

**Town of Westminster
Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

Report and Recommendations of the Advisory Board

Fiscal Year 2024

Annual Town Meeting

Westminster Elementary School

Saturday, May 6, 2023 - 1:00 p.m.



Westminster Advisory Board

Lisa A. Rocheleau, Chair
Erin K. Casali, Vice Chair & Secretary
John F. Fairbanks
David Libby
Peter J. Normandin

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Advisory Board Report

Introduction

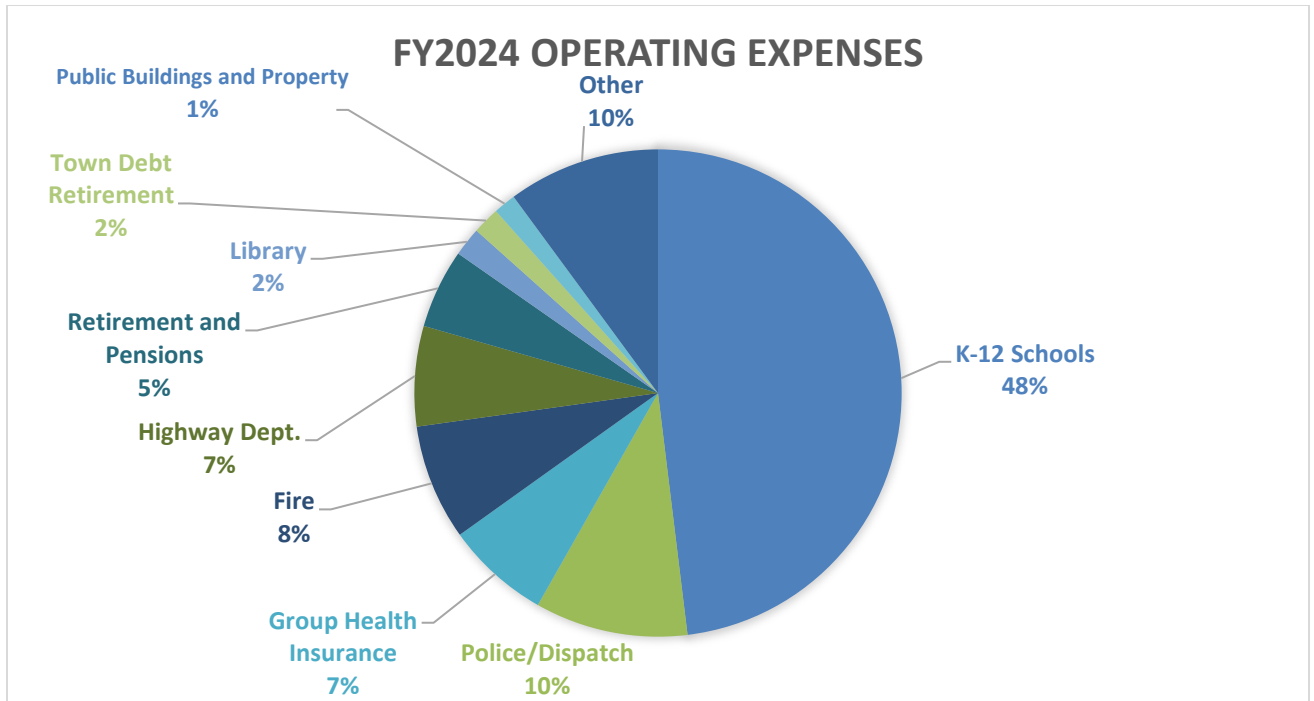
The following is the recommended budget proposal for the Town of Westminster from the Advisory Board for FY2024. The operating budget for the Town is presented in one article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant (Article 6). The remaining FY2024 budget is comprised of additional articles that cover capital expenditures and requests for special services by the Town. Each year Town Meeting reviews the proposed budget and adopts it by voting to appropriate funds for each warrant article.

Budget Recommendations

The Advisory Board is pleased to present the current budget recommendation, which is a responsible balanced budget within the 2 ½ plus growth guidelines as set forth by the Chairs of the Select Board and Advisory Board and State of Massachusetts.

The recommended operating budget (Article 6) for FY2024 is \$25,380,805. This is an increase of \$990,334 (3.9%) over the FY2023 operating budget. The increase is due to several factors which include:

- ★ In an effort to accommodate and plan for fuel prices, all departments were asked to budget their Motor Vehicle Fuel lines at \$3.50/gal for FY2024. This impacted Police and Fire budgets significantly based on their high fuel usage.
- ★ An increase of \$190,474 in “Police/Dispatch”, which is a 7.99% increase over FY2023, due to inflation and fuel related supply/service increases, overtime and contractual increases.
- ★ An increase of \$163,022 in “Retirement and Pensions”, a 13.9% increase over last year for a total of \$1,335,167 due to an increase in the Actuarial Accrued Liability. In order to lessen the impact of these annual increases, 40% of this expense will be offset for the current year by a transfer from the Pension Stabilization fund.
- ★ A net increase of \$114,120 between the Fire and Ambulance budgets. This accounts for increased fuel costs, training and overtime hours. The Ambulance budget, a total of \$658,293 will be covered by Ambulance Receipts Reserved, and as such will have no impact to the tax rate in the current year.
- ★ An increase of \$ 40,238 in “Group Health Insurance” which is a 2.99% increase over FY23, due to increases to the cost of health insurance for retirees and new enrollees; there was no increase year over year in the cost for current employees.
- ★ A 2% increase in the net school budgets between Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District and Monty Tech
 - Monty Tech: \$33,989 assessment increase (4.37%), due to increased enrollment
 - AWRSD: \$206,77 increase (1.85%) for a level services funded FY2024 budget
- ★ Parks and Recreation shows an increase of 135% (\$65,822) due to the proposed creation of the Community Services Director, department head position (Article 5)



The chart above shows the breakdown of the operating budget by department for FY2024.

Below is a summary of the articles to be voted on at the Special and Annual Town Meetings (both monetary and non-monetary). The Advisory Board is majority in favor of all the articles for each meeting:

★ Special Town Meeting:

Article 1: Supplement the FY2023 Snow and Ice accounts at \$400,000 from Free Cash. This is a transfer the Town plans for on an annual basis as winter weather is nearly impossible to predict or budget for months in advance. While our FY2023 budget considered average actual costs for the past ten years, this year's number came in higher than usual due to the increase in fuel and supply costs.

Article 2: Transfer \$75,000 from Solid Waste Enterprise Funds for the installation of a new landfill gate and corresponding software.

★ Annual Town Meeting:

Articles 1-4 are Customary Articles required annually to operate the Town as it relates to entering into various contracts for service, setting revolving fund limits and hearing Committee reports.

Article 5 pertains to the creation of a new position, a Community Services Director, requested by the Select Board and Town Administrator. This position would be a full time (40 hour) benefitted staff member that would serve to support and enhance functions of the Town currently provided solely by volunteers. Under the direct supervision of the Town Administrator, the Community Services Director would take over the management of the Community Center (rentals, clubs, other outside uses, etc.), provide full time staffing to Parks and Recreation, particularly the Summer Rec Program; the Agricultural Commission to aid in their mission; support Crocker Pond; and all other Boards/Committees that offer services to the residents with no paid staff. This position would be funded within the Parks and Recreation budget.

Article 6 is for the annual operating budget and includes all operating departments, including the schools. The Operating budget is mainly funded through Raise and Appropriate (taxes); the remainder, \$1,211,460, is funded through transfers from Ambulance Receipts (\$658,293), the Pension Stabilization Fund (\$535,167), Septic Loan Management Program (\$15,000) and Wetlands fees (\$3,000).

The FY2024 budget is also comprised of enterprise funds (Sewer, Water and Transfer Station – articles 7, 8 and 9) which total \$2,396,648 and are funded primarily by user fees; the remainder, \$86,832, is funded through Raise and Appropriate (taxes), as it relates to the capital costs of the loans associated with the Sewer In Line Storage and the Regional Treatment plant (this treatment was voted on at previous town meetings).

Articles 10, and 11 are customary money articles. These are articles that are on the warrant annually. There are two changes this year: in Article 11, due to the need to assess the values on both power plants in Westminster, the Board of Assessors is requesting \$100,000 for the Revaluation Consultant; second is the change in Article 10 compared to the prior year: the Town is requesting to add an Agricultural Fund in the amount of \$1,500 which would support the Agricultural Commission's future projects and initiatives.

Article 12 is the customary article used to offset the tax rate. The Advisory Board recommends \$230,000 of free cash be used to balance the budget, which is consistent with approved funding in the previous six (6) years.

Articles 13 through 17 are non-capital money articles that total \$37,500. These articles are requests submitted by various departments/committees but are not part of the Capital Plan as they do not exceed the Capital Plan scope of \$15,000. All articles are funded through either free cash or stabilization, and as such, do not impact the tax rate in the current year.

Articles 18, 19, and 20 are requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), to account for the monies received by the Town related to the statewide Opioid Settlement. At this time, in order to be utilized, the funds received must be allocated to a dedicated Stabilization Fund with restricted use. The Town, with the support of our local legislators, has entered into a regional initiative with Gardner, Templeton, Ashburnham and Winchendon to fund a Recovery Support Navigator (RSN), which will assist our Public Safety and Health Departments in providing critical resources to those in our communities struggling with addiction and their families.

