

AGENDA

FINANCE AND WARRANT COMMISSION DECEMBER 2023 MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, December 06, 2023

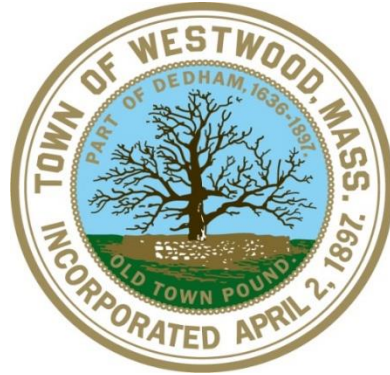
IN PERSON

Westwood Public Library – Community Meeting Room

7:00 P.M.

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- A. Call to Order at 7:00 P.M.
 - B. Grant permission to Westwood Media Center to live stream and videotape the meeting. Ask if anyone else wishes to record this meeting.
 - C. Welcome all participants including members, presenters, and members of the public and press.
 - D. Pledge of Allegiance.
 - E. **Member Roll-Call.**
 - F. Chair's Introductory Remarks –.
 - G. **Open Public Hearing Session**
 - 1. **Presenter(s):** Marianne LeBlanc Cummings [Select Board Chair], Christopher Coleman [Town Administrator], Stephanie McManus [Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director], Molly Kean [Asst. Town Administrator/HR Director], Members of the Select Board, Town Staff & Representatives from Dore and Whittier – Final Update/Comments on 2024 STM “Select Board” Warrant Articles

Select Board-1: Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding
Select Board 2: Debt Housekeeping – Fire Department Multi-Purpose Vehicle
Misc.-1: Miscellaneous Article
 - 2. Questions from Members
 - 3. Questions from Public and Press
 - 4. **Close Public Hearing Session**
 - 5. **Deliberate & Vote on 2024 STM Warrant Articles, Recommendations with Roll-Call.**
 - H. Reconvene Public Meeting
 - I. **Presenter(s):** Nora Loughnane [Director of Community & Economic Development], Elijah Romulus [Town Planner], Ellen Larkin Rollings [Planning Board Chair], Members of the Planning Board- Initial Review of Potential 2024 ATM “Planning Board” Warrant Articles
 - J. Chair's update – Article Write ups for STM 2024 Warrant Articles, Subcommittee Process Review.
 - K. Vice Chair's update -.
 - L. Other business that may properly come before the board
 - M. Old Business – Approval of 11.15.23 Minutes.
 - N. Public and Press -
 - O. Adjournment – **Roll-Call Vote.**



2024 Special Town Meeting Public Hearing

December 6, 2023

Select Board Articles

Select Board
Finance and Warrant Commission

Select Board -1: Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding (\$2,100,000)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate and/or transfer from existing funds the sum of Two Million and One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$2,100,000) to pay the costs associated with designing, preparing, and obtaining construction bid documents, for a new Fire Station (Station One), at the existing location of 637 High Street, Westwood and to renovate, refurbish and/or construct temporary quarters at 90 Deerfield Avenue, Westwood, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Fire Station Design and Bid Documents
Estimated Cost \$3.5M

Funding Breakdown

Free Cash **\$2,100,000**

- **Requires approval at the January 17, 2024, Special Town Meeting**

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds **\$1,400,000**

- **The Select Board approved the use of \$1.4M in ARPA funds at its meeting on November 13, 2023**
- **The use of ARPA funds is contingent upon Special Town Meeting approval**

Total **\$3,500,000**

Fire Station 1 Program*	Existing Area (sf)	Proposed Area (sf)	Future Growth Included (sf)
Visitor areas totals:	751	2,067	544
Administration totals:	796	3,251	400
Staff support/living/training totals:	1,412	5,332	492
Operations totals:	7,485	13,461	84
Infrastructure totals:	1,296	3,875	0
SUB TOTALS:	11,740	27,987	1,520
Circulation & Infrastructure Increase	26%	30%	30%
GROSSING FACTOR TOTALS:	3,062	8,396	456
GRAND TOTALS:	14,802	36,383**	1,976

**23 Responses to Programming Questionnaire out of 46 recipients (50% participation)*

***An additional 1,800 sf was removed during the programming process*

Fire Station Program Comparison	Fire Station 2 Existing Area (sf)	Fire Station 1 Proposed (sf)
Visitor areas totals:	210	2,067
Administration totals:	431	3,251
Staff support/living/training totals:	2,030	5,332
Operations totals:	5,054	13,461
Infrastructure totals:	1,307	3,875
SUB TOTALS:	9,032	27,987
Circulation & Infrastructure Increase	32.6%	30%
GROSSING FACTOR TOTALS:	2,946	8,396
GRAND TOTALS:	11,978	36,383

Select Board -1: Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding (\$2,100,000)



