

*Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission*

**January Meeting**

*Tuesday, January 26, 2021*

*Remote Meeting - ZOOM Webinar*

*6:00 PM*

*Meeting Minutes*

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Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12 2020 Order suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law MGL C. 30A Sec. 18 and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this public hearing of the Finance and Warrant Commission of Westwood, MA is being conducted largely by remote participation and we are not allowing in-person attendance by members of the public. Further, we have attempted to create at least 6 feet of space between all in physical attendance. The public is encouraged to join our meeting and participate fully. Members of the public attending this meeting virtually will be allowed to make comments if they wish to do so during the portions of the hearing designated for public comment. You will be queued up by the system operator and prompted when it is your turn to speak. The Chair will continue to give guidance and instructions as needed.

**JOIN ZOOM MEETING:**

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Jan 26, 2021 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Finance and Warrant Commission

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87844644099?pwd=Ynh3TjVUWGJSVHRvL2IvOHQrWTZRdz09>

Passcode: 633206

Or Telephone:

888 475 4499 (Toll Free) or 877 853 5257 (Toll Free)

Webinar ID: 878 4464 4099

<https://youtu.be/37V2Yxf6lsI>

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FinCom Chair Peter Lentz called the meeting to order at 6:01PM.

Finance and Warrant Commission member not present, Thomas Kilgarriff.

The Chair then granted permission to Westwood Media Center to live stream and record the meeting. He also asked if anyone else would like to record this meeting.

Chair Lentz made introductory comments and welcomed all participants including remote members, presenters and members of public and press to the January FinCom meeting. Ms. O'Donnell then called the ROLL.

Members were previously provided with the January agenda packet for the 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article Preview meeting. This is the first, high-level look at the 2021 Warrant. Warrant article sponsors were invited to be on hand to provide an overview of each article.

The Chair led members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

An update on recent Select Board meetings was given by the Chair.

*The Evening's Presenters:*

*-Carol Lewis - School Committee Chair, Maya Plotkin - School Building Committee Chair,*

*Emily Parks - Superintendent and members of School Committee & School Building Committee*

*-John Hickey – Chair - Select Board, Chris Coleman – Town Administrator,*

*Pam Dukeman – Assistant Town Administrator/Finance Director, Members of the Select Board,*

*Patrick Ahearn - Town Counsel*

*-Dave Atkins – Chair, Planning Board, Abby McCabe – Town Planner, Planning Board Member*

*Rob Gotti, Members of the Planning Board*

The Chair introduced the evening's first presentation from the representatives of Westwood Public Schools to discuss *Budget-13 Elementary Schools Building Project*. The presentation primarily considered two areas of discussion: the project schedule and the project budget, including recent decisions made and votes taken, at the latest School Building Project Committee meeting.

After this presentation, members asked questions and provided feedback on article Budget 13, also providing feedback on Option 3 which was adopted by the SBC. The Chair thanked Ms. Parks and her colleagues for attending and for providing so much relevant and detailed information to the Commission. A member did request that the Schools provide the answers to FinCom questions previously sent by FinCom to both the School Committee and the Select

Board after the Joint School Committee/Select Board/FinCom December 14, 2020 meeting. Ms. Parks agreed to follow-up on providing the requested answers for FinCom.

The Chair then introduced John Hickey – Chair - Select Board who provided an introduction to Select Board sponsored articles and turned the details over to Ms. Dukeman for the Finance articles Budget 1-12 for this portion of the Municipal Presentation. Ms. Dukeman then introduced Mr. Coleman next to present Select Board Articles 1-9 which are the general articles on the 2021 Warrant. After the presentation, members asked questions and provided feedback. The Chair thanked all who presented the Select Board 2021 warrant articles for attending and extended appreciation for the work currently being done. Chair Hickey reminded members that Misc. 1-4 are placeholders and could be used at a later date if needed.

The Commission then moved on to the next articles Planning Board 1-4. On hand to present them were Abby McCabe – Town Planner, Dave Atkins – Chair, Planning Board and members of the Planning Board. Ms. McCabe and Mr. Atkins explained Planning Board articles 1, 2 and 4. Then Ms. McCabe introduced Planning Board Member Rob Gotti to present *Planning Board -3 Zoning Text and Map Amendments Relative to Medical Uses*. Mr. Gotti provided an extensive presentation, explaining the history of this article which was originally initiated in previous warrants discussions. Mr. Gotti shared the considerable work that had been done since the original iteration of this article to get it ready for the current warrant cycle. Members commented on how impressed they were with the present-day work that had been done, and appreciated the substantial upgrade and update to the Medical Uses article. After the presentation, members asked questions and provided feedback. Finally, the Chair thanked Ms. McCabe and her colleagues for attending and for presenting details of the 2021 town meeting Planning Board articles.

Chair Lentz entertained questions from the public and press. Ms. O'Donnell said there were none in the queue at that time.

The Chair moved on to the “New Business” portion of the meeting, with his focus beginning with the “Assignment of Articles” discussion which he then led. He asked members to think about which articles they might be interested in writing and to share that with Ms. O'Donnell via email if they do have a preference. Mr. Lentz also suggested that he thought it might be sensible to have members who may have previously written the articles which will be needed to be repeated from the 2020 Warrant which had to ultimately be removed because of the pandemic. He asked if they might consider taking those on again for this current cycle. The Chair then went on to “Budget Process Discussion”, outlining the step by step process taken on by the Municipal and Education Sub-Committees. The Chair asked members to consider which of those articles fit into the work being done by the Sub-Committees. The Chair asked for a volunteer(s) to oversee OPEB. Members were asked to submit their names to Ms. O'Donnell if they choose to do so. He then moved to “Zoom Meeting Process Discussion” which focused on what members are thinking about how the public hearing and voting process will work, particularly for seeking input on each article by individual members and the voting process as a whole in this current Zoom world. Members brought up the issue of the importance of having public opinion heard and citizen participation as a high priority.

Also, during this portion of the meeting, a few members expressed concerns about “on-boarding” and training for new members of FinCom particularly the Sub-Committee process during their first year. The Chair expressed gratitude for the feedback and promised to reflect on this issue and address the concerns further at the next meeting. The Vice-Chair also suggested a “mentor” assignment for new members, using experienced members as a sounding-board, especially in the first year. Mr. Hertz volunteered to be a mentor to any new member and offered his services immediately for this annual town meeting cycle. New members volunteered to supply feedback and suggestions. Mr. Lentz asked members to consider what they might need and send feedback to Ms. O’Donnell.

The Chair then asked for any old business prior to adjourning. A member suggested that the last meeting minutes needed to be approved. The Chair then explained that the last meeting was a joint meeting hosted by the School Committee so they would be responsible for December 2020 meeting minutes. The member then suggested that November 2020 minutes needed to be approved. The Chair said that they would check on those minutes and add them to the February meeting agenda. A discussion continued regarding the previous approval of the October minutes and this member’s concern regarding FinCom’s approach to specifically adding his motion to the body of the minutes which was also discussed again and addressed during the November meeting.

Chair Lentz thanked members for attending and asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was offered and seconded. A ROLL CALL vote was taken.

### **Meeting Adjourned at 8:43PM**

For a complete video of the 1/26/21 FinCom meeting please see the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37V2Yxf6lsI>