

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 2021 6:30 P.M.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present – Selectmen:

Audrey LaBrie, Chair (6:49 p.m.)
Rick Ward, Vice Chair
Barbara Anderson
Danielle LaPointe
Amy Salter

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

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- August, 2021 Notice of Vacancies (filed)
- Snowbound Club, Inc. Entertainment Permit Application for September 11, 2021 “Snowbound Throwdown” (filed)
- Kalon Farms “Pop Up Bull Yard” Entertainment Permit and One Day Liquor Licenses Applications (filed)
- Toon & Tune Application to Transfer License to Northeast Recyclers LLC (filed)
- August 30, 2021 Memo from Town Manager to Board re: Gateway Park Introduction (attached)
- Draft Water & Sewer Assistance Program Application (attached)
- August 30, 2021 Memo from Town Manager to Board re: Winchendon Community Park Amphitheater Update (attached)
 - May 2021 Site Plan # 315702P008C-001 by Beals & Thomas (attached)
- August 9, 2021 Town Manager’s Report (attached)
- Minutes to be Approved:
 - August 9, 2021 Tri-Board Meeting

Vice Chair Ward called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked if anyone was video or audio recording, to which Ed Ford of Brown Street announced that he was.

- 1. SELECTMEN’S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** LaPointe thanked all those who attended the Winchenstock Benefit and said the event raised \$9,000 in funds for the Community Action Committee while simultaneously supporting the Rod & Gun.

Anderson thanked everyone who came out to GAR Park for the Summer Concert Series and thanked the Recreation Commission for all their work in organizing the Series.

Ward said School is back in session and asked everyone to slow down on the road. He also explained that he had the opportunity to visit to a new business on Central Street named Appleberry Fabrics. He attended their soft opening which he described as busy, and asked everyone to remember to support Winchendon businesses.

- 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None were heard.
- 3. PUBLIC HEARINGS:** There are no public hearings scheduled this evening.
- 4. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:**
- 4.1. Notice of Vacancies on Board of Selectmen appointed Boards and Committees – Ward read aloud the current list of vacancies on boards and committees the Selectmen appoint, and asked that anyone that might be interested send a letter/email of interest to the Town Manager’s office. Also, there is an online application that also may be utilized.

5. PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:

- 5.1. Entertainment Permit – Snowbound Club “Snowbound Throwdown” Sept. 11, 2021 – Dean Sweeney was present on his application to hold this fifth annual event from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on September 11th. The event will consist of three bands playing live rock music outdoors. The Snowbound Club currently has a temporary license for outdoor service of alcoholic beverages and they will be hiring Police Detail for the event. Sweeney informed the Board that some attendees will make food donations to go to food pantries in Templeton and Winchendon.

Anderson moved to approve the Entertainment Permit for the Snowbound Club for the “Snowbound Throwdown” event to be held on September 11, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

- 5.2. Entertainment Permit / Special One Day Licenses – “Pop Up Bull Yard”, Rebecca Higgins – Bull Spit Brewery would like to continue their “Pop Up Bull Yard” on Central St. for weekends in September, October and possibly a couple in November, weather permitting. They have 7 licenses available under Jim Hunt and would like to add additional licenses, up to 30, under Rebecca Higgins, who is the General Manager. The ABCC advised the issuance of these permits would be the decision of the Local Licensing Authority, which is the Board of Selectmen. There were no issues from Department Heads. Upon approval of the Board, the applicant will provide an extended lease with the property owner and an updated Certificate of Insurance for the Town. As a courtesy, abutters were notified of this agenda item this evening and invited to attend and express concerns or comments. Ward noted the additional hour of operating time requested each day; Hunt replied that the music hours will stay the same but they noticed that people were not typically ready to leave at 8:00 p.m. and might enjoy the extra hour to finish their food and drink. Anderson noted it will be dark at 9:00 p.m. in October and asked if that was a concern, to which Higgins responded that they installed lighting that operates on a timer beginning at 7:00 p.m. and ending at 10:00 p.m.

