

Approved: 10-7-2024

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

WINCHENDON TOWN CLERK
RCUD NOV 18 2024 AM 10:41

Meeting Minutes

MONDAY, September 23, 2024 6:30pm

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

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

William McKinney, Town Manager
Debra Dennis, Executive Assistant

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Letter of Interest-Thomas Laio-Planning Board
- Letter of Interest-Katie Johnson-Communications Committee
- Letter of Interest-Emily Croteau-Parks & Recreation Commission
- Permit Application-Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary 2158-Poppies Sale October 25th at CVS Pharmacy, Cumberland Farms, and in front of the Winchendon Post Office
- US-202 (Maple Street) & SR-140 (Gardner Road)"Road Swap"
- Draft Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes: June 24, 2024, July 18, 2024, and September 17, 2024

6:30 PM 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.

1. **SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Selectwoman Eitland commented about Fanelli Amusement this weekend. She asked for the Town Manager's report to be placed after public hearing/public comment. This will change starting with the October 7th meeting. Selectwoman Blanchard said we had a good turnout for employee night. Selectwoman LaBrie said there has been comments that Mr. McKinney was here during FY23. The management letter was for FY23 which ended before Mr. McKinney was hired. Chair Ward thanked Vice Chair Andrew Beauvais for running the meeting and also the members while he was recuperating.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Chair Ward said each person during public comments will have up to 3 minutes. This is not a debate, it's just for comments or announcements. David Watkins asked if there was going to be a fall meeting. Mr. McKinney said we don't have anything pressing at this time. Mr. Watkins said he wants to get a warrant article on. He said he is hoping to put a binding article concerning comm 97.

Frank Allen came forward. He said he wants to remind everyone he lives next to 580 River Street. Town Inspector/Engineer is still not doing the proper inspections. Ignoring section directly

behind his home. He wants to know why this person isn't doing the complete job. He said he wants to know who is his director/ supervisor. Mr. McKinney said Brian Croteau is his direct supervisor. Mr. Allen asked for this person to do on site soil samples which is written in the contract that French will pay for. This is not costing us a dime and it's protecting us.

3. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** There was no public hearings scheduled this evening.

4. **APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:**

4.1 **Appointment of Thomas Laio-Planning Board Member**—Mr. Laio has been an alternate on the Planning Board and now wishes to be a full member. **Selectwoman LaBrie moved to appoint Thomas Laio to the Planning Board Member as a full member with a term expiration of June 30, 2025. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.**

4.2 **Appointment of Katie Johnson-Communications Committee**—Katie Johnson has submitted a letter of interest to join the Communications Committee. **Selectwoman LaBrie moved to appoint Katie Johnson to the Communications Committee with a term expiration of 6/30/26. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.**

4.3 **Appointment of Emily Croteau-Parks & Recreation Commission**— **Selectwoman LaBrie moved to appoint Emily Croteau to the Parks & Recreation Commission as a student representative with a term expiration of June 30, 2025. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.**

5. **PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:**

5.1 **Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary 2158-Poppies Sale October 25th at CVS Pharmacy, Cumberland Farms, and in front of the Winchendon Post Office**—**Selectwoman LaBrie moved to approve the Poppies Sale by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary 2158 on October 25, 2024 outside at CVS, Cumberland Farms, and in front of the Winchendon Post Office. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.**

6. **BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS:** There was no boards/committee/commissions presentations this evening.

7. **NEW BUSINESS:**

7.1 **US-202 (Maple Street) & SR-140 (Gardner Road)"Road Swap"**— Mass DOT Highway Division District Two has been negotiating the terms of a "Road Swap" with Brian Croteau, DPW Director. The District requires the BOS to provide written acceptance of the terms for the purpose of discontinuing a section of Route 202, and Mass DOT acquiring of a section of Route 140, as negotiated with Mr. Croteau. Mr. Croteau came forward. Mass DOT maintains Route 140. They have done the sidewalks from State line-Ingleside Drive to the Harbour Restaurant. They will keep the bridge until repairs have been made. **Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board accept the terms in the letter from Mass DOT dated August 14, 2024 pertaining to the Winchendon US-202 (Maple Street) & SR-140 (Gardner Road) road swap. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: All aye.**

7.2 **United Sovereign Americans-"Resolutions for a legally Valid 2024 General Election"**: During public comment portion of the BOS SEP 9 meeting, members of United Sovereign