Article 21 is a \$330,000 Free Cash appropriation to apply for a LAND Grant in cooperation with the North County Land Trust to protect 80 acres of open space at 216 Ashburnham State Road. This property directly abuts 48 acres of protected space, and covers a significant portion of Phillips Brook which is home to many species of cold water fish. The land would be under the care, custody and control of the Conservation Commission and protected from future development. If the grant is successful, the Town will receive approximately \$230,000 towards this endeavor, which would go back to Free Cash. If the application is unsuccessful, the funding would be closed back to Free Cash.

Article 22 is for the proposed Capital Improvement Plan for FY2024. The funding for the FY2024 Capital Plan is broken down as follows:

- \$2,140,168 will be funded from Stabilization funds;
- \$300,000 will be funded from Raise & Appropriate;
- \$160,000 will be funded from Water and Sewer Enterprise funds;
- \$50,000 will be funded from Free Cash;

For details please see the "Annual Report of the Capital Planning Committee" further on in this booklet.

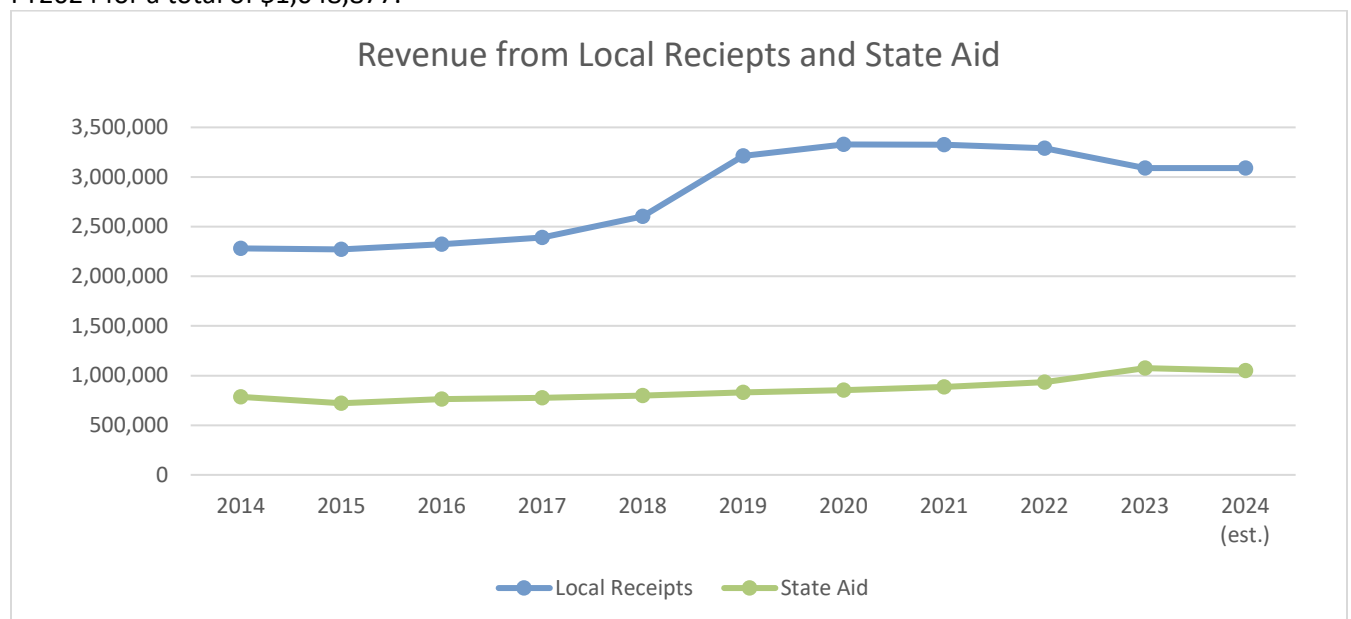
Articles 23 through 28 are miscellaneous articles and related to the following:

23. Transfer funding from the Ellis Road Water Tank article (voted May 2018 ATM) to the Shady Avenue Water Tank Improvement project (voted November 2020 STM) at the request of the DPW Director due to delays and inflation related cost increases;
24. Amend the General Bylaws to change the time for Annual Town Meeting to 10:00AM, on the first Saturday in May; and the Special Town Meeting to not earlier than 6:00PM on a Tuesday evening. This measure is to bolster attendance at both meetings by providing more convenient timing for voters;
25. Transfer care, custody and control of a parcel of Town owned land on Laurie Lane to the Select Board for conveyance in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws;
26. Amend the Zoning Bylaws of the Town of Westminster to accommodate Short Term Rentals (ex. AirBNB, VRBO, etc). There are currently 19 short term rentals in Westminster, registered with the state and, at this time, these rentals are not an allowed use in our zoning bylaws. This bylaw is being presented by the Planning Board;
27. Update the Table of Uses to include Short Term Rentals in accordance with Article 26;
28. Accept donation by LeeAnn Lamsa to the Forbush Memorial Library, of acrylic paintings done by Amy Kutka in 2002.

Revenue

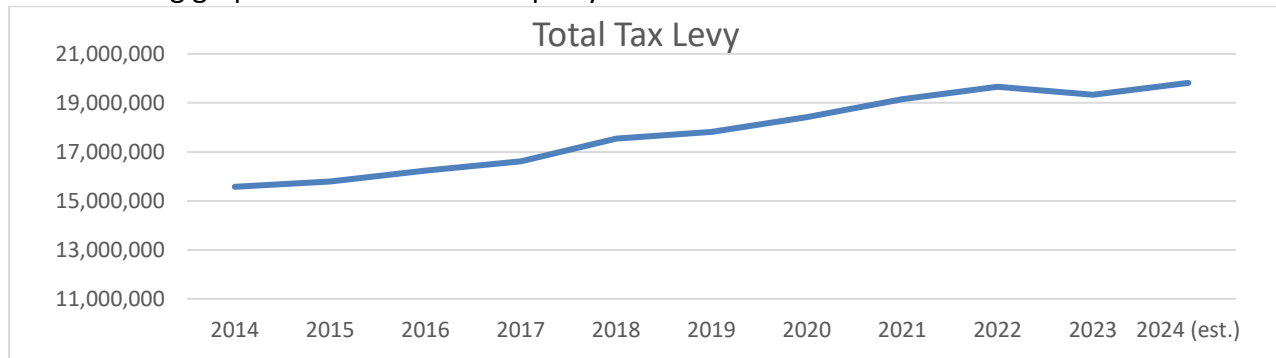
The sources of revenue for the Town of Westminster are State Aid, Property Taxes and Local Receipts. Local Receipts can be further broken down into Landfill Receipts and Other Local Receipts. Examples of Other Local Receipts include Excise Tax, Licenses/Permits, Fees and Fines/Penalties.

The following graph below shows the combined Local Receipts (including the landfill revenue estimate) and State Aid (\$4,138,877); the FY2024 estimate is consistent with the prior year. The State Aid estimate is also consistent for FY2024 for a total of \$1,048,877.



Revenue – Property Tax Data

The following graph shows the Total Property Tax Levied for the Town since FY2014.



The current tax rate is **\$13.06** per \$1,000 of valuation. This is based upon the valuation of all property in Town for FY2023 was \$1,480,111,751; this rate is expected to change once the final FY2023 valuations are performed. Any increase of \$100,000 in spending will increase the tax rate by approximately \$0.10 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

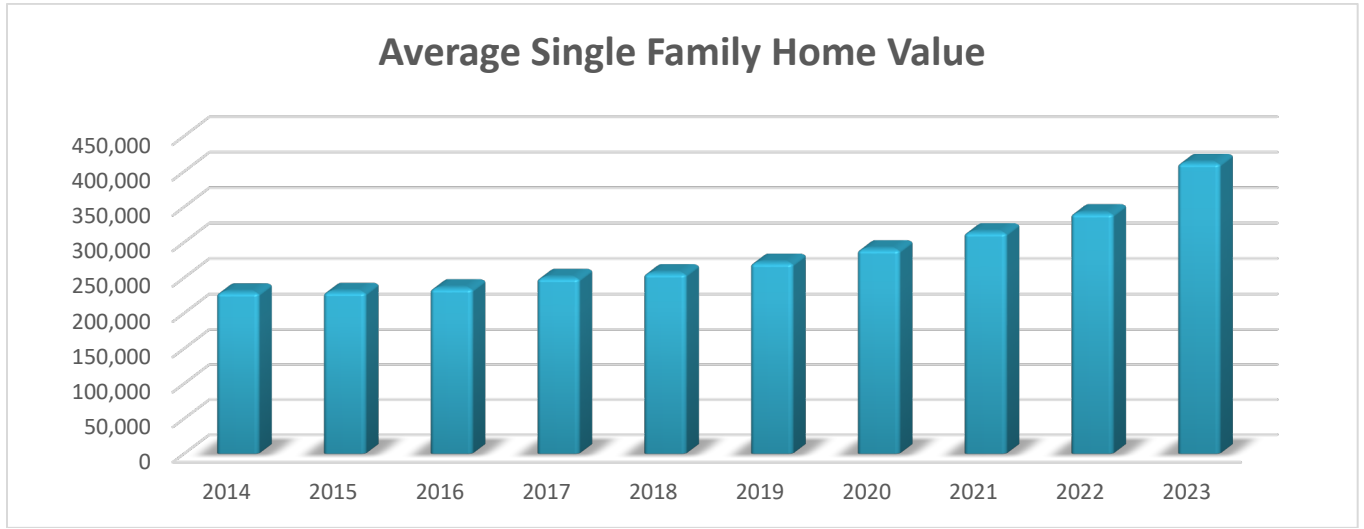
The charts below are sorted based on the Average Single Family Tax Bills and show how Westminster compares to our neighboring communities and communities of similar populations for FY2023. You'll see that Westminster falls in the center regionally, and has the lowest average tax bill in the comparison of communities of similar size.

