



Lunenburg Public Schools

Dr. Kate Burnham, Superintendent of Schools

MEETING NOTICE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING MEETING

Wednesday, April 29, 2020

Remote Participation Meeting, 7:00p.m.

AGENDA

School Committee

Heather Sroka, Chair
Wendy Bertrand, Vice Chair
Brian Lehtinen, Secretary
Carol Archambault
Jim LaVeck

Superintendent

Dr. Kate Burnham

Business Manager/ HR Director

Michael Cassidy

Recording Secretary

Susan Somers

Student Representative

Claire Delaney - Absent

Guests:

In accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law, please be advised that this meeting is being recorded and broadcast over the Lunenburg Public Access channel.

The Town of Lunenburg, in response to the COVID-19 (CoronaVirus) is currently following the guidance from the Lunenburg Board of Health, Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC regarding the virus and steps communities can take to prevent the spread and all town facilities are currently closed to the public. In accordance with the Governor’s Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G. L. c. 30A, § 20, all public meetings are being conducted remotely. **This meeting will be broadcast live through local access cable, on FacebookLive on the Public Access Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Lunenburg-Public-Access-Cable-157427270975305/>) and will be able to be found on the LunenburgAccess YouTube channel within 24 hours after the meeting.**

The following information is also provided for members of the public that would like to participate in the meeting remotely:

To Participate Remotely: From a computer, please use the link below to join the public meeting webinar:

<https://zoom.us/j/7663167607> or From a telephone, dial the toll free number (888) 475-4499 or (877)853-5257 and enter Webinar ID: Meeting ID: 766 316 7607

If you have not registered with Zoom you will be asked for your name and an e-mail address.

Note: No participant ID is needed, just press # when asked. Telephone users may dial *9 to request to speak after joining the meeting. Computer and app users may use the “raise hand” feature to request to speak.

The agenda lists all the topics which may be discussed at the meeting and are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Votes may be taken as a result of these discussions. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by Open Meeting Law.

1. **Call to Order** - 7:00pm by Ms. Sroka
2. **FY21 Budget Hearing** - Dr. Burnham outlined the budget process. She will be presenting tonight a 1.58% increase which includes 2 critical positions. COVID-19 continues to present us with challenges. How will we be opening the schools while practicing physical distancing? Will staff and students feel safe to return? The 1.58% increase includes a special education teacher for THES as well as a Wilson/Orton/Gillingham Reading Teacher. It also represents an increase in unemployment up to \$75k and a \$30k salary reserve (down from \$322k). There is no assistant principal, no school psychologist... Our capacity to optimally meet the needs of all our students is diminished. Progress on our strategy for continuous improvement is slowed. There are budgetary unknowns. Ms. Bertrand questioned if we have to recommend this budget? Dr. Burnham replied that if we do not, the town manager will assign us a number. Mr. LaVeck added that at a minimum we need to cover our contractual obligations. Mr. Lehtinen also added that if our numbers are lowered, we may have to start laying off staff. Dr. Burnham voiced that we are still awaiting guidance about what opening school in the Fall will look like. Staggered attendance? Busing would then be double bus runs... Will we be buying masks for everyone? Thermometers for taking temperatures? Possibly a hybrid of campus and remote schooling? No matter what, costs will be incurred. Ms. Archambault added - We don't know what we need in September. The town manager has a budget with reserves. I don't like this budget either. But the town should hear us if we come back in November with additional costs. Mr. LaVeck questioned the absence of a school psychologist position and the risk of no social/emotional supports. Ms. Sroka asked Mr. Cassidy if we know of any upcoming retirements? Is there a way of helping us find money/funding? Mr. Cassidy replied that he is aware of 2, possibly a 3rd as of today. This represents a

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savings of tens of thousands however, not hundreds of thousands.... As we get through the summer, hiring season, we may find the funding for a part-time position. Dr. Burnham re-iterated that the positions she has listed represent a level service budget. Ms. Sroka added that we may need to support this particular budget, so that the town manager doesn't give us lower numbers. The committee then heard from Dave Passios that he has optimism that there will be more funding later in the summer. Peter Beardmore added that there is nearly \$1 million set aside for some level of drop in state aid. The school dept. is impacted. Mitigation costs are inevitable and probably substantial. Is there a way to look at the reserve and allocate for needs? What would that mechanism be? Dr. Burnham reminded the committee that we are tracking expenses associated with the closure and we anticipate relief funds. Ms. Sroka added that everyone should be aware that there are NO cost savings because school buildings are closed. Dr. Burnham added that monies recouped will be reprioritized to ready us for the Fall. Mr. Cassidy added that there is not a lot of money in supplies and services, and that we are waiting on legislation regarding bus company payments, etc. Ms. Sroka took a motion from Mr. LaVeck that the budget be backed as presented. Motion seconded by Ms. Archambault. All in agreement via roll call vote.

