



# Town of Lunenburg

## Building Department

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November 29, 2023

To: The Town of Lunenburg Select Board

Subject: Request for modifications to fees charged by the Building Department

As Building Commissioner for the Town of Lunenburg I hereby request that the Select Board review and approve new fee schedules, as proposed, effective for all applications received on or after January 1, 2024.

The fee schedules in place have been utilized since 1987 with various modifications over the years with some fees having been updated in 2017. Standard practice is to periodically review department operations, find ways to streamline operations and review fees charged for services. Since June of 2023 the Department has undergone changes to aid in streamlining processes and conducted a comprehensive review of the fees charged for the services provided. As part of the comprehensive review, a survey of surrounding communities was conducted with the results of the survey included within this proposal. It's important to note that not all fees are changed with this proposal and some modifications to the schedules are to aid in fees being consistently calculated within our OpenGov permitting platform.

For residential building permit fees the changes in the schedule include:

- Set a rate for sheet metal permits at \$10/\$1000
- Set the minimum fee at \$60
- Address stop work orders by adding a fee of \$75 for the removal of a stop work order. No provisions previously existing for work without a permit.
- Set a fee for occupancy permits of \$50 per unit.
- Set a fee of \$50/30 days for temporary occupancy permits. Previously there were no provisions for temporary occupancies to be issued.

For commercial building permit fees the changes in the schedule include:

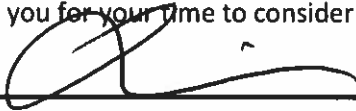
- Set the commercial building permit fees at \$12.75/\$1,000. This puts Lunenburg in line with the median fees charged in the area and addresses that additional resources needed to review, inspect and document these types of projects.
- Set a rate of \$12.75/\$1,000 for commercial sheet metal permits.
- Set a minimum permit fee for commercial permits of \$150.
- Set reinspection fees at \$60
- Address stop work orders by adding a fee of \$150 for the removal of a stop work order. No provisions previously existing for work without a permit.

- Set a fee of \$50 for occupancy permits per unit.
- Set a fee of \$50/30 days for temporary occupancy permits. Previously there were no provisions for temporary occupancies to be issued.

For Electrical permit fees, the fee schedule is completely new. The new fee schedule addresses the way the Town pays its Electrical Inspector by looking at the actual workload required for each permit type and assigning those permit types a certain number of included inspections. Previously the town charged one fee for a project regardless of the workload or number of inspections required. This resulted in the inspector getting paid as little as \$8 or \$10 for an inspection that could take over 45 minutes plus drivetime, phone calls and record keeping. The proposed electrical permit fee schedule assures a consistent level of compensation while keeping Lunenburg within the range of the survey conducted.

For plumbing and gas permit fees, the fee schedule is completely new. The new fee schedule addresses the way the Town pays its Plumbing and Gas Inspector by looking at the actual workload required for each permit type and assigning those permit types a certain number of included inspections. Previously the town charged one fee for a project regardless of the workload or number of inspections required. This resulted in the inspector getting paid as little as \$8 or \$10 for an inspection that could take 30-45 minutes plus drivetime, phone calls and record keeping. The proposed plumbing and gas permit fee schedule assures a consistent level of compensation while keeping Lunenburg within the range of the survey conducted.

Thank you for your time to consider this proposal.



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Brian Gingras- Building Commissioner



Notes on electrical inspector compensation:

1. Annual salary of \$18,466, 211 permits and 237 inspections averaging \$78 per inspection.
2. Inspector is paid a stipend of \$2,400 plus \$35 per inspection, permit volume was unavailable.
3. Inspector is paid a stipend, based on the number of inspections per permit of 1.05, the average pay per inspection is \$46.
4. Inspector is paid a stipend, based on the number of inspections per permit of 1.05, the average pay per inspection is \$47.

