

***Town of Westminster – Select Board Meeting Minutes – Monday, June 12, 2023***

**Members Present:** Salvatore Albert Jr (*present via phone*), Heather M. Billings, Melissa A. Banks

**Staff Present:** Stephanie Lahtinen, Tamie Chiarelli

**Others Present:** Lisa Rocheleau, Steve Rocheleau, Sheryl Vaillette, Roni Beal, Nick Langhart, Dave Libby, Gary McDonald, Sue Millman, Kristie Aubuchon, Leann Lamsa, Joe Serio, Betsy Hannula, Greg Buckman, Peter Normandin, Ross Barber, Karen Moore, Kyle Butterfield

**CALL TO ORDER**

H. Billings called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM in room 205 of the Town Hall. She announced that the meeting was being recorded and broadcast live by Ashburnham/Westminster Community Media and no other recording devices have been brought to her attention.

**APPROVALS**

JUNE 5, 2023 MEETING MINUTES:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the minutes of June 5, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATIONS:

Volunteer Emergency Management:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the payroll change request and authorization for Michael Cooley as Volunteer Emergency Management. The motion was seconded and passed.

Part Time Library Assistant:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the payroll change request and authorization from the Library Director for Linda Bredberg, filling a vacancy. The motion was seconded and passed.

DPW Truck Driver/Laborer:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the payroll change request from the DPW Director for Connor Rokowski as DPW Truck Driver/Laborer, filling a vacancy. The motion was seconded and passed.

ORDER OF TAKINGS – EASEMENTS FOR ROUTE 140 RE-DESIGN PROJECT:

H. Billings stated that the DPW Director is still working with Town Counsel to get the paperwork needed for this meeting. Once implemented the town will record at the registry and issue payment to property owners. Compensation will be paid through a town meeting article previously voted and Chapter 90 monies. The DPW has been in contact with affected property owners on multiple occasions (in person, mail, email, telephone) explaining the project, impacts to properties as well as the appraisal report.

The project is planned to be bid in the next month or two with construction starting later this fall. The work is expected to last two construction seasons, 2024 and 2025. There will be daily detours at times during construction.

M. Banks made a motion to approve the Order of Taking for deed grants and easements for the Route 140/Worcester Rd project. The motion was seconded and passed.

H. Billings asked if there were any comments and/or questions. There was none.

2023 APPOINTMENTS/REAPPOINTMENTS:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the following list of appointments/reappoints:

THREE YEAR APPOINTMENTS				
Board	First	Last		Term Exp
Agricultural Comm	Mary Louise	Altobelli	Chair	6/30/2026
Conservation Comm	Carrie	Monty	member	6/30/2026

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Council on Aging	Dot	Barrett	member	6/30/2026
Crocker Pond	Sharon	Lewis	member	6/30/2026
Cultural Council	Cynthia	Flynn	member	6/30/2026
NEW Cultural Council	Patricia	Gendron	member	6/30/2026
NEW Cultural Council	Sammi	Dawley	member	6/30/2026
Historical Comm	Carol	Bramante	member	6/30/2026
Liquor Comm	Gary	McDonald	Chair	6/30/2026
Mart Advisory Board	Heather	Billings	member	6/30/2026
Parks & Recreation	Jessica	Costa	Chair	6/30/2026
Dept of Public Works	Ross	Barber	member	6/30/2026
Zoning Board of Appeals	Elizabeth	Irvine	member	6/30/2026
<b>FIVE YEAR APPOINTMENTS</b>				
Monty Tech Representative	Ross	Barber	member	6/30/2028
<b>ONE YEAR APPOINTMENTS</b>				
Animal Control Officer	Alana	Meserve		6/30/2024
Animal Control Officer	Cheryl	Slack		6/30/2024
Building Commissioner	Eric	Chartrand		6/30/2024
Alternate Building Commissioner	Sarah	Culgin		6/30/2024
Alternate. Insp. of Plumb. & Gas	James	Imprescia		6/30/2024
Alternate. Insp. of Plumb. & Gas	Wayne	Little		6/30/2024
Alternate. Insp. of Plumb. & Gas	Anthony	Hoffman		6/30/2024
Inspector of Wiring	Harry	Parvianen		6/30/2024
Alternate Inspector of Wiring	Richard	Cannavino		6/30/2024
Fire Chief, Forest Warden & EM Dir.	Kyle	Butterfield		6/30/2024
Emergency Management Radio Operator				6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Charles	Clarkson		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Sean	Donelan		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Jay	Blauser		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Mike	MacIntosh		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Robert	Hamm		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Clay	Swenor		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Francis	Boivin		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Fran	Cooley		6/30/2024
Emergency Management	Terri	Boivin		6/30/2024
Acting Police Chief and Special Constable	Jason	Tamulen		6/30/2024
Police Matron	Stephanie	Welch		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Kent	Benson		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Nicholas	Aveni		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Leroy	Hawkins		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Edward	Robbins		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Gregory	Hobbs		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Jeff	Shampine		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	John	Boucher		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Quinn	Smith		6/30/2024
Reserve Police Officer	Brian	Rosengren		6/30/2024
Police Officer/Ashburnham	Hiram	Velazquez		6/30/2024
Police Officer/Fitchburg	Keith	Bourne		6/30/2024
Police Matron	Erin	O'Kane		6/30/2024
Tree Warden	Joshua	Hall		6/30/2024
Veterans' Graves Officer	Mark	Landry		6/30/2024
Veterans' Services Agent	Lynette	Gabrilla		6/30/2024
Animal Control Officer	Alana	Meserve		6/30/2024

