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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 a video recording of the meeting being taken by another party.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

●Ms. Michaud announced the passing of Veterans’ Agent Ed Dube. Ed was the town’s Veterans’ Agent for the last seven years. He was also on the Liquor Commission and MART Advisory Board. He had previously been a part time Police Officer and served on the Council on Aging.

●Ms. Michaud also mentioned that the Town Census and Master Plan Survey would be sent out in the mail next week. She encouraged residents to fill out these documents and return them to the Town Clerk’s office.

●Ms. Michaud announced that due to personal commitments, she would not be seeking re-election. She encouraged people who are committed to the town to seriously consider running for the Board of Selectmen position.

APPROVAL OF WARRANTS/MINUTES

Mr. Walker moved that the Board approve the regular session minutes of October 24, and December 12, 2011 as printed. Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Board members reviewed and approved the following warrants:

December 19, 2011	Accounts Payable #36	\$ 151,847.99
	Payroll #37	\$ 158,649.09
December 20, 2011	Sr. Tax Work Off #37S	\$ 19,256.00
December 21, 2011	Deduction #37D	\$ 159,546.24
December 27, 2011	Accounts Payable #38	\$ 887,421.98
January 3, 2012	Accounts Payable #40	\$ 480,359.25
	Payroll #39	\$ 169,324.47
January 5, 2012	Deduction #39D	\$ 150,800.19
January 9, 2012	Accounts Payable #41	\$ 337,689.33

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BORROWING – LIBRARY BAN

Treasurer/Collector Melody Gallant was on hand to request the Board’s authorization to renew the borrowing for the Library renovation BAN.

Ms. Michaud moved that the Board approve the borrowing of the Library renovation BAN Renewal in the amount of \$196,000 with People’s United Bank at an interest rate of .80%. Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

LITTLE LEAGUE – OFFER TO DONATE LIGHTING

Vice President of the Westminster Little League Dave Worthley was on hand to request the Board’s permission to erect lighting for the major league field this spring. He explained that the Little League would provide all labor and materials for the project which is estimated at \$28,000. He requested that the Town agree to assume the annual cost for electricity estimated at \$1,300 a year. He indicated that the project would not start until all of the money needed was in place and he anticipated that the installation would be completed by May 1st.

Mr. Worthley stated that the Little League would be contracting with Page Electric and requested that the Board approve the waiver of fees for permits.

Mr. Walker moved that the Board authorize the installation of lighting on the major league field provided full funding is in place with the Little League and installer. Also that the installer be required to submit a Certificate of Liability Insurance for the duration of the installation showing the Town of Westminster as the certificate holder. Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion.

Mr. Walker amended the motion to include waiving the local permit fees. Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CROCKER POND COMMITTEE - STATUS REPORT

Chairman Joe Macchia stated that they had submitted a Notice of Intent to the Conservation Commission and DEP as well as notifications to all abutters. The Committee is scheduled to meet with Con Com on January 25 to discuss the NOI for the bridge crossings for bike trails at Crocker Pond. Con Com will render a decision. There is a 10 day appeal process. If appealed it will go to DEP for a decision.

Mr. Macchia stated that the status of the bike trails is on hold due to the Notice of Intent. The bike trails have been blocked off between the two streams. He said that some of the bridges have been fabricated but are not in use or on the trails but have been stored off to the sides of the trails.

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Mr. Flanagan stated that he understood that the mountain bikers would be paying for costs incurred for the biking trails. He asked what the costs are going forward. Mr. Macchia replied that the CPC was always in charge of the project and that Don Seifert and the mountain bikers we working just like any other set of volunteers. It was never a project where CPC had an outside organization being responsible for an outside strip of land. The Committee has never given up the responsibility for one square inch of the facility. He further stated that CPC would be responsible for maintaining the bike trails and all grounds at Crocker Pond.

Mr. Macchia stated that the bikers will be responsible for paying for the costs incurred for the biking trails. Once this project is complete, CPC will be responsible for the maintenance.

Mr. Macchia mentioned that CPC are the only ones to hold a permit to maintain. He also mentioned that they had just renewed a five year application to do the maintenance around the areas of the Whitman River, the beaches, Frog Pond, Myrtle Pond and the two streams.

Mr. Flanagan asked what permit he was referring to.

Mr. Macchia replied that three years ago had to do some beach maintenance. The former Chairwoman of Con Com told CPC that they couldn't do the work without applying for permission to do the work through the Conservation Commission. CPC obtained a permit from Con Com because the work was being performed near wetlands. So, CPC put together a document which gives CPC a right to perform all maintenance on the Crocker Pond property.