In evaluating fees, it's important to look at how The Town of Lunenburg pays its electrical Inspector. The electrical inspector is paid a rate of 82.5% of the permit fees collected with the town retaining 17.5%. The portion retained by the town offsets the cost to provide administrative office support and record keeping as well as any supplies needed. Looking at the historical data available, the electrical inspector is currently paid at a rate of approximately \$50 per inspection, but with some inspections paying as little as \$8.25. The collection of commercial fees has helped to offset these lower value inspections, keeping the average around \$50, but the receipt of a large commercial permit fee is never guaranteed given most of the permitting is for residential in Lunenburg.

The proposed residential electrical permit fee rate changes look to smooth out the highs and lows and establish what's included within each permit type. Historically there were no provisions for how many inspections could be requested or performed for a specific permit type, this new fee schedule addresses those concerns as well. The average compensation to the inspector for residential permits will increase to \$52.50 but will stay consistent with no low paying inspections. Within the proposed fee structure is an allowance for permit types that require additional work by the inspector, such as calling in of approvals to the utility, those permits include solar installations, service connections, upgrades, and reconnections.

The proposed commercial electrical permit fee rate changes look to make the permit fees predictable and consistent by calculating the fee based on the cost of the project. With commercial electrical work the job cost typically is indicative of the scale and complexity of the project and as such a permit fee based on the value of the job means that the inspector is compensated based on the level of complexity and proportional amount of time to conduct those inspections. The Commercial fees have a base minimum but also a maximum to avoid extreme permit fees from being assessed.

Building Permit Fees by Municipality				
Municipality (updated)	*Residential		*Commercial	
	Fee per \$1,000	Minimum	Fee per \$1,000	Minimum
Ayer	\$12.50	\$75	\$14.00	\$140
Bolton (2022)	\$12.00/\$10 for other than new	\$50	\$13.50	\$50
Berlin (2019)	\$10.00	\$50	\$10.00	\$50
Clinton(2012)	\$10.00	\$50	\$13.75	\$250
Pepperell(2016)	\$10.00	Varies \$100- \$1,000	\$12.00	\$200
Townsend(2023)	\$7.50	\$60	\$7.50	\$60
Groton(2020)	\$12.00	\$80-\$150	\$12.00	\$150-\$600
Lancaster(2023)	\$10.00	\$75	\$13.75	\$250
Shirley(2022)	\$12.00	\$50	\$12.00	\$50
Sterling(2021)	\$10.00	\$75	\$13.75	\$250
Median	\$10.00	\$67.50	\$12.75	\$145.00
<b>Lunenburg(2011)</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Requested new fee</b>	<b>No change</b>	<b>\$60</b>	<b>\$12.75</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
	*Fees are based on a cost per \$1,000 of construction value. Construction Values are based on the estimated construction cost as provided on the permit application and verified by supporting documents such as contracts when necessary.			

An evaluation of the surrounding communities was conducted relative to the building permit fees assessed by the Town of Lunenburg. In reviewing the data collected, The Town of Lunenburg is in the Median of those communities reviewed with regards to residential building permit fees but is below the median by approximately 25% with regards to the fees assessed for commercial building permits. Typically, commercial fees are higher than residential fees because commercial projects are often more complex, placing a greater demand of resources within the department. These additional demands include requiring a greater amount of resources to properly review plans and specifications, a significantly greater volume of inspections with each inspection requiring more time than a comparable residential inspection, substantially greater record keeping and reviewing of reports and changes during the course of construction. Larger projects also require regular site visits and meetings with interested parties to ensure code compliance and compliance with special conditions. The requested changes to the permit fee schedule for building permits reflect the demands that commercial projects place upon the department and bring us in line with the median permit fees charged. Additional fees assessed for other department functions, including periodic inspections and forms of intent do not need any adjustment since those functions have been largely streamlined utilizing online permitting.

