

Approved: 1-22-2024

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING & JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
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Meeting Minutes

MONDAY, JUNE 26 2023-6:00pm

Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.

Present: Audrey LaBrie, Chair
Rick Ward, Vice Chair (via phone)
Danielle LaPointe
Melissa Blanchard
Barbara Anderson

Justin Sultzbach, Town Manager
Mary Calandrella, Executive Assistant
Debra Dennis, Administrative Assistant

School Committee Members Present: Chair Ryan Forsythe, David LaPointe, Karen Kast-McBride, and Greg Vine.

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Eight letters of interest- Vacant School Committee Position
- Email from Dylan Romanowski-Appointment Parks & Recreation
- Entertainment Permit Applications-Parks & Recreation Ice Cream Social, and Beals Library Outdoor events.
- Lodging License Extension Request-Camelot Farms
- Resignation-Fred Cloutier, Constable
- Park & Recreation Donation Forms-Fidelity Bank \$600 and Anonymous \$500
- Multiple End of Year Budget Transfer requests
- Memo from Town Manager-Mass Trails Grant dated June 26, 2023
- Destination Winchendon Phase I
- Destination Winchendon Phase II-Engagement Letter dated June 22, 2023
- Town Manager Report June 26 2023
- Draft Minutes June 12, 2023

Chair LaBrie called the meeting to order at 6:00P.M. School Committee Chair Ryan Forsythe called the joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen to order at 6:00 P.M. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair LaBrie stated that Selectmen Ward will be attending via remote tonight. All votes will be by roll call. Chair LaBrie asked if anyone would be audio or video recording this meeting tonight. There was no reply. Chair LaBrie turned the meeting over to School Committee Chair Ryan Forsythe.

JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

1. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:

1.1 **School Committee Vacancy** –School Committee Chair Ryan Forsythe said this is for an appointment of a new school committee member. The term begins August 1, 2023 and will serve until the next election 2024. We have received eight letters of interest. The following two questions will be asked of all candidates:

- (1) One of two examples public school district doing right and how strengthen.
- (2) One or two examples public school district is doing wrong or any areas needing improvement and how they would address those issues.

Candidates:

Mike Gaspar

1. Middle School Oversight and Dual Enrollment Program
2. Special Education Department and Teacher Turnover

He said he would address these by implementing policies and procedures that follow DESE requirement. Selectwoman LaPointe asked if once these problems are fixed will you run for the 3-year term? Mr. Gasper said yes. He said he has two students in the district and is in it for the long haul. Karen Kast-McBride asked about the time commitment he can give to the School Committee. Mr. Gaspar said he has a flexible work schedule and has time to commit to this.

Michael Barbaro

1. Literacy Program and no cost for food and sports.
2. Special Ed Department-Maintain our administrators. Better communication with the parents.

Mike Gaynor

1. Looking outwards by recruiting.
2. Special Education-provide strong special education services to our students. Understand where students are coming from. Making sure students feel included. Mr. Gaynor said wants to run at the next election. Feels he has a lot to bring to this position. He has the time to commit to this.

Kevin Nelson

1. Free activities, free meals. Learning and maintain grades good reflection of the teaching.
2. Special Ed services. Communication in terms of Special Education has been a problem. Another issue is a bullying problem. He said he has the time.

Adam LeBlanc

1. Analysis that the students are doing better and the teachers have the drive to teach.
2. Special Ed Department-Filling positions quickly. Take time to get better qualified. He said he has the time and would seek re-election if appointed. Greg Vine asked if you get position can you maintain an objective assessment with people you are working with. Mr. LeBlanc said he would look at the facts.

Anthony Finley

1. Classroom size and teacher's dedication to the students. Teacher retention is good.
2. Retention at the top level is a weakness. Find people internally. He said he will go all in but doesn't know what nine months would hold. He said he has the time to commit to this.

Brandis French

1. Teachers dedication, all activities outside of school.

2. Work on retention, lack of communication pertaining to Special Ed. She said she would want to be re-elected in May if appointed to the School Committee. She said her schedule would allow her to meet the time requirement.

Edward Ford Jr.

1. Dual enrollment.
2. Special Education System, and issues with communication with the Superintendent. He said increase student activity in the community. He said he has the time to commit to this.

Nominations:

Melissa Blanchard nominated Anthony Finley and Selectwoman LaPointe seconded.

Greg Vine nominated Brandis French, Selectwoman Anderson seconded.

Select Chair LaBrie nominated Adam LeBlanc, Selectwoman LaPointe seconded.

Select Chair LaBrie nominated Mike Gaspar, Selectwoman Anderson seconded.

Ryan Forsythe nominated Mike Gaynor, Selectwoman LaPointe seconded.

School Committee Chair Ryan Forsythe said there are five nominated candidates: Anthony Finley, Brandis French, Adam LeBlanc, Mike Gaspar, and Mike Gaynor.

