

*Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission
October Meeting
Monday, October 19, 2020
Remote Meeting - ZOOM Webinar
7:30 PM
REVISED Meeting Minutes
(please see revised text in italics)*

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.

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You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Oct 19, 2020 07:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Finance and Warrant Commission

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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Webinar ID: 885 4197 8487

FinCom Chair Peter Lentz called the meeting to order at 7:29PM.

Finance and Warrant Commission members not present: Angeila Hughes.

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

Mr. Lentz announced that he had appointed member George Hertz as Vice-Chair for the 2020/2021 season.

Members thanked and congratulated Mr. Hertz.

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

The Chair then led members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Lentz then introduced new members Craig Foscaldo, George Laham and Kate Wynne. Current members also took a moment to introduce themselves and share their experience on FinCom.

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

The Chair then introduced Pam Dukeman, Assistant Town Administrator and Finance Director, this evening's Presenter to give an update and overview on town finances. Please find attached, questions from members submitted previous to the meeting. John Hickey, Chair, Select Board was also in attendance.

After Ms. Dukeman's presentation, members asked questions and provided feedback. The Chair thanked Ms. Dukeman for attending and providing so much relevant and detailed information to the Commission.

Member Peter Ittig then asked for the floor to make a motion. The motion by Mr. Ittig: *Motion of Professor Peter Ittig at the meeting of the Westwood Finance & Warrant Commission on October 19, 2020 Motion: Whereas, the Town has received substantial new revenues in recent years from the University Station development and other new construction, as well as revenue from the new taxes on hotels and meals; Further, as increases in property taxes are now much more expensive for homeowners as property taxes are no longer deductible on Federal forms for most residents due to changes in Federal tax law; And, as the pandemic has caused unemployment and severe financial difficulties for many citizens and firms in Westwood; Therefore, it is resolved by this Commission to request the Select Board to submit a budget proposal this year that holds the average increase in the property tax on homes to the lowest level possible and not more than 2½%.*

The Chair granted permission and the motion was seconded. After much discussion, a motion was made and seconded to vote on Mr. Ittig's motion. The motion did not pass with a vote of one member in favor and 13 members opposed.

Chair Lentz then asked members to discuss how they feel about the current time of 7:30 for Zoom meetings and if they might be interested in having the November and December meetings at an earlier hour. Members agreed on a 6:00PM start. Ms. O'Donnell will make arrangements and advocate for a similar start time for the December combined meeting with SB & SC.

The Chair asked members to provide suggestions for the November meeting. After some preliminary discussion on topics, the Chair asked members to send any other suggestions to Ms. O'Donnell.

Members then voted to approve the September 2020 meeting minutes. The minutes were approved via ROLL CALL vote with 10 members in favor and one abstention.

Chair Lentz thanked members for attending and for their robust participation. He commented on the importance of member discussion of all relevant issues. He then asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was offered and seconded. A ROLL CALL vote was taken.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:50PM