Plumbing/Gas Fees By Municipality						
Municipality (updated)	*Residential	Single fixture	**Bath Sample	*Commercial	Annual Salary or % (note)	Average Volume
Ayer	\$82.50 /\$12.50	\$95.00	\$132.50	\$82.50/\$12.50	70%	n/a
Bolton (2022)	\$90.00/\$10.00	\$100.00	\$130.00	\$110.00/\$15.00	\$18,836 (1)	200
Clinton (2012)	\$100.00/\$10.00	\$110.00	\$140.00	\$60.00/\$20.00	n/a	n/a
Pepperell (2016)	\$60/\$7	\$60	\$67	\$60/\$12	\$5400/\$35 (2)	n/a
Townsend (2023)	\$60/\$8	\$68	\$92	\$75/\$10	\$15,096 (3)	300
Lancaster (2023)	\$60/\$20	\$80	\$140	\$80/\$20	60%	160
Groton (2020)	\$65/\$15	\$65	\$105	\$100/\$20	\$35/insp +mi	250
Shirley (2011)	\$100.00/\$15.00	\$115.00	\$160.00	\$120.00/\$15.00	\$11,616(4)	130
Sterling	\$75.00/\$10.00	\$85.00	\$115.00	\$75.00/\$10.00	\$50/insp	175
Median	\$75/\$10	\$86.44	\$130	\$80/\$15		
Lunenburg (1987)	\$30/\$6P, \$10g	\$36	\$54.00	\$30/\$6p \$10g	80%	331
Requested New Fee	\$75/\$10	\$85	\$115	\$80/\$15		
*Plumbing fees are based on a base permit fee plus a per fixture fee. Base/Per Fixture						
**The four-fixture sample represents a typical bathroom renovation with a toilet, tub or shower and a double vanity equaling 4 fixtures.						

Notes on plumbing inspector compensation:

(1) Only the number of permits was available, based on the average number of inspections of 1.5 per permit, the average pay per inspection is \$63.

(2) Inspector is paid a stipend of \$5,400 in addition to \$35 per inspection permit volume was not available. Pepperell is likely similar enough in volume to Lunenburg to calculate an average pay per inspection of \$48-\$50.

(3) Inspector is paid a stipend of \$15,096. Based on the number of inspections per permit of 1.5, the average pay per inspection is \$34

(4) Inspector in paid a stipend of \$11,616. Based on the number of inspections per permit of 1.5 the average pay per inspector is \$60.

In evaluating fees, it's important to look at how The Town of Lunenburg pays its plumbing and gas Inspector. The plumbing and gas inspector is paid at a rate of 80% of the permit fees collected with the town retaining 20%. The portion retained by the town offsets the cost to provide administrative office support and record keeping as well as any supplied needed. Looking at the historical data available, the plumbing and gas inspector is currently paid at a rate of approximately \$21.60 per inspection, but with some inspections paying as little as \$14.40.

The proposed residential plumbing and gas fee rate changes look to increase the fees to make the compensation to the inspector comparable to those in other communities in the area. The new proposed rates for residential plumbing or gas permits will result in an average compensation to the inspector of approximately \$34 per inspection for a basic single fixture installation requiring 2

inspections, \$46 per inspection for a more complicated bathroom or kitchen renovation with 2 inspections, and approximately \$56 per inspection on a new single-family home requiring more time on site per inspection with an additional trip for underground work.

The proposed commercial plumbing and gas permit fee rate changes are like those for residential with an increase in the base and per fixture fees to reflect the more complicated nature of commercial installations.



# Town of Lunenburg Plumbing and Gas Fee Schedule

Effective:

Residential Plumbing			
Permit Type	Fee	# Of Inspections Included	Fee for Additional Inspections
Base Permit Fee	\$85	2	\$45
Each Additional Fixture	\$10		
Solar Heater	\$75	1	\$45
Sewer Connection	\$60	1	\$45
Water Heater only	\$60	1	\$45
Underground/Trench	\$50	1	\$45
Water Piping only	\$75	1	\$45
Reinspection Due to Not Ready or Violation	\$50	1	
Commercial Plumbing			
Base Permit Fee	\$95	2	\$50
Each Additional Fixture	\$15		
Reinspection Due to Not Ready or Violation	\$65	1	
Residential Gas			
Base Permit Fee	\$85	2	\$45
Each Additional Appliance	\$10	-	-
Underground/Trench	\$50	1	\$45
Reinspection Due to Not Ready or Violation	\$55	1	
Commercial Gas			
Base Permit Fee	\$95	2	\$50
Each additional Appliance	\$10		
Underground/Trench	\$50	1	\$50
Reinspection Due to Not Ready or Violation	\$65	1	

\*A separate permit required for each building, dwelling unit, or commercial unit where work is taking place.