Select Board Chair LaBrie thanked all the applicants. She said regrettably we only have one open seat at this time.

Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard-Anthony Finley, Selectwoman LaPointe-Anthony Finley, Select Board Chair LaBrie-Adam LeBlanc, Selectwoman Anderson-Adam LeBlanc, Ryan Forsythe-Brandis French, Greg Vine-Brandis French, David LaPointe-Anthony Finley, Karen Kast-McBride-Adam LeBlanc, and Selectman Ward-Brandis French

There was a three way tie-Anthony Finley, Adam LeBlanc and Brandis French.

Selectwoman LaPointe moved to vote again for either Anthony Finley, Adam LeBlanc, or Brandis French and Chair LaBrie seconded. Roll Call vote: Ward yes, Anderson aye, LaPointe aye, Blanchard aye, and LaBrie aye.

Roll Call Vote: Greg Vine- Brandis French, David LaPointe-Anthony Finley, Karen Kast McBride-Adam LeBlanc, Ryan Forsythe-Brandis French, Selectwoman Blanchard-Anthony Finley, Selectwoman LaPointe- Anthony Finley, Selectman Ward- Brandis French, Chair LaBrie-Adam LeBlanc, and Selectwoman Anderson -Adam LeBlanc

Selectman Ward commented in the event of failure to elect, we would turn this over to the Town Clerk for a special election. Adam LeBlanc said he will withdraw his name.

Selectwoman LaPointe moved to accept the withdrawal of Adam LeBlanc, Selectwoman Anderson seconded. Karen Kast-McBride said the Attorney General's office said Mr. Finley may have an issue. Ryan Forsythe said the School Committee had potential candidate written in last May through school attorney legal opinion only certain positions have a conflict. Adam Finley said he is an employee at will. **Vote: Karen Kast-McBride aye, David LaPointe aye, Greg Vine aye, Ryan Forsythe aye, Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe**

aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Select Board Chair LaBrie nay.

Roll Call Vote: Greg Vine-Brandis French, David LaPointe-Adam Finley, Karen Kast-McBride-Adam Finley, Selectwoman Blanchard-Adam Finley, Selectwoman Anderson-Adam Finley, Selectman Ward-Brandis French, Chair LaBrie-Adam Finley.

Adam Finley was voted as the new School Committee Member.

Karen Kast-McBride moved to adjourn the School Committee meeting, David LaPointe seconded. Roll Call Vote: Karen Kast-McBride aye, David LaPointe aye, Greg Vine aye, and Ryan Forsythe aye.

Selectwoman LaPointe moved to take a five-minute recess at 7:30pm, Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.

Selectwoman LaPointe moved to take 5.1 and 5.2 out of order, Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye

5. OLD BUSINESS:

5.1 Destination Winchendon – Phase I Presentation – Dr. James Samuels and Jacob Brewer came forward. Town Manager Sultzbach said this is an approach to help the economic problem. Revitalization plan with Master Plan. This will highlight and incentivize why to come to Winchendon and spend their dollars. Unutilized assets make it more appealing for private investors. Dr. Samuels said we found underleveraged assets. Dr. Samuels went over the presentation. Chair LaBrie said we identified locations we feel we can get the most accomplished. Selectwoman Blanchard said now that streets are complete the water lines are a high priority. She said she is concerned with spending this amount of money. Selectwoman Anderson said drawbacks to Winchendon are we are not off the main artery which discourages businesses to come here. Dr. Samuels said there are assets that are capable of producing more money for the town. Next phase is to produce an analysis to show we are a quality place to visit and come back to. Sultzbach said the local economics suffered due to market issues. Housing market huge push by the state. One component that has changed is remote work, steady stream of people moving into town since they don't have to commute. Jacob Brewer said we already have traffic coming to this area for the natural resources. Selectwoman LaPointe said there is a large focus put on the private school in the town. Chair LaBrie commented by investing in what we have is the best way to provide for our kids. Jane LaPointe said she is interested in phase II. She said she is interested in focusing our Economic efforts.

5.2 Destination Winchendon Phase II Discussion and Vote-Dr. Samuels said the next step would be to take all outcomes in phase I and do an independent appraisals of the properties. Selectwoman Anderson said so many properties are privately owned. Why do we want to invest taxpayer money on a private property? Sultzbach said it's a private/public partnership. It is common for a municipality to make an investment which will result in tax money that we cover that amount and more. Selectwoman LaPointe said they are commercial properties. Brian Croteau said last month we did put in a Mass Works Grant for Beech Street. We want to bring in new roads, revised sewer. It's benefiting all the housing that is there now. This was only possible by a small investment from

the town. Sultzbach funding source \$18,000 for phase II he said there is ARPA money available. **Chair LaBrie moved we move forward with Phase II, Selectwoman LaPointe seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson no, and Chair LaBrie aye.**

Selectwoman LaPointe moved to take 4.3 out of order, Chair LaBrie seconded. Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.

