

Town of Lunenburg

Finance Committee:

Terri Burchfield, Chair
Peter Beardmore, Vice-Chair
Heather Sroka, Secretary
John Henshaw
Christopher Menard
David Passios
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Lunenburg Finance Committee August 27, 2020 Meeting

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

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>

Jay Simeone will be late if he is able to attend
Heather Sroka will not be present

2. Public Comment (1:42 – 8:12)

Peter Beardmore note the passing of Bruce Smith. Mr. Smith was a lifelong resident of Lunenburg. He was an original member of the Lunenburg Blue Knights Football Coach in the 1960's. He went on to coach in the 80's when Peter played. He was a member of the 1980's network of dads at all school events, school events. He had a son who was a classmate of Peter's in 1990, another son who was in class of 1992 and a number of step-children. Peter wanted to acknowledge his passing and acknowledge all that he did for Lunenburg and himself. He wishes his family all the best.

Carol Archembault the Lunenburg School Committee Chairperson is the Sole Spokesperson to the SC. This statement is being shared with permission of

the SC Chair. “At the last Finance Committee Meeting there were many comments involving the School District’s remote model. I wish to clarify the remote model the Lunenburg Public Schools will be operating with as schools open this fall with most students participating in a hybrid model. Any student that is registered to attend school remotely will be taught by Lunenburg Public School Educators. All Educators will receive additional training in remote education and meet regularly with their hybrid teaching peers, teach to the established Lunenburg curriculum, and develop a classroom community within the remote cohort. There are rare cases where a High School student may select a course that other remote students haven’t selected such as an upper level foreign language course. In those cases the school district will arrange for that course to be taught through Educere at a cost of \$200 per student per course. Otherwise the school district will teach all remote students. As was brought up by Finance Committee Members at the last meeting students may choose to attend another school through school choice or choose to home school. That is a decision each family needs to make. All remote registrations need to be in by tomorrow, August 28th so we can adequately plan for each student. Students that register remotely are welcome to switch the hybrid model at the end of each quarter if they so desire. I hope this clears up any questions you may have regarding the remote learning plan. Thank you.”

~~Peter this is not on the agenda and reports come later~~—he sent an email to the Superintendent about the cost related issues associated with School Choice and on-line learning. She acknowledged his email and basically said they are still in the process of calculating based on the aforementioned information Mrs. Archambault mentioned as a result of the survey and that they would be communicating with us down the road as the numbers become clearer. He did not realize at the last meeting that there is some potential negative impact as well with relation to the enrollment and potentially if a high number of students chose to home school in particular that would decrease our enrollment, and could have a negative effect on Town in the coming years on the cherry sheets. We should be aware and ask about it in the future.

Committee Reports (8:20 – 16:08)

John spoke to the Police and Fire Chief a few days ago. There has been a Covid effect on the PD in two ways. When the PD responds to a call and there is a good chance they have been exposed to Covid, the officers get tested and sequester for two to three days. The PD puts other officers on overtime to pick up slack. There are three times this has happened. Second, the Covid pandemic is a tense and open-ended time. They police are getting an increase in calls involving neighbor to neighbor or in-the house conflicts.

Fire Chief Sullivan expects the Ladder Truck and Engine 4 sometime at the end of the month of in September. The Paramedic training on how to use the defibrillator has been postponed due to Covid.

Terri – to John – are the types of Covid costs like over-time are they recoverable through the Covid funding/grants? John – the Covid overtime costs he doesn't believe are recoverable. However the increase PPE that the Town has made has been recovered 100%. The issue there is that the reimbursements have not been received yet, so there may be a cash flow effect at least short term.

Dave reported on the Parks Commission meeting with Karin Menard. Action items the chair is going to work on: Marshall Park and the direction to plan for that park. Hoping to pull together a list of what the commission sees the park looking like after a complete renovation, possible uses, changes of use, etc. Then go to the public and ask for public input then start to develop a master plan start source of funding. So far not seeing grant money for these projects drying up and doesn't look like it will in the foreseeable future. Very optimistic – hope to have a new Marshall Park within 5 years.