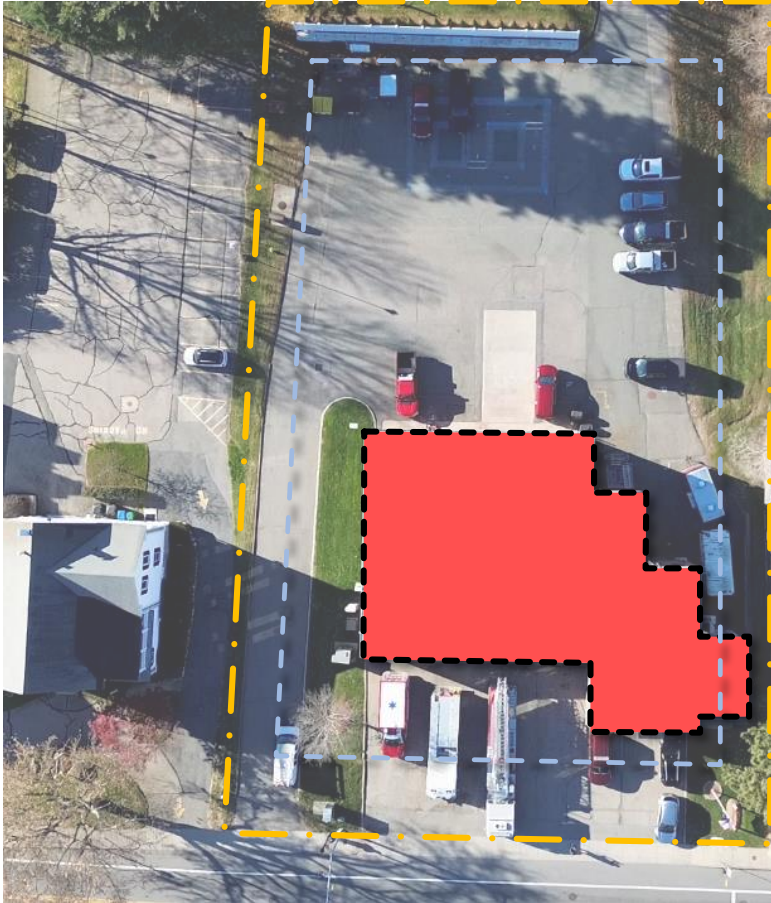
Current Fire Station One



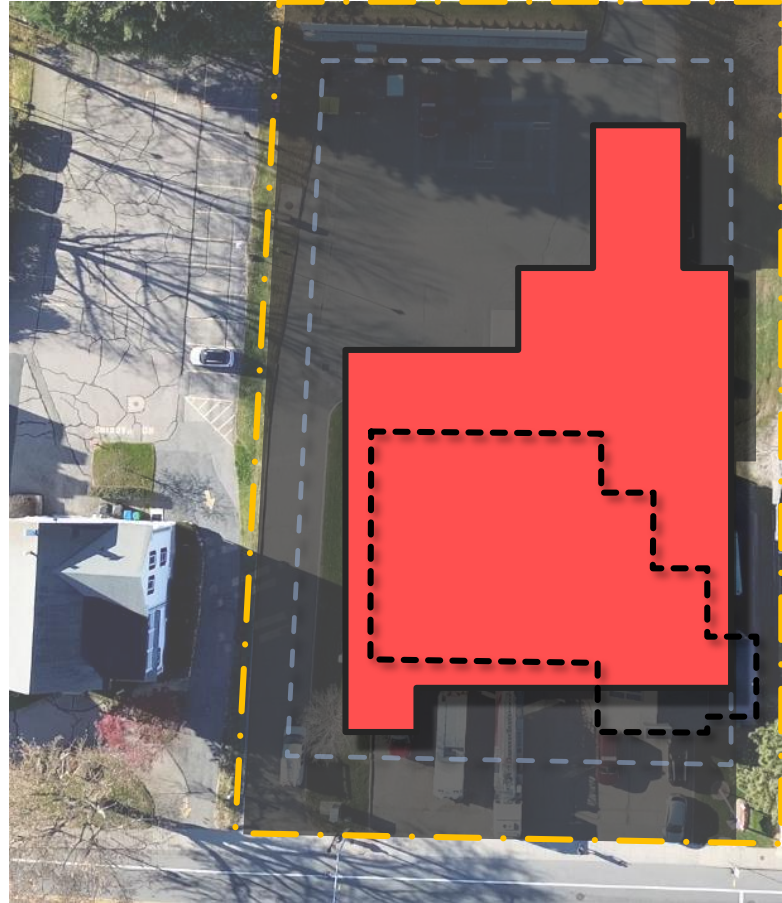
New Fire Station One **conceptual only, not final design*



Fire Station One



Existing Building



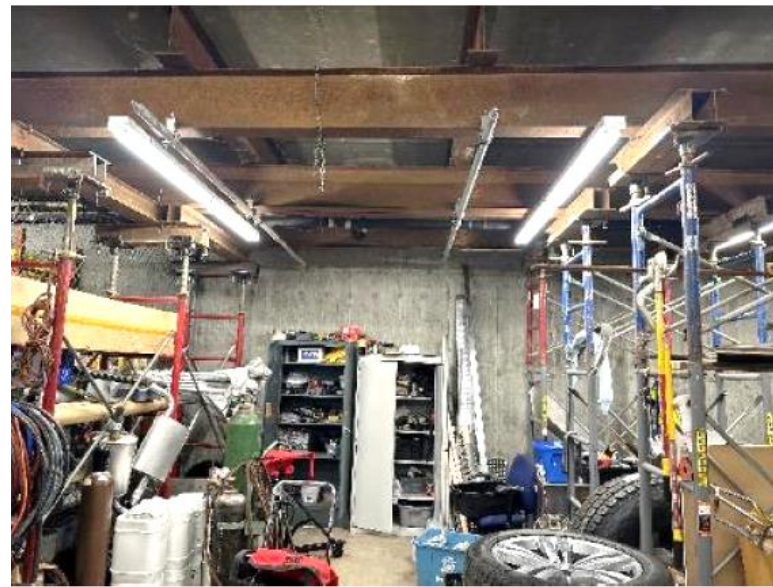
Proposed New Building

Fire Station One

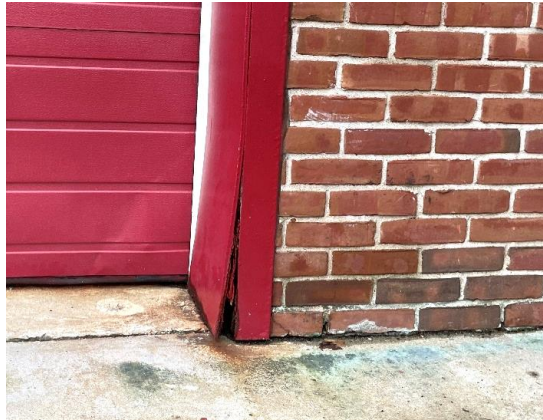
Firefighter Gear Storage



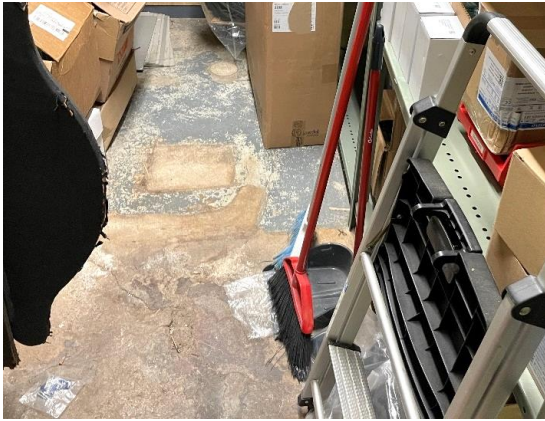
**Floor
Temporary Shoring System for
Structural Slab**