Municipality (nearby communities)	Average Single Family Value	Single Family Tax Bill	Single Family Tax Bill as % of Value	Average Tax Bill as a % of Income
Gardner	\$286,640	\$4,624	1.61%	20.95%
Hubbardston	\$354,932	\$4,625	1.30%	11.93%
Fitchburg*	\$294,199	\$4,713	1.60%	21.72%
<u>Westminster</u>	<u>\$412,711</u>	<u>\$5,390</u>	<u>1.31%</u>	<u>13.42%</u>
Ashburnham	\$341,621	\$5,654	1.66%	15.60%
Lunenburg	\$470,165	\$6,874	1.46%	16.85%
Princeton	\$458,009	\$6,934	1.51%	11.44%

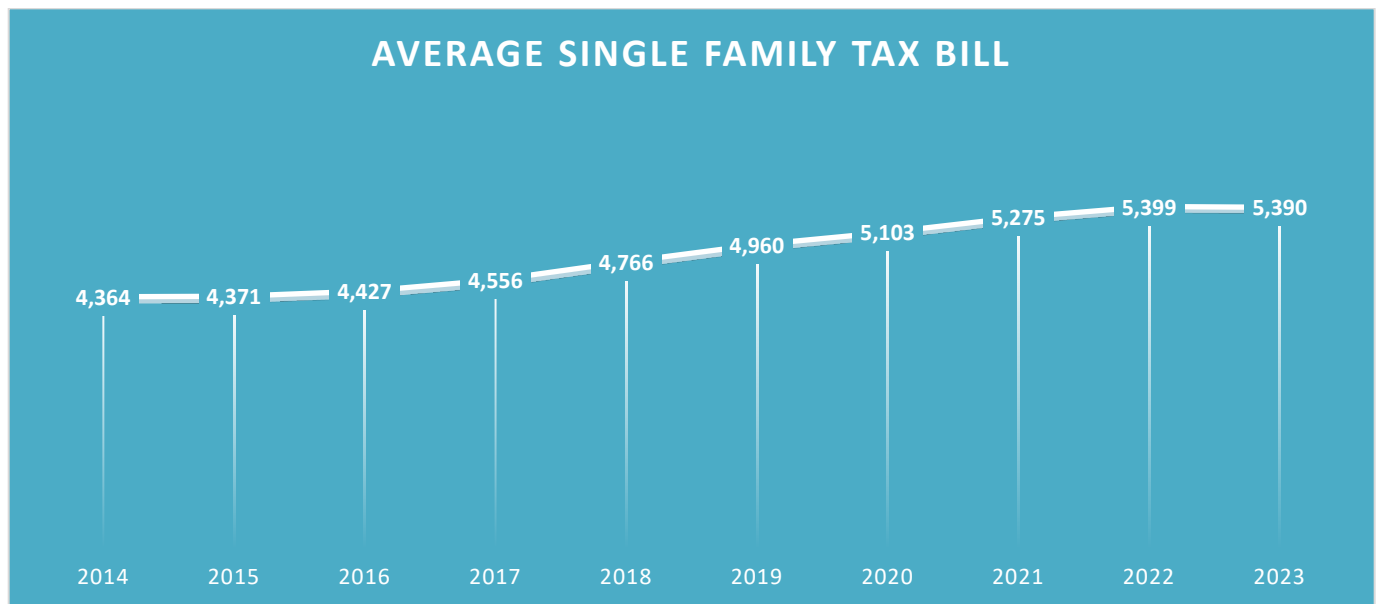
Municipality (similar populations)	Average Single Family Value	Single Family Tax Bill	Single Family Tax Bill as % of Value	Average Tax Bill as a % of Income
<u>Westminster</u>	<u>\$412,711</u>	<u>\$5,390</u>	<u>1.31%</u>	<u>13.42%</u>
Ayer*	\$447,050	\$5,552	1.24%	14.89%
Shirley	\$405,142	\$5,745	1.42%	18.87%
Rutland	\$419,830	\$5,760	1.37%	14.49%
Sterling	\$465,354	\$6,655	1.43%	12.95%
West Boylston	\$436,969	\$6,808	1.56%	18.21%
Lancaster	\$456,209	\$7,842	1.72%	20.44%

*indicates communities that have a different residential, industrial and commercial tax rate

The following chart illustrates the average home value in the Town of Westminster since 2014.

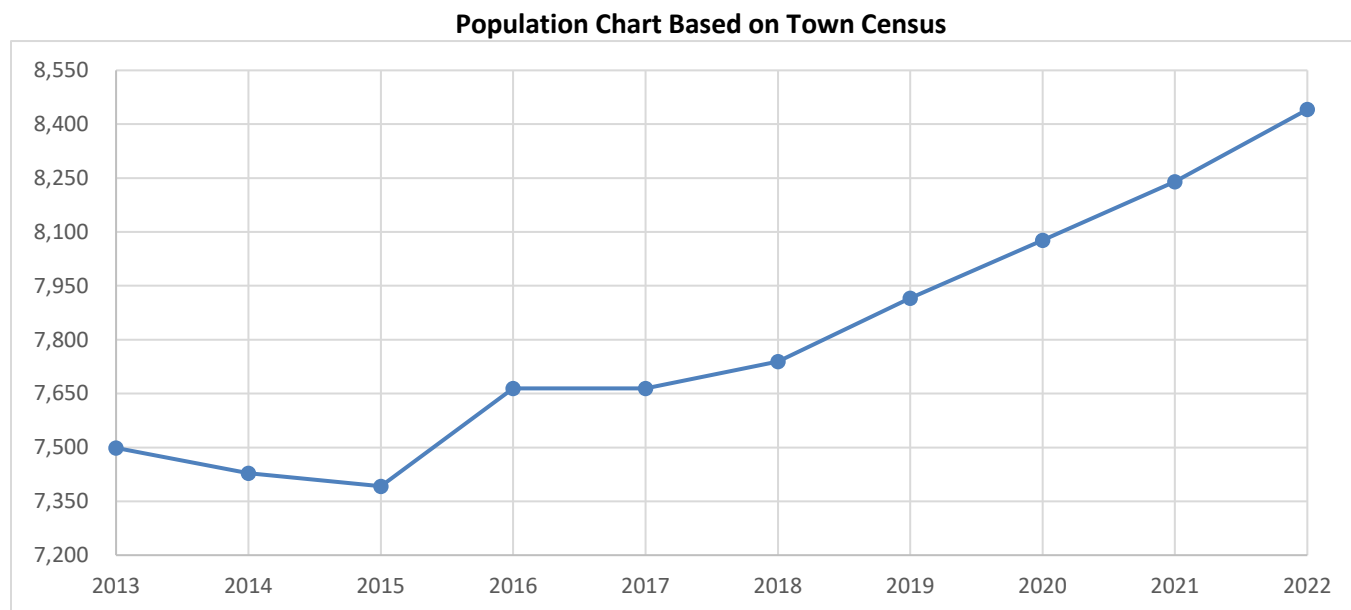


The following chart illustrates the average single-family tax bill for the Town of Westminster since 2014.



The average single-family tax bill for FY2023 is \$5,390; the increase in the average single-family tax bill is a function of both the increase in assessed value (see above) and the tax rate per \$1,000 of value. Relative to the rest of Massachusetts, Westminster's average single-family tax bill is 193rd out of 351 towns/municipalities.

The “Population Chart” below illustrates the population growth from 2013 to 2022, with the data source as the local census collected annually by the Town Clerks office. The population in 2013 was 7,498 compared to 8,441 in 2022. Since 2013 the population has grown by 943, which is about an 11% increase in the last 10 years.



Report from the Capital Planning Committee

The primary focus of the Capital Planning Committee is to study, research and make recommendations on capital improvement projects. In addition, the committee may develop processes and policies in order to maintain the capital improvement program (**CIP**). A set of financial policies have been created by the Capital Planning Committee and approved by the Select Board on October 27, 2014. These policies can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document and are key items to the Capital Planning Process.

