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Present: Nicholas A. Hay, John F. Fairbanks, Laila J. Michaud

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hay called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Office at Town Hall.

## APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

Board members reviewed and approved the following warrants:

February 1, 2010	Accounts Payable #46	\$ 924,383.22
	Payroll #47	\$ 163,375.49
February 2, 2010	Deduction #47D	\$ 146,598.14

#### AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION FEES

Mr. Fairbanks moved that the Board approve the Farmers' Market Annual Membership of \$75 and a per diem fee of \$4 for 2010. He also moved that the Board approve a reduced Annual Membership fee of \$50 for those vendors who attend the Vendor Training Seminar. Ms. Michaud seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### PETER NORMANDIN - LAND TAKING - 137 Main Street and 4 Leominster Street

Peter Normandin suggested that the Board consider the possibility of putting the property back on the market instead of demolishing it. Board members stated that the property on Leominster Street was an 'eyesore' and should be taken down. Selectmen Hay was concerned about contamination of the soil. Mrs. Murphy confirmed some contamination was detected and that the town would be responsible for the clean up when the property is taken.

The Board stated that they did not think it was fair to the property owners even though the state changed their minds about not having to take the property, to go back on the Town commitment which was voted at town meeting.

The Board agreed to continue to pursue the taking of these properties as previously voted, unless Town Counsel feels there is some legal reason that would prohibit the takings.

## MEETINGS POSTED ON WEBSITE

Mr. Fairbanks asked Mrs. Murphy to contact the Town Clerk to have the schedule of all meetings being held on the town's website.

#### MEMORIAL COMMITTEE POLICY

Mr. Fairbanks asked Mrs. Murphy to revise the Memorial Committee Policy to incorporate comments submitted by Betsy Hannula.

### PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Mr. Fairbanks asked Mrs. Murphy to request that the Personnel Board develop performance evaluation forms for positions of Town Coordinator, Fire Chief, Police Chief and DPW Director.

## PRESS RELEASE – FY2010 TAX RATE APPROVED

Selectmen Hay read the following press release regarding the 2010 approved tax rate:

The Department of Revenue has certified a tax rate of \$14.42 for Westminster for fiscal year 2010. This represents a rate increase of approximately 10.9% over last year's rate of \$13.00. The rate increase is offset by a corresponding decrease of 10.9% in total property values. In accordance with the Board of Selectmen's stated goal of no increase in taxes, the total amount of taxes to be raised among all combined property classifications (residential, commercial, and industrial) is the same for FY2010 as in FY2009.

It is important to note that although the total amount of taxes billed will not change, the effect on individual tax bills will vary, depending on revised assessed values. For example, a home valued at \$300,000 would have received a bill of \$3,900 at last year's rate of \$13.00. If the value of that home decreases by the town wide average of 10.9%, this year's bill will decrease slightly, to \$3,855. If the assessed value of that same home has not changed, however, this year's bill will increase to \$4,326.

Assessed values are arrived at in accordance with Department of Revenue guidelines, which prescribe a detailed analysis of arms-length sales in Westminster during the prior three calendar years. Sales are reviewed and analyzed by criteria such as style, neighborhood, age, condition and sales data. This results in differences in the changes that occur with assessed values between individual properties and between neighborhoods. Sales in one area of town may precipitate an increase in values in that neighborhood, while there may be no change, or a decrease in another neighborhood or with another style of home.

The actual real estate and personal property tax bills have been mailed. The 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter installment is due by Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter installment is due by Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Payments may be made at the Treasurer/Collector's office in person during regular business hours or may be placed in the drop box located at the front door of Town Hall or online at <a href="www.westminster-ma.gov">www.westminster-ma.gov</a>. Abatement application forms are due in the Assessor's Office by Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.

# 7:29 PM ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Fairbanks moved that the Board adjourn. Ms. Michaud seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Laila J. Michaud, Clerk (Prepared by B. Kazan)