LaBrie arrived at 6:49 p.m.

Anderson moved to approve the Entertainment Permit and Special One Day Liquor Licenses for seven additional One-Day Wine and Malt Licenses to Jim Hunt and also up to an additional 30 Special One-Day Licenses to Rebecca Higgins for the Pop Up Bull Yard located at 270 Central Street for additional weekends in September, October and November as presented this evening, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Anderson asked if there will be fires once it gets cold. Hunt answered they have been working with the Fire Department to have propane heaters available for customers to use.

- 5.3. Class III Motor Vehicle Junk License Transfer – Northeast Recyclers, LLC, 800 Spring St. – John and Holly Cahill, Tune & Toon LLC, were present on their request to transfer their business operations of the Class III Motor Vehicle Junk License to Stephen Gallant, Northeast Recyclers, LLC. They will remain the landowners of the property and no other changes to the operations is being proposed at this time. Mr. Gallant was also present this evening on this application. The Planning and Conservation Departments have noted there has been some expansion since originally permitted that is allowed but in the future they would like to see the site plan reviewed and to include the additional pieces of land. An updated Business Certificate has been provided along with Business Entity documents from the State, Worker’s Comp Certificate of Insurance, Used Car Dealer’s Bond and the pro-rated fee of \$75 has been paid.

Anderson expressed concern with the wetlands surrounding the property due to the nature of the business. Mr. Cahill said there was a major site plan review in recent years and asked Tracy Murphy, Director of Planning & Development to come forward. They explained that there is a third party that tests storm water frequently. Vehicles are processed appropriately, with removal of hazardous fluids and pollutants. There is also a third party responsible for ensuring vehicles are environmentally correct, meaning oil, antifreeze freon batteries, etc. are removed. The vehicles seen in the yard are empty shells; all hazards are removed.

Ward moved to approve the transfer of the Class III Motor Vehicle Junk Dealer's License located at 800 Spring Street to Northeast Recyclers, LLC with the condition the applicant seeks to update the site plan to include the additional lots within a year from this date, seconded by Salter. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

6. BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS:

6.1. Department Update from Don O'Neil, Director of Technology – This item was rescheduled.

LaPointe moved to take the items out of order and go to 8.1, seconded by Anderson. With a vote of all aye, the Board discussed 8.1 next with the agenda resuming as noted following that.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

7.1. An Update to the Board on Civics and Citizenship Changes at the High School – In her capacity as a para-educator at the school, Chairwoman LaBrie updated the Board on plans to increase student awareness of Town civics and citizenships. She discussed the orientation that the schools held for staff recently and said that it was incredible what the school has put together for plans moving forward. She asked the Board what they think about having a student representative on the Board of Selectmen. Anderson said she is extremely opposed to the idea and that meetings can be inappropriate for young students to be involved with. Labrie asked to have this topic added to a future agenda for further discussion amongst the Board.

7.2. Gateway Park Introduction – Sultzbach presented his following memorandum to the Board.

Board members, as we frequently mention our team is actively working to improve the major gateways to our downtown area as part of an economic development initiative. This is a priority highlighted in our Master Plan, and is featured on the FY22 BoS/TM Goals and Objectives. Specifically, we are looking to identify areas of blight and replace them with pockets of open space. We have been actively exploring the property at 3-11 Beech Street, an item that may come up on the 2021 Fall Special Town Meeting. In this scenario the garage would be raised as part of the site cleanup, with the two-family home potentially rehabbed and added to our affordable housing stock.

In anticipation of this prospective acquisition our team has started examining the corner of Spring Street and Lake Street – the parcel directly opposite the intersection. A photo of its present condition is attached. We are looking to redesign this corner in conjunction with the Beech St. property, with the intention of creating a "Gateway Park" for our downtown area. Redevelopment of this side of the road could be accomplished using remaining funds from our Shared Streets and Spaces Grant, as well as remaining Converse funds and small amounts of ARPA funding for storm water components. Funding for the Beech St. side would be dependent on funding not yet identified.