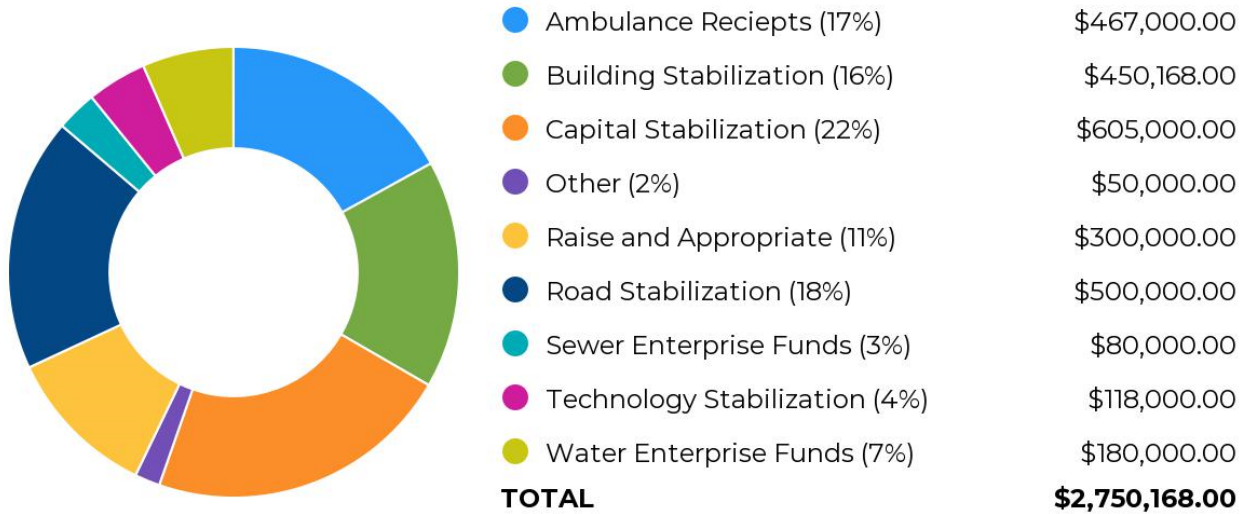
The purpose of the Capital Planning Committee is to study capital (tangible assets and projects) spending requests with a dollar value greater than \$15,000. The committee is charged with preparing annual capital spending recommendations to be submitted to the Select Board and Advisory Board and to be published in the Advisory Board booklet. The committee is also charged with developing a long range capital plan of at least five years.

The Capital Planning Committee has met with the various department heads over the past year and developed the following five-year CIP. The committee is pleased to recommend the following report to the Town of Westminster.

FY2024 Capital Plan

The proposed CIP for FY2024 totals \$2,950,168. The FY2024 CIP is funded from a combination of sources: Raise & Appropriate (taxes), Stabilization Accounts, Enterprise Funds and Other funding (e.g. Chapter 90, Ambulance Receipts...etc.). The following chart (Chart 1) illustrates the breakdown of the funding for the FY2024 Capital Plan.

Funding Source By All Years



The following is the FY2024 Recommendation from the Capital Planning Committee.

Table 1
FY2024 Capital Plan

Department	Project	Raise & Appropriate	Capital Equipment Stabilization	Building Maintenance Stabilization	Technology Stabilization	Road Maintenance Stabilization	Water & Sewer Enterprise	Ambulance	Chapter 90	Other
DPW	Road Maintenance	\$300,000								
DPW	Road Improvement Program					\$500,000				
DPW	Storm Water Permit									\$50,000
DPW	Ford F550		\$115,000							
DPW	Ford E250 Cargo Van						\$60,000			
DPW	Fuel Pump and Management System		\$30,000							
DPW	Replace 2013 Ford F350		\$70,000							
DPW	Replace Water Meters						\$100,000			
DPW	Shady Ave Water Storage Tank Rehab						\$100,000			
Police	Hybrid 2022 Ford Explorer		\$50,000							
Police	Hybrid 2022 Ford Interceptor		\$60,000							
Police	Bullet Proof Vests		\$40,000							
Police	Firearms/Weapons		\$30,000							
Fire	Replace 2016 Chevy Ambulance							\$467,000		
Fire	Replace 2016 Ford Explorer		\$85,000							
Fire	Air Compressor		\$110,000							
Cemetery	Zero Turn Mower		\$15,000							
Cemetery	Mt Pleasant Stone Wall Repair			\$30,000						
Technology	Computer Replacement				\$48,000					
Technology	LAN Wireless Apps				\$22,000					
Technology	Server upgrade Phase III				\$18,000					
Technology	Upgrade Library Phone System				\$30,000					
Schools	Districtwide Capital Projects			\$215,168						
Schools	Westminster Capital Projects			\$205,000						

Stabilization Fund Summary

The goal of the Capital Planning Committee is to develop a fiscally responsible five-year CIP and identify funding sources for at least the next three years of the plan. All Capital requests will be reviewed and prioritized by the Capital Planning Committee using a priority table. Furthermore, the five year CIP will be utilized as a planning tool to determine future Stabilization Fund Amounts.

Part of the CIP is funded from Stabilization Funds. Maintaining adequate stabilization fund levels is important to the financial stability of the Town. The Capital Planning Committee has defined minimum levels for each stabilization fund. As the Capital Planning Committee refines the five year CIP and identifies the funding sources the stabilization fund levels will be monitored. Adjustments to the five year CIP and/or funding sources may be required if future Stabilization Fund levels drop too low.

The certified Free Cash for FY2023 was approximately \$4.1 million dollars. (**“Free Cash” is actual receipts in excess of revenue estimates and unspent amounts in departmental budget line items**) This is higher than the typical average. The main contributing factor to this higher than average free cash amount was due to local receipts from the landfill. The landfill receipts came in at approximately \$1 million over the amount estimated. The landfill receipts are expected to continue to exceed the estimated amounts in the future. Since the landfill will close at some point, it is critical that revenue from this source be removed from the operating budget. The recent influx of free cash greatly helped the stabilization fund levels and will help fund the five year CIP.

Stabilization Funds - Encumbered

An important aspect of the Stabilization Funds is not only the current levels but also the levels over the next five years as they are used to fund the CIP. A portion of the amount in the Stabilization Funds are encumbered or reserved for future capital purchases. This encumbering of funds is essential in funding the five year CIP and ensures that not only will capital purchases happen in a timely manner but the impact of these projects have a minimum effect to the overall budget. The following Table reflects the amounts encumbered in each of the Stabilization Funds over the next five years based on the current CIP (Starting with the balance as of FY2023).

Table 2
Stabilization Fund FY2023 Balance and FY2024 – FY2028 Amounts Encumbered to fund the CIP

Stabilization Funds	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028
Capital Equipment Stabilization	\$ 2,275,144	\$ 1,670,144.35	\$ 780,144.35	\$ 300,144.35	\$ 215,144.35	\$ 120,144.35
Building Maintenance Stabilization	\$ 1,815,321	\$ 1,824,976.35	\$ 1,373,168.35	\$ 1,107,461.85	\$ 740,919.85	\$ 464,857.85
Technology Stabilization	\$ 1,014,990	\$ 896,989.76	\$ 833,989.76	\$ 639,989.76	\$ 494,989.76	\$ 442,989.76
Road Maintenance Stabilization	\$ 2,106,818	\$ 1,606,818.39	\$ 1,106,818.39	\$ 606,818.39	\$ 106,818.39	\$ (393,181.61)

The fund levels will decline if no additional money is transferred back into the Stabilization Funds. This is an important factor to understand when considering the Stabilization Fund levels. Each year the Town votes to transfer money back into the Stabilization Funds from the Certified Free Cash.

The amount transferred back into the Stabilization Funds is something that the Capital Planning Committee recommends based on the five year CIP. The amount transferred into the Stabilization Funds is part of a plan based on what is expected to be used in the future.

Some of the amounts in the Stabilization Funds reflected in FY2028 fall below the minimum stabilization fund levels established by the Capital Planning Committee in their Reserve Policy.

Debt Summary

A comprehensive CIP involves a strategy that includes a debt management plan. The debt management plan should be developed to meet the financing needs of the Town in a cost effective manner, taking into account Town priorities, as well as legal, financial, and structural considerations. The Capital Planning Committee has defined a debt policy to ensure that debt is managed within sustainable levels based upon annual revenues.

Table 3 below shows the current five year debt projections. The information is broken out to show the date of vote, debt excluded vs non-debt excluded, amount and mature date of the projects.

Table 3
Debt Summary - 5 year projection

Description	Date of Vote/Issue	Debt Excluded	Amount Voted	Debt Matured	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028
***Sewer In-Line Storage Project	4/11/2016	Yes	\$ 2,500,000	FY2056	\$ 53,554	\$ 53,554	\$ 53,554	\$ 53,554	\$ 53,554
***Sewer In-Line Storage Project - Interest					\$ 48,600	\$ 47,128	\$ 45,655	\$ 44,182	\$ 42,709
Rte 140 Design	5/2/2015	No	\$ 410,000	FY2024	\$ 82,000	\$ 82,000			
Rte 140 Design - Interest					\$ 2,800	\$ 2,800			
Senior Center	4/1/2015	Yes	\$ 2,830,100	FY2030	\$ 190,000	\$ 190,000	\$ 190,000	\$ 190,000	\$ 190,000
Senior Center - Interest					\$ 37,250	\$ 32,500	\$ 27,750	\$ 22,200	\$ 16,650
**Water Storage Tank - Ellis Road	11/17/2020	No	\$ 1,920,000	TBD	\$ 81,000				
**Water Storage Tank - Ellis Road - Interest									
New Tanker Truck - Fire			\$ 390,000	TBD		\$ 78,000	\$ 78,000	\$ 78,000	\$ 78,000
New Tanker Truck - Fire - Interest									
Septic Management Plan	5/4/2013	No	\$ 300,000	FY2039	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
Septic Management Plan - Interest									
(E1)2018 KME Fire Pumper/Tanker	11/27/2018	No	\$ 600,000	FY2025	\$ 120,000				
(E1)2018 KME Fire Pumper/Tanker - Interest					\$ 5,000				
(E2) KME Fire Truck			\$ 690,000	TBD		\$ 138,000	\$ 138,000	\$ 138,000	\$ 138,000
(E2) KME Fire Truck (Interest)				TBD					

