

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN-JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES
Tuesday, October 10, 2023
Town Hall, 109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.

Board of Selectmen Present:

Audrey LaBrie, Chair (remotely)
Rick Ward, Vice-Chair
Danielle LaPointe

William McKinney, Interim Town Manager
Mary Calandrella, Executive Assistant
Debra Dennis, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Barbara Anderson
Melissa Blanchard

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant-November 13, 2023
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6:30 P.M. Vice Chair Ward called the meeting to order at 6:30P.M. Finance Chair Kane called the Finance Committee to order. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chair Ward asked if anyone would be audio or video recording this meeting tonight to which there was no response heard. Vice Chair said Chair LaBrie will be attending remotely and all votes will be by roll call.

1. **SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Vice Chair Ward said Halloween Trick or Treating will be on Tuesday, October 31, 2023, from 5:30-7:30pm. He thanked Nicole Roberts, staff, the Police, DPW, and all those who made the Fall Festival possible. It was a wonderful time.

2. **NEW BUSINESS:**

Interim Town Manager Presentation of Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant-Bill McKinney, Interim Town Manager presented the Draft Special Town Meeting Warrants to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee.

Interim Town Manager William McKinney read all of the following articles.

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the reports of the Finance Committee, and any other Board or Committee, or act in relation thereto. This is usual and customary.

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$xxxx for the payment of bills of prior fiscal year as follows: Fiscal Year Name Invoice Amount \$XXX Total \$XXX. Dr. Maureen Ward asked if we know what free cash is. Bill McKinney said he is working with the Town Accountant and is trying to get this done.

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the additional sum of \$60,000 to be added to the Fire Department Houseman account to cover phase one of a wage scale adjustment or act in relation thereto. Fire Chief Smith said we have seen an overall salary increase in neighboring department. This is the town negotiating to keep the paramedics in town.

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the additional sum of \$126,245 to the Fire Department Spare Houseman account to cover the additional staffing needed to cover multiple emergency calls, or act in relation thereto. Finance Committee Member Dr. Maureen Ward asked where the funds would be appropriated from. Bill McKinney said

that it would come from free cash. Fire Chief Smith said it would cover a wage/salary adjustment. The current contract was made 1.5 years ago. They have been struggling to stay competitive and keep employees with the surrounding/comparable communities. Finance Chair Kane expressed his concern with using Free Cash to supplement the adjustment as it is a reoccurring expense. Selectwoman LaPointe said we need to remember what these services are for. These professionals leave their family every day to provide the emergency care and services the community needs and it is the towns responsibility to make sure the services are available and paid appropriately. Chair LaBrie mentioned the Article language states this would be for Phase one and questioned what the plans were for Phase two. Chief Smith replied they would look at the other half of the increase that they have done before and work it into the budget.

ARTICLES: 5 To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds, and/or borrow the sum of \$442,551 for the purpose of purchasing an ambulance (with an estimated 18-month delivery time) to replace the current 2016 Freightliner ambulance, or act in relation thereto. Vice Chair Ward asked if this was a Capital Planning Article and if so, asked if they have voiced their opinion on it. Chief Smith said it was in the packet last year but he was unsure if they stated their opinion or not. Vice Chair Ward stated they would typically have the Capital Planning vote on this. The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee would also need to vote. Chief Smith stated he did not believe they voted on it as it was supposed to be in the future Capital Plan. Chair LaBrie said it was not. She said she had some concerns of starting a trend of Capital Planning articles coming in from other sources and not following the proper channels. Chief Smith said he was not looking for the money; he was looking for the approval to order the ambulance as production time is 18-20 months.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the additional sum of \$XXX to the DPW & Fire Department vehicle repair account or act in relation thereto. DPW Director Brian Croteau said the trucks are getting older and are requiring more maintenance. He said they estimated they would need \$35,000.

ARTICLE 7: To transfer the sum of \$158,754 from free cash back into ARPA funds for the purchase of the Fire Department apparatus fire equipment known as S.C.B.A. Bill McKinney stated they were originally supposed to have a three-year lease for the S.C.B.A. equipment. Approval at the town meeting was required for that request, and the equipment had already been delivered, so the board agreed to use the ARPA funds to buy the equipment outright and save money on interest. They were able to pay the vendor right away and save about \$27,000 in interest charges. This request was to replenish the ARPA account to use the funds for its intended purpose.

ARTICLE 8: To reallocate the vote taken on for the Winchendon Community Park barn exterior funds to be transferred to Blair Square project, or act in relation thereto. Brian Croteau said Robinson Broadhurst supplemented the funds for the exterior of the Winchendon Community Park Barn. Since the community previously voted for the funds to go to that specific project, but are not needed anymore, the request is to vote and transfer those funds to the Blair Square project. Chair LaBrie the status of the Blair Square project. Brian Croteau said the Blair Square project is at about the 25% design.

ARTICLE 9: Lincoln Avenue - Town to the Redevelopment Authority. The Winchendon Redevelopment Authority is looking to sell 275 Lincoln Avenue. It is easier for them to handle the purchase and sale over the Town, in turn they are looking for the authorization to transfer the property.

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey the Town-owned property located at Oak Street and shown as Assessors Map 582-0-117, being a portion of the Poland and Streeter Schools property, for such consideration, and upon such other terms and conditions as the Board of Selectmen deems appropriate, and to take such additional action as may be needed to effectuate the purposes of this vote, including but not limited to execution of instruments and

documents to convey said property, or act in relation thereto. Chair LaBrie questioned if the language needed to add whom the property would be conveyed to (MVOC). Bill McKinney said he would check with the Legal Counsel. He stated the request was in regards to the two old school buildings that are going to be turned into Veteran housing. At the last town meeting, it was discovered they had only requested to convey the one property, not both buildings.