DPW Director Croteau has been reviewing Lake St. as part of the Blair Square solution, and preliminary plans have been reviewed by our Conservation Agent, Alison Manugian. Tracy Murphy is currently in the process of drafting a composite sketch to give us an idea for the potential of that area. We have also had conversations with the operator of the auto body shop on that corner. This initiative is a group effort in every sense of the term. A rendering will be brought forward at your upcoming September 13th meeting for preliminary review. This will be a community park, and we would like input from as many citizens as possible as we look to reframe the image of our downtown.

Murphy informed the Board that there is about \$40,000 in excess funds from a Shared Spaces grant that was obtained by the Town. The State has approved the use of these funds to create a new space along Lake Street, with native vegetation, a dedicated curb cut and a crosswalk to cross Spring Street to Beech Street. Sultzbach described the initiative as a marked improvement and a good point to start to shape the gateway into Winchendon. A more formal concept and sketch will be presented to the Board before work begins. LaPointe

asked to see a guardrail along the corner of Spring Street and Lake Street to prevent vehicles from crashing into the pond, to which Brian Croteau, Director of Public Works, answered that he plans to extend the guardrail for safety purposes. It was discussed that the street has already received one layer of leveler to establish pitches and contour, and a top coat will be placed as well. The street will be a one-way with two lanes dedicated for left-only and right-only turning.

Anderson thanked resident Tina Santos for her gardening work in the medians in Blair Square.

- 7.3. ARPA Funding Updates – In previous meetings, Sultzbach informed the Board of his intention to provide them with updates of how the ARPA funding is being spent.

- 7.3.1. Robbins Rd. Bridge Replacement, Sherbert Rd. Waterline Design, High St. Pump Station Upgrades – DPW Director Brian Croteau gave an update on the ARPA funding for these projects. He informed the Board that he received a small bridge grant in the amount of \$500,000. The project went out to bid and the lowest bid received was \$880,000. Luckily, he explained that the project is eligible for ARPA funding because it's a culvert that allows the river to pass through, which is storm water.

Next, he said the Sherbert Road water line from the plant to the town line needs to be replaced. ARPA funding can be secured, and additional grant funding can be sought if we have a design in place. He stressed the priority to fund this entirely through grant funding and not to ask the water users to have to saddle this large expense.

In regards to the Railroad Street project, Croteau said that they have hired oversight for the installation of water and sewer drainage; this is funded with ARPA monies.

On Town Farm Road, the DPW replaced a culvert pipe prior to paving. He described it as interesting, with no prior pipe actually installed, just rocks. A PVC pipe was installed, both on Town Farm Road and Independence Drive. Both basins on Independence Drive were collapsed so Croteau utilized ARPA funding to replace them.

In closing, Croteau said that there have been conversations with the Department of Environmental Protection regarding storm water leaching into sewage and having to treat it unnecessarily. Flow studies were done to determine bad areas in Town, and the cost came back at about \$175,000. He said he has roughly \$70,000 in his budget to devote to this project and he will seek \$105,000 in ARPA funding to fund the balance. This will reduce the amount of storm water going into the sewage plant, thus saving the Town money.

Anderson voiced her frustration with funds expended for designs in the hopes of receiving grants, if and when the grants are not received, she described those monies spent as a waste. Sultzbach said that there is no risk in design or engineering here because if this projects are not done, the system will fail. He hopes to obtain grant funding and expressed optimism with infrastructure bills coming down the pipeline from the federal government.

Labrie asked Sultzbach for a spreadsheet update what has been approved for designs and where the project currently sits. Ward said he appreciates the transparency shown in bringing these projects to the Board and to the public.

