. **State Representative Meeting Preparation:** Mr. Menard prefers the committee discuss the formulas regarding funding for this portion of the Commonwealth. Mr. Balish recalled the last time the delegation met with the committee they recommended similar towns band together to form a coalition to make their voices heard. Mr. Watters intends to send topics of discussion to the State Reps before the meeting on March 7.

7. **Minutes:** Mr. Nuzzolo motioned to approve the minutes from the February 9, 2023 and February 16, 2023 meetings. Mr. Gray seconded. On vote, motion passed unanimously.

8. **Committee Reports** Committee members updated each other on their respective liaison assignments.

9. Future Meetings: 3/2 IT, and Police Department, 3/7 Joint meeting with Select Board and School Committee with state delegation, 3/9 DPW and Facilities Department.

10. Public Comment: none

11. Adjourn At 9:32 p.m. Mr. Balish motioned to adjourn, Mr. Gray seconded. On vote, motion carried unanimously.