

Approved: 9-23-2024

TOWN OF WINCHENDON  
JOINT MEETING  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024

WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK  
RCUD SEP 24 2024 AM 11:56

Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Auditorium, 109 Front St., Winchendon, Mass.

Board of Selectmen Present:

Rick Ward, Chair  
Andrew Beauvais, Vice-Chair  
Audrey LaBrie  
Melissa Blanchard  
Erika Eitland

William McKinney, Town Manager  
Debra Dennis, Executive Assistant

School Committee Present:

Karen Kast-McBride, Chair  
Jake Catlin  
Michael Barbaro  
David Iannacone, Vice Chair

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List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Resume/Letters of Interest-School Committee Vacancy-Jennifer Hutchings Eleni Marinelli, and Jennifer Allen
  - Special One Day Wine & Malt Only License Application-Brian Croteau-Comedy Night July 27, 2024
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6:00PM Chair Ward called the meeting to order at 6:30P.M. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Ward asked if anyone would be audio or video recording this meeting tonight to which there was no response heard. School Committee Chair Kast-McBride called the School Committee to order.

1. Interview/Vote School Committee Applicants-

- Candidate Jennifer Hutchings came forward and said she has three children in the district and wants to be more involved. The School Committee members asked about what she likes most and least about the Public School. Ms. Hutchings said she likes most is the dedicated teachers and staff. What she least likes is the amount of students leaving the district and the cost. She said we need to work on retaining students.

She said the challenge she sees for the Winchendon Public School for one year is building trust and for five years is keep lines of communications going and move in a positive direction.

She commented the role of the School Committee is to work on policies, they are in charge of the superintendent and doing evaluations. She said she has the time to serve and has a flexible schedule.

Selectwoman Blanchard asked if there was a specific topic that concerns her. Ms. Hutchings said behavior is an issue at all the schools right now.

Selectwoman Eitland asked about how the Board of Selectmen and School Committee can improve the communication and outreach to the community. Mr. Hutchings said she doesn't see a lot of outreach right now. She said the School Administration needs to talk to students and hear their concerns and pass it on to the Superintendent, School Committee or the Board of Selectmen.

Selectwoman LaBrie said boards, committees, and commissions play an important role. The School Committees role involves the children which people can be more passionate about. How can the

members of the School Committee work with other members and the community? Ms. Hutchings said communication and be respectful.

Selectman Beauvais asked about her experience, and strengths she brings to group activities to be in harmony. Ms. Hutchings said delegate, know what others are doing, attention to detail, be organized, and have plan in place.

Chair Ward said parents were frustrated and the school budget didn't get passed at the initial Town Meeting. What would your approach be as a School Committee member so we don't have to go through that experience again? Ms. Hutchings said have communication with the public and clarify information.

- Candidate Eleni Marinelli came forward and said she has been a Winchendon resident her whole life. She said she is a Literacy Instructional Coach at Quabbin School. She said she is passionate about equality in schools and cultural responsible learning. She said she wants to contribute to the community.

Chair Ward asked what the three roles of the School Committee are. Ms. Marinelli said listening to district leaders/teachers, collaboration-make sure we are serving the community and investing in our children, and make sure we are getting the best curriculum for everyone.

Selectman Beauvais asked what experience/skills do you have pertaining to a team and how would you apply those skills to the community. Ms. Marinelli said being a good role model can impact good leadership and being a good follower.

Ms. Marinelli commented about having consistent social media posts and creating office hours with School Committee members.

Selectwoman Blanchard asked what topic are you concerned the most about. Ms. Marinelli said retaining students in the community. She said we need to find ways to keep current students and find way for other students who want to come.

Chair Ward said parents were frustrated and the school budget didn't get passed at the initial Town Meeting. What would your approach be as a School Committee member so we don't have to go through that experience again? Ms. Marinelli said create more transparency and communication. Reach out to the teachers and explain where we are at with the budget.

Selectwoman Eitland asked what are the three actions you want to take as a member of the School Committee to provide a quality education. Ms. Marinelli said increase student support services, look at the curriculum to make sure we are getting students ready for college, and AI development.

- Candidate Jennifer Allen joined the meeting via zoom. She said she has been a resident since 2003. She has a degree in Business Administration and has experience in Human Resource. She wants to help improve the school system and lend her experience and skill set towards that goal.

Ms. Allen said she wants to help everything go along. Everybody at the schools work very hard. She said the role of the School Committee is to set goals and set criteria as to whether we are meeting the goals, work with the Superintendent and teachers and do the very best to work together.

Selectwoman Blanchard asked if there was a specific topic that concerns her. Ms. Allen said budget constraints and regaining the trust of the community.

Selectwoman Eitland asked about how the Board of Selectmen and School Committee can improve the communication and outreach to the community. Ms. Allen said open communication on Facebook and the website, brief people in every avenue.



Selectwoman LaBrie said boards, committees, and commissions play an important role. The School Committee's role involves the children which people can be more passionate about. How can the members of the School Committee work with other members and the community? Ms. Allen said conflict resolution, be respectful, listen, be honest, and be straight forward.

Selectman Beauvais asked what are the three actions you want to take as a member of the School Committee to provide a quality education. Ms. Allen said listening, give a safe space, and work within skill set.

Chair Ward asked what the three roles of the School Committee are. Ms. Allen said listen to the community, listen to the teachers and administration, listen to students, and make plans so students get their needs met.

Chair Ward said parents were frustrated and the school budget didn't get passed at the initial Town Meeting. What would your approach be as a School Committee member so we don't have to go through that experience again? Ms. Allen said include the community as much as possible, get information out so they understand what is going on. Collaborate with the community and teachers.

Chair Ward explained the nomination process.

**Michael Barbaro nominated Eleni Marinelli and Jake Catlin seconded.**

**David Iannacone nominated Jennifer Allen and Selectwoman LaBrie seconded.**

**Selectwoman Eitland nominated Jennifer Hutchings and Michael Barbaro seconded.**

**Roll Call Vote: School Committee**

**Michael Barbaro-Eleni Marinelli**

**Jake Catlin-Eleni Marinelli**

**David Iannacone -Jennifer Allen**

**Karen Kast-McBride-Jennifer Allen**

**Roll Call Vote: Board of Selectmen**

**Selectwoman Blanchard-Eleni Marinelli**

**Selectwoman Eitland-Eleni Marinelli**

**Selectwoman LaBrie-Jennifer Allen**

**Selectman Beauvais-Eleni Marinelli**

**Chair Ward-Eleni Marinelli**

Chair Ward said with more than five votes Eleni Marinelli is the new School Committee member.

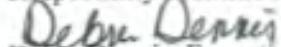
2. Recess to move to the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor-Selectwoman LaBrie moved to take a five minute recess and move to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor conference room. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.

The Board recessed at 7:54pm and reconvened at 8:00pm.

3. Special One Day Liquor License-Brian Croteau-Comedy Night July 27, 2024-Selectwoman Eitland moved the Board approve the Special One Day Malt and Wine License for Brian Croteau for July 27<sup>th</sup> from 5pm-9pm for the Comedy Night. Selectwoman LaBrie seconded. Vote: All aye.
4. Adjournment-Selectwoman LaBrie moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Vote: All aye.

The Meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm

Respectfully submitted



Debra Dennis, Executive Assistant