Enterprise Funds

Enterprise funds establish a separate accounting and financial reporting mechanism for municipal services for which a fee is charged in exchange for goods and services. The Town has three enterprise funds (water, sewer and transfer station). Some of the items on the CIP are funded by the enterprise funds. For example, if a pick-up truck

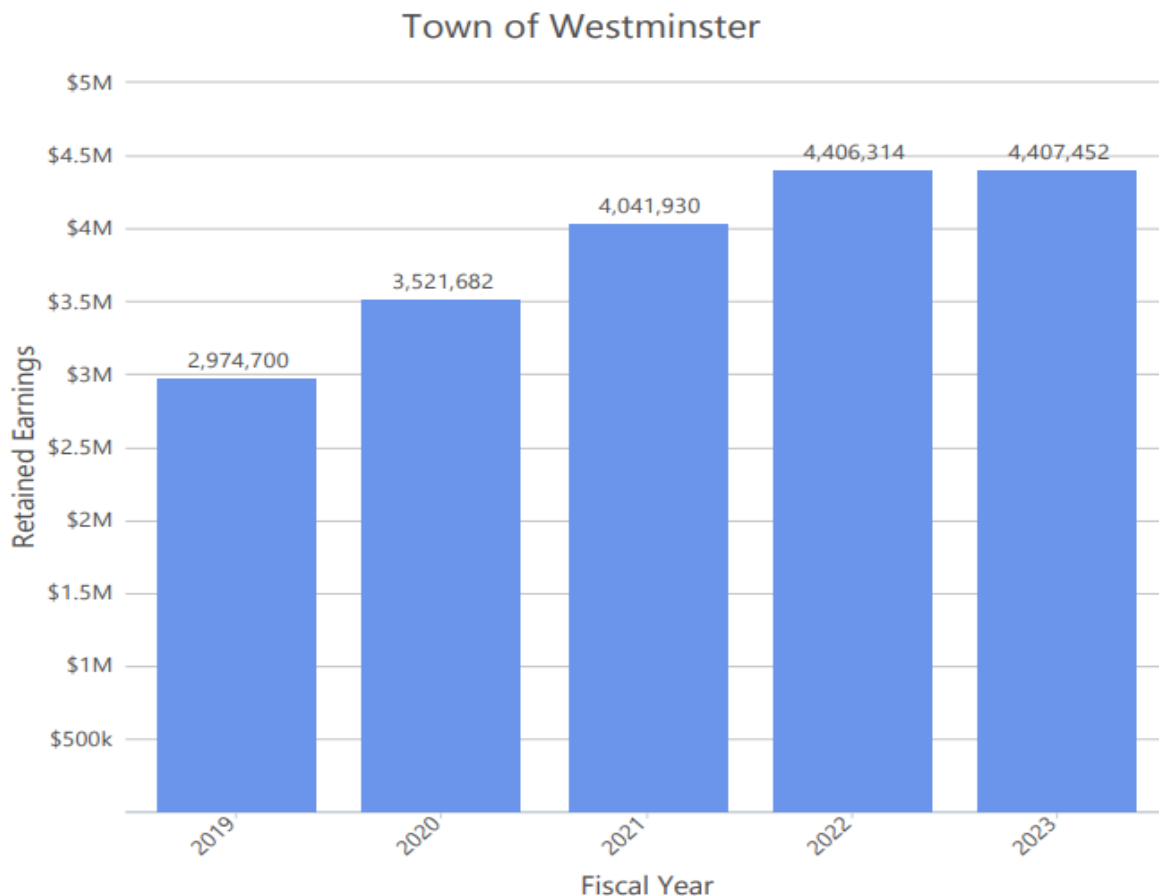
used by the water/sewer department is in need of replacement, then the funding for a new truck would come from the water and sewer enterprise funds. In addition, some items on the debt schedule are funded or partially funded by the enterprise funds (this would be noted on the debt schedule).

Similar to the stabilization funds, the enterprise fund levels must be maintained at adequate levels for financial stability. The chart below shows the Sewer, Water and Transfer Station Enterprise levels from 2019 to 2023.

Chart 5
(Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings)



Data Analytics and Resources Bureau
Category 1 - Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings
Data current as of 03/20/2023



Approximately 47% of the Sewer Enterprise expenditures are for collection charges paid to the City of Fitchburg. Another 26% is used to pay the debt for the sewer extension bond.

Overall, the status of the Town's financial position is positive. The Enterprise and Stabilization Funds are at adequate levels and the Town has a policy in place to maintain and address these funds and their minimum levels.

In addition, the five year CIP is successfully leveraging these funds for future capital expenses and thus keeping the amount needed to raise & appropriate from taxes consistent year over year. The Enterprise Fund levels are being monitored and the long range plan is to grow these levels in order to support future capital projects.

The next few paragraphs of the report are intended to expand on a few of the larger Capital Improvement Projects that are either currently on the plan or are expected to be added in the next few years. The goal is to inform and increase the awareness of these projects to the residents of Westminister.

Route 140 Design Project

A project for the engineering design of Route 140, i.e., Hager Park and Worcester Roads was approved at the May 2, 2015 Annual Town Meeting. This project will address a number of road repairs/deficiencies and flooding issues along the roadway. The area on Worcester Road in the vicinity of Mile Hill and Gatehouse Roads in particular has flooding issues and is a safety concern. The project has been split into two, Project 1 Narrows Road to Patricia Road and Project 2 Patricia Road to Princeton town line. Project 1 was completed in 2021. Project 2 is at 100% design submittal review with MassDOT with a proposed construction in 2024. Both projects have been approved for Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding. TIP is a multi-year program of capital improvements that reflect the needs of the regional transportation system.

Water Storage Tank (Shady Avenue) Project

A project for rehabilitation of the water storage tank off of Shady Avenue was approved at the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting. The cost of this project is estimated to be \$550,000. Funding this project will be borrowed and paid back from the Water Enterprise Fund. The existing storage tank was built in 1970 and rehabilitation is planned for the Fall of 2023.

MS4 Storm water Permit

This request is for the U.S. EPA's NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) 5-year permit jointly issued by EPA and MassDEP that became effective in 2018. Monies are used for consultant support in annual permit compliance. This request is for the newly issued NPDES Massachusetts Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit issued by the U.S. EPA. Money needs to be appropriated for annual permit compliance.

Multi-Year Road Improvement Project

A multi-year road improvement plan for repairing and improving town roads is part of the CIP. It is funded by a combination of the Annual Road Maintenance appropriation, MassDOT Chapter 90 and Road Maintenance Stabilization funds. Funding for this project is dependent on landfill revenue. Once the landfill is closed, transfers to the Road Maintenance Stabilization Fund from landfill revenue will cease. Paved roads under review for improvement in FY2024 include: Nichols Street, Ripley Road, Ellis Road, Bragg Hill Road, Battles Road, Merriam Road and North Common Road.

Public Safety Building

A public safety building committee has been formed and have been meeting to come up with a plan for the Public Safety Building. The current building has limited storage and the PSB Committee has a new charge to look at Town owned land for possible sites and report back to Select Board by September 2023.

Tower Ladder

A project for replacing the Tower Ladder is not yet on the five year CIP but is currently slated for FY2030. Although FY2030 is a number of years away, it is important to start discussing funding options now in order to have the least amount of impact to the tax payers. A Tower Ladder provides significant advantages over the traditional ladder truck with the main advantage being safety. A fire fighter can safely maneuver the bucket into position to best fight a fire and does not have to climb up and down a ladder that is wet and sometimes frozen. In addition, in a rescue situation rescued persons can be lowered to the ground rather than having to climb down a ladder. Another advantage is reach - a tower can extend out as well as up thus allowing a fire fighter to reach a home from the road. With all light weight construction buildings are made to depend on each component to support its own weight. When fire weakens one or more the building fall down faster endangering the people and firefighters. Another major advantage to a tower is that it can operate in any angle fully extended without fear of collapsing. This vehicle also allows us to operate with fewer people because of the safety factor.

Cemetery (Mt. Pleasant) Stone Wall Project

The project is to restore the perimeter Stone walls around the Cemetery. These Stone walls are made of Stone and mortar, and capped with granite slab. Installed in the mid 1800 time frame, they are a historic element of the cemetery. They play a vital role, as they are not only historic, but are structural retaining walls that are failing. They were placed to prevent erosion of the cemetery. The Mount Pleasant Cemetery sits on higher ground than all the property which, surround it. These walls hold back the cemetery higher ground from collapse. This project will repoint the walls and replace some existing stone work. These walls have been in place for nearly 170 years.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

WORCESTER, SS.

To either of the Constables of the TOWN OF WESTMINSTER in the County of Worcester, GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said Town qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs, to meet at the

**WESTMINSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
9 ACADEMY HILL ROAD
WESTMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS
on
SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023
AT 1:00 P.M.**

then and there to vote on the following articles:

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to supplement the amount voted under Article 9 of the May 7, 2022 Annual Town Meeting for the Snow & Ice Removal accounts (Department 423), or act in relation thereto.

(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$400,000)

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from available funds to replace the gate and related equipment located at the Transfer Station, to be spent under the direction of the DPW Director or act in relation thereto.