4.3 Mass Trails Grant Award-\$468,840 Webster Street Parcel-Justin Sultzbach recognized Lionel Cloutier for his persistence in improving of Webster Street. He recognized Brian Croteau for preparing the application to the state. Vice Chair Ward was also recognized for his work. Lionel Cloutier said the area is loaded with coal town brought in 1986. His idea was to complete the bike path.

1. APPOINTMENT

1.2 Dylan Romanowski to Parks & Recreation

Selectwoman Anderson moved to appoint Dylan Romanowski to the Parks & Recreation Committee term ending 6/20/2026, Selectwoman LaPointe seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.

2. PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS

2.1 Entertainment Permit -- Recreation- Ice Cream – Sunday August 27th 1pm@ WCP

Chair LaBrie said there are no issues from department heads. Tiffany Newton explained the event. **LaPointe moved to approve the entertainment permit for the ice cream social at the community park on August 27, 2023, Selectwoman Anderson seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.**

2.2 Entertainment Permit- Beals Library -Public Shows 6/29,8/3,10,17 & 24 – Library Lawn
Chair LaBrie said there are no issues from department heads. **Selectwoman Anderson moved to approve the entertainment permit for Beals Library for the Public Shows on June 29th, August 3rd, August 10th, August 17th, and August 24, 2023, Selectwoman LaPointe seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.**

2.3 Lodging License – Camelot Farms - temp license expires 6/30/23

Mary Calandrella said she received notification from the Greenfield Group that is working with Camelot Farms owner that the water bill has been paid and they have paid \$2,000 on the taxes. She recommended a three-month extension. **Selectman Ward moved to extend the Lodging License to expire on August 30, 2023 for Camelot Farms, Selectwoman Anderson seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.**

3. BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS

3.1 Notice of Vacancies –Chair LaBrie stated the Board has received the updated notice of vacancies and it is in the dropbox.

3.2 Recognition of former Constable Fredrick Cloutier

Mary Calandrella said the Town Clerk has asked for recognition of Fredrick Cloutier who will not be seeking re-appointment as he is retiring. Ms. Calandrella said Fred Cloutier was first appointed in 1974 as a Constable, making it 49 years. Additionally, he was a police officer in Winchendon from 1966-2005, making it 39 years. The Board thanked him for his years of service.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1 Accept donations to Parks & Recreation - \$ 1,100

Tiffany Newton said we have had the following donations \$600.00 from Fidelity and \$500.00 from an anonymous donor. **Chair LaBrie moved to accept the donations discussed this evening, Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.**

4.2 Year End Transfers

Chair LaBrie said this is a year-end transfer request for \$7,072 from the IT Tech Salary account to the Town Manager Executive Assistant Account. This is to cover the deficit due to Linda Daigle's retirement extension to assist in special projects. This has been approved by the Finance Committee. Selectwoman Anderson asked how much longer do we expect to be over drawing on this line item. Sultzbach said the end goal is to go to the official retirement date of August 18th. Ms. Daigle has been working on closing out special projects, updating policies, and getting the cable studio up and running. **Chair LaBrie moved to approve the budget transfer submitted this evening, Selectwoman LaPointe seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.**

6. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Justin Sultzbach went over the following:

Financial Updates-FY23 Year end is ongoing; the final year-end transfers will be brought before the board at your July 10th meeting. He said we are officially hit our revenue targets for FY23 projected.

Personnel Updates-Mr. Brian Croteau has been selected as the most qualified candidate for the newly created Director of DPW and Facilities role.

Project Updates-Staging will be installed on the Old Murdock early next week, weather permitting. Paving work has started in Pleasant street with some repairs and resetting of castings to occur over the coming weeks. Soil remediation at 4 Summer Drive is ongoing

Miscellaneous Updates-The Amphitheater hosted its first official Summer Movie Night. Roughly 100 attended. He thanked everyone who helped make the 2nd Annual Food Truck festival last weekend such a great success.

7. MINUTES

7.1 Regular Meeting Minutes 6/12/23-Selectwoman Anderson moved to approve the minutes of June 12, 2023, Selectwoman LaPointe seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard

aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.

8. COMMUNICATIONS-Chair LaBrie said the next meeting is July 10, 2023.

9. AGENDA ITEMS

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair LaBrie moved to go into executive session under -MGL, 30A, Sec 21 (a) # 2 – To discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel. - Interim Town Manager, Selectwoman Anderson seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaPointe aye, Selectman Ward aye, Selectwoman Anderson aye, and Chair LaBrie aye.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting went into executive session at 9:18pm

Respectfully submitted



Debra Dennis, Administrative Assistant