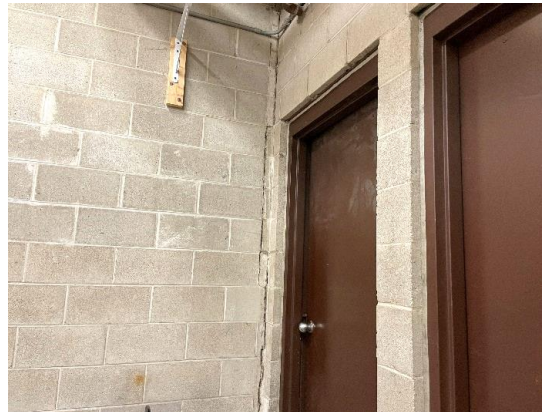
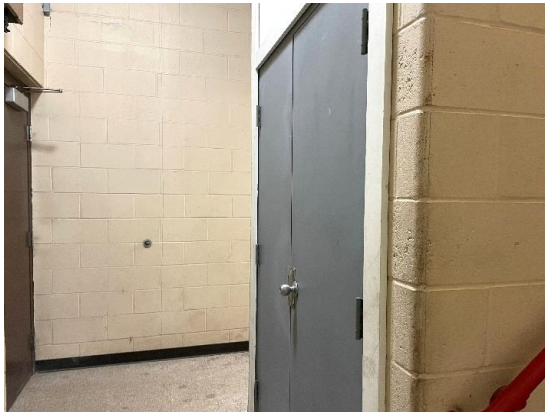
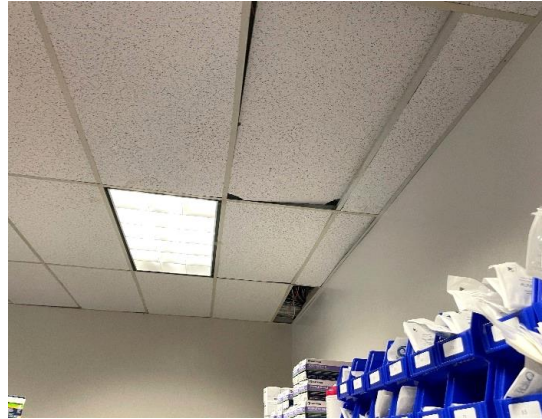
Fire Station 1: Existing Conditions



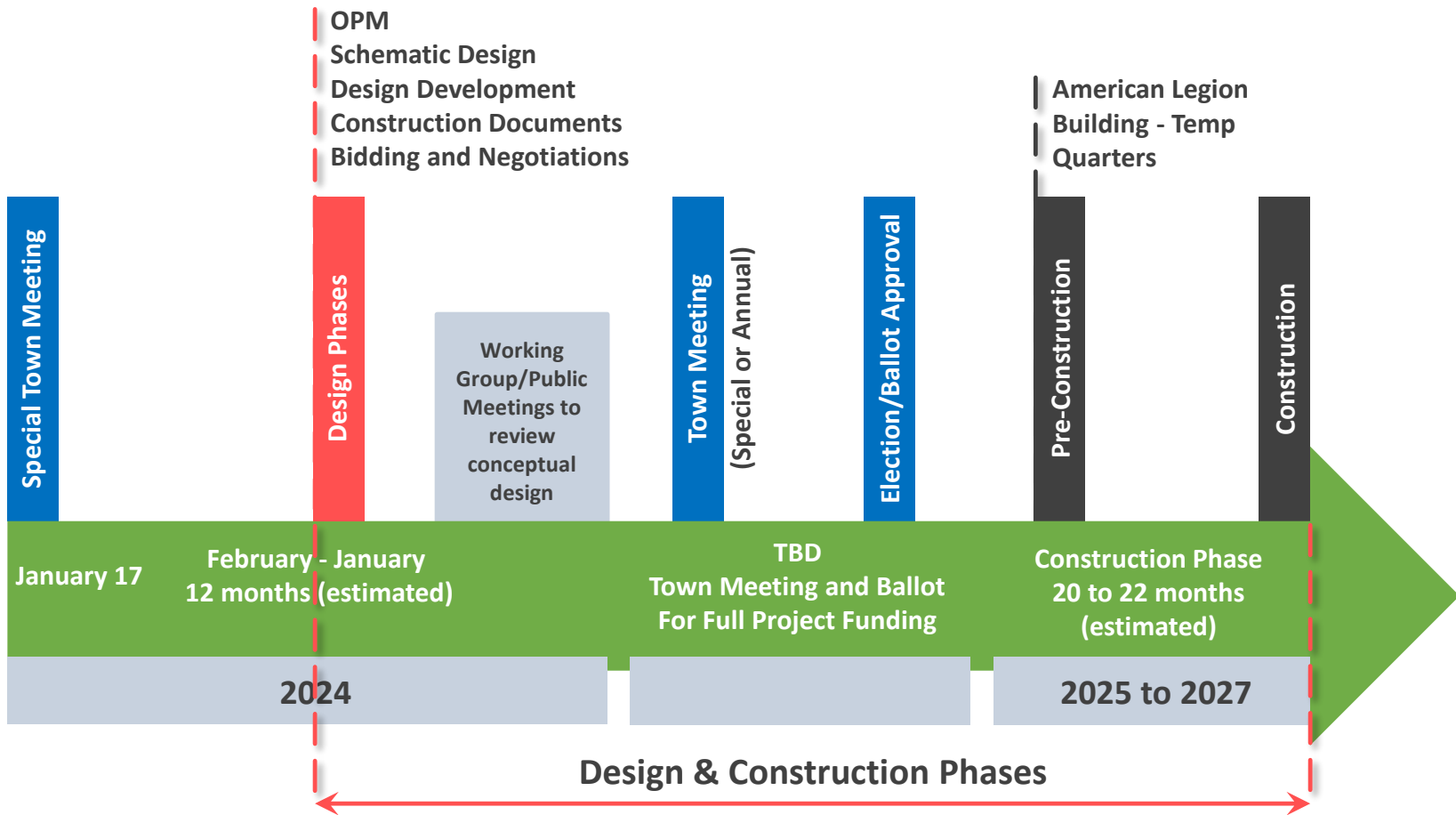
Fire Station 1: Existing Conditions



Fire Station 1: Existing Conditions



Why the need for a Special Town Meeting?

