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

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Billings 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 video recorded by Ashburnham Westminster Community Access TV, and audio recorded by The Gardner News.

APPROVED WARRANTS/MINUTES

Mr. Walker moved that the Board approve the minutes of January 5, 2015 as printed. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Board members reviewed and approved the following warrants:

January 13, 2015	Deduction #30C	\$ 1,893.86
January 14, 2015	Payroll #30B	\$ 167,212.04
January 15, 2015	Accounts Payable #30A	\$ 255,014.46
	Deduction #30C+	\$ 146,523.51
January 20, 2015	Accounts Payable #31A	\$1,011,487.69
January 26, 2015	Accounts Payable #32A	\$ 32,553.88
	Payroll #32B	\$ 169,282.01
	Deduction #32C	\$ 158,726.15
February 2, 2015	Accounts Payable #33A	\$1,163,676.30
February 10, 2015	Accounts Payable #34A	\$ 87,353.46
	Payroll #34B	\$ 202,927.88
	Deduction #34C	\$ 173,206.47

BORROWING – BACON STREET WATER MAIN PROJECT

Mr. Walker moved to approve borrowing in the amount of \$680,000 for the Bacon Street Water Main Replacement Project from UniBank at a rate of .49%, due on February 5, 2016. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT SAFETY INSPECTION FEES

Mr. Walker moved that the Board approve a reduction in the Building Department Safety Inspection fees, as follows:

- A-2 assembly use with 400 or less capacity                     Reduce from \$80 to \$60
- A-3 place of religious worship, churches, etc.                 Reduce from \$80 to \$20
- E – Day care facility   Reduce from \$80 to \$60
- R-2 multi-family (3 or more dwelling units)                 No reduction - Remain at \$80 + \$5 per unit

In addition, fees shall be waived for all municipal buildings and schools.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

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HIGHWAY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT

Mr. Walker moved that the Board vote to approve and sign the Highway Agreement, as drafted by labor counsel in accordance with the Memorandum of Agreement between the Town and the Union, signed on June 30, 2014. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

TOWN PLANNER -- ANNUAL GOALS

Town Planner Stephen Wallace was in attendance. Board members reviewed Mr. Wallace’s proposed work plan for the year. In addition to providing support to the Planning Board, Mr. Wallace will be working on the implementation of the recently completed Master Plan, assisting with the completion of a USDA Rural Development grant application for the sewer improvement project, continuing his work with the Economic Development Committee, assisting the Zoning Board with the revision of its application process, and working with the Bylaw Review Committee on recommendations for amendments to the general bylaws.

With regard to the Master Plan Implementation, it was agreed to wait until after the annual town meeting in May to form a committee for this purpose. Mr. Fairbanks stated he saw no need to wait for the formation of a Town Charter Committee and suggested that this be done right away.

Mr. Fairbanks also mentioned that the Old Town Hall Needs Assessment Committee may be requesting Mr. Wallace’s assistance in developing a strategy for the disposition or reuse of that building.

TOWN PLANNER -- PLANNING BOARD TOWN MEETING ARTICLE

Mr. Wallace explained that the Planning Board is requesting an article for the May Annual Town Meeting in the amount of \$7,000 to hire a consultant to draft a Village Center Zoning Bylaw, in accordance with recommendations contained in the Scanlan Report and included in the Town’s Master Plan.

TOWN PLANNER – WACHUSETT CORRIDOR MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Mr. Walker moved that the Board approve a Memorandum of Agreement relative to the implementation of the goals and recommendations included in the Wachusett Smart Growth Corridor Study. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

TOWN PLANNER – REVISED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Mr. Wallace presented a revised Community Development Strategy and requested that the Board prioritize the eleven recommendations in the CDS. Following discussion on the matter, Mr. Walker moved that the Board prioritize the recommendations as follows:

- 1. Sewer Capacity
- 2. Senior Housing
- 3. Upgrade and Expand the Town’s Information Technology
- 4. Develop a Plan for the Reuse of the Old Town Hall

5. Encourage New Development to “Build Green”
6. Village Zoning for Town Center
7. Modernize and Update Zoning Bylaw Table of Uses
8. Revise the Dimensional Standards for the Industrial Districts
9. Investigate Natural Resource Protection Zoning
10. Consider New Zoning Provisions to Encourage Affordable Housing
11. Prioritized Roadway and Sidewalk Improvement Programs

#### TOWN PLANNER – SAWMILL POND TAX POSSESSION PROPERTY

Mr. Wallace advised that the Town recently acquired through tax possession a parcel of property containing approximately 38 acres of water on Sawmill Pond. He recommended that the property be placed under the control of the Conservation Commission. Mrs. Murphy advised that the Conservation Commission is in favor of the recommendation. Mr. Walker moved that the Board vote to place an article on the upcoming Annual Town Meeting warrant to transfer care, custody and control of the property to the Conservation Commission. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### 911 GRANT APPLICATION

Mr. Walker moved to approve a grant application through the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security in the amount of \$21,129 for dispatch center expenses. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### APPROVE FY15 SNOW & ICE DEFICIT SPENDING

Mr. Walker moved that the Board vote to authorize expenditures in excess of available appropriations for snow and ice removal, effective immediately and expiring on June 30, 2015. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### POLICE CHIEF – REVIEW FY16 BUDGET AND ARTICLES

Chief Albert was in attendance to review his FY16 budget and article submissions. He explained that the increases in the budget are largely contractual. He is also requesting the replacement of two vehicles and the installation of a commercial grade air conditioning unit for the 911 server room at a cost of \$10,500.

In addition, the Chief is requesting a \$30,000 appropriation for the creation of a “Juvenile Specialist/School Resource Officer.” The duties of this position will be shared with officers in the Town of Ashburnham.

#### PROPOSED HEALTH INSURANCE REGULATIONS

Board members reviewed comments received from employees relative to proposed Health Insurance Regulations. The Board agreed to add a paragraph to address workers compensation absences under Section 5, and to treat such absences similar to unpaid leaves of absence with

respect to payment of health insurance premiums. The Board also agreed to add a reference noting that the Town currently contributes 50% toward retiree health insurance premiums. These changes will be incorporated in the regulations and submitted for approval at the next meeting of the full Board.

#### CLOSE WARRANT FOR ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Mr. Walker moved that the Board vote to close the warrant for the May 2, 2015 Annual Town Meeting on Monday, February 23, 2015. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### POLICY FOR TOWN MEETING PREPARATIONS

Board members reviewed a rough draft outlining procedures to follow in calling and preparing for town meetings. It was agreed to submit the draft to all town departments and boards for their review and comment.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Walker moved that the Board vote to enter into executive session for the two separate purposes of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining and to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real estate. Mr. Fairbanks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote. Ms. Billings announced that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and negotiating position of the town in both instances. It was noted that the Board would adjourn directly from executive session.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned from executive session at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wayne R. Walker

Clerk

(Prepared by K. Murphy)

**Town of Westminster**

*February 9, 2015 Board of Selectmen Meeting*

List of Exhibits Presented:

2/9/15 Agenda

2/9/2015 Town Administrator Report

1/5/2015 Meeting Minutes

Bond Anticipation Note – Water (Bacon/Elliott Street)

Executive Office of Safety and Security, Grant Application Information Package FY2015

Memo – Building Department

Update from Stephen Wallace – Town Planner Work Program

Memo – FY2015 Deficit Spending Authorization

Health Insurance Rules and Regulations, Employee Comments and Suggestions

Policy for Scheduling Annual Town Meeting