

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2022
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present -

Audrey LaBrie, Chair
Rick Ward, Vice Chair
Danielle Lapointe
Amy Salter

Justin Sultzbach, Town Manager
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant
Tamarah Casavant, Admin. Assistant

Absent -

Barbara Anderson

List of Documents Presented at the Meeting:

- Email communication dated 1/18/22 from Jill Sackett re: Deanne Keddy resignation (filed)
- Entertainment Permit Application – Family Fun Day at the Snowbound Club Feb. 19, 2022 (attached)
- Building Commissioners Project Code Recap dated 1/24/2022 (attached)
 - Building Commissioners Inspection report dated 6/17/20 – 1/14/22 (attached)
- Town Manager Memo dated 1/24/2022 regarding Six Month Review of Town Manager and BoS's Goals and Objectives (attached)
- Town Manager Memo dated 1/24/2022 regarding Joint Water Authority 1/19/2022 (filed)
 - Ashburnham & Winchendon Joint Water Authority Agenda dated 1/19/22 (filed)
 - Minutes of Ashburnham & Winchendon Joint Water Authority dated 10/20/21 (filed)
 - 4th quarter 2021 Operations and Maintenance Report for the water filtration plant (filed)
- Special and Annual Town Meeting Draft Schedule (filed)
- Town Manager Memo dated 1/24/2022 regarding discussion of ARPA Funding/Spending (attached)
 - Town of Winchendon ARPA Funding Spreadsheet (attached)
- Town Manager Memo dated 1/24/2022 regarding Finance Committee's Proposed Fiscal Policy Amendments (attached)
 - Finance Committee Proposed Fiscal Policy Amendments (attached)
- Report of the Town Manager January 24, 2022
- Minutes:
 - December 13, 2021, Regular Meeting

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

1. **SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** LaBrie thanked DPW for their efforts in maintaining the town through these persistent ice and snow storms the last few weeks. She encouraged residents to stay safe.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None was seen or heard
3. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** There were no public hearings this evening.
4. **APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:**
 - 4.1. Cultural Council Resignation – Deanne Keddy – LaBrie explained Deanne Keddy moved out of town and would no longer be able to participate. Ward and LaBrie thanked her for her service.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen accept the resignation of Deanne Keddy from the Winchendon Cultural Council and thank her for her service. LaPointe seconded.

Salter (Y) Ward (Y) LaPointe (Y) LaBrie (Y) 4-0 Approved

5. PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:

- 5.1. Entertainment Permit Sat., Feb., 19, 2022 – Family Fun Day at Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd. – Dean Sweeney was present on his application for an Entertainment permit to have a Family Fun Day Event at the Snowbound Club on February 19, 2022. It will include a variety of family friendly activities such as, cookout, fishing, snowmobile speed runs to be held across the street on Mill Glen Pond. Ward asked if this was dependent on ice safety, which Sweeney confirmed, absolutely.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen approve the Entertainment Permit for a Family Fun Day at the Snowbound Club for Sat., Feb. 19, 2022 to include ice fishing and snowmobile speed radar races on Mill Glen Pond. LaPointe seconded.

Salter (Y) Ward (Y) LaPointe (Y) LaBrie (Y) 4-0 Approved

6. BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS:

- 6.1. Department Update from Building Commissioner Geoff Newton – Building Commissioner, Geoff Newton was present to give a department update on how the building department is run and how much revenue it receives. He provided a year and a half of results (ran from July 1, 2000- present) gathering \$216,702 in the last year and a half. The Assessor's office gets a monthly report of revenue coming in and anything over \$1,000 needs verification the fee is appropriate. He reported there were about 889 permits issued, during this time, which require a lot of inspections. He also provided a daily report of inspections noting the blue highlights confirm being called back into work for Fire Department issues; the red highlights confirm when he used his motor vehicle to do an inspection. Order of Dwelling Visits are conducted as follows: Site Visits, footings, foundation, radon mitigation, framing, and sheeting. The entire dwelling and foundation is inspected with the Stretch Energy Code. COVID has delayed annual inspections and he is working on catching up on those now. He is working on getting 85 buildings up to code. He is working on a new format to get these new annual inspections completed.

Ward said the list Newton created was a benefit to the town. He appreciates it. He asked about the difference in permits from last year to this year. Newton stated that last year there were 32 and this year there are 8. He believes that this is COVID related. Geoff was thanked by the board for his report.

