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Present: Laila J. Michaud, Joseph E. Flanagan, and Wayne R. Walker

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Michaud called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen’s Office at Town Hall. She announced that the meeting was being broadcast live and recorded by Ashburnham Westminster Community Access TV. She also announced that she had been notified of an audio recording of the meeting being taken by Kerry O’Brien of the Gardner News.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

●Candidates Night will be held at the Forbush Memorial Library on Wednesday, April 4, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

●Lieutenant Colonel, Thomas E. Maeder, United States Army, AAFES Military Operations Officer-in-Charge, Afghanistan sent the following: To the Selectmen of Westminster – The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) Main Exchange located on Bagram Airfield was recently remodeled. The enclosed flag was mounted on the wall of the Exchange for over a year, under the watchful eyes of its patrons; the uniformed members of the United State of America, our NATO Allies and civilian contractors all engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). May you find it fitting to raise this flag, coated with the dust of Afghanistan, and allow it to fly above Academy Hill this Memorial Day and for as long as it remains serviceable breathing the air of freedom in your blessed town. Signed this 15th Day of March, 2012 in Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

Ms. Michaud stated that the Board was very pleased to receive the flag and thanked Tom for his service.

Mr. Walker stated that the Flag would be flown at the top of Academy Hill Road this Memorial Day.

●Town Hall Employee Ellen Sheehan was chosen as this year’s recipient of the Ashburnham/Westminster Rotary Employee of the Year award. The Rotary Club will be having an awards dinner at the Wachusett Village Inn on May 9, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

Board members reviewed and approved the following warrants:

March 28, 2012	Deduction #59D	\$142,890.90
April 2, 2012	Accounts Payable #60	\$363,772.65

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LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR WEST BOYLSTON TO JOIN ETA

Ms. Michaud explained that MRPC is working with the West Boylston officials to include the town in the Northern Worcester County Economic Target Area. MRPC is requesting a letter of support from each of the towns included in the ETA.

Mr. Flanagan moved that the Board vote to waive the requirement under our new policy for issuing letters of support and not require two meetings to make this decision. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Walker moved that the Board authorize the Chairman to sign the letter of support regarding the extension of the Northern Worcester County Economic Target Area (ETA). Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LETTER TO DHCD REGARDING CDBG ACTIVITIES

Mr. Flanagan moved that the Board authorize the Chairman to sign a letter to DHCD certifying that the Town has completed its FY11 audit and there were no findings concerning CDBG activities. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FORBUSH LIBRARY – FY 2013 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

Library Director Nicholas Langhart explained to the Board that the Library Trustees took another look at their budget and discovered that in order to avoid having to apply for a waiver from the State, they need a total appropriation of \$329,710 for FY 13. This is \$11,597 higher than the original submission of \$318,113.

After a lengthy discussion, the Board agreed to take this request under advisement.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT – REGIONAL AGREEMENT (CONT.)

School Committee Chairman David Christianson explained that the School Committee was trying to bring clarity to the Regional Agreement regarding the assessment method. The likelihood that allowing an option to use the alternative assessment method to remain in the agreement would continue to leave ongoing disagreement between the two towns and was precisely the kind of lack of clarity that the School Committee was hoping to eliminate.

He further stated that the School Committee agreed to leave the \$5,000 threshold for capital planning.

The Committee’s intent is to meet next Tuesday, April 10, and the goal is to approve the final amendment. Once the agreement is finalized, the School Committee will hold informational forums for the general public.

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SCHOOL DEPARTMENT – FY2013 SCHOOL BUDGET AND WARRANT ARTICLES

Ms. Michaud stated that currently, the school budget has been certified at the Superintendent’s recommended total of \$28,792,920, which places Westminster’s assessment at \$9,669,509. Westminster is inclined to level fund the additional funds line item in the school budget, which represents a 2.8% increase in operating expenses and reduces the Town’s assessment by \$745,639 (lessens the increase).

REVIEW DRAFT TOWN MEETING WARRANT

The Board reviewed a draft of the May 5 Special and Annual Town Meeting warrants.

PROPOSED BYLAW REQUIRING UTILITY COMPANIES TO TRIM TREES

Ms. Michaud indicated that Town Planner Stephen Wallace has provided a draft bylaw requiring utility companies to keep utility lines clear of branches and brush. DPW Director Josh Hall has also reviewed the draft and supports the bylaw.

The Board agreed to include this bylaw recommendation on the fall town meeting warrant.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

Mr. Flanagan moved that the Board approve a payroll authorization request for a full time Police Dispatcher. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

EARTH REMOVAL APPLICATION

The Board acknowledged receipt of an earth removal application from Robert Francis of Whitman River Dam, Inc., to remove approximately 32,500 cubic yards of fill from property located on Oakmont Avenue (4 acres) located near the bridge.

8:17 PM ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Flanagan moved that the Board adjourn. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne R. Walker, Clerk
(Prepared by B. Kazan)