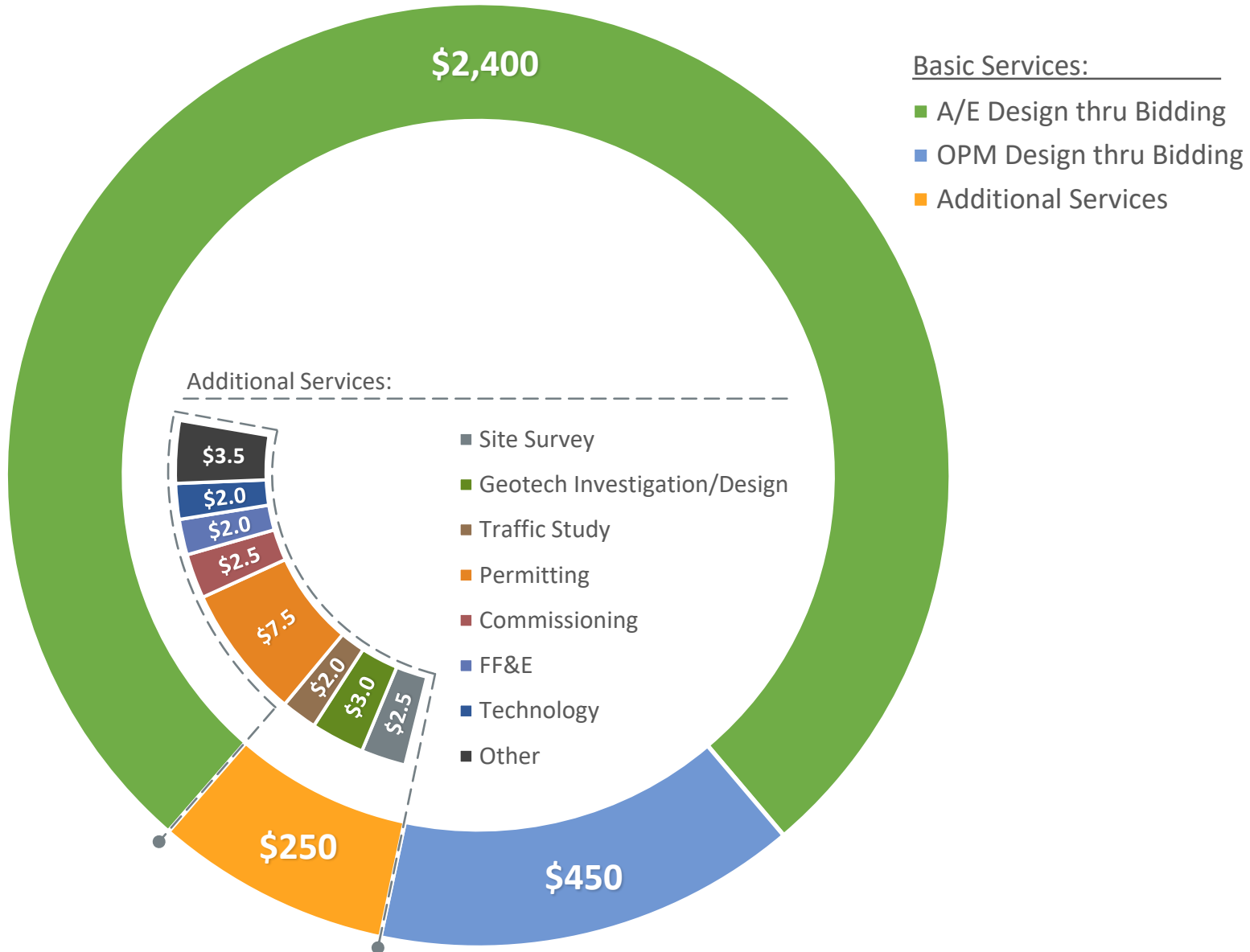


Estimated Project Timeline

Select Board -1: Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding (\$2,100,000)

PROJECT PHASE DURATIONS	
TASK	DURATION
New Fire Station 1 – Preferred Option	
Schematic Design	3 Months
Design Development	4 – 5 Months
Construction Documents	5 – 6 Months
Bidding & Negotiation	2 Months
Award and Mobilize	2 Months
Construction, FF&E, Closeout & Occupancy	20 – 22 Months
Total	36 – 40 Months

Design Budget (in thousands of dollars)



Select Board -1: Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding (\$2,100,000)

PROJECT BUDGET	
TASK	COST
New Fire Station 1 – Preferred Option	
Project Construction	\$30M - \$33M
A/E Design (SD – Bidding)	\$2.0M – 2.6M
OPM Services	\$500K
Add Services	\$250K
A/E Design (Construction Administration)	\$1.8M - \$2.2M
OPM Services (Construction Administration)	\$800K
Additional Soft Costs	\$1.2M - \$1.5M
Project Contingencies	Included in Construction Cost
Total	\$36.6M - \$40.9M

Project Cost Comparisons

Prior to 2020 the average escalation rate was +/-3%


PUBLIC SAFETY/POLICE STATION COMPARISONS						
Town	Program	Year	Building SF	Const. Cost Escalated to Dec 2023	Cost/SF	Notes
Foxborough Public Safety	Combined PS	2007	39,000	\$ 17,349,192	\$445	
Revere PD & Sub FD	Combined PS	2008	53,500	\$ 29,879,164	\$558	
Medfield Public Safety	Combined PS	2015	37,500	\$ 20,998,030	\$560	
Scituate Public Safety	Combined PS	2016	28,740	\$ 20,999,407	\$731	
Walpole Police Station	Police	2016	14,550	\$ 9,112,006	\$626	
Dedham PS	Combined PS	2020	50,210	\$ 49,230,826	\$980	Includes a Parking Garage
Essex Public Safety	Combined PS	2020	24,505	\$ 16,190,680	\$661	
Marshfield Police	Police	2020	26,022	\$ 18,626,772	\$716	
Ashland Public Safety	Combined PS	2021	41,148	\$ 28,914,727	\$703	
Leominster Police	Police	2021	37,333	\$ 29,295,160	\$785	Includes a Parking Garage
Norfolk FS	Fire	2022	26,694	\$ 21,327,089	\$799	
Quincy PS	Combined PS	2023	123,926	\$ 112,765,000	\$910	Includes a Parking Garage
Hingham PS	Combined PS	2023	49,233	\$ 42,689,080	\$867	Includes a Parking Garage
Stoughton FS	Fire	2023	25,145	\$ 18,418,390	\$732	