- 6.2. Snow Removal Process Update – DPW Director Brian Croteau was present to give an update on the Snow Removal Process. It's been an interesting winter and monitoring social media we wanted to make clear some of the policies and procedures of the town. Just to give you some history, the guys have logged over 155 hours this winter, and we are only in January. They have already spread 3,516 tons of salt and we used that all winter the past two years. Typically on a normal storm, not an ice storm, we pretreat the grounds, which takes about four to four and half hours. After that they put plows on vehicles and plow as long as needed. Once plowing is complete, they start retreating so snow gets back down to the asphalt. Sidewalks are difficult because of the consistency and amount. DPW maintains crosswalks on Central St, and will shovel or plow sidewalks from Blair Square to the bus stop pass the Fire Station. Croteau also noted the salt and sand availability at the town garage on Glenallen St. LaBrie asked about the sidewalks in front of the businesses and Croteau replied it is the business owner's responsibility to remove snow from the store fronts, as he does not have the staff for that.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

- 7.1. Six Month Review of Town Manager and Board of Selectmen Goals and Objectives – Town Manager Sultzbach reviewed the Goals and Objectives agreed upon with the Board of Selectmen. Sultzbach said we have made good progress but would like to highlight areas of improvement as a group to review. Items in red are in planning stage, items in yellow are ongoing and items in green are complete. He noted the yellow was in regards to Town Meeting and the goal to increase participation is 10%; he is not sure that he will make progress towards this goal due to the increasing COVID numbers. Item 6 in red pertaining to the Old Murdock Senior Center project, he noted the need to go through the design stage so the construction phase will not begin for a year. Ward said Sultzbach has done a fair assessment of the progress made and thanked him for his efforts. LaBrie suggested, COVID aside, revisiting childcare options for parents at Town meeting. Ward asked about providing transportation for the elderly to attend Town meeting.

7.2. Ashburnham/Winchendon Joint Water Authority Update – Town Manager Sultzbach updated the board on the meeting that was held on January 19, 2022. The Capital Plan was discussed at length, he said and the draft was included in their packets. There is a sizeable number of projects that we have to complete in the next ten years. At the next meeting he will have a more formal and concrete plan of how we can execute some of these projects in the most cost-effective way and will have conversations with Ashburnham on how to divide the burden of cost, right now at 50/50. He noted also that there was an authorized proposal for Tighe and Bond for services that Veolia provides and will keep the Board updated. LaBrie inquired about the repair and maintenance budget wondering what it was for. Sultzbach answered the physical plant exclusively. LaPointe asked about the impacts of the merger, what does this mean for us, right now can't go in house but was wondering if this might tie our hands down the line. Salter asked about ownership of the water plant and Sultzbach replied it's owned by both Ashburnham and Winchendon and the Wastewater facility is owned just by the Town. DPW Director Brian Croteau gave insight on how the Water Plant works and noted it is in need of a \$6,000,000 water main replacement. A portion of Ashburnham's water goes through that meter. Once we replace the line, a master meter will be put in and we only pay what goes through that meter. One filter treats everything. They have pumps that are solely their own and pay for their use. Ashburnham ships their waste to Gardner. They do not have a separate plant. Mr. Croteau was thanked for the information.

7.3. Special and Annual Town Meeting

7.3.1. Vote to Schedule Special and Annual Town Meeting for May 16, 2022, Approve Town Meeting Schedule including Opening and Closing of the Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrants – Town Manager Sultzbach explained the changes to the schedule and asked for approval from the board. LaBrie asked that we put more effort into advertising the Annual Town Meeting.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen schedule the Special and Annual Town Meeting for Monday, May 16, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. at Murdock Middle High School and to open the Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrants tonight, January 24, 2022, and to close the warrant on Monday, April 4, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. and to approve the updated Town Meeting Schedule as presented this evening. Seconded by LaPointe.

Salter (Y) Ward (Y) LaPointe (Y) LaBrie (Y) 4-0 Approved

8. OLD BUSINESS:

8.1. Discussion of ARPA Funding/Spending – Town Manager Sultzbach read his memo. LaPointe again wanted to reiterate she thought this process was done with the utmost transparency and acted within his authority and with the Board's support and is using the funds for their intended purposes. She felt the Town Manager has done his very best to be transparent and responsible with the spending. Ward agreed totally with LaPointe and felt the Tri-board concern was not so much in forming a committee or have someone else do it but to involve the members of the Finance Committee so more are aware of monies being spent. He suggested when the list is out, that it could be forwarded to the Selectmen and the Finance Committee. Sultzbach replied that was an easy fix and can forward to Tom Kane, Chair of the Finance Committee. Mr. Kane was present and stepped forward noting he appreciates the gesture, one of his concerns was that they had spent one million dollars on projects and a lot of those projects were projects with the Planning Board for a while missing funding. He believes that there needs to be some criteria to spend this money and selections should improve the town and provide lasting value. He appreciates his reports and asks the Town Manager might engage the Board of Selectmen in the criteria to consider. Sultzbach thanked Mr. Kane and noted it was before the Board to provide that kind of input in June and he will continue. DPW Director Brian Croteau again came forward to speak about an idea he had for ARPA funds. He proposed that we use the Wastewater Plant to take in outside sewage and collect a fee. Twenty-one years ago it was built but not to full capacity due to a money shortage. The wipes are breaking down the equipment and the plant is experiencing some other breakdowns. Croteau would like to put the process in to take out the wipes prior to reaching the plant. He would also like to get the plant running to full capacity so we can take in sewage and generate revenue. The study will tell us if the plant is capable, the equipment we would need to upgrade and profitability. Croteau spoke of his last request this evening to seek funding for engineering Project Design for grant funding for a bridge over at Mill Glen circle.