3. **Chair's Report** - None

4. **Public Comment - Agenda Items** - None

5. **Review and Approve Minutes**

- Regular Session April 15, 2020 - Ms. Archambault made a motion to approve minutes as written, seconded by Ms. Bertrand. Agreed upon by all via roll call vote.

6. **Review and Approve Line Item Transfers** - The Committee heard from Mr. Cassidy. Line item transfers included in packets represented negative balances outstanding. A long-term sub at both THES and the Middle School was unfunded. \$3,670 in accreditation expense. \$20,000 coming out of the electricity account toward a list of projects that Mr. Londa plans. Mr. LaVeck made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Archambault, all agreed via roll call vote.

7. **Superintendent's Report** - We are already in alignment with the commissioner's guidance on remote learning. How are things going? We have held dialogue in small groups with teachers, and listened to parent/student suggestions. We will continue to make shifts, although these may look different at different grade levels. Any changes will be communicated by principals and teachers. \$8,000 donated for the food gift card drive. Thank you to all who have worked at organizing this. End of year plans: Arrangements are being made for curbside pickup of locker/cubby items. Mr. McGrath is looking at the possibility of postponing graduation to August 1st. There will be an announcement next week. May 1st is school lunch help day, and administrative professionals day was last Wednesday. Thank you to all these folks and the hard work that they do. There will be resolutions to recognize all of them at the next meeting. Ms. Sroka asked how the curbside pickup will be working. Dr. Burnham answered that staff will be in to divvy up assigned lockers and desk items. Gym lockers are different as they are not assigned, and folks may need to stop in. An appointment schedule will be set up.

8. **New Business**

Action

a. **Permission to Post Open Positions** - The committee heard from Mr. Cassidy with a request to lift the hiring freeze and post open positions. There is an open nurse position and an English language learner position. There is a Title 1 coordinator - reading learning position - covered by grant funding. There are stipend positions, HS department heads, summer school program, athletic coaches at the middle/high school. The first two are due to retirements. Mr. LaVeck made a motion to approve lifting the hiring freeze to enable posting of positions. Seconded by Ms. Bertrand. Approved by all via roll call vote.

9. **Old Business** - None.

10. **Reports**

- a. **Finance Committee** - The committee heard from Ms. Archambault that the finance committee met on 4/23. Currently no problems with the FY20 budget. The Town Manager will be finding additional cuts for FY21. The Finance Committee heard from Senator Tran, but unfortunately Ms. Archambault lost the feed and missed the explanation of how the Monty Tech assessment affected Lunenburg. Plan is to try and push Ways and Means about the local aid cut. Final budget hearing 5/7.
- b. **Capital Planning** - The committee heard from Mr. LaVeck about \$1.3 million covering capital planning. \$664,800 reprioritized

11. **Public Comment-Open** - The committee heard from Lisa Harrison who expressed her thanks for everyone's work. She expressed that hearing plans for graduation and our Seniors, plans for the awards, etc. would do much to alleviate the anxiety that is happening. Dr. Burnham replied that decisions are anticipated at the end of next week.. Ms. Bertrand commented about the school council meeting that Mr. McGrath is working at this planning. There is a motorcade in the works. Many students attended, and it was great to see the collaboration. The sentiment is that we want to include as many things as we can, not just skip ahead. It was noted that Leominster just postponed their graduation to 8/1. Ms. Sroka asked when will be the seniors last

day in learning mode? Dr. Burnham noted that the Commissioner has recommended to push them back to later in June because of the 3 week enrichment period. There are no senior final exams, so they should remain in learning mode through exam week at least. The committee heard from Kathy Hyatt, who thanked everyone for their work. She indicated that she was speaking as a class advisor and also a Mom, and expressed that everyone is really looking for an end date. They'd love to see a May 22nd end date - many students want to do a senior countdown. Ms. Sroka added that she has a Senior, and so she is right there with Kathy... Many are going through a grief process around all these happenings. Dr. Burnham answered that care and concern to students is our utmost consideration, especially for the Seniors. Mr. Adams interjected that he wished to echo Dr. Burnham. We are all trying to make this as normal as possible for all. Ms. Sroka ended with noting that an email to Senior parents would be out in the next week.

12. **Adjournment** - Motion to adjourn by Mr. LaVeck, seconded by Ms. Bertrand, agreed by all via roll call vote. Adjourn at 8:48pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Somers, Recording Secretary