Since then, we have seen 1% for 2020, 5% for 2021, 14% for 2022 and 7% for 2023

Current Public Safety Historical Timeline

- July 2013: ● Town of Westwood creates PS Task Force
- Feb 2014: ● Hires D+W to conduct a Feasibility Study for Public Safety Facilities
- Nov 2014: ● Town approves design funding for FS2 and Police Headquarters
- Nov 2015: ● Town approves Construction funding for new FS2
- Two-Phase approach to Police HQ: (1) Deerfield Ave. Ext. and (2) Police HQ.
- Town appropriates funding for Deerfield Ave Ext.
- Nov 2016: ● Deerfield Ave. Ext. Construction completed
- Sep 2017: ● Police HQ Construction completed
- Oct 2017: ● FS2 Construction completed
- Nov 2022: ● Town Purchases American Legion Building
- Issues RFP for Feasibility Study for Fire Station 1

Potential Design, Bidding, Voting Schedule

- 
- Jan 2023: Hires D+W to conduct a Feasibility Study for Fire Station 1
 - Hires Centurion to conduct Operations & Response Time Study for Fire Dept
 - Oct 2023: Complete Feasibility Study for Fire Station 1
 - Dec 2023: Advertise for Design and OPM Services
 - Jan 2024: Special Town Meeting 1/17
 - March 2024: Hire Architect and OPM to Design Fire Station 1 through Bidding
 - April 2025: Bid Fire Station 1
 - Annual Town Election (ballot question)
 - May 2025: Annual Town Meeting with bids in hand
 - June 2025: Construction for Fire Station 1 begins

Estimated Construction and Completion Schedule

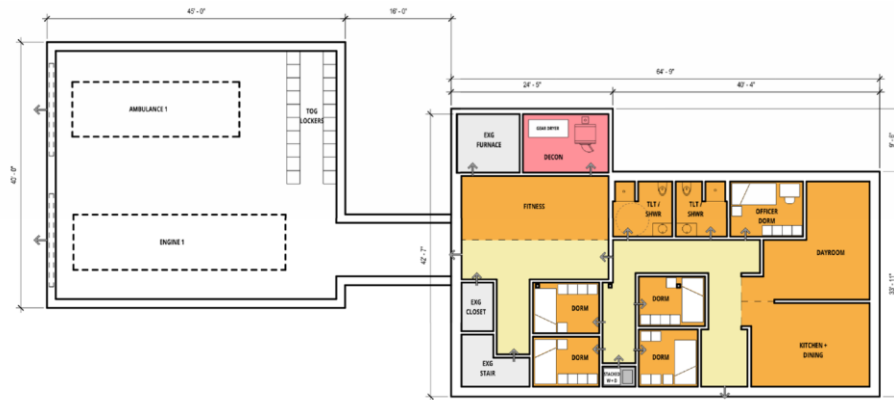
- June 2025: ● Award and Mobilization
- June 2025: ● Contractor Procurement Phase
- Aug 2025: ● American Legion Building Construction starts
- Dec 2025: ● Fire Department Moves to Temp Operations
- Jan 2026: ● On-site Construction starts
- Feb 2026: ● Existing Station Demo and Sitework Starts
- July 2027: ● Substantial Completion
- July 2027: ● Fire Department Move-In
- Dec 2027: ● Final Project Completion

Fire Department Proposed Temporary Quarters American Legion Building

- The American Legion Building was acquired through Town Meeting approval (2022 Annual Town Meeting – Article 17).
- Design funding approval will include design for the renovation and construction of temporary quarters at the American Legion Building
- Living quarters, administrative space, and apparatus bays



2nd FLOOR PLAN DIAGRAM 2,428 SF
1/8" = 1' - 0"



1st FLOOR PLAN DIAGRAM 2,428 SF
1/8" = 1' - 0"



Questions or Comments?

Select Board - 2

Debt Housekeeping

Fire Department Multi-Purpose Vehicle
(\$400,000)

Select Board 2 – Debt Housekeeping – Fire Department Multi-Purpose Vehicle (\$400,000)

To see if the Town will vote to abandon the purchase of a Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, for which \$400,000 was authorized to be borrowed under Article 12 of the Warrant at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 3, 2021, and then transfer the \$400,000 borrowed for that purpose, to pay a portion of the costs of the Hanlon School Project, so-called, which was approved by vote of the Town under Article 1 of the Warrant at the Town Meeting held on October 18, 2021, thereby reducing the \$84,610,386 authorized to be borrowed to pay costs of that project by \$400,000, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Motion:

That the Town: (i) abandons the purchase of a Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, for which \$400,000 was authorized to be borrowed under Article 12 of the Warrant at the Annual Town Meeting held on May 3, 2021, and (ii) transfers the \$400,000 borrowed to pay costs of purchasing the Fire Multipurpose Vehicle, to pay a portion of the costs of the Hanlon School Project, so-called, which project was approved by vote of the Town under Article 1 of the Warrant at the Town Meeting held on October 18, 2021, thereby reducing the \$84,610,386 authorized to be borrowed to pay costs of that project by \$400,000.

Miscellaneous Article – 1 (Article withdrawn – 12/4/23)

This article serves as a placeholder to insert an article in support of Town Government that may come up before the official Warrant is approved.



Questions or Comments?

**WESTWOOD PLANNING BOARD
ZONING AMENDMENT PREVIEW**

FINANCE & WARRANT COMMISSION MEETING

December 6, 2023

MBTA COMMUNITIES LAW

In 2020, State Zoning Act Amendments were enacted by the Legislature to promote the production of multi-family housing within walking distance of public transportation, in order to address a severe regional housing shortage.



