

**Proceedings of the Annual Town Meeting  
May 2, 2017**

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, the legal voters of the Town of Ashburnham met at Oakmont Regional High School Auditorium, 9 Oakmont Drive, Ashburnham on May 2, 2017. Newly elected Moderator Keith Glenny presided at the meeting which was called to order at 7 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. A moment of silence for those deceased members of our town, state and country was observed. The new Moderator introduced himself thanking Ron Reed for his years of service as Moderator. The new Town Administrator Heather Budrewicz was introduced as was Mary Calandrella, Executive Assistant. Also introduced were the Board of Selectman, the Advisory Board members, the School Committee members, Superintendent of Schools and the Business Manager. Retired Town Clerk Linda Ramsdell performed the duties of Town Clerk due to the absence of our current Town Clerk Michelle Johnson.

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

**ARTICLE 1:** To accept the reports of several town officers and all outstanding committees, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Board of Selectmen)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: --

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *Annual article to accept the reports of Town officials and boards.*

**Article 1 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 2:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize a PILOT payment based on the annual kilowatt sales of the Light Department multiplied by a per kilowatt value from the Municipal Light Plant Funds, to the town treasury, as authorized by its Light Board in accordance with Chapter 164 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Municipal Light Department)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *The PILOT agreement is tied to the Pilot payment in the annual kilowatt sales of the light department multiplied by a per kilowatt value. This was put in place for FY13 to ease the calculation and establish a standard process for future years. In FY18 it is estimated we will receive \$67,637.*

**Article 2 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 3:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of the revenue of the financial year beginning July 1, 2017, in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 4, and to issue a note or notes as may be given for a period of less than one year in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 17, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Treasurer)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *Allows the Treasurer to temporarily borrow operating funds for the Town to ensure payments are done in a timely manner. The Treasurer can only borrow that amount which is expected to be received.*

**Article 3 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into a contract or contracts with the Massachusetts Highway Department for the construction and maintenance of town roads in conformance with the Massachusetts General Laws, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *This article allows the Town Administrator to contract with the State to do road repairs in Ashburnham.*

**Article 4 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 5:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate all funds which become available in the Fiscal Year 2018 from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Highways, Chapter 90 Bond Issue proceeds, to be used by the DPW for the repair and maintenance of town roads in conformance with Massachusetts General Laws, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *This annual article allows the Town to expend its Chapter 90 state funds. For fiscal year 2018 the amount of those funds is estimated to be \$348,003.*

**Article 5 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 6:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the transfer of trust fund income not to exceed \$2,500 from the Cushing Academy Trust Fund to pay for the fiscal year 2018 secondary school expenses, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *This is the transfer of funds (interest) from the Cushing Academy Trust fund (\$116,000). When the Town students were removed from Cushing Academy it was required to deposit \$114,000 into the Town's funds and the interest earned on these monies were to be used to offset the cost to the Town for secondary education in public schools.*

**Article 6 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 7:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$25,873 from special assessments Title V Receipts Account (septic system loan program) to pay principal and interest due on notes payable to the Water Pollution Abatement Trust, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *The Town established a Septic System Loan Program where the cost was established as betterments. Each year charges are levied on the tax bills, and the revenue required is reserved or appropriated. We then must transfer monies required to cover the loan payment.*

**Article 7 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 8:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money not to exceed \$2,500 from the Waterways Improvement Fund for the purpose of waterway improvement, maintenance, and safety, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Ashburnham Lakes Coalition)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *The Waterways Improvement Fund is funded by a portion of the boat excise tax to be used for waterways maintenance, access, law enforcement or fire prevention. The Lakes Association has been given the charge of recommending the use of these monies to the Board of Selectmen who then approve or disapprove expenditures. In the past these monies have been used for Police boat patrols, lifesaving courses, purchase of a Police boat and other water related expenditures.*

**Article 8 Voted:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was moved that articles **1 through 8** be approved by consent.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2017 and to set the salaries of elected officials; or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Board)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: **(\$0.18)**