- 7.3.2. Water/Sewer Forgiveness Program – At the request of the Board, Town Manager Sultzbach met with his team to identify an opportunity to lessen the impact of outstanding water bills on residents. As mentioned during the water shut off conversation, the town is committed to finding ways to help citizens in need during these difficult times. Tracy Murphy, in conjunction with Brian Croteau, developed a Water/Sewer forgiveness program for residents that meet certain income requirements. These requirements are developed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This would be a one-time forgiveness up to \$250,

depending on qualifications. The forgiveness would be covered by ARPA funding as an allowable expense and the deadline for applications would be December 31, 2021. Murphy noted that she structured this very similarly to the fuel assistance program that is run through the CDBG grants. She said this would all be as confidential as allowed by Open Meeting Laws, but she will have to notify tax department and DPW who qualifies. This program is offered to residential users only. Once the application is completed, it is first come, first serve for eligible water and sewer users. Ward asked to see applications made available at FallFest.

Ward moved to approve the draft water sewer forgiveness program as presented this evening with applications to expire December 31, 2021, with funding from ARPA, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of Ward, aye, Salter, aye, LaPointe aye, LaBrie, aye and Anderson, no, the motion carried 4-1.

- 7.4. Consideration of Proposed Fall Special Town Meeting Schedule for Nov. 8, 2021 – Town Meeting is being proposed to take place on Monday, November 8th, 2021. The Interim Superintendent of Schools has been contacted to inquire if there might be any conflicts with them and for the use of the gymnasium. The Board was agreeable to this date, so a motion to set the date will be provided for the Board at their next meeting with a formal schedule detailing the timeline. Sultzbach urged any Board or Committee looking to place an item to see him.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

- 8.1 4 Summer Drive/Bull Spit Brewing Co. Redevelopment Update – Jim Hunt, Tracy Murphy and Justin Sultzbach were all present to provide the Board with an update on the redevelopment of this property. At this point, remediation work, a new roof, exterior repairs have been in progress. Hunt presented the Board with his vision board of the site and what the hospitality yard will look like in conjunction with the building. He explained that his company also purchased the Goodspeed building privately. That property will eventually tie in but right now, his priority is to restore the Foundry building. Asbestos in the building was removed. LaPointe said she is concerned about security given the proximity to the Clark YMCA, to which Hunt responded that his team met with the Clark team and they were thrilled that the abandoned building is now under responsible stewardship. Sultzbach added that this project still has to go through the whole permitting process so these concerns will be addressed then.
- 8.2 Winchendon Community Park Amphitheater Update – Sultzbach presented his following memorandum to the Board.

Board members, as you are aware, the planning for the Amphitheater at the Winchendon Community Park has been an ongoing process for the past several years. Recently the project struggled to navigate our town permitting requirements. I have worked closely with the Winchendon Community Park Committee, the architects, engineers, and members of our community over the last several months to answer questions for the community and satisfy the needs of the boards and commissions. I am happy to report that as of Thursday the 19th of August, the project has received full approval from the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Zoning Board.

With permitting now in hand, the project can move forward to the final design and bidding phase. We expect to have a contractor secured before the winter, with a bulk of the work to occur next spring. Beyond construction, we are also working to develop long terms plans for maintenance and operations. As part of these processes, we aim to include the public as much as possible. As a community park, it is crucial that this project is reflective of the community itself. With that in mind, please see attached draft plans for this project for your review. We would also welcome any feedback from the public, as they will be the ones to enjoy this community asset for years to come.

Sultzbach showed the preliminary site plan and discussed future plans with the Board. LaBrie asked if anyone in the audience would like to be heard, to which there was no response.

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

1. Financial Updates-

- Our Assessors Office has submitted the LA4, LA10, and LA 13 to DLS. We are working now to establish factors that will determine the tax rate for the upcoming year.
- Our Audit is ongoing, and we look forward to reporting the results.
- We are in the process of finalizing assignments for our Senior Tax work off.

