

Town of Westminster – Select Board Meeting Minutes – Monday, February 5, 2024

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

Staff Present: Stephanie Lahtinen, Tamie Chiarelli

Others Present: Karen Conte-Moore, Karen Sargent, Mike Cooley, Melinda Horrigan, Nick Langhart

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.

ANNOUNCEMENT:

AAA BOND RATING

We are thrilled to share the news that the Town of Westminster has achieved a AAA Bond Rating from S&P Global Ratings, making a significant milestone in our financial standing. This prestigious rating is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our exceptional staff and volunteers who have tirelessly committed themselves to ensuring the fiscal health of our community. This years of unwavering effort have not only secured this top-tier rating but has also positioned Westminster as a picture of financial stability. A heartfelt thank you to all who have played a role in this achievement – your commitment has truly made a lasting impact on the prosperity of our town.

SOUTH STREET SENTINEL:

Last week the Town unveiled the inaugural edition of the South Street Sentinel, Westminster's very own monthly newsletter! Created in-house by our dedicated staff, this publication aims to keep residents and interested parties up-to-date of the latest developments, events, and news within our community. Accessible on the town's website, we welcome contributions and submissions from our Boards/committees, staff and residents – share your stories, announcements and community highlights with Audra Kirtland, our community Services Director, at akirtland@westminster-ma.gov

PRINCETON/WESTMINSTER TAKE-OVER AT THE WOOSOX

The towns of Princeton and Westminster are going to be highlighted and featured during the Worcester Red Sox vs Buffalo Bisons on Sunday, April 7, 2024 at 1:05 PM at Polar Park. Various residents and organizations will be featured during this game and our town flags will be flown as well.

SENATOR PETER DURANT

Senator Peter Durant will be holding Office Hours in the Westminster Town Hall on Monday, February 12th in room 112 from 2:30 – 3:30 pm. Feel free to stop by and meet with the Senator!

APPROVALS:

WARRANTS:

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

Accounts Payable #24-32A \$46,126.96 2/5/2024

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

JANUARY 22, 2024 MEETING MINUTES:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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APPOINTMENT – COUNCIL ON AGING:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the appointment of Suzanne Farias to the Council on Aging (COA). The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATIONS:

Emergency Management Member:

M. Banks made a motion to approve payroll authorization for Joshua Mills for emergency Management member, as recommended by the Fire Chief. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Recruit Firefighter:

M. Banks made a motion to approve payroll authorization for Matthew Amendola as Recruit Firefighter, as recommended by the Fire Chief. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

CONTRACT COMMUNITY OUTREACH CLINICIAN (POLICE):

M. Banks made a motion to approve the contract with Colleen Cole as Community Outreach Clinician working with the Police Department. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

BOARD OF ASSESSORS – BALLOT VACANCY:

M. Banks made a motion to approve a vacancy on the ballot for the Board of Assessors. This is a requirement to allow nominations for the position at the Caucus or for a write in candidate at the Annual Town Elections. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

MARCH 5, PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY WARRANT:

M. Banks made a motion to approve and post the presidential primary warrant, to be held March 5, 2024 at the Westminster Senior Center, 69 W. Main Street. Polls will be open from 7:00 am – 8:00 pm. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS GRANT CONTRACT (EMPG):

M. Banks made a motion to approve the contract with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for an equipment trailer to house emergency shelter supplies on site at the Public Safety Building. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

FLAG POLICY:

M. Banks made a motion to approve and adopt the Flag Policy for the Town of Westminster. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Town Counsel has recommended that the Town adopt an official flag flying policy following the Supreme Court ruling against the City of Boston. Counsel has provided the policy which mirrors the town's current and past practice.

INITIAL BUDGET REVIEW:

Budgets were distributed to the Board earlier this week, since that time the Pension assessment has been received and other departments have finalized their submissions. The Advisory Board began their review this week as well. If the Board wishes to call in specific departments to discuss their budget requests, this can be scheduled for the 2/12 or 2/26 meetings. Non-money article requests are due February 16, along with Small Project Requests.

The Board would like to meet with Police, Fire, Town Clerk, Cemetery and Library Departments on the February 26th meeting. The School will be at the February 12th meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:29 PM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Salvatore Albert', written in a cursive style.

Salvatore Albert, Clerk
(Prepared by T. Chiarelli)

EXHIBITS:

- Town Administrator's Report
- Warrant (1)
- January 22, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Payroll Authorization (2)
- Clinician Contract
- Presidential Primary Warrant
- EMPG Contract
- Flag Policy
- Preliminary Budget Packet