Dave – TC Passios Committee met once since our last meeting. Discussion about inviting or soliciting other community groups in Town. The Chair made a Public Comment at the BOS meeting a couple of weeks ago to that effect inviting the Public or any other Boards specifically they should go to the Chair for consideration. Another look at where the architects and engineers are – starting to pull together a good picture of the condition of the building. Aspects that won't change no matter the configuration – such as a new roof. Things are moving forward. Hoping community groups are satisfied and have a chance to put in their input.

Not on the agenda however Chris brought up the notion of a rubric the Committee uses for building projects. This will be put it on the next agenda.

Chris – as the Finance Committee we make recommendations on Warrant Articles and their financial impact and he was wondering in the past if the High School Middle School came forward and if these other building projects if the Finance Committee put together a rubric for the community to help the voters decide whether they support or don't support a warrant article as written. How will we decide and discuss these topics and decide on supporting a warrant article?

Peter – the debt discussion is part of that. The effects of debt on both the budget and tax rates – all part. Other side of that the discussion – the benefits side – and the rubric side may be beneficial. Cost vs. benefit analysis would be worth discussion and exploration.

John – the idea of a rubric appeals to him. It would help in the data gathering section. Great idea.

Jay joined the meeting. (20:00)

Terri - Will add rubric to the agenda for discussion and exploration.

3. Town Manager/Finance Director Report (21:42 – 41:01)

Karen Brochu – Overtime costs related to Covid would be reimbursed from the CARES Act and FEMA. In FY20 the Town submitted overtime and received 25% so far. So far not a huge amount of money for FY20--approximately \$7,000. Costs could escalate but to the best of her knowledge they are reimbursable through the CARES Act and FEMA.

Next Tuesday will present the close of FY20 revenues and expenditures. The revenues of FY20 exceeded estimate of .6% or a total of \$267,291. Expenditures were 2.8% less than budgeted for a total of \$1,207, 219 in appropriation close-outs. Our undesignated fund balance which is the starting point for free cash certification is \$644,000 higher than at the close of FY19. Believes we will have a significant free cash certification once it's submitted. Last year's certification of free cash was \$1,107, 694 – close out this year was higher than the prior year so that may translate almost dollar for dollar in free cash certification.

Dave has a question for Karen. He is appointed to the Capital Planning Committee. As such he read all the charges of the CPC and was surprised to learn that because the CP was voted as a lump sum money could be moved anywhere within the CP without a vote at TM. Has that ever been done?

Karen – we do not do that. If there was an item on the Capital Plan that exceeded the amount that was appropriated if the Dept. requesting the capital item had the ability to fund within their appropriations the difference as long as it was a small percentage over what was budgeted we have allowed that to happen. We have never shifted dollars amongst the total capital plan.

Dave – was shocked that was in there and the way it was worded. Dollar amounts tied to each project. By-law reads differently even if it hasn't been done.

Karen – unaware it was in the By-law. Does not make sense.

Dave – Wallace Park – DPW shifted monies for the overage of the Park. How does it affect close-out funds? Could there be an instance where more money would roll more free cash into the process?

Karen – if you had the ability to move the monies within the Capital Plan and use those monies rather than incurring in the general fund as was the case with the Parks Department with the resurfacing of the court – if you have the ability to use the CP funds rather than the general budget you would have more free cash at the end of the year.

Dave – less restrictive under the policy. Once money under a CP project keep it there even unexpended Capital goes into another capital project.

Karen – correct.

Peter - unspent expenditures – will Fin Com see a list of what wasn't spent?

Karen – will provide the Fin Com the reports.

Peter – would like to see what is Covid impact.

Karen – discussion on close-outs.

Peter – 2020 busing issue been resolved.

Karen – going to the BOS on Tuesday.

Peter – calendar for Fall TM. Capital items that may need a different level of consideration for things going on socially and politically.

Karen – Heather L. looking at her pre-Covid budget to reinstate to bring forward the CP that was there. Unsure if the CPC has met with different needs or reprioritize.

Peter – personally some of that needs to be reconsidered. Two areas are body cameras in PD and at least the long term plan for those and the School Department want to broadcast from classrooms – don't have infrastructure to broadcast to students learning remotely and what we would have to do to get there.

Terri – is CPC meeting prior to Fall TM? Peter should send an email to Town Department heads to bring that to the CPC.

Peter - Unsure of the process of Special Town Meeting.

Terri – Federal Source of Funding.

Peter – information from SC. Body cameras – nonspecific information from Chief Marino both times he was at Fin Com. School - Legal hurdles and technical hurdles. What is the cost?