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

##### SET MINIMUM BID – LAURIE LANE PARCEL:

H. Billings stated that a minimum bid for the parcel on Laurie Lane released to the Select Board at the May 6, 2023 Annual Town Meeting.

Based on past practice and discussions with the DPW Director, it is recommended for a minimum bid price of \$1500 with an additional requirement of providing an approved survey of the parcel to the DPW and Planning Board prior to the property transfer.

M. Banks made a motion to approve the bid amount as recommended at \$1,500. The motion was seconded and passed.

#### **JOINT MEETING OF SELECT BOARD, CAPITAL PLANNING AND ADVISORY BOARD**

##### **◆ 6/21/2023 STM ARTICLE POSITIONS:**

S. Rocheleau (Chair of Capital Planning), called Capital Planning's meeting to order at 5:11P.

L. Rocheleau (Chair of the Advisory Board), called Advisory Board's meeting to order at 5:14P

All boards discussed taking a position on the following petitioned warrant article:

*ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to rescind, repeal and revoke the authority to demolish the property located at 3 Bacon Street (the former Town Hall), which was given to the Select Board under Article 36 of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting, and to reinstate the prior purpose of the property, which was to be conveyed subject to a historic preservation restriction, or act in relation thereto.*

L. Rocheleau, P. Normandin, S. Rocheleau, G. McDonald and M. Banks stated individually their opinions on this building, long-lived scenario, situations and costs related to it.

L. Rocheleau stated that it would be wrong, in her opinion, to rescind a vote already taken at a previous Annual Town Meeting by a Citizen's petition. It would be sending a message that no matter how you vote at the Annual meeting that it would not matter in the future and their vote does not count.

S. Vaillette (resident) asked if the building costs the town anything as it stands now. M. Banks mentioned that the town pays \$15,000 yearly for insurance for the building. M. Banks also brought up that the building is not safe and should it ever be on fire it would be detrimental to the surrounding house & buildings on that block.

K. Butterfield, Fire Chief, confirmed that he would not dedicate any manpower or equipment to that building should it be on fire and would call a 6-alarm fire for all the buildings surrounding it to protect them and everything in that area.

The Capital Planning Committee unanimously took a position as "Opposed".

The Advisory Board unanimously took a position as "Opposed".

The Select Board, M. Banks and S. Albert took a majority position as "Opposed". H. Billings was "In Support"

##### WARRANTS:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the following warrants:

Accounts Payable	#23-50A	\$78,777.40	6/12/23
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The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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WORCESTER REGIONAL RETIREMENT SYSTEM (WRRS) – 2% COLA INCREASE FOR RETIREES:

S. Albert recused himself from this vote/decision.

Recent legislation has allowed for the retirement system to increase the annual COLA provided to retirees from 3% to 5%. WRRS is looking for a vote from all its member communities by June 30, 2023 – in order for this measure to pass it needs a 2/3 favorable majority from the membership.

Currently, the Town of Westminster has an unfunded pension liability of \$15,350,965, with an FY2024 Annual Assessment of \$1,335,167. Accepting this measure would add approximately \$23,000 to that amount based on the Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability, escalating annually.

The Capital Planning Committee voted unanimously that they are “Not in Favor”.

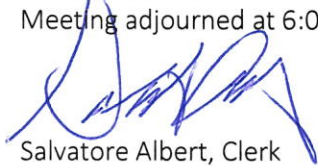
The Advisory Board Committee voted unanimously that they are “Not in Favor”.

The Select Board voted unanimously (2 members, 3<sup>rd</sup> member recused) that they are “Not in Favor”.

M. Banks made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:09 PM



Salvatore Albert, Clerk  
(Prepared by T. Chiarelli)

**EXHIBITS:**

- Town Administrator’s Report
- Warrant (1)
- June 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Payroll Authorizations (3)
- Order of Taking / Route 140 Redesign project
- 2023 Appointment & Re-appointments
- Presentation & correspondence from WRRS