# Town of Lunenburg Building Permit Fee Schedule

Effective:

<b>Residential</b>	
<b>Permit Type</b>	<b>Fee</b>
New Construction	\$10.00 Per \$1,000 of construction value. *Construction values shall be based upon the most recent Building Valuation Data published by the International Code Council.
Addition, Alterations, Repairs, Misc.	\$10.00 Per \$1,000 of construction value. *Construction values shall be based upon the stated value on the permit application and as supported by signed contract, invoices, etc. or as determined by the Building Official.
Sheet Metal	\$10.00 per \$1,000 of construction value.
Demolition	\$75.00 per building.
Minimum Fee	\$60.00
Reinspection fee due to not ready or violations	\$60.00
Removal of a stop work order for work started without a permit.	\$75.00
Certificate of Occupancy	\$50.00 per unit
Temporary Occupancy	\$50.00 per 30 days
<b>Commercial</b>	
<b>Permit Type</b>	<b>Fee</b>
New Construction, Additions, Repairs, Alterations, Misc.	\$12.75 Per \$1,000 of construction value. *Construction values for new construction shall be based upon the most recent Building Valuation Data published by the International Code Council. All others shall be based upon the stated value on the permit application and as supported by signed contract, invoices, etc. or as determined by the Building Official.
Sign Permit	\$25.00 Each Sign
Sheet Metal	\$12.75 per \$1,000 of construction value.
Demolition	\$150.00 per building.
State Certificate of Inspection	\$50.00
Minimum Fee	\$150.00
Zoning Form of Intent	\$15.00
Municipal	Exempt or as approved by the Select Board.
Reinspection fee due to not ready or violations	\$60.00
Removal of a stop work order for work started without a permit.	\$150.00
Certificate of Occupancy	\$50.00 per unit
Temporary Occupancy	\$50.00 per 30 days

\*A separate permit is required for each building, dwelling unit, or commercial unit where work is taking place.



# Town of Lunenburg Electrical Permit Fee Schedule

Effective:

Residential			
Permit Type	Fee	# Of Inspections Included	Fee for Additional Inspections
New Dwelling – Each Unit	\$300	4	\$65
Temporary Service	\$85	1	\$65
Addition or Renovation	\$130	2, no service upgrade included	\$65
Service Change or Repair	\$85	1	\$65
Accessory Structure	\$195	3, including 1 trench inspection	\$65
Swimming Pool	\$130	2 including 1 trench inspection	\$65
Boiler or Furnace	\$65	1	\$65
AC or Air Source Heat Pump(s)	\$55 +\$10 per each unit	1	\$65
Water/Sewer Pump	\$65	1	\$65
Rooftop Solar	\$100	1, no service upgrade included	\$65
Ground Mount Solar	\$165	2 including 1 trench inspection, no service upgrade included	\$65
Generator	\$75	1, does not include a trench inspection	\$65
Restoration of Power	\$85	1	\$65
Low voltage, Alarm	\$65	1	\$65
Trench/ Underground, per inspection	\$65	1	\$65
All Other, Minimum Fee	\$65	1	\$65
Reinspection Due to Not Ready or Violation	\$75		
Commercial			
Permit Type	Fee		
New Construction	\$5 Per \$1,000 up to \$10,000 then \$1 per \$1,000 Minimum \$250, Maximum \$5,000		
Addition, Alteration, Renovation, Solar	\$5 Per \$1,000 up to \$10,000 then \$1 per \$1,000 Minimum \$250, Maximum \$3,000		
Low Voltage or Alarm	\$3 Per Device Minimum \$75		
Service Change	\$75 + \$10 per meter		
Trench / Underground, per inspection	\$65		
Annual Maintenance Permit	\$300		
All other, Minimum	\$3 per device, minimum \$75.00, includes 1 inspection, \$65 per inspection thereafter.		
Reinspection Due to Not Ready or Violation	\$75		

\*A separate permit is required for each building, dwelling unit, or commercial unit where work is taking place.