

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
TRI-BOARD MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN
AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 2021**

Approved: 9/14/21

WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
RCUD SEP 15 2021 AM 11:30

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

TRI-BOARD MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tom Kane, Chairman of the Finance Committee, called their meeting to order 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.

BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS: TRI-BOARD MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE / SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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.

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.

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.

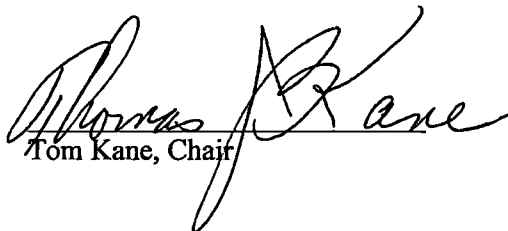
Toy Town Elementary On Bill Repayment Lighting Upgrade – The Green Communities Program has recently announced that they are revising the award amounts for communities that have received \$750,000 or more over the course of the program. Winchendon falls in this category, meaning our max award has dropped 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.

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.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Tower
Recording Secretary


Tom Kane, Chair