

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
INCLUDES TRI-BOARD MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 2021
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present – Selectmen:

Audrey LaBrie, Chair
Rick Ward, Vice Chair
Barbara Anderson
Danielle LaPointe
Amy Salter

Justin Sultzbach, Town Manager
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant
Taylor Tower, Administrative Assistant
Joanne Goguen, Town Accountant

Present – Finance Committee:

Thomas Kane, Chair
Dr. Maureen Ward
Phillip Levine
David Alexander
Charles Corts
Austin Cyganiewicz

Present - School Committee

Larry Murphy, Chair
Greg Vine
Ryan Forsythe

Thad King, Interim Superintendent

Absent – Karen Kast and Shauna LaPointe, School Committee

Douglas Delay, Finance Committee

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- July 26, 2021 Legal Notice of Community Outreach Meeting for Commercial Drive (filed)
 - Draft Host Community Agreement (filed)
 - Proposed Layout of Facility (filed)
- Entertainment Permit Application for To Each His Own Design Anniversary Celebration on 9/25/2021 (filed)
- Entertainment Permit Application for Recreation Commission Bicycle Event on 9/18/2021 (filed)
- Entertainment Permit Application for Recreation Commission Scavenger Hunt on 8/29/2021 (filed)
- Solicitor's Permit Application for Steven Westgate of Trinity Solar (filed)
- July 29, 2021 Letter from Nouria Energy re: Intention to Surrender Package Store License (filed)
- Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School – Winchendon Representative 2021 Report (attached)
- August 5, 2021 Memorandum from the Town Manager re: Toy Town Elementary LED Lighting Upgrade (attached)
- Town Accountant Enterprise Funds Crossover Spreadsheet and Revenue and Expenses through June 30, 2021 (attached)
- Ashburnham Joint Water Authority Meeting Agendas and Minutes (filed)
 - 2nd Quarter 2021 Operations and Maintenance Reports from Veolia (filed)
- ARPA Funding Spreadsheet as of August 5, 2021 (attached)
- Local Communities Fire Ambulance Fee Survey (attached)
- Ash Street Discharge of Mortgage (filed)
- Request from Director of Planning & Development to Allow Town Manager to Sign Discharge Papers (filed)
- August 5, 2021 Memorandum from Town Manager re: Pop Up Bull Yard (filed)

- August 9, 2021 Memorandum from Linda Daigle re: Hybrid Meetings (filed)
- August 9, 2021 Town Manager's Report (attached)
- Minutes to be Approved:
 - July 19, 2021 Regular Meeting
 - June 28, 2021 Executive Session

LaBrie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. LaBrie asked if anyone was video or audio recording, to which there was no answer.

1. **SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Anderson reminded everyone about the concerts at the GAR Park and urged residents to attend and check it out.

LaBrie said the School year is starting soon and she thinks it will be a good one.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None were heard.
3. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** LaPointe moved to take the agenda out of order, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously. Item 5.1 was taken first, with item 3.1 after and the agenda resuming as noted prior to that.

- 3.1. Community Outreach Meeting for a Proposed Marijuana Cultivation and Manufacturing Facility to be located at Commercial Drive – Ward read aloud the public notice that was mailed to abutters and placed in the paper. **LaPointe moved to open the public hearing, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried.** This community outreach meeting is required as part of the application process to hear a request to allow a marijuana cultivation and manufacturing facility in Winchendon. Steve Cefalo and Fred Massa of Winchendon Grows, LLC were present with their request seeking the Town to approve a Community Host Agreement. They were represented by their Attorney, Blake Mensing, who said he is a full time cannabis and municipal attorney. Mensing explained that this operation would generate approximately 140 jobs. He elaborated the excruciating detail and security required by the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) that his company would follow. He also detailed his proposed lighting and layout of the property and added that there will not be much for signage as they do not intend to draw attention to their operation. They have strict procedures in place to prevent sale or distribution to minors and they are also very selective in their hiring process. LaBrie asked if the Board had any questions. Anderson asked what kind of timeline was anticipated, to which Mensing answered there are many steps left to take, including the drafting of a Host Community Agreement. There is much more permitting to accomplish with the State; tonight's discussion is only a preliminary step toward this establishment building and operating. Ward asked if estimate of 140 personnel means that all those employees will be arriving and leaving at the same time; to which Mensing answered they will have regular business hours and not all day, every day shifts. LaPointe expressed concern about odor. LaBrie asked if anybody in the audience would like to speak. Greg Vine of Forest Avenue asked that when drafting the Host Community Agreement, the Selectboard ensure that the Community benefits are Winchendon-specific. Ricky Laperriere, owner of Mylec, relayed a concern from parents of the kids who play at Mylec. Parents are concerned about their children being exposed to odors. Tracy Murphy, Director of Planning & Development, explained that there will be a mandated 500' buffer between the new facility and the rinks.

