

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 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

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- National Grid's Ash Street Pole Petition No. #30332268 (filed)
 - September 2, 2021 Memo from DPW Director to BOS Regarding Pole Petition (filed)
 - September 1, 2021 Abutter's Notice (filed)
- August 29, 2021 Notice of Resignation from Patrick Moon, Communications Committee (filed)
- Annual Update from IT Director (attached)
- Annual Update from Director of Planning & Development (attached)
- Letter Received August 9, 2021 from Atty. Stacy Norrell re: Notice of Intent to Sell 185 Baldwinville Road (filed)
 - August 11, 2021 Memo from Town Manager re: First Right of Refusal for 185 Baldwinville Road (filed)
 - Recommendation to Board re: First Right of Refusal Option from Planning/Conservation & Assessors Dept. (filed)
- September 13, 2021 Memo from Town Manager re: Town Hall Conditions Assessment (attached)
 - September 2, 2021 Conditions Assessment from Building Conservation Associates, Inc. (attached)
- September 13, 2021 Memo from Town Manager re: Board and Committees Structure (attached)
 - Charter Section 2-3 (attached)
 - Excerpt from Board of Selectmen Policies and Procedures re: Advisory Committees of the Selectmen (attached)
- January 25, 2016 Board of Selectmen Minutes re: Student Selectmen Procedures (attached)
 - October 19, 2011 Letter to Winchendon Public Schools re: Student Representative (attached)
 - October 12, 2011 Board of Selectmen Minutes re: Student Representative (attached)
- Draft Rendering of Gateway Park (attached)
- Draft Special Town Meeting Schedule (filed)
- September 13, 2021 Town Manager's Report (attached)
- Minutes to be Approved:
 - August 30, 2021 Regular Meeting

LaBrie called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. She asked if anyone in the audience was audio or video recording, to which none was heard.

1. **SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Ward thanked Fire Chief Smith for his organization of a 9/11 memorial. He was saddened by lack of attendance but commended Chief Smith for his work.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Manuel King, Director of the Beals Memorial Library, invited the Board and all in the community to their 108th anniversary celebration to be held Saturday, October 2nd from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. A bench will be dedicated in memorial to Barbara LaFrennie, longtime advocate and volunteer for the library.
3. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - 3.1 National Grid/Verizon New England Pole Petition No. 30332268 – Ash St. - Ward read into record the Public Hearing notice for the Pole Petition. National Grid and Verizon New England are looking to install one Joint Owned (JO) pole on Ash Street.

Anderson moved to open the Pole Petition Public Hearing, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the hearing was opened.

DPW Director, Brian Croteau, finds the request acceptable and has included a memo for the Board. Abutters have been notified and none came forward with questions or concerns.

Anderson moved to close the Pole Petition Public Hearing, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the hearing was closed.

Ward moved to approve the Pole Petition for one Jointly Owned pole on Ash Street, Plan No. 30332268 as presented this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

4. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:

- 4.1. Resignation Communications Committee – Patrick Moon – With regret, Mr. Moon is resigning from the Communications Committee. He has moved out of Town and will no longer be able to serve on this committee. Anderson thanked Mr. Moon for volunteering and described him as having been a wonderful asset to the community. Ward noted that Mr. Moon had thanked Linda Daigle, Ray Coe and Barbara Anderson for their support.

Anderson moved to accept with regret the resignation of Patrick Moon from the Communications Committee and thank him for his service, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

5. PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS: There were no permits or licenses before the Board this evening.

6. BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS:

- 6.1. Department Update from Don O’Neil, Director of Technology – Mr. O’Neil was be present on his report to the Board of Selectmen. He has provided a bullet point list of topics to review with the Board this evening. He noted he is always busy being a Department Head of one.

