

Town of Lunenburg

Finance Committee:
Terri Burchfield, Chair
Michelle Walton, Vice-Chair
Peter Beardmore, Secretary
John Henshaw
Jay Simeone
David Passios



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Lunenburg Finance Committee May 14, 2020 Meeting

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Present: Terri Burchfield, Michelle Walton, Peter Beardmore, Dave Passios, John Henshaw, Jay Simeone
Absent: None

1. Call to Order

- Terri Burchfield, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the COVID-19 / Zoom meeting advisory statement.
- This meeting was recorded and is viewable on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSOVTrqv66U>

2. Announcements:

- (~3:15 to 8:20) Peter Beardmore said he heard from a colleague who is involved with Belmont's government. The prospect is that state aid could decline by 20% to 25%. Peter emailed Representative Hay and Senator Tran to check this out. Senator Tran characterized the information as "not unrealistic". Sen, Tran's advice was to plan conservatively assuming up to a 20-25% cut in local aid. The recommendation from the state was to operate as conservatively as possible, ideally on a month to month basis.
- (~8:20 to 10:00 +) Heather Lemieux said she read Sen. Tran's response differently as far as tone. She also spoke with Rep. Hay and as there has been "zero guidance from any leadership at the state about numbers", she cautioned that voicing the prospect of a 20-25% cut in state aid was "a dangerous pattern". Rep. Hay told her a majority of legislators are reaching out to leadership that state aid and education funding is their priority.

- Heather said the rainy-day funds and the Cares Act could help. She encourages Peter B. stated the rainy day fund will “be depleted before we can blink our eyes”. He said, “right now we have to assume the worst.”
- Terri wondered whether the reference to a one twelfth budget means the state wondering whether there will be Annual Town Meetings.”

3. Town Manager: Report on the list of projects and costs sent to Rep. Hay in February. Details at (13:55-15:00)

- There is a chance to get partial funding from the state.
- The state bill for funding of these projects is a bond issuance.

4. Capital Projects: Damon McQuaid called the Capital Planning Committee to order. Present: Damon McQuaid, Jim LaVeck, John Henshaw.

- Dave Passios suggests that items #1, 3, 6 and 10 should be postponed either until ATM or next year. He would like to get a funding source for the streetlights. The streetlights will reduce expenses. Now that there is sufficient free cash this is less urgent.
- Asbestos abatement: John Londa--if it gets funded at ATM the project would be done over the summer. If postponed until the November Town Meeting would push it out to summer 2021.
- Peter B. If Town Meeting were to be postponed under the rules of the 1/12th budget scenario, could the Town appropriate free cash? Heather said that the Town could. (~31 - 32 min)
- Terri B. asked how would deferring the replacement of ALS equipment affect the Fire Department, Chief Sullivan said that postponement could mean not getting the equipment until the fall and perhaps as late as July, 2021 and without it “we’re dead in the water as far as certifying and billing at the Paramedic level. We need ALS certification well as the equipment to be able to use the ALS equipment.
- If the ALS equipment is funded at the Fall Town Meeting, the department could get the ALS equipment in early 2021.
- Damon M. emphasized the risk that costs of ALS equipment, which is highly specialized gear, could increase.
- Self-of new Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus would replace old SCBA apparatus which is at end of life.
- Dave Passios also brought up the advantages of consequential savings on the streetlight conversion project.

5. Setting Up a Debt Group: (~1:30:00 to 1:41)

- Peter B. listed the big projects: TC Passios, The Turkey Hill Building and the renovation or disposal of any space that would be vacated as a result of the renovation of T. C. Passios. Totaling all the costs may be about what the cost of the Middle-High School project. It may affect debt levels and the tax rate. A task is to construct those scenarios and their effects?
- Dave P. said the debt policy needs a review in this context.
- Peter B. stated that he would like us to have a set of numbers or ballpark figure work through this prior to the Town Meeting.
- Heather L. stated that having an idea of projected revenues is important too.
- Terri suggested setting an agenda at our May 28 meeting.

6. Committee Reports: None

7. Public Comment:

- Peter B. said that citizens have different sensibilities regarding COVID. Perhaps when the current situation abates enough to meet in person, if there is a way to have a hybrid meeting--some participants present and others participating remotely.

8. Next Meeting:

9. **Adjournment** Dave moved to adjourn, Peter Seconded: Approved 6 - 0. 8:52 PM