(Capital Planning, Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)

(Amount requested: \$75,000)

AND YOU ARE DIRECTED to serve this warrant, by posting attested copies thereof at the Town Hall and the U.S. Post Office in said Town, fourteen days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

HEREOF FAIL NOT, and make due return of this warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting, as aforesaid. Given under our hands this 10th day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-three.

Salvatore J. Albert

Heather M. Billings

Melissa A. Banks

SELECT BOARD

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

WORCESTER, SS.

To either of the Constables of the TOWN OF WESTMINSTER in the County of Worcester, GREETINGS:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said Town qualified to vote in elections and in Town affairs, to meet at the

**WESTMINSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
9 ACADEMY HILL ROAD
WESTMINSTER, MASSACHUSETTS
on
SATURDAY, May 6, 2023
AT 1:00 P.M.**

then and there to vote on the following articles:

CUSTOMARY ARTICLES

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Select Board to enter into a contract with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation or other appropriate state agency for the construction and maintenance of public highways for the ensuing fiscal year, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to Chapter 40, section 4 of the General Laws to authorize the Select Board to enter into any and all contracts on behalf of the Town for the ensuing fiscal year unless otherwise provided by law, on such terms and conditions as it deems to be in the best interests of the Town, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 3. To hear reports of any committees appointed to act on Town affairs or in its behalf.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote to set the following spending limits for each Revolving Fund authorized under Chapter 28-9 of the Town Bylaws for FY2024, or act in relation thereto: *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

- 1 Hazardous Materials Recovery - \$12,000
- 2 Agricultural Commission Programs - \$10,000
- 3 Public Health Clinic and Emergency Response - \$25,000
- 4 Private Road Maintenance - \$10,000

ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will vote to establish one (1) full-time Community Services Director position, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board, Advisory Board and Personnel Board Unanimously in Favor)*

OPERATING BUDGETS

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to fix the compensation of appointed and elected officers, provide for a Reserve Fund, and determine what sums of money the Town will raise and appropriate, including appropriations from available funds, to defray charges and expenses of the Town, including debt and interest, for the ensuing fiscal year, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*
(Amount requested: \$25,380,805)

ACCOUNT NAME AND NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	FY2023 APPROVED	FY2024 REQUESTED	INCREASE (DECREASE)	% Change	% of Budget	COMMENTS
Select Board	Salaries	4,000	4,000	0	0.00%		
122	Expenses	27,250	28,750	1,500	5.50%		
		31,250	32,750	1,500	4.80%	0.13%	
Town Administration	Salaries	148,604	154,750	6,146	4.14%		3% COLA, and Step
129	Expenses	7,200	7,200	0	0.00%		
		155,804	161,950	6,146	3.94%	0.66%	
Advisory Board	Expenses	650	650	0	0.00%		
131		650	650	0	0.00%	0.00%	
Reserve Fund	Expenses	98,400	98,400	0	0.00%		
132		98,400	98,400	0	0.00%	0.42%	
Accountant	Salaries	106,360	112,312	5,952	5.60%		3% COLA, and Step
135	Expenses	37,900	38,900	1,000	2.64%		contractual audit increase
		144,260	151,212	6,952	4.82%	0.58%	
Assessors	Salaries	70,274	72,383	2,109	3.00%		3% COLA and step
141	Expenses	20,964	21,695	731	3.49%		
		91,238	94,078	2,840	3.11%	0.39%	
Treasurer/Collector	Stipend	1,000	1,000	0	0.00%		
147	Salaries	162,789	158,298	-4,491	-2.76%		New department head
	Expenses	20,816	19,916	-900	-4.32%		
		184,605	179,214	-5,391	-2.92%	0.78%	

Legal	Expenses	75,000	75,000	0	0.00%	
151		75,000	75,000	0	0.00%	0.32%
Personnel Admin.	Salaries	54,531	56,166	1,635	3.00%	3% COLA
152	Expenses	19,500	21,175	1,675	8.59%	Payroll software contractual increase
		74,031	77,341	3,310	4.47%	0.31%
Data Processing	Salaries	70,794	72,918	2,124	3.00%	
155	Expenses	121,600	132,100	10,500	8.63%	ViewPoint, Zobrio and Cloud Services increases
		192,394	205,018	12,624	6.56%	0.81%
Town Clerk	Stipend	1,200	1,200	0	0.00%	
161	Salaries	91,208	93,945	2,737	3.00%	
	Expenses	11,260	11,960	700	6.22%	
		103,668	107,105	3,437	3.32%	0.44%
	Stipend	700	700	0	0.00%	
Elections	Salaries	15,585	9,620	-5,965	-38.27%	
164	Expenses	18,505	20,425	1,920	10.38%	
		34,790	30,745	-4,045	-11.63%	0.15% no State or Federal elections
Conservation	Salary	40,846	42,072	1,226	3.00%	
171	Expenses	1,050	1,050	0	0.00%	
		41,896	43,122	1,226	2.93%	0.18%
Town Planner	Salary	82,193	85,891	3,698	4.50%	3% COLA and Step
172	Expenses	4,500	4,500	0	0.00%	
		86,693	90,391	3,698	4.27%	0.37%

Planning Board	Salary	2,000	2,000	0	0.00%	
175	Expenses	1,150	1,150	0	0.00%	
		3,150	3,150	0	0.00%	0.01%
Board of Appeals	Salary	1,000	1,000	0	0.00%	
176	Expenses	300	300	0	0.00%	
		1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	0.01%
Agricultural Commission	Expenses	500	500	0	0.00%	
179		500	500	0	0.00%	0.00%
Economic Development	Expenses	1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	
182		1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	0.01%
Public Buildings and Property	Salaries	112,164	114,330	2,166	1.93%	New Department Head, COLA and Step
	Expenses	252,050	262,550	10,500	4.17%	increased utilities
192		364,214	376,880	12,666	3.48%	1.54%
Town Report	Expenses	2,250	2,250	0	0.00%	
195		2,250	2,250	0	0.00%	0.01%
Crocker Pond	Salaries	22,314	22,983	669	3.00%	3% COLA for summer staff
199	Expenses	7,655	7,655	0	0.00%	
		29,969	30,638	669	2.23%	0.13%
Police/Dispatch	Salaries	2,044,243	2,171,429	127,186	6.22%	contractual increases
210	Expenses	340,690	403,978	63,288	18.58%	annual taser maintenance included
		2,384,933	2,575,407	190,474	7.99%	10.09%

Fire	Salaries	1,006,274	1,079,762	73,488	7.30%	contractual increases	
220	Expenses	177,786	209,595	31,809	17.89%		
		1,184,060	1,289,357	105,296	8.89%	5.01%	
Ambulance	Salaries	497,218	485,111	-12,107	-2.44%		
231	Expenses	152,251	173,182	20,931	13.75%		
		649,469	658,293	8,824	1.36%	2.75%	Entire budget for Ambulance to be funded from Ambulance Receipts Reserved
Emergency Management	Salaries	4,611	31,025	26,414	572.80%	portion of Fire Chief salary is reflected in Emergency Mgmt.	
299	Expenses	12,405	12,405	0	0.00%		
		17,016	43,430	26,414	155.23%	0.07%	
Building Dept.	Salaries	232,606	228,405	-4,201	-1.81%		
241	Expenses	20,000	20,000	0	0.00%		
		252,606	248,405	-4,201	-1.66%	1.05%	
Animal Control							
292	Expenses	40,700	40,700	0	0.00%		
		40,700	40,700	0	0.00%	0.17%	
Tree Warden	Salary	2,000	2,000	0	0.00%		
294	Expenses	33,200	33,200	0	0.00%		
		35,200	35,200	0	0.00%	0.15%	

K-12 Schools	Contribution to Fndn. Budget	7,807,347	8,297,014	434,823	6.27%		
390	Additional Funds	2,404,869	2,073,708	-440,071	-13.77%		
	Transportation	490,692	551,050	49,874	12.30%		
	Comm. Serv.	4,308	4,330	-50	0.51%		
	Stabilization	0	0	0			
	Capital	0	0	0			
	Subtotal-Operating	10,707,216	10,926,102	44,576	2.04%		
	WES Bond	242,000	232,953	-9,047	-3.74%		
	Oakmont Bond	230,000	226,938	-3,062	-1.33%		
	Subtotal-Debt	472,000	459,891	-24,000	-2.57%		
	SUB-TOTAL K-12	11,179,216	11,385,993	206,777	1.85%	47.22%	Level Services Increase
Monty Tech	Foundation State Minimum	745,000	771,335	26,335	3.53%		
	Additional Funds			0	0.00%		
	Transportation	20,000	26,472	6,472	32.36%		
	Capital	13,500	14,682	1,182	8.76%		
	Bonds	0	0	0	0.00%		
	Sub-Total MTech	778,500	812,489	33,989	4.37%	3.49%	
Total Schools, 390	Total Schools	11,957,716	12,198,482	240,766	2.01%	49.03%	
Highway Admin.	Salaries	331,152	344,596	13,444	4.06%		3% COLA and Step
421		331,152	344,596	13,444	4.06%	1.40%	
Highway Dept.	Salaries	641,498	678,765	37,267	5.81%		contractual increases
422	Expenses	266,370	266,670	300	0.11%		
		907,868	945,435	37,567	4.14%	3.84%	