Ward moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the hearing was closed.

Ward moved the Board authorize the Town Manager to negotiate and enter into a Community Host Agreement with Winchendon Grows, LLC on behalf of the Town of Winchendon, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

4. **APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:** There were no appointments or resignations this evening.
5. **PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 Entertainment Permit – To Each His Own Design 30 Year Anniversary Celebration, Sept. 25, 2021 – Don Comeau of To Each His Own Design was present on their application celebrating their 30th year anniversary serving the community. The event is scheduled for Sept. 25th from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00pm and will include a live band with music by Deacon Express and will offer hot dogs and hamburgers to attendees. The applicant has reached out to the Board of Health for a temporary food service permit. Parking is available at the Clark/YMCA. The fee has been paid. There are no concerns from Department Heads.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen approve the Entertainment Permit as discussed this evening for September 25, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. to “To Each His Own Design” celebrating their 30th year anniversary serving the community, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

- 5.2 Entertainment / Road Use / Bike Path Permit – Recreation Commission – “Tour de Winchendon” 1st Annual Bike Event, Sept. 18, 2021 – Debra Bradley of the Recreation Commission was present for this permit and for agenda item 5.3. The “Tour de Winchendon” event is a family fun bike event starting and ending at the Winchendon Community Park that will begin at 10:00 a.m. It is not a race but a family bike ride making pit stops at local businesses for a passport stamp. The goal of the ride is to highlight what Winchendon can offer with the bike path, Winchendon Community Park, local businesses and organizations. The Police Chief has no issues with the bike event provided they understand they have to observe traffic rules for bicycles and noted that they are happy to assist with traffic at a couple spots on the route if an officer is available at the time. There are no concerns from other Department Heads. A rain date is being proposed for Sat., Sept. 25th. Ward noted concerns regarding lack of crosswalk on Maple Street; to which Bradley said volunteers will be present with cones and safety gear to ensure the safety of attendees. Anderson was excited to see this event, describing it as a fantastic way to spend the day with your family. LaBrie asked what this plan is for anybody that shows up late. Bradley said the event begins at 10:00 a.m. but they won’t actually embark until 10:30 a.m. Waivers, sign up and explanation of rules will give some extra time for those who might be running late.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen approve the Entertainment Permit / Road Use / Bike Path Use Permit as discussed this evening for the Recreation Commission for the first annual “Tour de Winchendon” bike event to be held on September 18, 2021 with a rain date established for Saturday, September 25, 2021, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

- 5.3 Entertainment Permit – Recreation Commission – Scavenger Hunt, August 29, 2021 – The Recreation Commission has been busy and is looking to hold a Scavenger Hunt in collaboration with the Winchendon Historical Society; taking folks on a Scavenger Hunt around historic Winchendon. The hunt is meant to be enjoyed on foot, however, there are a few bonus stops that may require a vehicle. The event starts at 1:00 p.m. at the Murdock Whitney Mansion and ends at Seppies in the Toy museum. There are no issues from Department Heads.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen approve the Entertainment Permit for the Recreation Commission for the Scavenger Hunt for Sunday, August 29, 2021 as presented this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

As a side note, Ward applauded the Winchendon Courier for their reliable coverage of all the fun events in Town.