<b>LINE</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>FY16 Actual</b>	<b>FY17 Budget</b>	<b>FY18 Recommend</b>
1	Moderator		100	100
2	Board of Selectmen	6,616	6,935	6,957
3	Town Administrator	172,750	187,667	169,645
4	Advisory Board	50,176	50,500	50,500
5	Town Accountant	66,443	67,660	63,251
6	Board of Assessors	108,053	111,500	111,300
7	Treasurer/Collector	-	-	152,749
8	Treasurer	110,177	122,078	
9	Tax Collector	63,819	68,383	
10	Town Clerk	52,117	57,502	51,939
11	Land Use	31,812	41,567	127,557
12	Town Hall	42,940	44,315	45,800
13	Town Buildings	137,364	154,733	153,375
14	Non-Departmental	80,732	90,681	112,791
15	IT Expense	178,027	209,666	199,317
16	Police	1,172,600	1,273,736	1,339,972
17	JRO	-	35,000	-
18	Fire	630,734	638,566	744,271
19	Emergency Dispatch	238,510	287,119	285,408
20	Inspections	97,941	91,097	-
21	Animal Control	29,000	33,850	31,000

LINE	DEPARTMENT	FY13 SPENT	FY14 BUDGET	FY15 RECOMMEND
22	Monty Tech	462,389	445,572	450,636
23	Ash-Wes Reg. School District	6,552,760	6,727,170	6,912,170
24	Highway	735,365	718,483	733,277
25	Snow & Ice	208,370	220,000	220,000
26	Board of Health	43,607	23,719	20,368
27	Conservation Commission	25,049	30,181	25,810
28	Council on Aging	17,594	25,448	26,490
29	Veterans' Services	68,129	75,688	74,834
30	Agricultural Commission	-	300	300
31	Parks & Recreation Committee	19,900	20,550	20,490
32	Library	208,058	226,207	210,873
33	Historical Commission	-	2,000	2,000
34	Debt Service	2,001,334	1,943,085	1,884,834
35	Employee Benefits & Insurance	1,083,435	1,226,872	1,367,981
		<b>14,695,801</b>	<b>15,257,930</b>	<b>15,595,933</b>

Setting of Elected Salaries under Article 9:

- a. Town Moderator: \$100
- b. Board of Selectmen: Chairman - \$1,300; Clerk - \$1,100; Member - \$1,100

**Brief Explanation:** *Annual operating budget article as noted above is an increase of 1.80% over FY17. The revenues to offset the cost of the proposed budget come from the following sources:*

REVENUE	FY18
<b>Property Tax Levy</b>	
Prior Yr Levy Limit	\$ 11,131,299
2.5% Increase	\$ 278,282
New Growth	\$ 100,000
Prop 2 1/2 Override	\$ -
Debt Svc. Override -School	\$ 1,369,003
Debt Svc. Override -Municipal	\$ 595,520
<b>less overlay</b>	\$ (95,000)
<b>LEVY SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 13,379,104</b>
	<b>FY18</b>
<b>Other Revenue</b>	
State Aid	\$ 896,693
Local Receipts -	\$ 1,736,600
Other Revenue	\$ 371,845
<b>OTHER SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,005,138</b>
<b>REVENUE TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 16,384,242</b>

**ARTICLE 9 VOTED:** On motion of Ron Putnam, it was voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,595,993 for the Departments and purposes noted in the warrant and to set the salary for all Elected Officials as printed in the warrant.

Majority Voice "YES"

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**ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money up to \$629,733 for the operating budget of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District, to be added to the sum voted under Article 9 for said operating budget, provided that no funds shall be expended and no bonds shall be issued unless the Town has first voted at an election to exempt this expenditure from the provisions of Proposition 2½, so called, and further provided that the Town of Westminster also votes to approve and fund its proportional share of such additional appropriations, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Board of Selectmen)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: \$.87

**Brief Explanation:** *This article, if passed with a subsequent ballot question, will add monies to the AWRSD budget to support their assessment request.*

**ARTICLE 10 VOTED:** On motion of Dave Christianson, it was voted to raise and appropriate \$629,733 for the operating budget of the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District, to be added to the sum voted under Article 9 for said operating budget, provided that no funds shall be expended and no bonds shall be issued unless the Town has first voted at an election to exempt this expenditure from the provisions of Proposition 2½, so called, and further provided that the Town of Westminster also votes to approve and fund its proportional share of such additional appropriations.