Snow and Ice Control	Salaries	77,000	77,000	0	0.00%	
423	Expenses	320,000	320,000	0	0.00%	
		397,000	397,000	0	0.00%	1.68%
Street Lighting	Expenses	26,000	20,000	-6,000	-23.08%	reduction due to LED streetlight installation
424		26,000	20,000	-6,000	-23.08%	0.11%
Cemetery Dept.	Salaries	168,217	172,525	4,308	2.56%	OT Line item for Cemetery Foreman
491	Expenses	15,680	17,180	1,500	9.57%	
		183,897	189,705	5,808	3.16%	0.78%
Health Dept.	Salaries	125,367	132,115	6,748	5.38%	
510	Expenses	19,860	19,860	0	0.00%	
		145,227	151,975	6,748	4.65%	0.61%
Council on Aging	Salaries	62,522	65,770	3,248	5.19%	Administrative staff and Meals on Wheels drivers
541	Expenses	15,700	15,700	0	0.00%	
		78,222	81,470	3,248	4.15%	0.33%
Veteran's Services						
543	Expenses	17,000	18,000	1,000	5.88%	contractual regional agreement with Gardner
		17,000	18,000	1,000	5.88%	0.07%
Veteran's Assistance	Expenses	90,000	75,000	-15,000	-16.67%	Increased efficiencies in reporting with Gardner agreement
544		90,000	75,000	-15,000	-16.67%	0.38%
MART	Salaries	92,269	95,038	2,769	3.00%	COA Dir. And Van Drivers
549	Expenses	12,250	12,250	0	0.00%	
		104,519	107,288	2,769	2.65%	0.44%

Library	Salaries	309,618	323,119	3,974	4.36%	COLA and Step
610	Expenses	146,340	162,765	6,100	11.22%	Books & periodicals, Lecturers
		455,958	485,884	10,074	6.56%	1.93%
Recreation Dept.	Salaries	27,380	93,202	65,822	240.40%	includes new Department Head salary - Community Services Director
630	Expenses	21,440	21,440	0	0.00%	
		48,820	114,642	65,822	134.83%	0.21%
Concerts	Expenses	3,000	3,000	0	0.00%	
631		3,000	3,000	0	0.00%	0.01%
Hager Park Comm.	Expenses	1,100	1,100	0	0.00%	
661		1,100	1,100	0	0.00%	0.00%
Historical Comm.	Expenses	1,280	1,280	0	0.00%	
691		1,280	1,280	0	0.00%	0.01%
Memorial Day	Expenses	1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	
692		1,300	1,300	0	0.00%	0.01%
Care of Town Clock	Expenses	350	350	0	0.00%	
699		350	350	0	0.00%	0.00%
Town Debt Retirement	Fire Truck	120,000	120,000	0	0.00%	BAN - Year 4of 5
710	Senior Center	190,000	190,000	0	0.00%	Maturing 6/30/2030
	Bond	82,000	82,000	0	0.00%	BAN - Year 3 of 5
	Rte. 140 Re-design	15,000	15,000	0	0.00%	Maturing 01/15/2039
	Septic Management Program					
	Total Expenses	407,000	407,000	0	0.00%	1.72% VOTE AS ONE LINE ITEM

Town Debt Interest	Short Term Borrowing	5,000	5,000	0	0.00%		
750	Senior Center Bond	42,000	37,250	-4,750	-11.31%		
	Fire Truck	888	5,040	4,152	467.57%		
	Rte. 140 Re-design	1,640	4,000	2,360	143.90%		
	Total Expenses	49,528	51,290	1,762	3.56%	0.21%	VOTE AS ONE LINE ITEM
Regional Plan. Council.	Expenses	2,899	2,972	73	2.52%		annual assessment
840		2,899	2,972	73	2.52%	0.01%	
Other Employee Benefits		40,000	40,000	0	0.00%		
910		40,000	40,000	0	0.00%		
Retirement and Pensions	Expenses	1,172,145	1,335,167	163,022	13.91%		
911		1,172,145	1,335,167	163,022	13.91%	4.96%	Annual assessment increase from Worcester Regional Retirement System
Group Health Insurance	Expenses	1,346,946	1,387,183	40,238	2.99%		
914		1,346,946	1,387,183	40,238	2.99%	5.70%	0% increase in insurance premiums, increase for retiree benefits and additional staffing
Group Life Insurance	Expenses	4,700	4,900	200	4.26%		
915		4,700	4,900	200	4.26%	0.02%	

Other Insurance	Expenses	2,500	2,500	0	0.00%	Unemployment
945		47,500	50,000	2,500	5.26%	Workman's Compensation
		215,000	230,000	15,000	6.98%	Property and Liability
		68,500	77,500	9,000	13.14%	Fire/Police Accident
		2,000	2,000	0	0.00%	Deductibles
		335,500	362,000	26,500	7.90%	1.42% VOTE AS ONE LINE ITEM
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET		12,432,756	13,182,323	749,568	5.69%	50.97%
TOTAL SCHOOL BUDGETS		11,957,716	12,198,482	240,766	1.97%	49.03%
TOTAL BUDGET		24,390,472	25,380,805	990,334	3.90%	

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to operate the Sewer Enterprise for Fiscal Year 2024, or act in relation thereto.
(*Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)
(Amount requested: \$1,291,976)

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to operate the Water Enterprise for Fiscal Year 2024, or act in relation thereto.
(*Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)
(Amount requested: \$830,472)

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to operate the Solid Waste Transfer Facility Enterprise for Fiscal Year 2024, or act in relation thereto.
(*Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)
(Amount requested: \$274,200)

CUSTOMARY MONEY ARTICLES

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, sums of money for the following purposes, or act in relation thereto:
Westminster Cultural Council
Conservation Fund, as provided in Section 8C of Chapter 40 of the General Laws
Agricultural Commission, as provided in Section 8L, Chapter 40 of the General Laws
(*Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)
(Amounts requested: \$4,000 for Cultural Council; \$5,000 for Conservation Fund; \$1,500 for Agricultural Commission)

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to fund a portion of the cost of retaining a professional consultant to perform the revaluation of real and personal property in the Town as required under Massachusetts General Laws, or act in relation thereto.
(*Select Board Unanimously in Favor and Advisory Board Majority in Favor*)
(Amount requested: \$100,000)

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from Free Cash to reduce the Fiscal Year 2024 tax rate, or act in relation thereto.
(*Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)
(Amount requested: \$230,000)

NON-CAPITAL MONEY ARTICLES

ARTICLE 13. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money for a new lowering device for the Cemetery Department, or act in relation thereto. (*Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)

(Amount requested: \$6,000)

ARTICLE 14. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money for a hot/cold power washer for the Cemetery Department, or act in relation thereto. (*Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)

(Amount requested: \$6,000)

ARTICLE 15. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be spent under the direction of the Historical Commission for continued work with a historic preservationist, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board Unanimously in Favor and Advisory Board Majority in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$3,000)

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money for an independent consultant to perform a search for a full time, permanent Police Chief; said sum to be spent under the direction of the Town Administrator, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$14,000)

ARTICLE 17. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money to upgrade the Town's financial cash book and software, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$8,500)

ARTICLE 18. To see if the Town will vote to establish an Opioid Abatement Stabilization Fund, in accordance with Chapter 40, Section 5B of the Massachusetts General Laws, to be used, upon further appropriation, for the purposes of implementing the abatement strategies set forth in the Massachusetts State-Subdivision Agreement for Statewide Opioid Settlements, dated March 4, 2022. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 19. To see if the Town will vote to accept the fourth paragraph of Chapter 40, Section 5B, of the Massachusetts General Laws, which allows the dedication, without further appropriation, of all, or a percentage not less than 25 percent, of particular fees, charges or receipts to a stabilization fund established under Chapter 40, Section 5B of the Massachusetts General Laws, to be effective for all fiscal years beginning on July 1, 2023. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 20. To see if the Town will vote to dedicate all or a percentage, which may not be less than 25 percent, of the receipts from the Statewide Opioid Settlements, as defined in the State-Subdivision Agreement for Statewide Opioid Settlements, to the Opioid Abatement Stabilization Fund established in accordance with Chapter 40, Section 5B of the Massachusetts General Laws, effective for the fiscal year 2024, beginning on July 1, 2023. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 21. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate and transfer from Free Cash, a sum of money, for the purpose of acquiring, for conservation and passive recreation purposes certain property located at 216 Ashburnham State Road, together with buildings thereon, known as the Therriault Property, consisting of 80 acres, more or less, and identified on Westminster Assessors Map 4 as Parcel 2, and costs incidental or related thereto, and to authorize the Select Board to acquire said property by purchase, gift, and/or eminent domain on such terms as the Select Board deems appropriate, which property shall be held under the care, custody and control of the Conservation Commission for the foregoing purposes under the provisions of G.L. c. 40, §8C, and, further, at authorize the Select Board, the Conservation Commission and/or their designee to apply for, accept and expend funds from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or other public or private sources to defray all or a portion of the costs of acquisition, including, but not limited to, grants and/or reimbursements from the Commonwealth under G.L. c. 132A, §11 (the so-called LAND Grants), and/or any other federal, state or other grants or reimbursement programs in any way connected with the scope of this article, and to enter into any and all agreements and execute any and all instruments as may be necessary or convenient on behalf of the Town of Westminster to effectuate said acquisition. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

(Amount requested: \$330,000)

CAPITAL ARTICLES

ARTICLE 22. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to be spent for the following capital equipment and/or projects, including related incidental costs, or act in relation thereto. (2/3 vote required) (*Capital Planning, Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)