- 5.4 Solicitor/Hawker/Peddler License Application – Steven Westgate for Trinity Solar – Mr. Steven Westgate was present on his application to go door to door seeking to garner interest for solar panels being offered through Trinity Solar. He stated it is a no-cost program through the state and that his job is only to introduce the program. If residents are interested, he would then set up an appointment with a sales representative. He notes he does not enter people’s homes, will be wearing a mask and is fully vaccinated. He does have a state Hawker/Peddler license that the Board requires. He noted on the application that his hours would be Tuesday through Thursday, 2:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.; Friday 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

In the past, the Board has stated the end time for the day to be “dusk but no later than 7:00 p.m.” Dept. Head responses have been received, with the Fire Department having a major issue with this application not agreeing with allowing someone to go door-to-door at this time concerned of potential increases of COVID-19 infections.

LaPointe would like to see the hours decreased, citing 7:00 p.m. as dinner time for many families and bedtime for the little ones. Salter noted the concerns of the Fire Chief, who came forward to elaborate that specific to the pandemic, he is concerned with allowing someone to travel door to door in the name of sales. Solicitation can be an annoyance to homeowners anyway, but it can be frightening especially during a pandemic. Daigle added this gentleman is only here until September 30th so the permit is only effective until then.

LaPointe moved the Board of Selectmen approve the Solicitor/Hawker/Peddler License application for Steven Westgate representing Trinity Solar as presented this evening, with an expiration date of September 30th, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

- 5.5 Surrender of Package Store License – Nouria Energy Retail, Inc., d//b/a Winchendon Irving, 93 Gardner Rd. – Linda Daigle informed the Selectmen that the Town Manager’s Office has received notice from Nouria Energy Retail’s President, Tony El-Nemr that effective August 5, 2021 the business is voluntarily surrendering their Retail Package Wine and Malt Beverages license for Winchendon Irving located at 93 Gardner Road. Each business is allowed a certain amount of alcohol beverage licenses in the state and they have opted to surrender this one for a different location. The ABCC will be notified of this action, allowing an additional Retail Package Wine and Malt Beverage Store license available to the Town of Winchendon.

LaPointe moved to enter into recess, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the Board entered into recess at 7:25 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 7:33 p.m. All rose for the pledge of allegiance. LaBrie noted that Keith Kent of the Winchendon Courier would be recording the meeting.

6. BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS:

TRI-BOARD MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE / SCHOOL COMMITTEE

- 6.1 Recognition of Service – Joan Landers, Supt. of Schools- The Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee recognized and thanked Ms. Joan Landers for the years she has served this community as the Winchendon Public Schools Superintendent. Multiple Board and Committee members shared fond memories with Ms. Landers, and thanked her for all she has done for the schools and to wish her well in future endeavors.
- 6.2 Murdock Fund Trustee Annual Gift Presentation – Mr. Jack LaDeau, Murdock Fund Trustee, was present on behalf of the Murdock Fund to present its annual gift to the School Department. He explained that per his Will and Trust, every year, Mr. Murdock gives a gift to the Town. Ephraim Murdock Jr. died in 1882 after a successful lifetime as a businessman. He designated his entire estate to the Town to educate children ten years of age and older. He stipulated a building must be constructed no further than a mile from his house, resulting in the Old Murdock School. LaDeau then presented the Town with a check for \$175,000.
- 6.3 Report of Winchendon’s Representative to the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District - Dr. Moe Ward was present on her District report to the Tri-Board meeting this evening; this report can be found in the Town Manager’s Office. She listed off twelve Winchendon students that were SKILLS USA local winners, three of which were district winners as well – Noan Strom, Kaitlyn Scoot and Quinn Armstrong. There are 97 seniors and 31 juniors out on co-operative programs, working and learning in local businesses. Monty Tech is offering a Rapid Reemployment Grant, with \$45,000 allocated to provide a no-cost CNA training program for ten people in need of employment due to COVID-19 layoffs. This 150-hour training program will result in a number of certifications to ensure program graduates are prepared to enter healthcare careers. She went on to inform everyone that the Monty Tech Welding Program was approved as a Massachusetts Pre-Apprenticeship Program; having this designation opens them up for grant

opportunities. There is a 98.5% graduation rate and a 0.3% dropout rate. 15% of students have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). She also informed everyone of important dates coming up and already come and gone, such as Boot Camp, Summer School and Summer Camp, and listed three grants received totaling \$524,998.