2. Personnel Updates-

- Carlene Breene, our DPW Executive Assistant, has announced her resignation and impending retirement this fall. We have posted internally for the role for 7 days, as required by union contract language. A special thanks to Carlene for her years of dedicated service in Winchendon.

3. Project Updates-

- The redevelopment of 4 Summer Drive is ongoing. Remediation of hazardous materials on the roof and interior of the structure is complete, with soil remediation to take place this fall. The Bull Spit team is looking to start roofing and masonry work in September.
- Phase 2 testing of the Beech Street property is complete, with a probable cost for cleanup to return in early September. This figure will be crucial data for our Special Town Meeting.
- The Conditions Assessment for the Town Hall structure will be complete in early September, and should be ready for your review at your upcoming September 13th meeting.
- The Wayfinding Signage Initiative is moving forward. Members of our team met with the designer last week to finalize some details prior to fabrication. This will include gateway signs and signage for municipal buildings.
- A draft for OPM Services for the Old Murdock Restoration is in the works, and will be ready for review at your next Board of Selectmen meeting.
- You will no longer be able to enter Blair Square from Front Street heading northbound effective this upcoming Friday, September 3rd. All traffic coming down High Street will be diverted after the bridge down Lake Street. This will be a one way road heading out of Front Street moving forward as part of the Blair Square redesign. Barrels will be placed in the road for the next several months to provide an opportunity for motorists to adjust to the change. There will also be ample signage to direct traffic.
- Phase 2 of restorations at the Beals Memorial Library is ongoing. As we look to complete the design phase, we are anticipating the project to go out to bid this winter.
- Plans for a controlled burn of the house at the Winchendon Community Park are underway, with our Fire Department expecting to oversee the process on Saturday, October 2nd. The remains will be removed by our DPW, and the foundations will be broken, filled in, and leveled off with loam and seed.

4. Miscellaneous Updates –

- I was joined by our Planning/Development team to meet with the owners of the RHI building, located at the corner of Central and Railroad St. I briefly toured some of the interior of the building to better understand some of the barriers we are facing in terms of development.
- I met with the Communications Committee to participate in the kickoff of preliminary discussions for the negotiation of our Comcast contract.
- The Capital Planning Committee will be kicking off this September, pending an appointment from the School Committee at their August 26th meeting.
- I toured Murdock Farm several weekends ago. As always, should a local business owner like me to tour their operations please reach out to my office.

- A meet and greet was held for our veterans to introduce both myself and our new Veteran's Agent Steve Bassett. As always, we are fully supportive of our veterans and are always happy to accommodate their needs when possible.

Referring to social media conversations regarding the Gracie's Consignment and Home Goods Store having been asked to remove their sign, LaBrie asked Sultzbach to provide support to Gracie's and make sure they are informed of what signage they could install that is compliant with Town Bylaws. Anderson asked Sultzbach to place a signage discussion on a future agenda.

LaBrie shared with the Board that she has seen people commenting on social media that there is a company going around on a scooter, soliciting door to door. The company eventually stopped at her door and she informed them of her position on the Board and reminded them that they are in violation soliciting without a permit. She urged everyone that if a solicitor comes to your door, and you do not think they have a permit, report it to the non-emergency Police Department line at 978-297-1212.

10. MINUTES:

- 10.1. Monday, August 9, 2021 Regular Meeting including a Joint Meeting with Finance Committee and School Committee – Ward moved to approve the minutes for the regular meeting which was a joint meeting with the Finance Committee and the School Committee on Monday, August 9, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

11. COMMUNICATIONS:

12. **AGENDA ITEMS:** LaBrie said the meetings scheduled next month are on Monday, September 13th and September 27th.

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

14. **ADJOURNMENT:** Anderson moved to adjourn, seconded by LaPointe, with a vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Tower

Taylor Tower
Administrative Assistant