22	Department	Amount Requested	Funding Source
22-01	DPW - Road maintenance	\$300,000.00	Raise and Appropriate
22-02	DPW - Road Improvement Program	\$500,000.00	Road Maintenance Stabilization
22-03	DPW - Storm Water Permit	\$50,000.00	Free Cash
22-04	DPW - Replace Ford F550	\$115,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-05	DPW - Replace 2013 Ford E250 Cargo Van	\$60,000.00	Water & Sewer Enterprise
22-06	DPW - Fuel Pump and Management System	\$30,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-07	DPW - Replace Ford F350	\$70,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-08	DPW - Replace Water Meters	\$100,000.00	Water & Sewer Enterprise
22-09	Police - Hybrid 2022 Ford Explorer	\$50,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-10	Police - Hybrid 2022 Ford Interceptor	\$60,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-11	Police - Bullet Proof Vests	\$40,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-12	Police - Firearms/Weapons	\$30,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-13	Fire - Replace 2016 Chevy Ambulance	\$467,000.00	Ambulance Receipts
22-14	Fire - Replace 2016 Ford Explorer	\$85,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-15	Fire - Air Compressor	\$110,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-16	Cemetery - Zero Turn Mower	\$15,000.00	Capital Equipment Stabilization
22-17	Cemetery - Mt Pleasant Stone Wall Repair	\$30,000.00	Building Maintenance Stabilization
22-18	Tech - Computer Replacement	\$48,000.00	Technology Stabilization
22-19	Tech - LAN Wireless Apps	\$22,000.00	Technology Stabilization
22-20	Tech - Server upgrade Phase III	\$18,000.00	Technology Stabilization
22-21	Tech - Upgrade Library Phone System	\$30,000.00	Technology Stabilization
22-22	Schools - Districtwide Capital Projects	\$215,168.00	Building Maintenance Stabilization
22-23	Schools - Westminster Capital Projects	\$205,000.00	Building Maintenance Stabilization

MISCELLANEOUS AND ZONING ARTICLES

ARTICLE 23. To see if the Town will vote pursuant to General Laws Chapter 44, §20 to transfer \$100,000 from the amount borrowed pursuant to Article 21 of the 2018 Annual Town Meeting and Article 6 of the November 17, 2020 Special Town Meeting to the amounts previously appropriated for the Shady Avenue Water Tank project, or act in relation thereto. (*Capital Planning, Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor*)

ARTICLE 24. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Westminster General Bylaws (Chapter 25 of the Code of the Town of Westminster, Massachusetts, §25-4 and §25-6) to change the convening time of the Annual Town Meeting to 10:00AM and the convening time of the Special Town Meeting to not earlier than 6:00PM and to authorize the Town Clerk to make such changes to the Bylaw, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 25. To see if the Town will vote to transfer the care, custody and control of the parcel described below from the board having custody thereof for the purposes for which it is currently held to the Select Board for the purpose of conveyance, and to authorize the Select Board to convey all or a portion of the Town-owned parcel of land located at the intersection of Laurie Lane, consisting of 11,885 square feet, directly adjacent to Assessors Map 138, Parcel 38 on such terms and conditions and for such consideration as the Board deems appropriate, or act in relation thereto. (2/3 vote required) *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

ARTICLE 26. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 205 of the Code of the Town of Westminster, to add Section 205-32.1 under Article XI Special Provisions as follows, and further that non-substantive changes to the numbering of this bylaw be permitted in order that it be in compliance with the numbering format of the Code of the Town of Westminster: *(Select Board Unanimously in Favor and Advisory Board Majority in Favor)*

205-32.1.1. PURPOSE.

The purposes of this section are to:

1. Provide a process through which certain residential dwelling units and bedrooms within dwelling units may be registered with the Town of Westminster for use as "short-term rentals";
2. Provide health and safety standards for short-term rentals; and
3. Provide for the orderly operation of short-term rentals within the Town.

205-32.1.2. DEFINITIONS.

"Short-term rental", an owner-occupied, tenant-occupied or non-owner occupied property including, but not limited to, an apartment, house, cottage, condominium or a furnished accommodation that is not a hotel, motel, lodging house or bed and breakfast establishment that is rented for thirty-one (31) days or less.

Short-term renter: Any person or persons occupying a dwelling unit, or a bedroom within a dwelling unit, as a short-term rental.

Short-term rental operator: The person or persons offering a Dwelling Unit or bedroom within a Dwelling Unit, for short-term rental, with the written permission of the owner, condominium association, and homeowners association where applicable.

Operator-occupied short-term rental: The short-term rental of a Dwelling Unit, or of individual bedrooms within a Dwelling Unit, that is the primary residence of its operator.

Operator-adjacent short-term rental: The short-term rental of a Dwelling Unit that is not the primary residence of the operator, but is located within a dwelling with a total of four or fewer Dwelling Units where one of the Dwelling Units in the building is the primary residence of the operator.

205-32.1.3 REQUIREMENTS. Operator-occupied, and operator-adjacent short-term rentals are permitted as an accessory use to a permitted principal residential use, subject to the following requirements:

1. No Dwelling Unit, or bedroom within a Dwelling Unit, may be used as a short-term rental except in compliance with this bylaw.
2. The following Dwelling Units may not be used as short-term rentals:
 - i. Dwelling Units designated as affordable or otherwise income-restricted, which are subject to affordability covenants or are otherwise subject to housing or rental assistance under local, state, or federal programs or law;
 - ii. Accessory Apartments as defined in Section 205-34; and
 - iii. Any Dwelling Unit in violation of the State Sanitary Code, 105 CMR 410.
3. All short-term rental operators shall register with the Health Department prior to short-term rental use and occupancy in conformance with Section 205-46.5 below.
4. A short-term rental operator may make available no more than one (1) Dwelling Unit for operator-occupied short-term rentals, which may include the separate short-term rental of each of no more than three (3) individual bedrooms, and one (1) Dwelling Unit for operator adjacent short-term rentals, which may be rented only as a whole unit to one (1) party of short-term renters at any one (1) time and may not be rented as separate bedrooms to separate parties.
5. A short-term rental shall be limited to parking of one (1) vehicle per lawful bedroom in the short-term rental.
6. The short-term rental operator or their agent shall maintain an up-to-date log of all occupants that occupy the short-term rental, which shall contain the occupants' names, ages, principal residence address, and dates of commencement and expiration of each short-term rental period. The log shall be available for inspection by Town officials with authority to regulate use of the Dwelling Unit, including the Town's Board of Health. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the Town shall have basic identifying information of all occupants of the short-term rental at all times.
7. The short-term rental operator must be current with all town taxes, water, and sewage charges on the property being rented.
8. Each short term rental shall comply with 105 CMR 460.100 (D).
9. All short-term rental operators shall maintain liability insurance appropriate to cover the short-term rental use.

10. During any period of seven (7) or more consecutive days when the short-term rental operator is away from the Dwelling Unit, an operator-occupied short-term rental may be rented only as a whole unit and not rented as separate bedrooms to separate parties.
11. The number of bedrooms made available for operator-occupied short-term rentals within a dwelling unit shall not be greater than the number of lawful bedrooms in the dwelling unit.
12. Renting for an hourly rate, or for rental durations of less than ten (10) consecutive hours, shall not be permitted.

205-32.1.4 REGULATIONS.

The Board of Health shall have the authority to promulgate regulations to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Section 205-32.1 "Short-Term Rentals."

205-32.1.5 REGISTRATION, INSPECTION AND FEES.

1. All Dwelling Units, or bedrooms within a Dwelling Unit, offered for short-term rentals shall register with the Health Department and secure a Certificate of Registration according to standards set forth by the Board of Health, and pay all associated fees. The Certificate of Registration shall require the short-term rental operator to agree to abide by the requirements of this bylaw.
2. It is the responsibility of the short-term rental operator to renew its Certificate of Registration on an annual basis or upon change of operator or owner.
3. Prior to issuing or renewing a certificate of registration, the Health Department and Fire Department shall conduct an inspection to verify that each Dwelling Unit, or bedroom within a Dwelling Unit, to be rented to short-term renters meets the requirements of this bylaw.
4. Units shall be annually recorded in the Short-Term Rental Registry for a fee set by the Board of Health.

ARTICLE 27. To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, Chapter 205 of the Code of the Town of Westminster, Attachment 1, Table of Use Regulations, to add a new category (18) under Section I. Accessory uses and off-street parking, as follows: *(Select Board Unanimously in Favor and Advisory Board Majority in Favor)*

Use	Residential			Commercial			Industrial	
	R-I	R-II	R-III	C-I	C-II	VC	I-I	I-II
(18) Short term rental (See § 205-32.1)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

ARTICLE 28. To see if the Town will vote to accept as gifts three acrylic on canvas paintings done by Amy Kukta in 2002 of scenes intended for murals in the library stairway given by LeeAnn Lamsa and accepted by the Library Board of Trustees on January 10, 2023, or act in relation thereto. *(Select Board and Advisory Board Unanimously in Favor)*

AND YOU ARE DIRECTED to serve this warrant by posting attested copies thereof at the Town Hall and the U.S. Post Office in said Town, seven days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

HEREOF FAIL NOT, and make due return of this warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting, as aforesaid. Given under our hands this 10th day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-three.

Salvatore J. Albert

Heather M. Billings

Melissa A. Banks

SELECT BOARD