While she found the graduation rate commendable, Anderson questioned how many students are sent back to the Winchendon schools. Ward answered that Monty Tech does not send any students back; they work with them to keep them enrolled. Some students might choose to return to Winchendon Schools; it is estimated to be 2.5%. Forsythe said that he questions the appropriateness and equity that come along with vocational schools. Murphy commended Dr. Ward's report and said he is thrilled that they are examining the admissions. He explained he has voiced for years that our general vocational programs across the state are creating inequitable educational opportunities. There was significant discussion surrounding the equitability with emphasis being placed on more fair standards.

6.4 Toy Town Elementary On Bill Repayment Lighting Upgrade – The Green Communities Program has recently announced that they are revising the award amounts for communities that have received \$750,000 or more over the course of the program. Winchendon falls in this category, meaning our max award has dropped from \$250,000 to \$100,000. To mitigate the impact of this loss, Town Manager Sultzbach has been working to identify alternative funding sources for energy projects in town outside of the Green Communities program. In this spirit, staff has secured a \$17,000 utility incentive from National Grid to execute a \$100,000 LED lighting upgrade at Toy Town Elementary. Energy savings over the first five years will be applied to the bill to pay off the remainder of the project – meaning at the end of a 15 year period, this \$100,000 project will be funded entirely outside of the operating budget, and will result in over \$75,000 in energy savings.

6.5 Town Accountant Reports – Town Accountant, Joanne Goguen was present and updated the committees on her revenue and expenses report. SPED Medicaid, Meals Tax, Building Fees, Ambulance and Chapter 70 revenues were over budget. Investment Earnings, Treasurer Misc., Vet Benefits and Vet, Blind, Surviving revenues were under budget. Of the \$961,998 CARES funding that was allocated to the Town, \$730,483 was spent as of June 30th, leaving \$231,515 left to spend before December. \$570,705.29 was received in ARPA funds. Goguen explained to the Board that the Water and Sewer Enterprise Accounts are in need of attention. The Transfer Station Account started the year with \$79,000 in positive retained earnings and ended the year with \$128,779. Water started with positive retained earnings of \$22,206 and ended in the negative of \$81,563. Sewer started with negative \$40,046 and ended with negative \$154,122. Goguen said that Enterprise Water and Sewer are in tough shape. Dr. Ward said she would like to see a request for proposals issued for a new auditor as discussed.

Dr. Ward motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee, seconded by Corts. With a vote of all aye, the Finance Committee meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Vine noted that we are in the midst of another surge of the COVID-19 virus, specifically, the Delta variant. He said Winchendon's vaccination rates are low compared to surrounding communities and asked that those who are able to receive the vaccine please consider doing so.

Forsythe motioned to adjourn the School Committee meeting, seconded by Vine. With a vote of all aye, the School Committee adjourned at 8:48 p.m.

Anderson motioned to recess, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the Board entered into recess at 8:49 p.m.

The Selectboard reconvened at 8:55 p.m.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

7.1. Water/Waste-Water Financial Review –

7.1.1. Ashburnham & Winchendon Joint Water Authority Update – Per a previous request from the Board, Sultzbach provided the meeting agendas and minutes from the Joint Water Authority. Anderson said that per a suggestion from resident Ed Ford, she would like to see a Water & Sewer Committee be formed, comprised of stakeholders. She expressed concern about these accounts, especially after the report tonight from the Town Accountant. LaBrie asked Sultzbach what the next steps to create a committee would be. Sultzbach said he will look into the logistics of that and potentially place it on the next agenda. He explained that he does see the value of this incentive, but his only concern is that in terms of day-to-day operations, it is hard to find expertise to fix a multimillion dollar capital enterprise. His team is identifying funding to hire people who do have the expertise with water and sewer operating. He offered further clarification as to why these accounts are negative, explaining that due to the pandemic, water and sewer shutoffs were not conducted on seriously delinquent accounts, leading to significant loss of revenue. Illegal sump pumps were installed, directing water into the sewer system causing higher operating costs. We also saw significant rainfall causing less watering of lawns and gardens and lower water use overall. LaPointe wanted it on record that she is vehemently opposed to any more hikes in water and sewer rates. She does not want this contract to be extended until there is a guarantee of no more rate hikes. She said the governor is raising a state of emergency, people are losing unemployment and trying to find jobs, and we should not be shutting off their water. Sultzbach clarified that the process of shutting off delinquent accounts requires several months of notice before water is turned off. LaBrie said there is also a process for rental units that mandates contacting the landlord and letting residents know that water hasn't been paid.