Chris – the IT issues may come into with the need to go to a better platform.

Peter – Bandwidth and infrastructure issue. Networking speed and switches and routers in THES – but none of the work has been done to determine the cost associated with it.

Meeting Minutes (40:33 – 44:18)

Terri – at the last meeting we did see the minutes for July 23rd that Heather had wanted to make changes to. Wondering about minutes for June 11th Meeting Minutes and if they were approved. Peter believes they were approved as they were submitted. May want to come back to them.

Does anyone want to proceed with the July 23 meeting minutes?

Peter moves to approve the July 23rd meeting minutes. John hand up. John sent an email regarding meeting minutes. John wants to hold off as they are not time sensitive. Peter withdraws his motion. John wants Heather to polish them up a little.

Budget Review (44:20 – 1:05)

Terri – Did everyone have a chance to review the budget information? Does anyone have comments, questions, want to start a discussion now. Or since the BOS will be discussing budget priorities at their next meeting. Do we want to hold off until after that?

Peter believes a detailed discussion at the next meeting is the most appropriate given the TM is absent. Only request he has is that he is one that requested the Dashboard Document and it has proven to be a useful document to him to keep track of what we did over the budget season. His request through Terri and Karen is that they don't lose this when they are deciding what they are going to make whole in the fall.

Terri asked Chris if he found any of the information helpful. Chris said he did find it helpful. On the expenditures side he found that both on the Police and Fire additional personnel had been removed so he supposed that meant it would be kept level. He is interested in a five-year plan. If so, is it available.

There is a five- year forecast. However, Terri believes Chris is speaking to the staffing plan the Police and Fire put together for the 10 year bringing them up to 24 hour coverage. He was looking for all the departments. There is no staffing plan. There is a five-year forecast. Unsure if staffing changes is represented in the five-year forecast. Peter recalled that the school department had included a great deal of staffing issues in it and it became a very controversial item. Unsure if all the departments include it but the school department did.

Only staffing plan Terri recalls was Police and Fire. Terri will attempt to locate the document and forward it with the five-year forecast.

I'm more than happy to relinquish my role as Secretary to someone who likes to have things that are easier on the eye and more detailed than I have prepared.

File sharing options – Chris could share – options from Steve Malindrinos – Google Drive, OneDrive, or moving from OneDrive to a Share Point. Shared repository. One Drive on the individual to set up. Steve said one thing with Share Point is \$6 per user per month. Not a lot of money in the grand scheme. Having all the data in on spot would be good on the broader town wide level. Chris set up a OneDrive using his Lunenburgonline account. He has to share with others. Threshold for cost – 6 gigabytes.

Chris has issues with Google Drive. It can be confusing if you have two google accounts. One Drive shared with his daughter's. He feels Share Point would be the best option. Could start with One Drive and move to Share Point.

Peter – Threshold cost with OneDrive it is expensive as well. Personal opinion Whatever it is, it has to have unique logins so that there can be record keeping. Share Point is the most elegant but it has a cost associated.

SharePoint gets into work flow/shared calendar.

Terri- meetings would run themselves and no chair would be needed. Chris joked that would be SharePoint Plus.

Terri question or concern – helpful for sharing information. Storage – can go in and look but not manipulate data – that could be a violation of open meeting law.

Peter – Not be able to collaborate on the platform and edit as some people do on-line. Could share editable documents, download, edit and then share as a new version. What he has done with the minutes in the past for a document that hasn't been shared to the Town Website – downloads it, puts it in a PDF version and then sends it along to become a Public Document. Sharing documents that would be linked to in the minutes.

John – the 6\$ per month per person - Is that discounted if everyone in Town Government logs on or is this just Fin Com? With Share Point - can he log in and keep the tabs without paying \$6. OneDrive is free. SharePoint can google and look. Peter will share some folders so John can look at SharePoint. John will look and call Peter if he feels overwhelmed.

Terri- documents can be any type. Might be worth starting with OneDrive. Security an issue?

Peter- standardized on Microsoft on work and personalize – this would be another login using the Lunenburgonline. Could turn into a usability issue but probably not a security issue.

Terri – happy to move toward this – does SharePoint eliminate the usability issue?