Majority Voice "YES"

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**ARTICLE 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money to operate the Water Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *The FY18 expenses increased by 3.85% and adequately represent direct expenses to the Enterprise Fund. Rates will be set by the Water/Sewer commission in the upcoming weeks. We will likely seek the assistance of an outside consultant to conduct a formal rate study.*

**ARTICLE 11 VOTED:** On motion of Ron Putnam, it was voted to appropriate the sum of \$774,641 to operate the Water Department for the fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2017, as set forth in the Advisory Board recommendation:

Salaries	\$190,153.80
Expense	\$163,003
Water Filtration Plant	\$159,000
<u>Debt Service</u>	<u>\$262,485</u>
	\$774,641

Majority Voice "YES"

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**ARTICLE 12:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of money to operate the Sewer Department for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *The FY18 expenses increased by 4.66% and adequately represents direct expenses to the Enterprise Fund. Beginning mid-FY17, an additional \$30k annual expense for bioxide additive to the pump station. Rates will be set by the Water/Sewer commission in the upcoming weeks. We will likely seek the assistance of an outside consultant to conduct a formal rate study.*

**ARTICLE 12 VOTED:** On motion of Ron Putnam, it was voted to appropriate the sum of \$889,959 to operate the Sewer Department for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017, as set forth in the Advisory Board recommendation:

Salaries	\$140,472
Expenses	\$155,602
Service Charges Gardner	\$315,125
<u>Debt Service</u>	<u>\$278,760</u>
	\$889,959

Majority Voice "YES"

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**ARTICLE 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or appropriate by transfer from available funds the sum of \$422,278 to fund the recommendation of the Capital Planning Committee to include the following:

Line	Item	Amount
1	Trackless Snow Plow	\$ 146,250
2	Fire Truck Pumper-Tanker (three year lease to purchase)	\$ 190,000
3	Road Repair – adds to Chapter 90 funding	\$62,028
4	Police Cruiser Car #6 – replaces 2013 cruiser	\$44,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$422,278</b>

and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a lease with an option to purchase for a term of three years for the fire truck pumper-tanker (Item #2), and to sell, trade in or dispose of any equipment being replaced, or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: YES

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *The Capital Planning Committee has developed a sustainable capital plan that can be funded within the raise and appropriated tax levy. This year's plan includes spending \$422,278. Revenue to offset costs for this article will come from Local Receipts. The Capital Planning Committee will convene this summer to review and update the capital planning, including the potential additional of regional school capital projects.*

**ARTICLE 13 VOTED:** On motion of Jamie Piedrafite, it was voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$422,278 to fund the recommendation of the Capital Planning Committee to include the following:

Line	Item	Amount
1	Trackless Snow Plow	\$ 146,250
2	Fire Truck Pumper-Tanker (three year lease to purchase)	\$ 190,000
3	Road Repair – adds to Chapter 90 funding	\$62,028
4	Police Cruiser Car #6 – replaces 2013 cruiser	\$44,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$422,278</b>

Unanimous “YES”

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**ARTICLE 14:** To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c.40, § 13E and authorize the Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District to establish a reserve fund for unanticipated or unbudgeted costs of special education, out-of-district tuition or transportation, in accordance with the provisions thereof or act in relation thereto. (*Requested by the AWRSD School Committee*).

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *Under the Acts of 2016, c. 218, § 24, the legislature added a new section to Chapter 40 of the General Laws permitting school districts that accept the statute to establish a reserve fund, out -of -district tuition or transportation from year to year going forward. Once approved by both Towns, the AWRSD will be able to put money in and take money out of this account for these purposes through a School Committee vote, and a majority vote of the selectmen in both towns.*

**ARTICLE 14 VOTED:** On motion of Dave Christianson, it was voted to accept the provisions of G.L. c.40, § 13E and authorize the Ashburnham Westminster Regional School District to establish a reserve fund for unanticipated or unbudgeted costs of special education, out-of-district tuition or transportation, in accordance with the provisions thereof.