7.1.2. ARPA Update - Town Manager Sultzbach will be providing updates at every Board of Selectmen meeting moving forward highlighting which projects are being initiated or supplemented by ARPA funding. It is a priority that this spending is transparent, and it is our intention that this spreadsheet will help keep the general public aware of how this crucial funding source is being applied throughout the community. In addition, it will assist our accounting team in tracking when funds come in from the Federal Government, and out through our expenditures.

7.2. Review of Ambulance Rates – After conducting a survey with surrounding communities, Fire Chief Tom Smith is requesting fee increases for four ambulance billing categories. The Chief was present to speak on this and explained how the changes would greatly increase the amount that the Town bills out and would inevitably improve the Town's income while still keeping the fees competitive. He explained 7% is paid out of pocket. His suggested rate changes would keep us in the middle compared to other communities. He predicts that the cost of ambulance supplies will significantly increase within the next year. Of 1,325 ambulance transports, 89 self-pay. Some insurance companies send checks directly to the individual, which could account for part of the number of self-paying. Chief Smith explained sometimes claimants receive those checks and do not pay the ambulance fee, choosing to pocket it instead. Ward expressed concern about the increase in the mileage category, to which Smith answered that is a category that we are significantly lower in than surrounding communities. Salter asked for the fixed minimum cost of an average ambulance run, saying that while we do need to be cost-effective, this is not something we should be making a huge profit off of. Smith explained that as far as exact cost, that varies depends on how deep you want to dive in on what we use. The actual apparatus, the personnel on shift, the materials used are all variables. Truck prices are also going way up. Anderson asked how much money is lost in cases where the ambulance is dispatched on site and then declined by a patient. Smith explained that his staff tries to educate the patient on the need for an ambulance whether you can or can't pay. He said he does not look at this as losing money even though our ambulance went out; hopefully they still provide a service even if we don't transport them. If they still go to the hospital via private ride, that is our goal that they sought help. Ward asked when the last time these categories were increased was, Chief Smith estimated five or six years ago.

LaBrie moved the Board approve the requested fee increases for the specific ambulance billing categories as presented this evening, seconded by Salter. Anderson said she is very concerned about the elderly refusing rides. If we are seeing pushback, she asked Smith to come back and let us know. These can be revisited. Smith said his Department does not see a lot of that. If one of the medics even remotely feels

like someone will refuse because of money, we work hard to work with them. LaPointe would like to see a public awareness campaign that highlights the payment plans and abatement options available. **With a vote of Ward, no, Salter, aye, Anderson, no, LaPointe, aye, and LaBrie, aye, motion carried 3-2.**

- 7.3. CDBG Housing Rehab Discharge of Mortgage – This is a CDBG loan that has been paid off therefore the Mortgage can be discharged. Tracy Murphy, Director of Planning & Development, explained this is a pretty standard procedure.

Ward moved the Board approve the Discharge of Mortgage for 21 Ash Street as presented this evening, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

- 7.4. Town Manager Signing Authority

7.4.1. CDBG Housing Rehab Discharge of Mortgages – Director of Planning and Development, Tracy Murphy, has requested the Board authorize the Town Manager to sign future Discharge of Mortgages for her reason noted in her email. This has been past practice but the current Town Manager has not yet been authorized. Murphy explained that she tries to maintain confidentiality for Housing Rehab clients and it is difficult to maintain that privacy when she has to come before the Board to discharge the mortgage. LaBrie asked if there are timing issues that would mandate this; to which Murphy answered sometimes the timing is tight. Anderson was uncomfortable relinquishing this responsibility but LaBrie offered the option of Sultzbach keeping the Board apprised in a less public forum. Murphy explained she is happy to provide reports and that she sees maybe two to three a year.