Chris – SharePoint is more remotely managed by giving permissions – would appoint an administrator as fincom page – could have a public page. Unsure of records management for the Town but this could be helpful to go to digital records Town wide.

Peter – spoke to Mr. Malindrinos within the past few years– have a municipal records management system and still have one in place. Most of the town storage is standardized on google – due to the price.

Terri has no problem pursuing it. She is technologically inept. But she is happy with jumping on board.

Peter – Chris should coordinate with Mr. Malindrinos.

Chris -spoke to Mr. Malindrinos and he is more than happy to help set this up. Chris to set-up OneDrive and Town Manager's thumbs up.

4. Public Comment (1:05 - :

Dave Passios a couple of things he left out earlier. Addition to the Parks Report – the Wallis Park basketball court resurfacing capital project is now complete – just a few touch-ups for the DPW. Looks fantastic. Budgetary point of view Resurfacing dollar amount was exactly what was appropriated. \$7,000 incumbered for the fence work from the Parks Budget.

Spoke to Town Counsel – Town Charter has cleared the legislature. Last he saw it was on the Governor's desk. Heard there was an article. Close the finalization of the Charter.

Peter Beardmore – questions regarding the money incumbered in Parks Department. Shouldn't that require a formal request for a transfer of funding if we're incumbering a Town Department Budget something that was on the Capital Project Plan?

Dave – that would be a good question for Karen. She did cover that in our back and forth saying that rather than transfer capital money between projects in a capital plan in a few instances we've covered overages on Capital Plan Projects by incumbering available money in a department's line item that would otherwise roll to free cash. If you start to question outside of the powers to be especially if you go to the Attorney General's office -they just say unless it egregiously out of wack what they're doing if that's been common practice they're not going to fight it.

Terri asks a clarifying question – Was the fence part of the Capital Plan?

Dave – believes the Capital Plan was worded as improvements and resurfacing of the basketball court so that is why the fence was included.

Peter would like to inquire what the practice is. If the regulations specify that money in a budget for operational expenses in a department requires a transfer to move it to a capital function. No harm no foul – but sooner or later there will be harm and foul and people are going to do it anyway. In his opinion if this a process we're not following he thinks it should be followed.

Karen – clarify that the funds aren't actually transferred to Capital Article. The expenditure is split so that whatever was in the Capital Article is expended from Capital and the balance not covered comes from the Parks Department's operating budget. There is no physical transfer of funds.

Peter doesn't recall fence repair in the Parks Budget.

Karen there is a line item in Parks Budget that is pretty general – Parks Department Expenses.

Chris – was the difference in money just the cost of the fence.

David – pretty much so. The fence happened first.

Chris – fences are repaired under operating budgets.

Difference between a repair and replacement and a difference between a Capital Plan Project and a repair. This wouldn't necessarily show up in the Capital Plan because it doesn't meet the threshold.

Interesting question work some future discussion when Heather L. is available. In what situation would we see a line item transfer.

Peter – Debt Project – expecting to meet with Superintendent, Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Londa to discuss THES scope. Question for Dave - Do we expect to see some TCP big ticket items – do you think those will be of any value for scoping of final project?

Dave - only in the realm the early figures with be costs are going to be constant – roof, infrastructure heating and electric. Want to ensure they bring forward numbers that are not going to change dramatically. Very often the first number that we hear is the number brought to Town Meeting. Only numbers that will not change to be brought right now.

Municipal uses to be vetted for the next few meetings. Dave does not see any new number coming out until late September. As reports become more reliable they will be posted for public.

Dave - discussion around the Capital Project – paying for that project that way is that it skews the actual figures for the Capital Project.

Terri – also possible that if the court was not repaving the fencing could have been replaced anyway.

Dave agreed with that assessment.

Jay encouraged Committee members to watch the Board of Assessors July 13th meeting. He happened to watch they were ratifying the new Assessor. One of the issues that came up with the State and the process and the software wasn't very user friendly. Concerned with running two systems causing tax bills to run late. Software issues – state v. other. Jay had a bad signal and could not hear him.

Karen doesn't have a lot of information on it. Need new software. Entered a new contract. Assessing software IAS World. Conversion is not complete. Working on issues with the conversion. Legal Counsel is involved. New Assessor wants to make a switch to move from new software to another software.

5. Adjournment

Next Meeting September 10

Motion to adjourn Dave seconded by Jay all in favor