



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

11 South Street

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April 4, 2016

To the Editor:

Westminster voters will face a decision on a ballot question at the April 26, 2016 Annual Town Election that could have a significant impact on the future financial stability of the Town. Westminster is one of a few remaining towns that has as its Chief Financial Officer an elected Treasurer/Collector. During the past several years, many towns have transitioned from having an elected Treasurer/Collector to having this official appointed by the Town's chief executive officers. This change has been strongly recommended for Westminster as well, as far back as 2009 by the state Department of Revenue and by the Town's independent financial auditors. The Department of Revenue stated, "We recommend that the town convert the office of treasurer/collector to an appointed position. A clear trend has emerged among Massachusetts communities in favor of appointed positions for a number of compelling reasons. Most relate to ensuring that office holder possess the experience and qualifications for the position and to expanding the pool of potential candidates for the job. Often mentioned is the prevailing theory of government practice that policy makers should be elected, but operational positions, where a certain skillset is required, such as the treasurer/collector, accountant, assessor, etc. should be appointed." This change is now being proposed by the Board of Selectmen and is unanimously endorsed by the Planning Board, the Personnel Board, and nearly unanimously by the Town's financial Advisory Board (6-1 in favor). In addition this proposed change was approved by a near unanimous vote by voters at a Special Town Meeting held on November 17, 2015. Further, the Town's current elected Treasurer/Collector, who has served in this office in an elected capacity for 23 years, fully supports this change. We strongly urge the Town's voters to approve this change as well. Polls will be open at the Westminster Elementary School on Tuesday, April 26th from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Sincerely,

John F. Fairbanks

Wayne R. Walker

Heather M. Billings