Ms. Michaud confirmed with Mr. Macchia that the bikers will be responsible for building the bridges and they will be responsible for picking up the related costs. Mr. Macchia's response was that so far they have. Ms. Michaud also confirmed that the CPC will be responsible for the costs to take care of the maintenance of the property.

Mr. Macchia stated they would have to buy some emergency materials. DEP wanted CPC to have materials on hand in case of erosion – suggested bales of hay (now have) Public Works Department donated bales of hay left over from a road project. Also, have to have crushed stone on the premises to help combat erosion under the instruction of the DEP.

Ms. Michaud confirmed these requirements were verbal from the DEP and not in writing. Mr. Macchia agreed.

Mr. Taylor expressed his concern over spending money for hay and crushed stone for a project which was in a pending status. Mr. Macchia stated the hay was donated and the crushed stone has not been ordered and will not be ordered until approval. Mr. Walker stated that Conservation Commission will state was is or is not required when they make their determination.

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Donna Brownell expressed her concerns over CPC purchasing some of the materials before an NOI has been approved by the Conservation Commission.

Mr. Flanagan stated that if CPC felt they were going to need Town Counsel, they should bring it before the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Macchia response was he said to the Board if this becomes a long drawn out argumentative thing that he would surely ask for Town Counsel to help CPC out.

Ms. Michaud stated that before it gets to this point, it should go to Con Com and wait for their recommendations/conclusions and then address the issue if need be.

Ms. Michaud encouraged all parties to try to work together.

RESERVE FUND TRANSFER REQUEST – FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief MacAloney was on hand to discuss his request for a Reserve Fund transfer of \$6,000 for vehicle maintenance. He explained that this year’s unexpected costs are more than he has ever seen in prior years as Fire Chief. Specifically, Engine 1 has had unexpected repairs amounting to over \$6,000 which is half of the total vehicle maintenance budget. This followed by the Tower with \$2,000.

Mr. Flanagan moved that the Board support the Chief’s request to transfer \$6,000 from the Reserve Fund for unexpected vehicle maintenance. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

AMBULANCE ABATEMENT

Mr. Walker moved that the Board approve an abatement request in the amount of \$774.04 for Call #WM10791. Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

REQUEST FOR GIRL SCOUT EXHIBIT SPACE AT TOWN HALL

Library Trustee Walter Haney was on hand to explain to the Board that about two years ago the Library Trustees grappled with having private property displayed at the Library. He further explained the Library created a policy under the advisement of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners of not accepting private property for display.

Jean Popik from the Montachusett Girl Scouts explained that they have an extensive program in place in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouting on how scouting grew within Westminster. The celebration will start in March, 2012 and end in February 2013.

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Town Clerk Denise MacAloney stated that she had been contacted about a request to use the Town Hall for the display. Although it could be displayed at Town Hall she did not feel that the property would be secure. She further questioned why the Library would not accommodate the Girl Scout’s request.

Ms. Michaud asked Mr. Haney if the Library Trustees would reconsider changing their policy.

Library Trustee Robert Hynes mentioned that the Trustees are having a meeting on January 12th and would reconsider a change in the policy.

2012 ANNUAL LICENSE RENEWALS

Mr. Flanagan moved that the Board approve 2012 Common Victualler licenses for the VFW Grill and Westminster Café. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FY2013BUDGET – NONUNION COLA

Mr. Walker stated that the Personnel Board recommends a 2-1/2% COLA for nonunion personnel. He further explained that over the last three years nonunion personnel have received 0%, 0% and 1%. The year before the nonunion personnel received 2-1/2% while union personnel received 3%.

Mr. Flanagan moved that the Board support the Personnel Board’s recommendation to implement a 2-1/2% Cost of Living increase for nonunion personnel for FY 13. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

UPDATE – 46 CARTER ROAD TREE

Ms. Michaud stated that the National Grid Representative will be meeting with someone from Verizon to determine whether or not a different configuration is possible to avoid the tree.

UPDATE – 39 CARTER ROAD

Mrs. Murphy stated that Mr. Longley has not submitted an updated plan as requested by the Board.

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7:22 P.M. - EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Michaud moved that the Board enter into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining; further, that the Chair declare that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Town, and that the Board adjourn directly from executive session. Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned from executive session at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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