1. New Assessor Server, and payroll server.
 - This has been completed and was in dire need of replacement. Operations in the Assessor’s office should run much smoother now.
2. New email server – switching town email to: Winchendon-ma.gov
 - Once the server is set up, the townofwinchendon.com emails will be forwarded for at least a year to allow for a seamless transition.
3. Upgrading firewalls
 - Town Hall, Fire Department, Police Department, DPW and Library will all get upgraded firewalls
4. Document Scanning project
 - Right before COVID, we were awarded a Community Block Grant to digitize files in the Planning and Building Offices. The work will cost more than what the grant awarded, so Town Staff is currently working on obtaining more funding. The goal is to have appropriate files available on the website so that residents can easily find files they need.
5. Fiber connection to Police station
 - Backups are all done at the Police Station and are stored offsite. Right now, it is a little slow so Mr. O’Neil is working on correcting that.
6. New server for the PD
 - Their server is about eight or nine years now and is a little slow. They will receive a new server to speed things up. They will have two separate servers.
7. New server for the FD
 - Wiring at the Fire Department is a little tricky and will be time consuming to unravel it all and install a new server.
8. Working with Linda on broadcast updates
 - O’Neil has been working with Daigle and Access AV to allow for hybrid access to Board meetings.
9. Upgrading PC’s in the senior center

-O'Neil described these PC's as ancient and in need of updating.

10. Preparing for release of Windows 11
11. Day to day break fix

LaPointe wondered if there could be an internship offered with the School Department to ease Mr. O'Neil's workload since he is a department of one. Anderson was concerned about the Town's vulnerability to being hacked, referring to the recent hacking in Peterborough that resulted in the loss of millions of dollars. O'Neil described the safety measures he has in place to protect the Town and he described the Town as being in good shape. Ward would like to see some formal training on Town staff to help inform them of suspicious emails and good practices to avoid exposing the town to hackers.

- 6.2. Department Update from Tracy Murphy, Director of Planning and Development – Ms. Murphy was present on her report to the Board. She provided a PowerPoint presentation for the Board and discussed staffing, staff initiatives and responsibilities. Her department provides assistance to the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Conservation Commission, Winchendon Redevelopment Authority and the Toy Town Community Partnership. Murphy serves as the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Coordinator. Murphy discussed a new Grant Activity page on the website which provides links to the programs themselves so people can learn about those. She shared with the Board all the open grants that the Town has right now, totaling \$2,014,251. There is also \$4,340,000 in funding available from the Massachusetts Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). She reviewed eleven current projects happening in Winchendon that her office is facilitating. She informed the Board that the Planning Board will be busy moving forward with Zoning Bylaw amendments and she encouraged public input. Ward thanked Murphy for initiating the addition of grant monies to the website. He asked for additional education and public outreach on the Right to Farm status that Winchendon holds. Anderson expressed several concerns with office procedures and current projects.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

- 7.1. First Right of Refusal – 185 Baldwinville Road – The Selectmen's office received notice from Kevin Doyle, through his Attorney Stacy Norrell, who introduced herself to the Board, that Mr. Doyle intends to sell land which is currently under the provisions of Chapter 61 and is seeking whether the Board of Selectmen will exercise or waive its First Right of Refusal. The land consists of .818 acres pursuant to MGL c.61A (Forest Land) and a portion of the 50 acres as documented by the Forest Land Tax Lien dated January 24, 2012. A letter from Attorney Norrell with the associated attachments including the draft Purchase and Sale Agreement along with a map of the parcel was provided for the Board's information. The office has received word back from our Regional Assessor who advises they are not aware of any interest the Town might have in pursuing its purchase option; the Planning Dept. recommends the Board not act on the Right of First Refusal and the Conservation Commission met at the time of this writing and did also vote the Board not act on the Right of First Refusal.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen not exercise or assign its first refusal option to purchase .818 acres of land owned by Kevin A. Doyle located at 185 Baldwinville Road, Winchendon, MA as presented this evening, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

LaPointe moved to take agenda item 8.1 out of order, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

- 7.2. Town Hall Conditions Assessment Review - The Town Manager provided the Board the following memo on this topic along with the analysis of the building provided by BCA Architects.

As you are aware, the Town of Winchendon is facing a significant backlog in unaddressed capital projects. As part of an effort to remedy this issue, my office has made it a priority to identify trouble assets in town to help us identify the potential costs our community could be facing as we move down the road. This will help us better identify funding opportunities, or at minimum, prioritize and plan out these repairs as funding becomes available.

