

Members Present: John F. Fairbanks, Wayne R. Walker, Heather M. Billings

CALL TO ORDER

J. Fairbanks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in room 205 of the Town Hall. He announced that the meeting was being recorded by Ashburnham/Westminster Community Access TV and Doneen Durling, a reporter from the Gardner News.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

J. Fairbanks indicated that the Ashburnham/Westminster Regional School Committee is seeking to fill a vacancy for an Ashburnham member on the Committee. Ashburnham residents interested in the position are asked to submit a letter of interest to School Committee Chairman David Christiansen no later than February 5, 2016. The appointment will expire in April 2016.

APPROVALS

MINUTES

W. Walker made a motion to approve the minutes of January 11, 2016. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

WARRANTS

W. Walker made a motion to approve the following warrants.

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|------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| January 25, 2016 | Accounts Payable 16-30A | \$139,767.29 |
| January 26, 2016 | Payroll 16-30B | \$187,897.11 |
| January 27, 2016 | Deduction 16-30C | \$167,343.19 |
| February 1, 2016 | Accounts Payable 16-31A | \$128,745.63 |

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

BAN RENEWAL

Melody Smith was present to discuss a Bond Anticipation Note in the amount of \$460,000 for the Bacon/Elliott Street water main replacement project.

W. Walker made a motion to execute the Bond Anticipation Note Renewal, in the amount of \$460,000 for a term of one year. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATIONS

W. Walker made a motion to approve the hiring of Patricia Streeter, as part time COA Assistant replacing Michelle Johnson. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

W. Walker made a motion to approve the hiring of Kathy Lawrence, as part time COA Assistant. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

HEARINGS/OTHER SCHEDULED MATTERS

TOWN PLANNER 2016 WORK PROGRAM

S. Wallace presented a detailed list of items his department will be undertaking in the upcoming year.

The Board and Mr. Wallace discussed this work program and indicated they would like the Planning Department and DPW to pursue MassWorks funding and also for Mr. Wallace to act as an advisor for the Master Plan Implementation process.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT BUDGET DISCUSSION

Superintendent Gary Mazzola and Business Administrator Sherry Kersey were present at this evening's meeting. Dr. Mazzola and Ms. Kersey made a presentation to the Board regarding the fiscal situation the school district is facing as well as an explanation of past practices.

Dr. Mazzola went on to discuss their future budget guidelines and goals for the upcoming years.

NEW BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

J. Fairbanks indicated he would like to expand upon the charge of this Committee. The proposed charge follows:

1. *Conduct an in depth review of the town's current organizational structure,*
2. *Obtain information regarding various models of government structure from other Massachusetts communities similar in size to Westminster,*
3. *Identify strengths and weaknesses in Westminster's current form of government and areas for improvement,*
4. *Recommend changes in the Town's organizational structure, including but not limited to the terms of office and the method of selection of officials, consistent with the needs of the Town; for example, consider changing the name and duties of the Advisory Board to Finance Committee or changing the Town Clerk's position from elected to appointed,*
5. *Report its findings and recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and then Town Meeting within two years,*
6. *The ultimate goal of the Town Government Study Committee is to gain the support and confidence of the public through the creation of a new town charter establishing the framework for an improved structure of government for the Town of Westminster.*

W. Walker made a motion to accept the new charge.

The Board then indicated that Lisa Rocheleau has volunteered to serve on the Committee as an Advisory Board member, Dan Bartkus will be serving from the Conservation Commission and John Fairbanks will be serving on behalf of the Selectmen. The following candidates were all citizen volunteers from the community:

Adam Collette
Daniel Gilbreath
Roy Hughes
Connor Robichaud

The Board conducted short interviews with each candidate at the meeting.

W. Walker made a motion to appoint John Fairbanks, Lisa Rocheleau, Dan Bartkus Adam Collette, Daniel Gilbreath, Roy Hughes and Connor Robichaud to the Government Study Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The first meeting of the Committee will be called following the appointment of a designee from the Planning Board and an additional Citizen-at-Large.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

W. Walker moved that the board enter Executive Session at 7:41 p.m. to discuss non-union contract negotiation and that the chairman declare that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the town's negotiating position. H. Billings seconded the motion. Mr. Walker indicated that the

meeting would adjourn directly following Executive Session. The motion was passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned directly from Executive Session at 8:10 p.m.

Heather M. Billings

Clerk *(Prepared by S. Lahtinen)*