Ward moved the Board authorize the Town Manager to sign future Discharge of Mortgages relating to CDBG loans as presented this evening, seconded by Salter. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

- 7.4.2. Town and School Vendor and Payroll Warrants – The Town Charter allows the Town Manager to sign accounts payable and payroll warrants on behalf of the Board of Selectmen if there is a majority of the Board that are unable to sign a warrant prior to checks needing to be issued. The Board has taken this vote with the prior Town Manager, Mr. Hickey. Anderson would like the documents in question to be scanned to them prior to approval.

Ward moved the Board authorize the Town Manager to sign vendor and payroll warrants on behalf of the Board of Selectmen in extenuating circumstances where the Board has been reached out to and a majority of the Board is unavailable to sign for payment of Town funds at the time they are scheduled to be released and the Board will be notified of this necessity if it were to occur, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

- 8.1 Update on Kalon Farm Pop Up Bull Yard, 270 Central St. – The “Pop Up Bull Yard” was approved by the Board of Selectmen on June 28th, 2021 with the events kicking off the weekend of July 9th. As requested by the Board, the Town Manager provided the following update.

Board members, as requested I am providing an update. This event has run for five weekends without incident. I have followed up repeatedly with both our Police and Fire Chiefs, and not one call has come in regarding this the “Pop Up Bull Yard” or any issues stemming from its attendance.

My office has received one noise complaint from a nearby neighbor, however the management team At Bull Spit has been cooperative in coordinating with my office to rectify these issues. I drove up this past Sunday the 8th to meet with the neighbor and experience the volume first hand. Bull Spit has remained committed to identifying a middle ground in an effort to be a good neighbor.

As you may have seen on social media, many are crediting this as a family friendly community event. Many citizens have called to express their gratitude for such a vibrant and lively addition to our downtown. Local establishments have also praised this event for drawing increased foot traffic to Central Street. This is a testament to both the preparedness of our staff, as well as Bull Spit's commitment to being a positive member of our community.

- 8.2 Remote Participation of Board/Committee Meetings for Citizen Participation Status Update – The office has continued to work with our Cable/Broadcast/Media vendor for hybrid meetings which would allow for remote participation of citizens in upcoming Board/Committee meetings. Ms. Daigle provided a memo for the Board, including updated costs, on updating the Town's equipment. There are only seven committees that are broadcast live as required by Town Bylaw and the current plan is to only include those committee meetings in a hybrid format. If the Board would like the other committees to have this ability, it would cost an additional thousand dollars at the very least. Daigle clarified that the equipment in the Broadcast PC must be operated by a broadcaster for the meetings. Personnel is limited so it is not as simple as just scheduling whenever convenient for the committee. LaBrie noted attendance at physical meetings is very minimal, but she thinks this is worth the investment due to the increase attendance when meetings were held virtually. Anderson asked if anybody had investigated Zoom Rooms, and said CARES would fully fund it. They can be installed in all public buildings and any meeting could be broadcast with public participation. Daigle had not heard of this but questioned if that software could connect with our broadcast equipment and be compatible. LaPointe asked if there is a weekly or monthly plan fee for the Owl. Daigle believes it's just the purchase of the hardware. The Town does pay Zoom already to utilize it for virtual meetings. Sultzbach said that they will look into the concept of Zoom Room and if it is feasible. Anderson asked if this would be entirely covered by CARES; Sultzbach answered the initial purchase of the equipment will be but the funding expires in December so personnel fees incurred after that will have to be funded from the budget. Ultimately, the Board agreed for those meetings required by Bylaw to have capability of live broadcast with Zoom remote participation.

LaPointe moved the Board approve the upgrades to our Cable/Video/Broadcast system to include equipment to allow for hybrid meetings as presented this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Financial Updates-

- a. The first installment of ARPA funding has been wired into our accounts.
- b. Veteran's payments have been certified by the state and will be rolling out on a consistent basis moving forward.
- c. I coordinated with department heads to develop a list of capital items that would fall under the state ARPA umbrella. This list came in over \$96,000,000 in infrastructure needs. This does not include roads.
- d. I attended a meeting with the Finance Committee last week to participate in their goal setting discussion. This collaboration will help ensure FinCom's goals are aligned with the financial priorities set by the Board of Selectmen and Town Manager's office.
- e. ARPA Spreadsheet update attached.

Personnel Updates-

- a. N/A

Project Updates-

- a. The Winchendon Housing Authority lent the use of their lift so that BCA Architects could further inspect Town Hall to develop a conditions assessment.