Gables Residential at University Station

The Law:

“M.G.L. c. 40A, §3A (a)(1) An MBTA community ***shall*** have a zoning ordinance or by-law that provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right...”

MBTA COMMUNITIES LAW

Key Components of the Law

MBTA Communities *shall* amend their Zoning Bylaws to include:

- At least one zoning district of a reasonable size
- Located within 1/2 mile of a train station or bus stop
- Suitable for families with children (no age or bedroom restrictions)
- With a minimum gross residential density of 15 units per acre
- Multi-family permitting process cannot be discretionary

WESTWOOD'S CURRENT ZONING:

MUMFROD near Rt 128 MBTA Station:



University Place by Pulte Homes
100 two-bedroom condos



Gables Residential
350 one & two-bedroom apartments



WESTWOOD'S CURRENT ZONING:

MUMFROD near Islington Station:



Foster Block Property - 22 Everett Street



WESTWOOD'S CURRENT ZONING:

MUMFROD Overlay District Parcels:

Street Address	Map & Lot	Lot Area (Acres)	1/2 Mile?	Current Zoning	Current Use	Tax Category
22 Everett St (Foster Block I)	23-226	1.92	Partially - IS	MUMFROD/FMUOD3	Industrial	Commercial
Everett St (Foster Block II)	23-227	4.86	Partially - IS	MUMFROD/FMUOD3	Vacant	Commercial
85-91 University Ave (Gables I)	33-019	3.74	Yes - Rt128	MUMFROD/UAMUD	Apartments	Residential
95 University Ave (Gables II)	33-054	2.89	Yes - Rt128	MUMFROD/UAMUD	Apartments	Residential
120-130 University Ave (Pulte)	33-056	2.75	Yes - Rt128	MUMFROD/UAMUD	Condos	Residential
		16.16				

MBTA COMMUNITIES GUIDELINES

Draft Guidelines were finalized on August 17, 2023

- Westwood is defined as a Commuter Rail Community
- Housing unit capacity requirement = 15% of stock
- 5,801 units x 15% = 870 total unit capacity
- District must include least 50 acres total land area
- At least 25 acres within 1/2 mile of MBTA stations
- Up to 25 acres may be located elsewhere in Westwood
- At least 10% of residential units must contain 3 bedrooms
- No unreasonable parking requirements
- EOHLIC must review and approve districts for compliance with Guidelines on or before December 31, 2024



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF HOUSING &
LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Maura T. Healey, Governor ♦ Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor ♦ Edward M. Augustus, Jr., Secretary

TO: Municipal Officials in MBTA Communities
FROM: Secretary Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
DATE: August 17, 2023
RE: Revisions to Section 3A Compliance Guidelines

On August 10, 2022, EOHLIC released Compliance Guidelines for Multi-Family Zoning Districts Under Section 3A of the Zoning Act (the "Guidelines"). One revision was made in October 2022. This is a summary of the second change. In response to feedback from municipal leaders in several MBTA communities, EOHLIC is revising the Guidelines to offer MBTA communities a path to receive some credit for mixed-use development zoning districts. The revision also specifies how Section 3A compliance may affect certain discretionary grant award decisions. These revisions:

1. Allow an MBTA community to "offset" the minimum multi-family unit capacity requirement in certain multi-family zoning district(s) by up to 25%, based on the unit capacity of a mixed-use zoning district that meets key requirements of Section 3A and the Guidelines, but for requiring a ground floor non-residential component. Such "offset" - only available where existing village-style or downtown development is essential to preserve pedestrian access to amenities - still requires a municipality to demonstrate the same total amount of unit capacity.
2. Protect the financial feasibility of achieving housing goals where mixed-use zoning requires ground-floor non-residential uses by (i) setting forth location criteria for mixed-use development districts and requiring that EOHLIC has pre-approved the location before the MBTA community's vote on its zoning changes; (ii) capping the percentage floor area of each development that may be required to be non-residential (ground floor only); (iii) requiring a broad mix of non-residential uses allowed as of right; and (iv) prohibiting minimum parking requirements for non-residential uses.
3. Allow MBTA communities to locate more housing in walkable and transit-oriented neighborhoods without jeopardizing existing non-residential resources and amenities. Many MBTA communities expressed a desire to locate districts in village-style or downtown neighborhoods but feared that allowing multi-family housing as of right in those areas could risk a loss of existing businesses and buildings. Many residents expressed a desire to live in village-style, downtown, and transit-oriented neighborhoods.
4. Add a list of thirteen discretionary grants programs to Section 9 to alert MBTA communities of additional grant programs that will consider compliance with Section 3A in making grant awards.

These revisions to the Guidelines are intended to provide greater flexibility to MBTA communities to adopt new zoning districts in mixed-use neighborhoods, and to promote housing opportunities for residents in such neighborhoods. The revisions do not reduce the total unit capacity required by the Guidelines.

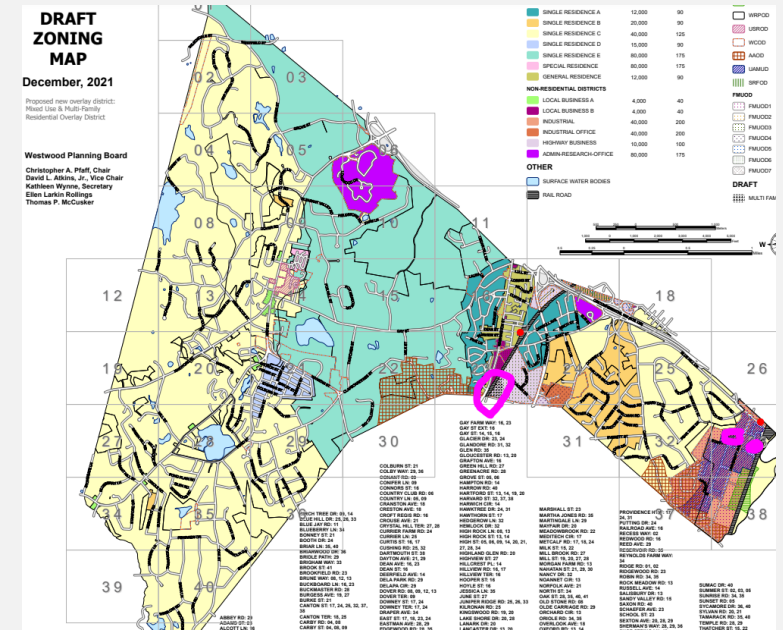
WESTWOOD'S CURRENT ZONING VS. GUIDELINES:

Current MUMFROD Overlay District:

- 16.16 acres district approved in May 2022
- Includes 450 previously approved units at University Station
- 160 units approved at 22 Everett Street by MUMFROD Special Permit
- **610 units** (actual -- not just capacity) within current MUMFROD district

MBTA Community Guidelines:

- Previously developed units and units allowed by special permit not counted
- EOHLC will only count by-right unit capacity within designated zone
- 16.16 acres at 15 units per acre = existing capacity of only **242 units**
- Westwood is required to increase unit capacity by at least 628 units
- Westwood is required to increase land area by at least 33.84 acres



DENSITY EXAMPLES

85-95 University Station
350 apartments = **51.9** units per acre



120-130 University Avenue
100 condos = **36.4** units per acre

DENSITY EXAMPLES

282-298 Washington Street
18 Condos = **21.7** units per acre



672 High Street
6 condos = **13.6** units per acre

DENSITY EXAMPLES

321 Washington Street
12 Apartments = **12.6** units per acre



401 Washington Street
9 apartments = **8.6** units per acre

PROPOSED ARTICLE I

AMENDMENTS TO MIXED-USE MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT (MUMFROD)

Amend Section 9.9

Expand district to at least 50 acres with 870 units capacity

- Consider separate subdistricts with 15 units per acre and 35 units per acre
- Consider mixed-use district with mandatory first floor commercial uses

Maintain current application requires and review procedures

- EIDR permit application process allows proposals up to 15 units per acre
- High density proposals require special permit application
- 15% of proposed units required to be affordable, 85% units are market rate
- 10% of units must have at 3 bedrooms
- Planning Board public hearing process with abutter notification
- Height, setback, parking requirements, drainage, lighting, traffic review, etc.

PROPOSED ARTICLE 2

AMENDMENTS RELATED TO WIRELESS COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

Expand Wireless Communication Overlay District

Amend Section 9.7 to allow wireless communication facilities at University Station

Rooftop Wireless Facilities

- Project Development Review (PDR) Approval required
- No higher than 10 feet above existing roof surface
- Stealth enclosures required if visible from adjacent properties
- Subsequent antenna replacements permitted by Administrative PDR Approval

Monopole Wireless Facilities

- Special Permit Approval required with abutter notification
- Flagpole style stealth monopole with maximum 36” diameter
- No more than two (2) monopoles within the UAMUD
- Subsequent antenna replacements permitted by Administrative PDR Approval

PROPOSED ARTICLE 3
AMENDMENTS TO DEFINITIONS

Amend Section 2.0

Clarify and revise definitions for:

- Lot Width
- Detached Accessory Structure
- Accessory Use
- Retaining Wall
- Rear Yard

Add illustrations for:

- Average Height calculation
- Wall and Fence Height Limitations

PROPOSED ARTICLE 4

AMENDMENTS TO ZONING MAP REFERENCES

Amend various Zoning Bylaw overlay sections to remove references to parcel numbers, property names, and street addresses

Replace with references to the Official Zoning Map

PROPOSED ARTICLE 5

AMENDMENTS TO ACCESSORY APARTMENTS

Amend Section 8.5.6 [ADU Design] to replace the term “Floor Area” with the term “Gross Floor Area”. This will clarify the manner in which Accessory Dwelling Units are measured.

PROPOSED ARTICLE 6

AMENDMENTS TO GENERAL BYLAW CHAPTER 342
RELATED TO SOLID WASTE

Amend Chapter 342 to include requirements for enclosure and maintenance of temporary construction dumpsters

PROPOSED ARTICLE 7
HOUSEKEEPING AMENDMENTS

Amend various sections of Zoning Bylaw and/or the Official Zoning Map as necessary to correct errors or inconsistencies and to clarify such sections, including amendments to correct spelling, grammatical or numerical errors found within either document.

Accessory Apartments – ADU Design applies Gross Floor Area, not just “Floor Area”.

PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

JANUARY 9, 2024 @ 7:00 PM

Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83750823606?pwd=MWZZOUITc0NDaFdwSzcxQ0FDZTJ5dz09>

Passcode: 980624

Or Telephone:

877 853 5257 US Toll Free, 888 475 4499 US Toll Free
833 548 0276 US Toll Free, 833 548 0282 US Toll Free

Webinar ID: 837 5082 3606

Westwood Finance and Warrant Commission
NOVEMBER 15, 2023 REMOTE MEETING
- ZOOM WEBINAR
7:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

Finance Commission Chairperson George Hertz called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

He briefly mentioned the Open Meeting Law pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023. Then he welcomed all participants, members, and members of public and press to the FinCom November 15, 2023 meeting.

Finance and Warrant Commission members who were present: William Bruce Jr., John Carey, Jim Ferraro, Seth Frederickson, Mike Gay, George Hertz, Caitlyn Jurczak, George Laham, George Maroun, Kristina Patyjewicz, Christopher Poreda, Sean Weller, and Alexander Yale.

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.

Afterwards, Chairperson Hertz led members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Finance Commission administrator, Ms. Wong then called the ROLL.

Members were provided with the final agenda and other related material prior to the meeting. Additional Presentation Slides from Hilltop Securities & Long-Range Financial Planning Committee (LRFPC) were distributed to members after the meeting.

Chair's Introductory Remarks:

- On behalf of the Commission and himself, the Chair expressed his condolences to Ms. Hughes who is dealing with a family loss.
- Chairperson Hertz went over the meeting procedures for the night.
 - Vice Chair Poreda will introduce the Special Town Meeting Warrant Article discussion.
 - Madam Chair LeBlanc Cummings will be a panelist during the Special Town Meeting Warrant Article presentation and then become an attendee for the remaining of the meeting.
 - Select Board member, Mr. Gotti, will be presenting as the Chair of the Long-Range Financial Planning during his presentation.
- Next meeting will be in person on December 6th where the Commission will have to vote on the Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles.

