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Present: Wayne R. Walker, Heather M. Billings, and John F. Fairbanks

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Walker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Selectmen’s Office at Town Hall. He announced that the meeting was being recorded by Ashburnham Westminster Community Access TV.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Master Plan Committee will host a workshop on what our Town Center could look like in the future. The workshop will be held at the Forbush Memorial Library on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 1 pm. (Snow date of April 19<sup>th</sup> – check the Town’s website). The workshop will start with a presentation, then a walking tour of the Town Center along Main Street returning to the Library to conclude with a discussion about what people want our Town Center to look like in the future. Information can also be viewed on the Town’s website at [www.westminster-ma.gov](http://www.westminster-ma.gov)

APPROVED MINUTES/WARRANTS

Mr. Fairbanks moved that the Board approve the minutes of March 24, 2014 as printed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Board members reviewed and approved the following warrants:

March 26, 2014	Deduction #57D	\$ 146,673.08
	Accounts Payable #59	\$ 64,048.61

ACCOUNTING SERVICES CONTRACT EXTENSION

Town Administrator Karen Murphy stated that after meeting with the Treasurer/Collector and reviewing the services that are being provided by Ms. Costello, they both felt she has done an exceptional job.

Mr. Fairbanks moved that the Board extend the Town’s contract with Julie Costello for Accounting Services through December 31, 2014. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

REVIEW TOWN MEETING ARTICLES AND FY15 BUDGETS

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Mr. Walker mentioned that the School Department’s Excess and Deficiency (E & D) account was certified by the State. The Department of Revenue indicated that the E & D was in excess of the amount allowed (5% of the operating budget), so the school was required to

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refund the two Towns the excess amount. Mr. Walker asked the Committee to explain how they intend on using the E & D excess money (A balance of \$1.4M.).

Dr. Hicks explained that the vast majority of the money (approximately \$800,000) will be used toward the FY15 assessment which will allow for no layoffs of staff. It will also allow for a part time Physical Education Teacher at Oakmont, two additional Vice-Principals and a Curriculum Coordinator.

Dr. Hicks also mentioned there is a capital appropriation of \$186,295 for next year. This will leave the E & D account right around \$100,000.

Mr. Walker mentioned that the available excess E & D FY14 money was being requested to be used to create positions for FY15 which have not been vetted by Town Meeting. Looking at the trend of E & D, it is trending downward which means these new positions are going to be funded by one-time reoccurring revenue. He asked if Dr. Hicks could assure the Board that the School budget will not be inordinately increasing in subsequent years for these expenditures which are being funded by one-time reoccurring revenue.

Dr. Hicks stated that he could assure the Board was that they would be as frugal as they can with what they spend and attempt to save as much money as they can throughout the coming year. Also, at some point, the state has to kick in more money. The state is presently giving the schools \$25 per student. There is a possibility that regional transportation will increase but at this point is not set in stone. He won't know until sometime in May.

Dr. Hicks stated that he also has sustainability concerns, which he has conveyed to the School Committee. The Committee, however, feels very strongly that they need the Curriculum Coordinator and Vice Principals.

Ms. Billings asked if there would be any benefit to funding the Curriculum Coordinator position for only one year. Dr. Hicks stated that he will take whatever he can get. School Committee member Jeff Boudreau clarified that all proposed positions are restored positions, with the exception of the Curriculum Coordinator (which they had fifteen years ago).

Mr. Walker asked what was the amount of additional money the School is looking to cover capital expenditures for this current year. Dr. Hicks stated they were looking for money to cover security equipment for WES and Meetinghouse Schools. They are asking for \$40,469.

Mr. Walker asked why they didn't see this article at last year's Annual Town Meeting. Dr. Hicks wanted to make sure he did it right and worked with both town's Police and Fire Departments before making any requests.

Mr. Walker requested that the School work significantly closer with the Town's Capital Planning Committee in future years to come up with a five year capital plan for the schools. Dr. Hicks agreed.

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Mr. Fairbanks mentioned that he would like to see the School Committee have a five year facilities maintenance capital plan which may require hiring a professional. Dr. Hicks agreed.

Dr. Hicks stated that he will bring his comments to the School Committee’s next meeting.

**PARKS & RECREATION**

Parks & Recreation Commission Chairman Andy Sears was on hand to answer questions regarding his proposed FY 15 budget and articles. After a lengthy discussion, it was mutually agreed to reduce the article to fund bleachers and team benches for the Lacrosse field, and just fund the benches for \$2,000. It was also agreed to fund approximately 63% (Westminster Youth) of the \$9,500 article request for janitorial coverage for the youth basketball programs. Mrs. Murphy was asked to contact Doug Briggs, Ashburnham Administrator to request they cover Ashburnham’s portion of the other 37% (Ashburnham Youth) of the \$9,500.

The Board further indicated that they felt strongly that moving forward this cost should be incorporated into the School’s budget and no longer be funded as a Town article.

**LIBRARY**

Library Director Nick Langhart and Library Trustees Walter Haney and Leola Leger were on hand to discuss their proposed FY15 budget. Walter Haney stated that there were three reasons why the Library budget was slightly above the recommended increase; 1) Trustees were trying to get the Director’s salary in line with other Library Directors, 2) An increase in programming, 3) Increase 4 hours in staffing time per week to allow for the necessary coverage.

After a lengthy discussion, the Trustees agreed to take another look at their budget.

**BOS MEETING CHANGE**

The Board agreed to cancel their meeting scheduled for Monday, June 9<sup>th</sup> due to scheduling conflicts and reschedule the meeting for Monday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**8:45 P.M. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Fairbanks moved that the Board adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

John F. Fairbanks, Clerk  
(Prepared by B. Kazan)