

*Town of Westminster – Select Board Meeting Minutes – Monday, April 1, 2024*

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

**Staff Present:** Stephanie Lahtinen, Tamie Chiarelli

**Others Present:** Karen Conte-Moore, Bryce Kirby, Anthony Cleeves, Audra Kirtland, Lisa Rocheleau, Ellen Sheehan, Keith Harding, Ross Barber

**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 by Ashburnham/Westminster Community Media and no other recording devices have been brought to her attention.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

H. Billings announced the Welcome to Westminster event at the Library on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. This was mainly designed for new residents to get to know about the town, but all is welcome.

WooSox Town Takeover at Polar Park, Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM of the Town of Westminster and the Town of Princeton. Tickets purchased will benefit a non-profit from each town. Tickets can be purchased using the QR code on the flyers that are displayed at all businesses and town buildings throughout the town and on the website.

**APPROVALS:**

WARRANTS:

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

Accounts Payable	#24-40A	\$1,432,106.65	04/01/2024
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The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

MARCH 18, 2024 MEETING MINUTES:

M. Banks made a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

218 ASHBURNHAM STATE ROAD – PURCHASE & SALES AGREEMENT:

This is being passed over, the sellers are still reviewing the Purchase & Sale Agreement.

APPOINTMENT – COUNCIL ON AGING:

M. Banks made a motion to appoint Brenda Albert to the Council on Aging for a term to end June 30, 2026. S. Albert recused himself, H. Billings seconded the motion and it passed.

SET HOURS FOR ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION:

S. Albert made a motion to vote & approve the abbreviated hours for the Annual Town Election, from 7:00 am – 8:00 pm to 9:00 am to 7:00 pm, due to lack of contested races. H. Billings voted yes and M. Banks voted no, the motion passed with a majority.

E. Sheehan was present to explain the reasoning for the abbreviated hours of no contest in any of the races, less residents will come out to vote and there are little to no people for the town election that show up to vote between 7:00 – 9:00 am

M. Banks stated that her reason for not voting for it is that the people that may want to stop by to vote before they go to work, that if it's not open that early the likelihood of them trying to make it later will not happen and feels that it would be a dis-service to the residents

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### WESTMINSTER SENIOR RESIDENCES PROJECT DOCUMENTS:

M. Banks made a motion to approve to lease a portion of the town-owned property located at 6 Community Way to CCD Westminster Senior LLC for a term of 99 years for senior affordable housing purposed, and to execute, and to authorize the Town Administrator (or any Select Board member who is most readily available to sign and notarize documents) to execute on behalf of the Select Board, Ground Lease, Notice of Lease, Affordable Housing Restriction, and any and all other documents as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish the foregoing lease. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Documents to be signed:

- First Amendment to LDA
- Assignment and Assumption to LDA
- Ground Lease
- Notice of Ground Lease
- Affordable Housing Restriction
- Tax Credit Regulatory Agreement
- Ground Lessor Estoppel

K. Harding asked about the rental rates.

S. Lahtinen stated that the rent is based on income levels and they are based on the current HUD rates.

### **ONGOING BUSINESS/MISCELLANEOUS**

#### POLICE DEPARTMENT MUTUAL AID:

M. Banks made a motion to approve and sign the Local Mutual Aid Agreement. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

This agreement has been in place with neighboring communities and was originally executed by a former Select Board and Police Chief. This is an update to that agreement.

#### SMALL PROJECTS REQUESTS – REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION:

The board reviewed the six board/committee submittals and recommended/suggested the following:

It was suggested that all of the Gazebo repairs should be officially submitted through Capital Planning due to all of the repairs throughout the whole Gazebo that need to be made and the overall cost of it, which is over the Small Project Request limit and reaches the Capital Plan threshold. The Gazebo would be able to be repaired properly and possibly have the opportunity to upgrade the underside storage area.

