

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

Others Present: Karen Murphy, Stephanie Lahtinen, Melody Smith, Betsy Haley-Cormier, Keith Harding, Kevin Nivala, Salvatore Albert, Ken Lombardi, David Monty, Julie Belliveau, Ross Barber, Jim Delisle

CALL TO ORDER

J. Fairbanks called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. in room 205 of the Town Hall. He announced that the meeting was being recorded by Ashburnham/Westminster Community Access TV, and by the Fitchburg Sentinel and Enterprise.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

J. Fairbanks announced that the Agricultural Commission will be holding a Farmland Inventory meeting on April 5th from 6:30-7:45 p.m. at the Forbush Library.

APPROVALS

MINUTES

W. Walker made a motion to approve the minutes of March 21, 2016 as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

WARRANTS

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

March 28, 2016	16-39A Accounts Payable	\$931,635.87
April 4, 2016	16-40A Accounts Payable	\$302,281.70
April 5, 2016	16-40B Payroll	\$172,096.06
April 6, 2016	16-40C Deductions	\$149,740.94

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATIONS

W. Walker made a motion to promote Nicholas Aveni from part time dispatcher to full time dispatcher. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

W. Walker made a motion to hire Kimberly Bonk as part time dispatcher, replacing Nicholas Aveni. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

BORROWING FOR SEWER PROJECT

M. Smith presented the Bond Anticipation Note (BAN) for \$1,800,000 with an interest rate of .72% for a term from April 11, 2016-April 11, 2017.

W. Walker made a motion to issue the BAN for the inline sewer expansion project for an amount of \$1,800,000, with .72% interest rate and a term of 12 months with Greenfield Cooperative Bank. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PRESS RELEASE – APRIL 26, 2016 BALLOT QUESTION

W. Walker introduced a press release he drafted supporting the vote to change the Treasurer/Collector position from elected to appointed. Discussion continued on the best way and time to distribute this notice to the local newspapers and also whether or not it was appropriate to put this notice on the town website.

K. Murphy will follow up with Town Counsel.

J. Fairbanks made a motion to approve the press release as written. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

EXTEND APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM TOWN CLERK

W. Walker made a motion to extend the appointment of Marybeth Haley-Cormier as interim Town Clerk through May 3, 2016 in accordance with MGL Ch. 40, Section 107. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

DECLARE VOTING MACHINES SURPLUS

W. Walker made a motion to declare two AccuVote voting machines as surplus, as they have been replaced with two new machines. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

HEARINGS/OTHER SCHEDULED MATTERS

HEALTH INSURANCE – ACCEPTANCE OF CH. 32B, S. 21-23

Ken Lombardi, of NFP Corp. gave a presentation on MGL Ch. 32B, s. 21-23, an option available to reduce the town's health insurance costs. If the town approves this option it would allow the Board of Selectmen to make cost saving plan design changes for the health plan without having to negotiate separately with the collective bargaining unions.

D. Monty pointed out the potential impacts plan changes could have on the employees who carry town insurance and how that should be taken into consideration before altering the plans.

W. Walker made a motion that the Town of Westminster elect to engage in the process to change health insurance benefits under MGL c. 32B, s. 21 through 23. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

9-1-1 REGIONALIZATION DISCUSSION

Chief Albert and Chief Nivala discussed the regionalization survey distributed by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. Both indicated that Westminster did not meet the criteria for this survey but also they have each spoken to other public safety officials who have regionalized their dispatch, and did not feel it was worth the transition.

The Board discussed this with both Chiefs, who agree regionalization is important but not with public safety.

Based on the discussion the Board requested Chiefs Nivala and Albert to draft a letter in response to this survey, summarizing their opinion regarding the issues with regionalization.

ONGOING BUSINESS

FY17 BUDGET/GENERAL REVIEW

The Selectmen discussed Article 22, regarding the mosquito program proposed by the Board of Health.

The Board of Health recommended that the town become a part of the MA Mosquito Control Program. J. Fairbanks and H. Billings indicated they would support testing, but would like to include another article that offers the option to use the a la carte mosquito control services offered by Vector.

The Board discussed the budget for the school; the Selectmen indicated that they will be supporting the school district capital projects at \$35,700.

H. Billings indicated that the Crocker Pond Committee has been working on getting a quote for their handicap sidewalk; she indicated that they will keep their article for this at \$14,500.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

The Board unanimously recommended the Town Meeting Warrant articles with the exception of Article 22 for Mosquito Control, as well as Articles 36-39 which relate the Village Center Zoning Bylaws. The Board indicated they were not prepared to make a recommendation on the zoning bylaw changes at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

DISBAND PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING NEEDS COMMITTEE

W. Walker made a motion to disband the Public Safety Building Needs Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

W. Walker moved that the board enter into Executive Session at 8:01 p.m. to discuss pending litigation and that the chairman declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the town's litigating 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 8:35 p.m.

Heather M. Billings, Clerk
(Prepared by S. Lahtinen)