

Town of Lunenburg

Finance Committee:
Terri Burchfield, Chair
Peter Beardmore, Vice-Chair
Heather Sroka, Secretary
John Henshaw
Christopher Menard
David Passios
Jay Simeone



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Lunenburg Finance Committee
August 13, 2020 Meeting

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting
Present: Terri Burchfield, Peter Beardmore, Dave Passios, John Henshaw, Jay Simeone, Chris Menard, Heather Sroka
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=jSOVTrqv66U>

2. Public Comment:

- (1:44 – 2:37) Dave Passios, 56 Whiting Street sends his condolences personally and for this committee to the family of Douglas MacMillan. A wonderful procession of tractors and tribute to Douglas MacMillan.

3. Town Manager:

- (3:33 – 9:51) Heather Lemieux to provide the same report provided at the last Selectman's Meeting.
 - The State Announced a commitment to no less than the Fiscal Year 2020 Level of Funding for Unrestricted General Government Aid and Chapter 70 as the baseline for Fiscal Year 2021.
 - Fiscal 2021 Capital Plan
 - Town Hall Ramp Project will be included in the Complete Streets Project – encompasses Town Center

- Flat Hill Culvert Design Engineering Firm is under contract – as part of this project they will prepare an Application for the Small Bridge Program to apply for the construction funding on that project
- Turkey Hill Asbestos Abatement Project is in process
- The Marked Police Cruiser has been ordered
- The Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus order in progress
- The ALS Equipment Phase I on hold
- The ACL - Animal Control Vehicle has been ordered
- Mid-Life Overhaul of Squad 3 on hold – however the pump may need to be repaired/replaced sooner at a cost of \$15,000 of the \$65,000 total project.
- Portable radios some have been purchased for new officers - \$2,000 of the \$45,000
- AC design for Primary out to bid
- Senior Center Front Design in progress and then needs to be put out to bid

Legislature Passed an Infrastructure Bond Bill - 2 of 4 Lunenburg Projects Chosen - \$150,000 Turn Out Gear for the LFD and \$100,000 Fire Alarm Upgrades at the Primary School – sent to Gov. Baker on 8/3 for approval.

In April Federal Stimulus Package Grant Project MRCP to put together an Applicatio. BOS Signed a letter in support of a Regional Coronavirus Community Block Grant Application and it was approved. Towns included Lunenburg, Shirley, Royalston, Townsend and Westminster. \$296,100 for microloans for small businesses and to support local food banks.

Town Treasurer has a list of unclaimed checks on the Town website. Process takes years. Possible auction for town property. All possible money generating projects.

Board Questions for TM: (9:52 – 19:05)

Peter on State Aid Commitments – Had heard it had not made it to Gov. Baker's desk – TM's reply Both Gov and Legislature committed and the Town received a letter from the Dep. Of Revenue with numbers. Peter feels we still need to be careful and conservative.

Peter asked about the timeline for Fall Town Meeting – Date Set by BOS at Sep. 1 Meeting. TM response Free Cash/New Growth/Local Receipts will all come into play

and will look at how Lunenburg is trending to make any adjustments to the Fiscal 2021 Budget.

Peter – now more money from State – funding recommendations for projects that were not funded. When will you be looking at that? TM response – she will be looking at local receipts because local receipts were level funded from 2020. Time line for TM recommended School Department funded a 1.8% increase instead of a 2.5%. Police Officer, Fire Fighter, when can we potentially start moving money into these things. TM could estimate an October timeframe.

Peter – Why weren't Cap Planning Projects funded or why are on hold. TM - Delays in Training due to Covid 19. Being conservative in not committing to projects that were not time sensitive.

Terri – Microloans – Does that include the local farmers? TM – unknown – documents have not been issued and does not know specifics. Businesses with 5 or less employees and no more than \$10,000.

Dave – Still nervous of funding. No State Budget. The commitment sounds good in the press, but still cautious. List of Items in the Bond Bill – do you foresee the Town applying to any grants – Town infrastructure/ Library? TM – typically get notifications around grants and parameters. Will apply if eligible.

4. Meeting Minutes (19:06 – 24:21)

- 4/28, 5/7, 5/14, 5/28, 6/11
 - 4/28 joint meeting with BOS and Senator Tran
 - 5/28 remove Michelle Walton as a participant
 - John move to approve with Amendment removing Michelle Walton as an attendee on 5/28
 - Jay did not see 6/11 Minutes
 - Dave has not seen all
 - John Amended Motion to approve 4/28, 5/7, 5/14 and 5/28 with Amendment Jay Seconds
 - Vote to approve block John – aye, Heather – abstain, Jay – aye, Chris – abstain, Dave – aye, Peter – aye, Terri – aye
 - Peter to redistribute 6/11
 - 7/23 table to next meeting

5. Review By-Laws/Committee Appointment (24:22 – 39:59)

Terri – Email from Chris Town Bylaws list Capital Planning as a 3 year appointment. Discussion to review FinCom appointment. Terri reviewed Bylaws searching FinCom terms. Please make Terri aware of any inconsistencies in practices and Bylaws. TM made a spreadsheet of appointments and Terri screen shared.

Terri asks the Committee is to reappoint Dave Passios to the 3 Year Term on Capital Planning Staggered appointment schedule. Some discussion around the 3 year term limit and the fact that Mr. Passios only has 2 years left on his Fin Com Term. Charter requires a hearing to remove a member from Capital Planning – Town By-law requires staggered three year term.

