

Town of Westminster – Select Board Meeting Minutes – Monday, December 4, 2023

Members Present: Salvatore Albert Jr, Melissa A. Banks, Heather M. Billings

Staff Present: Stephanie Lahtinen, Tamie Chiarelli

Others Present: Robin Holm, Melinda Horrigan, Karen Conte-Moore, Kyle Butterfield, Lee Ann Lamsa, Joe Serio, Audra Kirtland

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.

TAX CLASSIFICATION HEARING

Robin Holm of the Board of Assessors is present at this evenings meeting. Robin stated that the Board of Assessors are recommending that the Select Board to vote to adopt a factor of 1, which will tax all classifications of property (residential, commercial, industrial, personal property and open space) at the same rate.

M. Banks made a motion to vote for the factor of 1. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

SENATOR-ELECT PETER DURANT

Senator-Elect Durant was supposed to be at tonight's meeting, but it has been postponed due to other legislative commitments at the State House.

APPROVALS

WARRANTS:

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

| | | | |
|------------------|---------|----------------|----------|
| Accounts Payable | #24-23A | \$1,323,938.03 | 12/04/23 |
| Payroll | #24-23B | \$291,374.88 | 12/07/23 |

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

NOVEMBER 13, 2023 MEETING MINUTES:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the minutes of November 13, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES MARCH 13, 2023:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the executive session minutes of March 13, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS – ALTERNATE BUILDING COMMISSIONER:

M. Banks mad a motion to vote to appoint George Tignor as alternate Building commission/Zoning Enforcement Officer for a term to end June 30, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

FRATICELLI OIL CO. CONTRACT:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the contract with Fraticelli Oil Co to provide #2 heating oil delivery and related service for the Emergency Home Heating Assistance Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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AMBULANCE WRITE-OFFS:

M. Banks made a motion to approve to write off 2023 uncollectable ambulance receipts of \$14,838.71. The balance were reviewed per the Write-off Policy. These amounts reflect those who have submitted hardship applications as well as deceased individuals. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

CEMETERY DONATION:

M. Banks made a motion to accept a \$150.00 donation to the Cemetery Dept from Kathleen Niemi. Mrs. Niemi, in a letter, expressed the kind and exceptional service she received from Alan Mayo, Cemetery Superintendent and the cemetery staff before and during the funeral services held after the passing of her husband. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

BUDGET CALL LETTER/FY2025 COLA:

The Personnel Board voted to recommend 3% Cost of Living Adjustment for all non-union employees for FY2025.

M. Banks made a motion to accept the Personnel Boards recommendation of the 3% COLA and to approve the Budget Call Letter to all departments and boards, including the COLA as well as verbiage relating to budgeting for fuel and utilities for the coming year. The motion was seconded and pass unanimously.

2024 HOLIDAY LIST:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the 2024 Holiday List. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

New Year's Day – January 1
Martin Luther King Jr Day – January 15
President's Day - February 19
Patriot's Day – April 15
Memorial Day, May 27
Juneteenth, June 19
Independence Day, July 4
Labor Day, September 2
Columbus Day. October 14
Veteran's Day, November 11
Thanksgiving Day, November 28
Day after Thanksgiving, November 29
Christmas day, December 25

FINANCIAL POLICIES – INITIAL REVIEW

These policies were provided to the Town after a comprehensive review completed by the Collins Center from UMass Boston. They have been edited by our auditors (Roselli, Clark and Associates), as well as the Town Accountant, Treasurer/Collector and Town Administrator. This version of the policies has been provided to the Advisory Board, Capital Planning Committee and DPW commission for review/comment.

S. Lahtinen explained that one of the most substantive changes is to the number of Stabilization funds; the recommendation is to consolidate into three main accounts, Capital Stabilization, General Stabilization and Pension Stabilization for more effective and flexible funding management.

The Town will be undergoing a Standard & Poor's Bond Rating call on January 8th in advance of the long term borrowing for the Ellis Road Water Tank project. According to our auditors, the adoption of these policies is an important step in attaining a AAA Bond Rating.

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H. Billings said that the Board will review these policies and address/vote on it at the next Select Board meeting on December 18th.

ADJOURNMENT

M. Banks made a motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:22 pm



Salvatore Albert, Clerk
(Prepared by T. Chiarelli)

EXHIBITS:

- Town Administrator's Report
- Warrant (2)
- November 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- March 13, 2023 Executive Session Meeting Minutes
- Fraticelli contract
- Holiday List
- Budget Call letter
- Letter from K. Niemi – Cemetery donation
- Draft Financial Policy