

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES  
MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2022  
Town Hall, 4<sup>TH</sup> Floor Robinson-Broadhurst Conference Room  
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present:

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

Justin Sultzbach, Town Manager  
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant

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List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- 3.9.2022 DPW Director List of Roles and Responsibilities; Grants obtained; Major Projects Completed (attached)
- Brian Croteau's Resume (filed)
- Town Manger Memo dated 3.14.2022 pertaining to Grant Activity and Other Savings (attached)
- Town Manager Memo dated 3.14.2022 regarding Contract Negotiations – Summary of Request (attached)

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Chair LaBrie called Executive Session to order at 8:25P.M.

Executive Session – M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a): Subsection 2: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; DPW Director.

Town Manager Sultzbach presented the Board with DPW Director Brian Croteau's resume and a list of his current roles, responsibilities, grants he was successful in obtaining and the major projects that have been completed. Mr. Croteau reviewed the documents with the Board giving additional detailed information and noting he will obtain his bachelor's degree in April next year integrating classes towards a Master's Degree in Public Administration. He holds a Massachusetts D2 Full Operator license pertaining to drinking water and he just became a certified Massachusetts Tree Warden.

Mr. Croteau was thanked for the information he provided the Board and left Executive Session at 8:44P.M.

Sultzbach informed the Board that Mr. Croteau was not your typical employee and is easily one of the best people on his staff. Neighboring communities are looking to recruit him with it being hard to find an individual to do this type of work. He commented this is a modest request reflective of his efforts.

LaBrie asked if the contract would mirror the Police and Fire Chief's contracts and Sultzbach replied yes, both of those contracts have those mechanisms pertaining to the education incentive; other sections of the contract are similar as well. The Board had discussions on his current certifications, the education of the DPW Director, the management skills required of the role, the 7% increase with an Associate's Degree and what current DPW

Directors are being paid referencing the salary survey. It was noted that Mr. Croteau has obtained \$156,000 worth in grants to the town and \$1.3 million was pending.

The Board reviewed the salary request with the Town Manager clarifying the DPW Director's salary would stay in the current pay matrix with an increase at 2.5% with an education incentive that he would be entitled to 7.5% of his base salary for an associate's degree and 15% of his base salary for a bachelor's degree. Mr. Croteau currently holds an Associate's Degree.

Salter commented people should be rewarded for doing a great job and she has no problems with this request as it was proposed.

LaPointe felt Mr. Croteau goes above and beyond and warrants it.

Anderson commented she wanted more time to review this and do her research.

LaBrie reviewed the raises he would obtain per degree and the funds he has brought to the town.

**Ward moved to approve the salary recommendation with the incentive for education as presented by the Town Manager this evening and to create a formal contract authorizing the Town Manager to execute it; Salter seconded.**

Roll call vote:

**Ward (Y), Salter (Y), LaPointe (Y), Anderson (A), LaBrie (Y) 4-0-1 Approved, 1 Abstention**

Executive Session – M.G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a): Subsection 2: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; Town Manager.

Town Manager Sultzbach presented the Board with supplemental information they had requested at the last Executive Session pertaining to grant activity and his accomplishments. He also provided the Board with a summary of his request.

Sultzbach reviewed the specific accomplishments leading a team to amass over \$1,750,000 in grants and obtaining additional funding from the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation for the Winchendon Community Park Amphitheater Project. Beyond supplemental funding, he highlighted money saving abilities to negotiate lower cost on behalf of town services. Other important accomplishments he noted in the ten months he has been here were implementing a comprehensive Capital Planning system, making significant headway in solving the Water and Sewer Enterprise issues and moved several projects forward that were dormant including the development of 4 Summer Drive, the restoration of Old Murdock, the permitting of the Winchendon Community Park Amphitheater and the future construction of the Gateway Park at Beech St. He is willing to take on tough issues and it is a priority for him to move the Town forward.

LaPointe commented with the short time Mr. Sultzbach has been here, he has shown us and is making an impact.

The Board reviewed the memo regarding his summary request.

Sultzbach spoke about a way to minimize the impact of his request could be through a potential buyout of his health insurance. If the town were willing to buy out his health insurance for an annual payment of \$5,000, the Town would save over \$10,000 a year which would cover everything he is asking for.

Mr. Sultzbach left Executive Session at 9:35PM.

LaBrie noted that looking at his request, there is a \$9,750 difference and looking at all that he has done and the grants he has obtained, this would be money well spent.

Anderson thought it was too soon wanting to be conservative and see more to be able to justify this to the residents.

Salter commented the Town Manager has proven himself adding retaining good employees is difficult. It's money well spent and he is making a huge impact so far.

Ward commented this increase of \$9,750.00 amounts to a 7.5% increase. With the list of grants of \$1,754,000, he could justify this every day of the week with every resident. We want to keep our professionals and it is what it costs to do so.

LaPointe agreed in getting the contract done and was looking to fund it through the insurance buyback. Some members were cautious on approaching the insurance "opt out" and wanted to keep it a separate issue. After further discussion on this, the following motion was offered:

**Ward moved to approve the "Contract Negotiation – Summary of Requests" as presented by Justin Sultzbach dated March 14, 2022 as presented this evening; Salter seconded.**

Roll call vote was taken:

**Ward (Y), Anderson (N), Salter (Y), LaPointe (N), LaBrie (N)      2-3 Not Approved**

**LaPointe moved to approve the "Contract Negotiation – Summary of Requests" dated March 14, 2022 as presented this evening by Justin Sultzbach and to add an optional health insurance opt-out provision; the annual "opt-out" payment amount is \$2,000 for waiving an individual health insurance plan or \$4,000 for waiving a family health insurance plan; LaBrie seconded.**

Roll call vote taken:

**Ward (Y), Anderson (N), Salter (N), LaPointe (Y), LaBrie (Y)      3 -2 Approved**

**Ward moved to adjourn from Executive Session; Salter seconded. By a roll call vote of all aye, Executive Session adjourned at 9:52 P.M.**

**Ward moved to adjourn from Open Session; Salter seconded. By a vote of all aye, Open Session adjourned at 9:52 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,



Linda Daigle  
Executive Assistant