Discussion around the purpose of three year terms and who may be able to fulfill that on FinCom. Motion to appoint Dave Passios to a three year term made by Peter Beardmore, Seconded by Jay Simeone. All in favor roll call vote.

6. Committee Reports (40:03 – 1:21)

Heather has a meeting scheduled with **Council on Aging** on Monday the 17th

Chris has been not heard back from the **Association of Town Finance Committees** – unsure what being a liaison entails – receive any info to bring to the Committee's attention – Chris was wondering in general if this Committee could move to a google drive to store documents so that information is easy to access. Heather L. believes that would be easy to do. Take this offline. Chris is going to work with Steve M. to get a google drive for FinCom with a record of who accessed it and when.

Dave – **TCP Committee** to meet on Monday – 2 Members had a discussion with SB – Agenda item was charge of the committee came up Article 24 of 2019 ATM and their interpretation of charge and committee's interpretation are aligned.

Terri brought up discussion around access to TCP – Specifically the Boys and Girls Club or general use or open up to individual groups. All groups who expressed interest being considered and interviewed. Was this advertised or just people who have expressed an interest? Terri felt there was a lack of open notice to access TCP – General Community Use and Town Offices was the charge. Now space could be committed to a group and unavailable to other town groups. Public Space not Public Meetings. Peter thinks there is a risk of overcomplicating this already complicated issue. Boys and Girls club similarity of use with the Extended Day taking care of kids outside of school hours. School Department struggles around finances and ability to support and Boys and Girls Club has expressed interest in helping assist. Peter had this in mind when he voted for this committee at Town Meeting. No other group in town has the standing. Chris completely disagrees with this assessment. A National Organization such as the Boys and Girls club should not get preferential treatment. Was

not put forward to the community and Terri leery of this. Grange has requested use of Town offices. Mr. Passios is a rep of the Fin Com on that Committee and does not think that this is up for discussion. Mr. Beardmore thinks that this project has been up front and transparent. Mr. Passios cannot bring anything to the TCP Committee unless there is a vote. Chair entertained a motion and no motion was made. He will not bring anything as a member of the Finance Committee to the TCP Committee.

Peter – School Committee - SC approved new school calendar around 170 school days opening on September 16. SC approved to open school under a hybrid learning plan. Many factors in the hybrid plan – available space, social distancing, limited lunch room space, bussing challenges. Bussing is the biggest challenge – 10 busses with DESE guidelines of 25 students per bus. Long four hour meeting. Would like Financial ramifications from TM to date. Peter met with Superintendent Burnham and Mr. Cassidy, HR Director. Had a list of positions to fill. No additional budgetary requirements with new hires.

Dee Bus payment still unresolved and on the SB agenda for next Tuesday. Fiscal year 2021 need to reengage with transportation providers – 4 days a week perhaps some cost savings. Additional costs for sanitization etc. to work out.

Teacher contract negotiated with LEA one year -minor language change with some financial impact – no COLA increase a .5% increase after 90 days for teachers in the top tier of steps – 85 teachers. Cost associated with that.

Received 2 sizeable Covid related Grants from DESE

\$377,550 – CVRF School Reopening Grant

\$198,073 – Elementary and Schools Emergency Relief Fund

These grants a variety of Covid related stipends, PPE, custodial overtime, substitute teachers, possible increase in unemployment costs, tech needs online programs and training - hiring 2 one year positions – Psychologist and a Social Worker and Nurse all are Covid related impacts. Back up of kindergarten screenings. Will be utilizing the Psychologist in this process.

Chris – Chapter 70 Funding and the Cherry Sheet – concerned about the school receipts and assessments. School Choice could be something parents and students look at. We send 78 students and receive 34. Public Virtual Schools - two MA Virtual Schools will have a decade of experience over a traditional Public School. We should monitor these trends. This year allowing students to make hybrid, remote or choice quarterly. Doubtful there will be an accurate October 1 report. What is MontyTech looking to do and how will that impact Lunenburg? Unknown. MT assessment will not increase this year. MT is on a hybrid plan.

7. Town Debt Working Group (1:21 – 1:29)

Peter - Have not met since. They may have misread the timetable on TCP financials. THES met with Superintendent and Mr. Cassidy went through all info from the symposium last fall. Complexity associated with the figure. Mr. Londa should be brought into the discussion - will meet again the week of August 31st with a best guess number. Solar panels, roof replacement, boiler replacement, starting to add up to over \$6M in Capital Planning projects.

This project is going to take longer than expected. Probably not report ready in November.

John – a huge project with a lot of unknowns. Will probably generate a range – low – high. Leave it to the Town voters to decide what projects to do when.

Two year large projects to plan for next ten years.

Wants to get agreement with project principals as to a figure not an exact number but will it be close?

8. Public Comment: None

Terri -

Next Meeting August 27

Peter – No need to have Debt discussion on the agenda

State Aid monies with Town Department heads and School Committee

Begin Budget Discussions – PreCovid and Post Covid

Flag lines that were deferred

History of development and notes

John wants to contact Heather Sroka about meeting minutes

9. Adjournment

John makes motion to adjourn, Chris seconds. All in favor roll call vote. 8:34