- 8.2. Finance Committee's Proposed Fiscal Policy Amendments – Town Manager Sultzbach spoke to the importance for the new proposed fiscal policies and amendments. The three amendments pertain to the Stabilization Fund, the Post-Employment Benefits Reserve Fund (OPEB) and Contractual Separation Liabilities Fund. He is concerned about taking funds removing the flexibility and asked for feedback from the Board. LaPointe offered that she was 100% in support of the policy with her only concern is the word “shall” and the concrete percentages. Kane explained that the OPEB falls in the same category as retirement, health insurance, some things in the budget that have to be covered. He said this is a policy not a bylaw and it guides you and directs you. The Board could address it if there is a concern; it's not being locked in legally. After further discussion, the Board felt it was a good step in the ability to pay future costs.

Ward moved the Board of Selectmen adopt the Fiscal Policy Amendments proposed by the Finance Committee as discussed, this evening. LaPointe seconded.

Salter (Y) Ward (Y) LaPointe (Y) LaBrie (Y) 4-0 Approved

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:

Financial Updates-

- a. The deadline for Capital Requests for FY23 was today. The CPC will hold their first meeting on January 31st.
- b. MIIA is in the process of finalizing increases for insurance costs in FY23. This is a crucial figure for balancing the FY23 Budget.

Personnel Updates-

- a. Three candidates were interviewed for the Assistant Accountant position. We are in the process of negotiating with a qualified finalist. Callie Knowler, our former Assistant Account, has agreed to provide temporary support for payroll and other duties until the new Assistant Accountant is settled.
- b. Interviews have started for the part time Conservation Agent position. We expect to have a finalist secured in the coming week.
- c. Resumes were reviewed for the part time Planning and Development Clerk role, with interviews expected to begin this week and carry into next.

Project Updates-

- a. A kickoff meeting was held today with CBI Consulting for the Old Murdock Restoration Project.
- b. A pre-bid walkthrough was held on site last Wednesday for the Winchendon Community Park Amphitheater project. Bids are due on February 3rd at 2pm.
- c. TEC Engineering is developing a proposal to carry Blair Square through the TIP process. Should the board support this expense (value tbd), it could potentially be phased in over several years. ARPA would be a potential funding source for Phase 1. We would apply to the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation to grant fund the other phases, or potentially build it into the Capital Improvement Plan.

Miscellaneous Updates –

- a. Union negotiations are ongoing as the agreements in place are set to expire this year. We are working to determine potential budget impacts as we work together towards in agreement.
- b. The Planning Board is in the early phases of reviewing potential zoning changes. A comprehensive review of our Zoning Bylaws is currently underway, with sections to appear at the ATM for review in approval. This would include a reworking of signage requirements. All proposed changes will incorporate an extensive public hearing process.
- c. Bull Spit is in the process of finalizing soil remediation plans. We are encouraging them to submit plans to start the permitting process for

building/site improvements. This will allow work to resume in the spring on schedule.

- d. The funding set aside at the May 2021 Annual Town Meeting for grant design funds has been applied to a review on Beech St. These designs will set us up for potential grant funds through the CDBG program. Surveying was carried out last month.
- e. The Bud Barn received the green light from the Cannabis Control Commission today and is hoping to open Friday. An official opening date will be distributed to the Board of Selectmen and Public Safety officials.

LaBrie inquired about the upcoming union negotiations and aligning all the contracts. Sultzbach replied that they are pretty well set and in line and he was also looking for parity noting that some have unique roles but in any areas they can be pulled together, he was working to resolve.

10. MINUTES:

10.1. Monday, December 13, 2021 - Regular Meeting

Ward moved to approve the Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting minutes of Monday, December 13, 2021 as presented this evening. LaPointe seconded.

Salter (Y) Ward (Y) LaPointe (Y) LaBrie (Y) 4-0 Approved

11. COMMUNICATIONS:

12. AGENDA ITEMS: LaBrie noted the next regularly scheduled meeting is February 14, 2022.

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

14. ADJOURNMENT:

Ward moved to adjourn, seconded by LaPointe. With a vote of all aye, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Salter (Y) Ward (Y) LaPointe (Y) LaBrie (Y) 4-0 Approved

Respectfully Submitted,



Tamarah S. Casavant
Administrative Assistant