- b. I toured Town Hall with Jim Hachey from Monty Tech to identify potential projects that would fit within their curriculum. Special thanks to Moe Ward for making the introduction.
- c. Work has started to replace the railings at Town Hall along Front Street. Samples of the existing millwork have been removed and are being replicated off site.
- d. I attended a site visit for the Winchendon Community Park in late July. This included members from various boards, predominantly Zoning, to address any questions as the project moves through the permitting process.
- e. Phase 2 site testing is underway at 3-11 Beech Street, including a recent round of ground penetrating radar to detect possible underground fuel tanks.
- f. I was joined by DPW and Planning & Development to examine the corner across the street (Lake and Spring). We are working to identify funds to place a modest green space there to improve the appearance of our "Downtown Gateway".
- g. We will be flipping Front St. to a one way down the hill towards Lake Street as a preliminary effort to examine the traffic pattern heading into Blair Square. As part of this, traffic will be directed down Lake St (also one way), then up Spring Street. Lake Street will be freshly paved in advance of this change using Ch.90.
- h. Our team continues to meet weekly with representatives from Bull Spit Brewery to ensure the 4 Summer Drive property remains on schedule. Exterior asbestos remediation will begin this week, while the interior remediation is complete. A P&S for the property is currently being drafted by legal counsel.
- i. I met with architects from Tighe & Bond at Old Murdock Senior Center last week to discuss the needed repairs. Given the value of the project, we will need to secure an OPM prior to selecting a designer. This RFP will be going out this fall, with a designer to be secured over the winter, repairs in the early summer.
- j. A pre-construction meeting was held for the Railroad St. project – with work expected to begin shortly after Labor Day. This will include new sidewalks stretching down to Central Street, more trees, and better-defined curb cuts.
- k. We released an RFP for design services to replace the water main from Ashburnham along Sherbet Road. This will help us address ongoing water infrastructure needs throughout the community.

Miscellaneous Updates –

- a. I met with the President of Franklin Pierce University to talk about opportunities for a partnership that would benefit both parties. We will work together to create avenues for FPU students to volunteer in our community, opportunities for our WPS students to pursue a degree should they desire after high school, and coordinate interactions between our athletic programs and those at the University.
- b. I met with the owner of the IGA and our Town Planner on site to discuss barriers to the site. We will be working closely to try to secure a tenant for that high profile storefront in the heart of our downtown.
- c. I attended a virtual seminar to discuss the Montachusett Economic Development District & Montachusett Region Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies. This was in part to advocate for a regional effort to utilize ARPA funding for the expansion of broadband throughout the area.
- d. I have been regularly communicating with our Board of Health to track announcements from the DPH and CDC in relation to the spread of COVID-19. Winchendon as of Thursday the 5th is seeing a 3.73% positivity rate, an increase from .35% in mid-July. Vaccination rates in town rest around

45%, over 20% lower than the state average. A flyer regarding our Vaccination Demographics is attached.

Ward thanked the Town Manager, Accounting staff Joanne Goguen and Callie Knowler, and the Veterans' Agent Steven Bassett for straightening out Veterans payments. He asked if we have a set time during the month when they will get their checks moving forward. Sultzbach said there will be one more odd offset makeup pay early this month and that going forward in September, it will be consistent. He will confirm which week. There was a huge backlog of issues and changes on the State level which caused the delay in payments. Cleaning that up with the state was a priority but we had to hit the brakes and be responsible from financial standpoint.

10. MINUTES:

10.1. Monday, July 19, 2021, Regular Meeting – **Ward moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of July 19, 2021, seconded by Anderson. The motion carried 4-0-1 with LaBrie abstaining.**

10.2. Monday, June 28, 2021, EXECUTIVE SESSION - **Ward moved to approve the executive session minutes of June 28, 2021, and release them, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

11. COMMUNICATIONS:

12. AGENDA ITEMS: LaBrie noted that the next meeting is scheduled for August 30, 2021.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION: There was no Executive Session scheduled for this evening.

14. ADJOURNMENT: Anderson moved to adjourn at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor C. Tower

Taylor Tower
Administrative Assistant