It was also suggested, that in reference to the Historical Commission's request for updates to the Farmer's Co-op, that Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission address the Historical Commission's involvement, as Conservation Commission has ownership and wants to transfer the ownership to Agricultural Commission. It was agreed that the Farmer's Co-op does need a bathroom.

Select Board is still in review process and will make a determination at a future meeting

#### BUDGET AND ARTICLE REVIEW:

The draft budget documents for FY2025, including the STM and ATM Articles list, warrants and general fund budget draft. These numbers reflect both AWRSD and Monty Tech Assessments, as well as various adjustments to several department budgets as requested at the last joint meeting. This includes a reduced amount in Police and Fire expenses, reduction in the Library budget of \$13,800 per AB vote and several other smaller adjustments.

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One change has been made since the 3/18 meeting – based on feedback from Town Counsel, the Town Administrator recommends the removal of Article 22 for the Farmer's Co-op transfer of ownership. Legal transfer of ownership will trigger Article 97 legislation and a 1:1 land swap. Counsel suggests that the Conservation Commission and Agricultural Commission enter into internal agreements as it relates to the use and further utilization of the parcel.

The Select Board and Advisory Board will need to take action on the following items:

Special Town Meeting Warrant

Article 1	(unpaid bills from a prior year \$1250)	unanimously in favor
Article 2	(transfer for snow & Ice removal accts \$200,000)	unanimously in favor
Article 3	(transfer for Sewer enterprise \$50,000)	unanimously in favor
Article 4	(transfer all stabilization to Capital Equip)	unanimously in favor
Article 5	(close Stabilization funds)	unanimously in favor

Annual Town Meeting Warrant

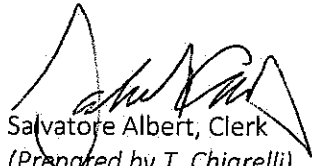
Article 1	(Select Board enter into contract MassDEP)	unanimously in favor
Article 2	(Chapter 40, Section 4)	unanimously in favor
Article 3	(Committee presentation)	unanimously in favor
Article 4	(Spending limits Revolving fund)	unanimously in favor
Article 5	(Fulltime Asst Health Agent)	unanimously in favor
Article 6	(enact special legislation change to Town Clerk to appt)	unanimously in favor
Article 7	(Budget)	unanimously in favor
Article 8	(transfer funds to operate Sewer enterprise)	unanimously in favor
Article 9	(transfer funds to operate Water enterprise)	unanimously in favor
Article 10	(transfer funds to operate Solid Waste enterprise)	unanimously in favor
Article 11	(transfer avail funds to Cultural, Con Comm, AG Comm)	unanimously in favor
Article 12	(transfer portion of funds consultant real/property assessmnt)	unanimously in favor
Article 13	(trnsfer free cash to reduce FY25 tax rates)	unanimously in favor
Article 14	(transfer avail funds to iPads for Planning board)	2 to 1 in favor
Article 15	(transfer from Amb receipts for Paramedic training)	unanimously in favor
Article 16	(transfer avail funds software upgrade for Assessor)	unanimously in favor
Article 17	(transfer funds to plow for Cemetery)	unanimously in favor
Article 18	(transfer funds for Capital Equip/projects)	unanimously in favor
Article 19	(trnsfer/borrow funds for replacemnt a smaller fire engine)	unanimously in favor
Article 20	(trnsfer/borrow funds for replacemnt a smaller fire water tank)	unanimously in favor
Article 21	(transfer free cash for Building/Maintenance fund)	unanimously in favor
Article 22	(transfer free cash for Small initiatives Projects)	unanimously in favor – <i>but agreed, should be moved to STM warrant</i>

**ADJOURNMENT:**

M. Banks made a motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM

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Salvatore Albert, Clerk  
(Prepared by T. Chiarelli)

**EXHIBITS:**

- Town Administrator's Report
- Warrant (1)
- March 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Senior Residences Project Documents (8)
- Police Dept Mutual Aid Agreement
- Small Projects Requests (6)
- Draft STM Articles & ATM Articles