At your June 28th meeting I requested \$7,500 to be transferred from the Finance Committee Reserve account for the purpose of hiring an architectural firm to conduct an exterior conditions assessment of the Town Hall Structure located here at 109 Front Street. As mentioned in previous meetings, our

newly minted Master Plan calls out the historic Town Hall structure as a cultural resource in Town with no plans in place for maintenance, restoration, or preservation.

BCA Architects of Newton, MA was secured to carry out a top to bottom exterior analysis of the building. This included multiple site visits, as well as a complete vertical inspection by lift. The attached report details the findings of these inspections, highlighting the three structures that make up modern day Town Hall including the original Town Hall, the original Fire Station, and the 1986 addition connecting the two points.

Exterior conditions are called out by building material, including brick, granite, composite materials, and wood. Each category is highlighted individually, incorporating recommended remedies for the windows, roofing, and masonry. I did stress that the Town would likely not have the resources to repair the building in one shot, and as such at my recommendation the consultants provided options for phasing in the work over the next 5-10 years.

6 Phases are provided, totaling in \$4,535,464 in estimated repair costs (Adjusted for inflation). Each passing year would result in an additional increase in cost of roughly \$160,000 per year. These phases will be added to our Capital Plan as part of the upcoming comprehensive review that the Capital Planning Committee will be undertaking in the coming year. The first Capital Planning Committee meeting of the year is slated for this upcoming Wednesday, September 29th.

Ward said he liked the report and he would like to see more effort made to preserve these historic buildings rather than ignoring maintenance needs and allowing the buildings to accumulate further disrepair. Anderson commented that having a capital plan is fabulous but at every Town Meeting we request funding for the latest emergency; sometimes it's approved and sometimes it is not. It's an emergency until voted down and then we don't hear about it anymore. We have insurmountable projects ahead of us and maybe Town Hall is not insurmountable, maybe the Senior Center is not insurmountable but all these projects together is a lot for the public to take in. We need better planning and better organizing our capital needs so that when we say we need to have it, we need to have it and we build public trust.

Salter would like focus on the needed Fire Department repairs. Ward reminded the Board that Town Meeting resulted in a "no" vote on the funds needed to repair the Fire Department. LaPointe said that with proper capital planning strategies and enforcement, she views these repairs as doable and not insurmountable. It was discussed that a Community Preservation Act, which is an added tax that would help fund repairs such as this, has been voted down at Town Meeting in the past. LaPointe suggested outreach and education might help if this item was to be placed for a Town Meeting vote again.

- 7.3. Boards and Committees Structure - Town Manager Sultzbach provided the Board with the following memo. The Selectmen were also provided with the Board's policy on appointing committees to aid on matters under their jurisdiction. The Bylaws make reference to specific committees, notably the Finance Committee, Board of Health, Council on Aging, Audit Committee and the Group Insurance and Benefit Committee. The Town Manager has reached out to Town Council regarding further clarification with any state laws that might pertain to this subject.

As a follow up to your August 30th meeting, I wanted to confirm with Legal Counsel the process for the Board of Selectmen to create committees. As the Town's Chief Executive Authority the Board of Selectmen are permitted to form a committee at any time regarding any subject. It would be typical for the Board to provide this committee with a charge, then publicize the meeting to solicit volunteers.

Board members may appoint members to these committees with 1 year appointments being the recommended increment. This newly implemented board or committee would vote for its own chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The group would be bound by open meeting law, and would have to be sworn in by the Town Clerk pursuant to G.L. c.41, §107. The existence of this new board or committee would not need to be reflected in the Town Charter or Bylaws.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

