

Town of Westminster – Select Board Meeting Minutes – Monday, September 11, 2023

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

Staff Present: Stephanie Lahtinen, Tamie Chiarelli

Others Present: Kim Samson, Dorcus Hurd, Linda Landry, Andrew Storm, Timothy Masters, Betsy Hannula, Kim Caisse, Martha Rainville, Tiffany Davis, Nick Langhart, Joe Serio

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.

H. Billings stated that before beginning our meeting, we would first like to take a moment of silence in remembrance of the September 11, 2001.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PUBLIC NOTICE STATEMENT:

At this time, Town Administration has confirmed that Making Opportunities Count (MOC), Inc of Fitchburg in cooperation with the State's Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), will be coordinating the placement of up to 30 displaced migrant families at the Rodeway Inn under the authority of the State's "Right to Shelter" law. The town has not received a confirmed move-in date but it is projected to be within the next week.

The Commonwealth's "Right to Shelter" law obligates the State to provide housing for families with children and pregnant women without homes, and the State's policy is to place these families in hotels in cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth without the need for local approval and in many instances, without prior notice.

There are currently hundreds of migrant families being housed in hotels in communities throughout the Commonwealth, and soon that will include Westminster. Only action regarding immigration policy at the Federal level or a change in State law can directly address this situation.

In light of these circumstances, it is our sincere hope that Westminster will continue to be the kind and welcoming community we all know it is. Integrating these new migrant families into our town and school district will be a challenge, but we are prepared to remain in compliance with the Governor's initiative and State law during this time. As a small town and a tight-knit community, we will endeavor to help our new inhabitants adjust, feel welcomed, thrive, and become productive residents of Westminster.

This Board is confident that by working collaboratively with our State and Local Legislators as well as Town and School leadership; we will meet the needs of this new challenge.

As always, our Town staff and officials are available to address concerns, answer questions and assist as needed. Thank you all for your cooperation and support in this matter.

This notice will be placed on our Town website and updated as needed based on information received.

Town of Westminster – Select Board Meeting Minutes – Monday, September 11, 2023

JOINT MEETING WITH LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Kim Samson, Chair of Library Trustees was present along with a quorum of Library Trustees and called the Board of Trustees to order at 5:08 pm. H. Billings called for a roll call vote to appoint Michelle Miller as the new Library Trustee filling a vacancy left by Martha Rainville. This appointment will remain in effect through April 29, 2024 Annual Town Election. H. Billings voted to approve, M. Banks voted to approve and S. Albert voted to approve. K. Samson voted to approve, K. Caisse voted to approve, M. Rainville voted to approve and T. Davis voted to approve.

APPROVALS

WARRANTS:

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

Accounts Payable	#24-11A	\$100,248.70	9/11/23
Payroll	#24-11B	\$253,963.27	9/14/23

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

AUGUST 28, 2023 MEETING MINUTES:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the minutes of August 28, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATIONS:

Acting Chief Stipend:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the payroll change request and authorization for a weekly stipend of \$500/week (from \$300/week) for Acting Chief Jason Tamulen. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

It has been over 12 months since Lt Tamulen was appointed Acting Chief, in this time period he has successfully managed the Westminster Police Department

Planning Consultant:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the payroll change request and authorization for Tracy Murphy as Planning consultant at \$75/hr. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Tracy will be transitioning to per diem/10 hour a week position with the Town, following her resignation from full time service.

APPOINTMENTS:

Zoning Board of Appeals (Alternate):

M. Banks made a motion to approve the appointment of Gary Hulecki to the Zoning Board of Appeals as an alternate member with a term to expire June 30, 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Board of Registrars:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the appointment of Linda Landry to the Board of Registrars for a term to expire March 31, 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

DONATION TO FORBUSH LIBRARY – JAMES GREENE:

M. Banks made a motion to accept the donation from Westminster resident, James Greene, in the amount of \$500 to purchase "Great courses – Science" for the Forbush Memorial Library. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

This is the second time Mr. Greene has given a donation in support of the Great Courses programming at the library.

Town of Westminster – Select Board Meeting Minutes – Monday, September 11, 2023

NEW BUSINESS

NOVEMBER 2023 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING:

M. Banks made a motion to set the date of the Fall Special Town Meeting for Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 7:30 pm in the Westminster Elementary School. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

M. Banks made a motion to set the dates to Open and Close STM Warrant to Open Monday, September 25, 2023 and Close Friday, October 13, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

S. Albert made a motion to adjourn; the motion was seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 5:16 PM



Salvatore Albert, Clerk
(Prepared by T. Chiarelli)

EXHIBITS:

- Town Administrator's Report
- Warrants (2)
- August 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Public Notice Statement
- Payroll Authorizations (2)