

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2021
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present:

Audrey LaBrie, Chairwoman
Rick Ward, Vice-Chairman
Barbara Anderson
Amy Salter
Danielle LaPointe

Justin Sultzbach, Town Manager
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant of November 8, 2021
 - Special Town Meeting PowerPoint presentation by Town Manager Justin Sultzbach
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Chairwoman LaBrie called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All stood for the Pledge of the Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

When asked by the Chair if anyone in the audience was audio or video recording the meeting this evening, there was no response.

1. SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There were no comments or announcements this evening.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

There were no public comments or announcements this evening.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1 Vote of Board to Finalize the Special Town Meeting Warrant of Nov. 8, 2021 - The Town Manager reviewed the final draft of the Special Town Meeting Warrant with the Board.

Article 1 – Committee Report – Customary article.

Article 2 – Payment of Prior Year Bills from Free Cash in the amount of \$1,621.25.

Article 3 – Central St. Municipal Lot Construction: This article is seeking to transfer \$65,000 from Free Cash. The Capital Planning Committee has reviewed and approved the project.

Article 4 – DPW Replacement Truck Purchase: This article is seeking to transfer from Free Cash \$66,735.27 for the purchase.

Article 5 – Fund FY21 Water Budget Deficit: This article is seeking to transfer from free cash \$81,562.65 to fund the prior year deficit.

Article 6 – Fund FY21 Wastewater Budget Deficit: This article is seeking to transfer from Free Cash \$154,131.98 to fund the prior year deficit.

Article 7 – Fund FY22 Water Budget Deficit: The Town Manager explained this article is seeking to reduce the FY22 Water Budget and is being recommended by the Department of Revenue due to the prior year's revenue shortfall. To fund the shortfall, voters will be asked to decrease the FY22 budget by \$70,000 with cuts that have been identified to minimize the total amount requested at Town Meeting; the remaining projected deficit of \$114,406 is being requested to be covered through Free Cash with that number being finalized. Sultbach explained that this action needs to be done quickly because of the tax recap to pass in November. If the Article is voted down, the tax rate would not be certified and the Town would run into a deficit that would have to be addressed at another Special Town Meeting. He also noted that the Department of Local Services has recommended the Selectmen meet to raise the rates for Water and Sewer. He briefed them on a long term plan to try and rectify this multifaceted issue.

Article 8 – Fund FY22 Wastewater Budget Deficit: Similar to the above article, voters will be asked to decrease the FY22 budget by \$100,000 with cuts that have been identified to minimize the total amount requested at Town Meeting; the remaining projected deficit of \$199,217 is being requested to be covered through Free Cash with that number also to be finalized.

Article 9 – Fund FY22 Veterans Service Director Personnel Account Deficit: This article is seeking an increase of 70 hours to the budget to fund the additional efforts of the new Veteran's Services Director to address the backlog of Veterans' claims due to the untimely passing of the previous Agent. The amount of \$1,553.00 is being requested with a transfer from Free Cash.

The Town Manager noted the next three articles were brought forth by the Finance Committee. They are financial best practices that he supports.

Article 10 – Fund OPEB Trust Account: This articles seeks to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$50,000 to the OPEB Trust Account to begin to set aside annually coverage of ongoing costs of retiree healthcare and life insurance costs.

Article11 – Fund Contractual Separation Pay-outs: This article seeks to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$50,000 to a Reserve Account to fund contractual separation payouts of vacation time and/or sick time upon retirement or otherwise leave of employment with the town.

Article 12 – Fund Stabilization Account: This article seeks to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$130,000 to the Stabilization Account.

Article 13 – Cracksealer Authorization: This article seeks authorization to enter a 3-year lease purchase agreement for a Cracksealer to be funded through the Operating Budget. He confirmed the total amount with the DPW Director to be \$93,000 and asked to amend the draft warrant noting the annual amount to be \$31,000 a year.

Article 14 – Accept Deed in Lieu of Foreclosure – Beech St.: This article consists of two properties which combined owe just over \$150,000 in back taxes. Instead of the Town taking the property which takes several years to do and includes fees, the property owner wants to donate it to the town. It's anticipated about \$180,000 in cleanup costs for the site as well as a cost to demolish and remove the garage. The sale of the property would cover the cost of this work. The intent is to transfer the property

to the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority in Article 15. The goal is to rehabilitate the house and garage site at no cost to the taxpayers and drastically improve the downtown gateway in the process.

Article 15 – Transfer Beech St. to the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority.

Article 16 – Transfer Parcel 153 to Bull Spit: This article seeks to transfer a small undevelopable piece of property that was overlooked when adjacent parcels of land were authorized for transfer at a previous Town Meeting.

Article 17 – Street Acceptance – Madison Ave.: The required paperwork has been provided by the developer and the road is ready to be accepted at Town Meeting. Approvals for easements are being finalized.

LaPointe asked about OPEB recalling back in 2015 it was mentioned in the DLS report; she asked if the Town Manager could review the report and see if there are any other action items we may be needing to attend to. This will be put on an upcoming meeting agenda.

Ward moved the Board finalize the Special Town Meeting Warrant of November 8, 2021 as discussed this evening; seconded by Salter.

Sultzbach confirmed this includes the amended language in Article 13, changing the figure to \$31,000. The Chair confirmed.

By a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

5. ADJOURNMENT:

Ward moved to adjourn; LaPointe seconded. By a vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 6:31PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Daigle
Executive Assistant