Unanimous “YES”

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**ARTICLE 15:** To see if the town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 44, § 53F 3/4, and establish a special revenue fund known as the “PEG Access and Cable Related Fund” to reserve cable franchise fees and other cable-related revenue for appropriation to support PEG access services, oversight and renewal of the cable franchise agreement, the fund to commence operation for fiscal year 2018, which begins on July 1, 2017, and to transfer a sum of money to the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund or act in relation thereto. (Requested by the Town Administrator)

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: --

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: --



**Brief Explanation:** *The purpose of this article is to keep revenue for purposes of cable access—need to create Special Revenue Fund for that purpose—otherwise funds will roll into General Ledger and there would be no funds for cable access TV.*

**Article 15 Voted:** On motion of Leo Janssens, it was voted to accept the provisions of G.L. c. 44, § 53F 3/4, and establish a special revenue fund known as the “PEG Access and Cable Related Fund” to reserve cable franchise fees and other cable-related revenue for appropriation to support PEG access services, oversight and renewal of the cable franchise agreement, the fund to commence operation for fiscal year 2018, which begins on July 1, 2017, and to transfer the sum of \$28,170.62 along with any additional income from FY17 from Cable Fees Special Revenue to the PEG Access and Cable Special Revenue Account.

Unanimous “YES”

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**ARTICLE 16:** To see if the Town of Ashburnham will continue to appropriate their usual funding for the Ashburnham Senior Center to continue operating at the Town Hall located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 32 Main St. Ashburnham, MA 01430. *(Requested by Citizen’s Petition)*

SELECTMEN                      ADVISORY BD.                      CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.                      TAX RATE  
RECOMMEND: --                      RECOMMEND: --                      RECOMMEND: --                      IMPACT: --

**Brief Explanation:** *(Citizen Petition)*

**ARTICLE 16 VOTED:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was voted to PASS OVER this article.

Unanimous “YES”

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**ARTICLE 17:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the Capital Stabilization Account to pay the remaining balance of the town’s IT contract , or act in relation thereto. *(Requested by the Town Administrator)*

SELECTMEN                      ADVISORY BD.                      CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.                      TAX RATE  
RECOMMEND: YES                      RECOMMEND: YES                      RECOMMEND: YES                      IMPACT: N/A

**Brief Explanation:** *This transfer will allow the town to pay the balance of its 3 year contact with Guardian (approximately \$70,119k for completed infrastructure improvements) and remove this expense from the annual operating budget, freeing up approximately \$30k going forward.*

<u>Hardware</u>	<u>Contract Date</u>	<u>Exp of Contract</u>	<u>FY18 Balance</u>	<u>Contract Total</u>
Town Server	Sep 2016	9/30/2019	\$28,094	\$63,211
Town Hall Computers: 3 Desktops 1 Laptop	Jun 2018	6/30/2018	\$2,602	\$2,603
Police Department Computers: 3 Desktops	Dec 2015	12/31/2018	\$1,845	\$2,768
DPW Computer: 1 Desktop	Dec 2016	12/31/2019	\$615	\$1,538
			<b>\$33,156</b>	<b>\$70,119</b>

**ARTICLE 17 VOTED:** On motion of Kyle Johnson, it was voted to transfer \$70,119 from the Capital Improvement Account to pay the remaining balance of the Town's IT infrastructure contract purchases.

Unanimous "YES"

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**ARTICLE 18:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the Capital Stabilization Account for security upgrades at the JR Briggs School including but not limited to the purchase and installation of new security software, 10 additional security cameras and 5 Door Access Panels or act in relation thereto. (Requested by the Town Administrator)

SELECTMEN  
RECOMMEND: YES

ADVISORY BD.  
RECOMMEND: YES

CAPITAL PLAN. COMM.  
RECOMMEND: YES

TAX RATE  
IMPACT: N/A

***Brief Explanation: Ashburnham Dispatch has no current access to view the security feed at the JR Briggs School at this time without a security software upgrade at JR Briggs—Dispatch can see the other schools security feeds. This article will also allow for the purchase of 10 additional security cameras and 5 additional Door Access Panels.***

**ARTICLE 18 VOTED:** On motion of John Mulhall, it was voted to transfer the sum of \$15,500 from the Capital Improvement Account for security upgrades at the JR Briggs School including but not limited to the purchase and installation of new security software, 10 additional security cameras and 5 Door Access Panels.

Unanimous "YES"

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda A. Ramsdell  
Temporary Town Clerk