

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

J. Fairbanks called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in room 205 of the Town Hall. He announced that the meeting was being recorded by Ashburnham/Westminster Community Access TV.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

John Fairbanks stated that this Sunday August 9<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am-5:00pm, the Annual Town Benefit will be taking place on Academy Hill.

**CABLE CONTRACT UPDATE**

Comcast Representative Ben Pearlman and Special Counsel Bill Solomon attended this evening's meeting of the Board of Selectmen to present additional information to the Board regarding the cable contract and more specifically, the possibility of bringing service to Bragg Hill, West Princeton and Bolton Road residents.

B. Pearlman indicated that following the last meeting, he met with Comcast and they determined the cost of wiring cable access to those homes at approximately \$220,000; he stated that Comcast was willing to contribute \$60,000 towards this installation and it would be up to either the town or the residents to cover the remainder. B. Pearlman also indicated that this amount does not include homes that are located more than the distance from the roadway specified in the contract; these nonstandard installations would be an additional cost to the residents depending on how offset their property is from the street. B. Pearlman indicated that he was willing to do the research to find out what houses along those roadways are nonstandard installations.

Discussion continued between the Board, Mr. Pearlman and Mr. Solomon. The Board indicated that they would like to see Comcast contribute more than \$60,000 to the extension of service to these areas. The Board stated that once we receive a rough estimate of the cost of installation for each location, the town will survey these residents to see who would be willing to sign on for Comcast service, knowing the amount they will have to contribute to the installation.

J. Fairbanks indicated that the Cable Advisory Committee will continue negotiating with Comcast to move this situation forward.

**APPROVALS**

MINUTES

The minutes of July 20, 2015 will be approved at the next meeting.

WARRANTS

W. Walker made a motion to approve the following warrants.

Accounts Payable 16-04A	\$1,174,165.21
Payroll 16-04B	\$179,767.86
Deduction 16-04C	\$168,546.91
Accounts Payable 16-05A	\$148,643.91

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

PAYROLL AUTHORIZATION – PART TIME POLICE OFFICER

W. Walker made a motion to authorize the appointment of Nicholas Aveni as a part-time police officer. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

9-1-1 TRAINING GRANT APPLICATION

W. Walker made a motion to approve the grant application, in the amount of \$10,000 for FY2016 Dispatcher Training. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

REQUEST TO CONDUCT TOUR OF SENIOR CENTER

Laila Michaud requested permission from the Board of Selectmen to conduct a tour of the Westminster Senior/Community Center on Saturday October 3<sup>rd</sup> from 12:00-1:00 p.m. prior to the Oakmont Class of 1963 Reunion. L. Michaud would be responsible for opening and closing the building and show her classmates around the new facility.

H. Billings indicated that she would be more comfortable approving this if there were policies and procedures in place for the use of the building. The Board requested that the Senior Community Center Building Use Committee return at the August 24<sup>th</sup> meeting with their proposed recommendations and at that time the Board will make a decision regarding her request to conduct a tour.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR REQUEST TO WAIVE BUILDING PERMIT FEE FOR SIGN

W. Walker made a motion to approve the waiving of the Sign Permit Fee for the installation of the new signage at Forbush Memorial Library. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**NEW BUSINESS**

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Connor Robichaud, an intern from UMass presented his report and recommendation for a Government Study/Town Charter committee. C. Robichaud presented the two options for the formation of a Charter Committee; a Home Rule Charter or a Special Act Charter. He indicated that he interviewed several town employees and Board members as well as members of Hubbardston's Town Charter Committee to get a better understanding of the best way to start this process.

C. Robichaud recommended that the town form a Special Act Charter Committee, which would help to get the process underway more quickly. This committee would consist of individuals appointed by the Selectmen.

The Board asked if the membership of the committee should limit the amount of town employees able to serve on it.

C. Robichaud indicated that the committee should consist of mostly residents that are motivated and committed to seeing this through, as well as a small number of town employees.

J. Fairbanks stated that this item will be discussed at the next meeting to move forward on the formation of a Charter Committee.

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON EXPANSION OF MART SERVICES

Stephanie Lahtinen, Executive Assistant, presented her report regarding the expansion of MART services to Westminster. S. Lahtinen discussed that the town already pays an annual MBTA assessment for its proximity to the commuter rail, and recently the town was informed by MART that these funds could be used to offset the cost of additional public transportation options. The



first option is adding another Council on Aging van for use, managed by the Senior Center. The second option would be to add Westminster to MART's fixed route bus service. With this service, the town would be included in the bus routes, including five stops in town throughout the day. Additionally, Westminster would be eligible to take advantage of their ADA/Paratransit services for the disabled community.

S. Lahtinen recommended, based on the research conducted, that it would be more beneficial for the town to get a fixed route bus service than an additional van, due to the cost as well as the amount of residents it would be able to serve.

The Board discussed the options presented, as well as the recommendation and indicated that they would like more information regarding parking, usage and also the opinions of the residents that had expressed interest at prior meetings. This will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

#### SCHEDULE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

W. Walker made a motion to hold a Special Town Meeting on Tuesday September 29, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at the Westminster Elementary School. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### ENERGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE – NET METERING AGREEMENT

Doug Hurley returned to the Board with the information that the solar developers looking to contract with the town would not be able to hold their pricing until the November Town Meeting, and would most likely have already sold them to another party by that time.

The Board asked D. Hurley if this was taken to vote at the September 29<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting, would the developers be able to hold the price until that time. The Selectmen all indicated that they were not comfortable entering the town into a 20 year contract without a Town Meeting vote to do so.

D. Hurley indicated that he would gather this information and return at the next Board meeting.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

W. Walker moved that the board enter Executive Session at 7:45 p.m. to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. H. Billings seconded the motion. Mr. Walker indicated that the meeting would adjourn directly following Executive Session. The motion was passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned directly from executive session at 8:30 p.m.



Heather M. Billings  
Clerk  
(Prepared by S. Lahtinen)