

Ground Rules for Lunenburg Tri-Board Meetings

FY 2027 Budget Planning & Multi-Year Forecasting

Purpose:

The Tri-Board Meetings bring together the Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee to collaborate in the development of the FY 2027 operating budget and a three-year financial forecast. These meetings aim to provide transparency, collaboration, mutual understanding, and consensus across these stakeholder public bodies.

I. Shared Values and Commitments

1. Collaboration over Competition:

We are one team working toward a common goal — the financial and operational well-being of the Town of Lunenburg and its residents.

2. Respect for Diverse Roles and Authority:

Recognize and respect the distinct statutory and functional roles of each Board and Committee.

3. Commitment to Transparency:

Be honest and open about fiscal challenges, priorities, and assumptions. Avoid withholding information or surprises.

4. Consensus Building:

While disagreements are expected, all parties commit to seeking common ground and shared solutions.

II. Meeting Conduct and Etiquette

1. Equal Voice for All Members:

Every member from each of the three Boards has an equal right to speak, ask questions, and contribute ideas.

2. Respect Time Limits:

Meetings will follow an agenda and respect time constraints. Comments and questions should be concise and on-topic. Each member is limited to three minutes per topic for comments and questions. Meetings will adjourn no later than 10:00 p.m.

3. **One Person Speaks at a Time:**

No interrupting. Members from all Boards should wait to be recognized by the Chair of the meeting.

4. **Active Listening:**

Listen to understand, not just to reply. Avoid side conversations or distractions.

5. **Participate with those in the Room:**

Avoid conversations and messaging with those not present in the room.

6. **Assume Good Intentions:**

Approach discussions with curiosity, not judgment. All members are presumed to act in the best interest of the Town.

7. **Patience with Process:**

This is a new process for staff members, town leaders, boards and committees, and the public. We will be patient with the process and recognize the process may not be smooth to begin with.

III. Structure and Communication

1. **Agendas and Materials in Advance:**

Meeting agendas will be distributed at least 48 hours in advance to allow for review and informed discussion. Staff will endeavor to provide supporting documents 48 hours in advance.

2. **Defined Roles in Meetings:**

A neutral facilitator or rotating chair will moderate meetings to ensure balanced participation and agenda progress.

3. **Clear Documentation:**

Accurate meeting minutes or summaries will be prepared and shared with all members to ensure continuity and accountability.

4. **Participation by Boards and Committees:**

Participation in the Tri-Board Meetings is voluntary. Any public body may choose to withdraw at any point in time.

IV. Conflict Resolution and Decision-Making

1. **Address Conflict Directly and Constructively:**

Concerns will be raised respectfully during meetings, not via public forums or social media.

2. **Disagreement is Not Disrespect:**

Honest differences of opinion are essential and will be addressed with professionalism.

V. Commitment and Accountability

1. **Regular Attendance and Participation:**

Members endeavor to attending each Tri-Board meeting prepared to engage meaningfully.

2. **Accountability to Each Other and the Community:**

Members are expected to uphold these ground rules and hold each other respectfully accountable when they are not followed.

Adopted by the Select Board on July 1, 2025

Adopted by the Finance Committee on

Adopted by the School Committee on