Evening's Presentations-

A. Summary of 2024 Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Presenter(s): Marianne LeBlanc Cummings [Select Board Chair] and Christopher Coleman [Town Administrator]

Vice Chair Poreda introduced this evening's first presentation. Ms. Mariannae LeBlanc Cummings [Select Board Chair] and Mr. Christopher Coleman [Town Administrator] were present. Before Ms. LeBlanc Cummings started her presentation, she expressed her sympathies to Ms. Hughes and her family. Ms. LeBlanc Cummings announced the Special Town Meeting will be on January 17, 2024 with a backup weather date on January 18. The Special Town Meeting is primarily to request the Town allocate funds for the design and bid documents for the construction of a new Fire Station 1 at its existing location. The Select Board is expected to vote on the final language of the warrant articles on December 4th and present it to the Commission at the Public Hearing on December 6th.

Ms. LeBlanc Cummings introduced the following Special Town Warrant Articles:

- Select Board 1- Fire Station Design and Bid Document Funding [\$2,100,000]
- Select Board 2 – Debt Housekeeping- Fire Department Multipurpose Vehicle [\$400,000]
- Miscellaneous Article 1 – *Placeholder*

Ms. LeBlanc Cummings and Mr. Coleman spent time answering questions after their presentation. During the presentation, one member wanted to know if it was typical for the Town to spend \$3.5 million on design and bid projects. The Chair stated that perhaps the Commission can compare the data from the Hanlon School project to see if that project had a design and bid funding. Members wanted to understand the urgency of the fire station 1 project and know how the \$3.5 million amount came about. Mr. Chip Heitkamp (Consultant, D+W Architects) who conducted the Fire Station 1 feasibility study was invited as a Panelist to answer members' questions. Mr. Coleman also noted that [the fire station feasibility study](#) is available to view on the town website for the members of the public. After the Q&A, the Chair commented that he believes this year, the challenges of Westwood will not really be on the operating budget but the capital side due to urgent demands with a limited amount of money. Then he thanked Ms. LeBlanc Cummings, Mr. Coleman and Mr. Heitkamp for their time in presenting and answering questions.

B. Town Financial Update

Presenter(s): Stephanie McManus [Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director], Peter Frazier & Lisa Driscoll [Hilltop Securities, Town Financial Advisors]

Chairperson Hertz introduced the evening's second presentation. Ms. Stephanie McManus [Asst. Town Administrator/Finance Director] was present and invited her guests, Mr. Peter Frazier & Ms. Lisa Driscoll [Town Financial Advisors from Hilltop Securities] to join her. Mr. Frazier and Ms. Driscoll gave a brief background on what Hilltop Securities firm does. Then they presented an overview on debt borrowing and showed a flowchart of how the Municipal debt process works. After their presentation, a Q &A took place. There were no questions from members. Any follow up questions will go directly to Ms. McManus. Chairperson Hertz thanked Mr. Frazier and Ms. Driscoll for their time in presenting. Next, Ms. McManus presented a financial update to the Commission. Mr. Robert Gotti [Long Range Financial Planning Committee Chair] was also present during Ms. McManus' presentation. Ms. McManus went over the reserve funds including free cash, the Town's debt policies and how it relates to the current debt status.

C. Informational Overview of the Long-Range Financial Planning Committee and FY25 Budget Issues

Presenter(s): Robert Gotti [Long Range Financial Planning Committee (LRFPC) Chair]

Mr. Gotti moved on to his presentation after Ms. McManus finished with hers. He provided a general overview of the Long-Range Financial Planning Committee and showed a list of major projects that appeared in the Capital Book over the years. In addition, he mentioned that the Select Board authorized \$500,000 of unrestricted ARPA funds to allow the LRFPC to conduct a comprehensive facilities study of both Municipal and School Buildings. The goal of the study is to assess both the extent and urgency of needs as well as better informed sense of cost. Next, Mr. Gotti presented some illustrations on what does the Town's overall debt capacity look like relative to its financial policies. One member commented that the Commission will need information on how the Town's credit rating will be affected if more debt is being taken out. After his presentation, Mr. Gotti and Ms. McManus spent time answering members' questions. Chairperson Hertz thanked Ms. McManus and Mr. Gotti for their time in presenting and answering questions. He reiterated it will be challenging for Westwood going forward more on the capital side over the operating budget. Moreover, his biggest concern is the ability of taxpayers to continue to absorb substantial increases from projects like the Hanlon school. He expressed that the Town will have a difficult time trying to fund other major projects yet the demand is there. He commented that the work Mr. Gotti and the LRFPC are doing is very critical and it was a good step in setting up the facilities study.

Chair's Update-

The Chair recapped the next meeting will be in person on December 6th. The Commission will open the Public Hearing, deliberate, vote and close the Public Hearing. He strongly encouraged the members of the Public to attend their meeting and mentioned the Public's views and opinions are extremely important to the Commission. Vice Chair Poreda mentioned the time is very limited on the Special Town Meeting warrant and encouraged members of the Public to send questions to Ms. Wong if they have comments about tonight's meeting. The Vice Chair also requested the Town Administrator and Select Board to share any information they have on the final wording of the Special Town Warrant articles since there is very little time between the Select Board's December 4th meeting and the FinCom Public Hearing on the 6th.

Old Business:

Members were asked to review and approve the meeting minutes for October 10, 2023. The Chair complimented Ms. Wong on writing the meeting minutes. A motion was offered and seconded. A ROLL call took place. Ten members approved the minutes. Two members abstained and three members were absent.

Chairperson Hertz then entertained questions from the public and the press. Vice Chair Poreda read questions from the Q&A Box.

- ❖ One resident commented that Firefighters have zero input in the new fire station. She expressed the Town should be more transparent about the fire station building and asked when the Firefighters will join the working group. Chairperson Hertz responded that the Firefighters are working with the Town's architecture team and he has no additional information.
- ❖ Second resident expressed her opinion on the need to reallocate the \$400K originally approved for a fire truck. The Chair thanked the resident for her comment.

The Chair then thanked members for attending and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. He asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was offered and seconded. A ROLL CALL vote was taken unanimously in favor.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:21PM

For a complete video of the 11/15/23 FinCom meeting please see the following link:
<https://westwoodmediacenter.tv/>