8.1 Student Selectmen Representative – This item was visited out of order, after item 7.1. This has been placed back on the agenda for further discussion. Looking through past records, it appears that in 2011, a letter soliciting a student representative was sent out to Winchendon Public Schools, The Winchendon School and Monty Tech but there doesn't appear to be any interest found at that time. The Board addressed this again in December of 2016 but tabled the agenda item with a 3-2 vote at the January 25, 2016 meeting. Candia Frye, an English teacher and member of Heal Winchendon came forward to speak to this topic, along with Camille Hart, student representative. LaBrie advocated for the addition of a Student Selectmen Representative, expressing her belief that it would provide a bridge in communication with the School Department and the School Committee. Frye informed the Board on current happenings within the School. She also discussed a survey that was sent to thousands of stakeholders within the school system, hoping to ascertain what was lacking, what can be improved and what future goals and initiatives are. She apprised the Board of several exciting initiatives in the school, such as Introduction to Engineering classes and a dual enrollment program that allows senior students to earn college credits prior to graduation. Anderson shared her opinion that the nature of Selectmen's business, such as marijuana licensing, dog hearings that could result in euthanasia of someone's pet, provides an inappropriate environment for a student. She suggested an internship instead. LaPointe shared some positives of a student representative and thinks it should not be written off just yet. LaBrie thanked the Board for their input and said they can continue to discuss this topic and look into the logistics of it.

8.2 Draft Rendering of Gateway Park – The Selectmen were provided a draft rendering of the Gateway Park coming in to Winchendon that was discussed at the last meeting. This will be placed on Lake Street, which has been repaved and changed to a one-way street. Murphy and Brian Croteau, Director of Public Works, came forward to discuss this project that is funded with grant money. Murphy said that indigenous vegetation will be planted without affecting the sight lines. Croteau said a crosswalk and a small ramp will be added along with signage for the bike path.

8.3 Fall Special Town Meeting November 8, 2021 – The date for Special Town Meeting has been confirmed with the School Department, the Finance Committee and the Town Moderator. The Selectmen were provided a draft schedule with some tentative dates to be confirmed. Ward would like to vote their recommendations after the Finance Committee public hearing, in the interest of public participation.

Ward moved to schedule the Special Town Meeting for Monday, November 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. and to open the warrant tomorrow, Tuesday, September 14, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. and to close the warrant on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 12:00 noon, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Financial Updates-

- a. Federal and State reporting is nearly complete for year end.
- b. Our Tax Collector has noted a significant increase in outstanding water bill payments.
- c. We are coordinating with our Assessors Office to set the tax rate for the upcoming fiscal year.
We expect this hearing to occur in November.

Personnel Updates-

- a. The recently vacant Executive Assistant position in the DPW will be filled by Taylor Tower. The Administrative Assistant vacancy in the Town Manager's office has been posted.
- b. We will be filling a backup position for our Building Commissioner. The previous backup took a full time role in Gardner.

Project Updates-

- a. Front St heading out of Blair Square has been flipped to a one way. This will be marked temporarily with barrels for the time being, with a permanent change to the infrastructure slated to occur in the spring.
- b. The Winchendon Community Park Amphitheater design is nearly complete. The project will go out to bid this winter.

- c. Some additional oil barrels were discovered at the Beech St. property. This will have an impact on the cleanup cost, with a final estimate due to be delivered in the next week.
- d. Central Mass Masonry will be coming in next week to complete the emergency masonry work at Town Hall.
- e. We are moving forward with our studies of the existing water infrastructure in town. We expect to have an update in the late fall.

Miscellaneous Updates –

- a. Preliminary meetings have been held for Fall Fest. This included the Planning and Economic Development office, the Town Manager's Office, as well as members of our Public Safety team.
- b. I coordinated a meeting between the Director of Athletics at Winchendon Public Schools and the Director of Athletics at Franklin Pierce University. It was a productive discussion, and both teams will work to coordinate on future initiatives between their communities of students.
- c. The Bud Barn recreational facility has reached substantial completion of its building and is expecting to open its doors in the late fall.

10. MINUTES:

10.1. Monday, August 30, 2021 Regular Meeting – **Ward moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of Monday, August 30, 2021, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

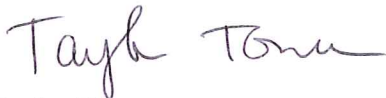
11. COMMUNICATIONS: LaBrie noted that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 27, 2021.

12. AGENDA ITEMS:

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

14. ADJOURNMENT:

Respectfully submitted,



Taylor Tower
Administrative Assistant