Americas described their resolution and presented each member of the Board with a copy. Jeffrey Collins came forward. Selectwoman LaBrie said she is concerned with the voter process. She said she feels we have lost control of elections. Chair Ward said when I look at the nine items you want the Board to endorse. Out of the 9 what are existing laws. Jeffrey Cohen asked that the Winchendon Board of Selectmen vote on whether to pass our Resolution for a Legally Valid 2024 General Election. Chair Ward wanted clarification on #5. (second sentence issue with must have access to the ballots). #7 Audit-3% of the Town Clerks Office are audited. Jeffrey Cohen said when you have an audit it is important to have independent people do the audit. Chair Ward said integrity of elections are important. He commented he is concerned as a Board of Selectmen we are non-political. If we sign this can there be a perception of being bias to one side or the other. Selectwoman Eitland we want to have elections we can stand by with integrity. I don't see at a local level that we have voter fraud in any way. Jeffery Cohen said information contained within the numbers are available from William Galvins office. We haven't found a single town that hasn't had problems in Massachusetts.

Selectwoman LaBrie said you want your elections done right and not compromised in any way. Look at it in different perspectives. I want to know the votes aren't being compromised and the voter rolls are correct. Selectman Beauvais said we owe it to the residents of Winchendon that we consider supporting this. This will be on the October 7th agenda.

Jeffrey Cohen said what we ask is very basic we want our voting moving forward to follow the existing law.

7.3 Discussion with Katie Johnson, Transportation Coordinator-Transportation Task Force- Miranda Jennings came forward. Chair Ward said the task force has put out a survey. Ms. Jennings said this is a product of the task force. It is for people who have cars and don't. We want to hear from people who rely on public transportation. Chair Ward said the survey came from a grant. He asked what the ultimate goal is. Ms. Jennings said a town might have an app that residents can request an uber ride. It could include expansion of hours. Fund a new website and connect with the MART routes and commuter rail.

8. OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business this evening.

9. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:** Mr. McKinney said the information about the Town Treasurer has been put out there. It is a difficult time at Town Hall. Working on making things right. We hired Donna Spellman to help out. Donna and Bill have been working together in the Treasurer/Collectors office. He said he is working on bank reconciliations. Roselli has mentioned the Treasury cost would be around \$50,000. He said I can do it myself with Donna's help. He said he talked to some of the banks about increasing the interest rates and the cd rates. At the next meeting he will give an update on what is happening. Make sure residents know we are looking out on their behalf. Thanked Brian, Miranda, and Shaina for putting on Employees night. El Tora has opened up. Selectwoman Eitland asked based on the Audit Report is it better to hire support staff to get this done in a timely way. Mr. McKinney said he wants to get a sense as to where we stand and come up with a better answer which is going to take me a couple of weeks. Selectman Beauvais said I don't think it's on you to correct the issues of Treasurers of prior years. We need to clean this up sooner than later. He said he is in favor of seeking the independent firm. Selectwoman LaBrie agreed but we don't want to turn over a mess without having a sense of what is going on. Mr. McKinney said he will have an update on October 7th as to where things are. Chair Ward said starting on the October 7th meeting he wants to have a financial update once a month and will allow public questions.

Mr. McKinney commented about the statement that he lied about the reason the Treasurer wasn't at the Tri-Board meeting. He said on Tuesday he was told by the Treasurer that he couldn't attend due to a family emergency. Chair Ward said we are following what legal has said. We will get the information out as soon as we can.

10. MINUTES:

10.1 June 24, 2024 Regular Meeting

Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board approve the meeting minutes of June 24, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: All aye.

10.2 July 18, 2024 Joint Meeting with School Committee

Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board approve the meeting minutes of July 18, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: All aye.

10.3 August 9, 2024 Regular Meeting-This was tabled.

10.4 August 10, 2024 Tri-Board Meeting-This was tabled.

10.5 September 16, 2024 Executive Session-This was tabled.

10.6 September 17, 2024 Emergency Meeting

Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board approve the meeting minutes of September 17, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: All aye.

11. COMMUNICATIONS: Next meeting October 7th. Early voting starts on October 19th and election is November 5th.


12. AGENDA ITEMS:

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION: There was no scheduled executive sessions this evening.

14. ADJOURNMENT: Selectwoman LaBrie moved to adjourn. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: All aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53pm.

Respectfully submitted



Debra Dennis, Executive Assistant