ARTICLE 11: Winchendon Furniture- Land Swap for Bike Path. Brian Croteau stated the Town received Just under \$500,000 to extend the bike path from the current path to Jackson Ave. There is a small triangular piece of land on Spruce St. owned by the Town next to Mr. Ladeau's land. He would donate a portion of his property behind the old Walgreens to be able to extend the bike path for a transfer of that small triangular piece to Mr. Ladeau.

ARTICLE 12 - To see if the Town will vote to accept XXXX as a public town way, for all purposes customary as a public way including maintenance and repair, in the location laid out by the Board of Selectmen, on plan noted as XXXX Subdivision Plan, dated XXXXXX, and drawn by XXXXXX Engineering Inc., said plan having been placed on file with the Town Clerk, and further to authorize the Board of Selectmen to accept such all necessary property interest, or act in relation thereto. DPW Director Brian Croteau explained this would help clean up the list of unaccepted roads. Chair LaBrie asked any stipulation to send notification to people who live on these roads that the town is taking this step. Bill McKinney said we will find out.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote pursuant to G.L. c.43B, §10(a) to amend the Town Charter as recommended by the Charter Bylaw Review Committee in a document entitled, s2021 Proposed Charter Revisions", on file in the office of the Town Clerk and available on the Town's website at <http://www.townofwinchendon.com/> with text to be inserted underlined and text to be deleted shown in the margins; revisions include but are not limited to: ministerial and clerical amendments such as grammar, capitalization, gender neutrality, internal consistency, and references to and updates based upon state law and other matters; or act in relation thereto. Bill McKinney said this article passed at ATM of May 2021 and was returned approved by the Attorney General's office. It was required to be placed on the next Town Elections Ballot and was not; therefore, at the guidance of Town Counsel, the article is being resubmitted at Town Meeting the Fall 2023.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town shall accept the renumbering and revision of the Zoning Bylaw of the Town from its original numbering, as amended through May 15, 2023, to the numbering or codification, arrangement, sequence and captions and the comprehensive revisions to the text of the Zoning Bylaw as set forth in the Final Draft of the Code of the Town of Winchendon, dated September 28, 2023; said codification of the Zoning Bylaw having been done under the direction of the Planning Board, and being a compilation and comprehensive revision of the present Zoning Bylaw, including amendments thereto. All Zoning Bylaws, as amended, heretofore in force, shall be repealed, except that such repeal shall not affect any suit or proceeding pending as the result of an existing law. The Zoning Bylaw shall be codified as Chapter 300 of the "Code of the Town of Winchendon, Massachusetts."

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town shall accept the renumbering and revision of the various bylaws of the Town from their original numbering or their numbering in the former General Bylaw compilation, as amended through May 15, 2023, to the numbering or codification, arrangement, sequence and captions and the comprehensive revisions to the text of the General Bylaws as set forth in the Final Draft of the Code of the Town of Winchendon, dated September 28, 2023; said codification having been done under the direction of the Board of Selectmen and Town Attorney, and said Code being a compilation and comprehensive revision of the present bylaws of the Town. All bylaws of a general and permanent nature, as amended, heretofore in force and not included in the Code shall be repealed, except that such repeal shall not affect any suit or proceeding pending as the result of an existing law, and such repeal shall not apply to or affect any bylaw, order or article heretofore adopted accepting or

adopting the provisions of any statute of the Commonwealth. These bylaws shall be referred to as the 'Code of the Town of Winchendon, Massachusetts.'

ARTICLE 16: PLACE HOLDER- Solar Moratorium-Bill McKinney said we are still waiting for the language.

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town By-laws to rename the Board of Selectmen as the Selectboard, and, for such purposes, to replace the words 'Board of Selectmen or "Selectmen" with Selectboard"; and 'Selectman" with 'Selectboard member, and to authorize the Town Clerk to make non-substantive ministerial revisions to ensure that gender and number issues in related text is revised to properly reflect such change in title; or take any other action relative thereto. Vice Chair Ward clarified this change should have been in regards to the Charter. He also stated the specific titles were "Board of Selectmen, not "Selectboard member', and "Select Board", not "Selectboard". The Article needed to be revised with the language originally sent in. Each of these articles need to state what type of vote is required at town meeting.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of G.L. c.44, S54(b) to allow Town trust funds to be invested in accordance with G.L. c.203C, the so-called "prudent Investment Rule", or take any other action relative thereto. Bill McKinney said this gives us more investment choices for town funds.

Finance Committee Member Dr. Maureen Ward said in the past, there have been articles always on the Fall Town Meeting funded OPEB, Stabilization and Separation liabilities. OPEB is 5% of health costs benefits, Stabilization is 10% of free cash, and Separation liabilities is \$50,000.

Vice Chair Ward moved to take a ten-minute recess and then reconvene on the fourth floor. Selectwoman LaPointe seconded. Roll Call Vote: LaBrie aye, LaPointe aye, and Ward aye.

Recess at 7:55 pm. The Board of Selectmen Reconvened at 8:05pm.

Selectwoman LaPointe moved the Board reopen the warrant to add OPEB, Stabilization, and Separation Liabilities articles and close the warrant at twelve noon tomorrow October 11, 2023. Vice Chair Ward seconded. Roll Call Vote: LaBrie aye, LaPointe aye, and Ward aye.

October 30, 2023-Joint Executive Session

November 5th and November 6, 2023-Interviews of Town Manager Candidates

The Board members discussed the process and timeframes of the Town Manager Search Committee.

ADJOURN

Selectwoman LaPointe moved to adjourn. Vice Chair Ward seconded. Roll Call Vote: LaBrie aye, LaPointe aye, and Ward aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted



Debra Dennis, Administrative Assistant