

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, November 25, 2024 6:30pm
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 109 Front St., Winchendon, Mass.

Present: Audrey LaBrie, Acting Chair
Melissa Blanchard
Erika Eitland

Debra Dennis, Executive Assistant

Absent: Rick Ward and Andrew Beauvais

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Letter of Interest-Shaina Cunningham-Communications Committee
- Digital Equity Plan-MRPC-Tracy Murphy, Senior Planner
- Draft Minutes-September 9, 2024, September 10, 2024, October 7, 2024, November 6, 2024, and November 12, 2024

6:30 PM Acting Chair LaBrie called the meeting to order at 6:30P.M. All rose for the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair LaBrie 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:** Acting Chair LaBrie said Congratulations to the Murdock Cheerleading Team who took 2nd place at the state competition. They qualified for nationals which is in Tennessee in May.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Jane LaPointe came forward and spoke about the letter town residents received that are on town water concerning lead in water. After speaking to the Town Manager she said she learned that the state sent this out and it is required. There is no issue with Town Water having lead in it. She also requested an update on the water line work on Central Street. She discussed the road closed sign and needing an updated sign so that delivery services know they can go around the sign. Acting Chair LaBrie said she will get an update and this will be discussed at the next meeting.
3. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** There was no scheduled public hearings this evening.
4. **APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:**
4.1 Appointment-Shaina Cunningham-Communication Committee- Selectwoman Eitland moved the Board approve the appointment of Shaina Cunningham to the Communications Committee with a term expiration of June 30, 2027. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded.
Vote: All aye.
5. **PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:** There was no permit/license applications this evening.
6. **BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS:** There was no boards, committees, or commission presentations this evening.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Digital Equity Plan-Tracy Murphy MRPC-Tracy Murphy Senior Planner came forward and went over the draft digital equity plan. The overall purpose of the Digital Equity Planning is to understand the existing conditions around the internet access and digital technology, specifically those related to availability, affordability, and adoptability of broadband internet devices. We had a survey that was printed out and located at various town building. 182 residents took the survey. Prioritized Actions for Implementation - \$56, 603. 77 earmarked for Winchendon. The following goals, actions, and champion were discussed.

Goal	Action	Champion	Funding/Program
Create additional public wifi availability in and around public facilities.	Install public charging stations, outside internet "café" type spaces, and expand internet service into parking areas.	Community Anchor Institutions (Town Hall, Senior Center, Library, CAC, Schools) Communications Committee. See Goal CE3.3 of Community Master Plan	
Expand "Hot Spot" lending program	Expand "Hot Spot" lending program in the Library and educate staff and community organizations about their existence.	Community Anchor Institution, Library See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	
Provide access to additional devices.	Provide additional Chrome Books and Lap tops for loan programs. Provide translation tablets to all Anchor Institutions and Digital Assets	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library,CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, Library,CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan	Municipal Implementation Grant Program
Increase the level of Citizen Participation in Town Government	Provide additional desktop computers for use in the Senior Center, Housing Authority properties, and CAC. Provide updated software to all Anchor Institutions/departments to streamline processes and ensure accessibility. Include Anti-Spam software where necessary. Update the Town Website to include fillable forms and ADA accessibility measures	Community Anchor Institutions (Senior Center, CAC) See Goal CE3.5 of Community Master Plan Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal CE4 in Community Master Plan Communications Committee, IT Dept. See Goal CE4 in Community Master Plan	

Ms. Murphy said the next steps is a 14 day comment period. Then incorporate comments and submit the plan to MBI. Once the plan is approved encourage digital equity partnership program and proceed with implementation of the grant process. The plan should go up on line so they can comment on it. Selectwoman Eitland asked if it could be extended so that paper copies can be available so printed comments can be submitted. Ms. Murphy said she would and bring them to the Senior Center and WCAC. The deadline can be extended. The town can apply for \$100,000 but \$56,603.77 is earmarked for the town. Once plan is approved she will put the town in contact with some digital equity partners. The decision on what you are going to apply for is the town's decision but she said she will write the grant.

8. OLD BUSINESS: There was no Old Business this evening.

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: There was no Town Manager's report this evening.

10. TOWN MANAGER FINANCIAL UPDATE: There was no Town Manager Financial update this evening.

11. MINUTES:

11.1 September 9, 2024 Regular Meeting

Selectwoman Eitland moved the Board approve the meeting minutes of September 9, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Vote: All aye.

11.2 September 10, 2024 Tri-Board Meeting

Selectwoman Eitland moved the Board approve the meeting minutes September 10, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Vote: All aye.

11.3 October 7, 2024 Regular Meeting

Selectwoman Eitland moved the Board approve the meeting minutes of October 7, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Vote: All aye.

11.4 November 6, 2024 Special Meeting

Selectwoman Eitland moved the Board approve the meeting minutes of November 6, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Vote: All aye.

11.5 November 12, 2024 Regular Meeting-The Board tabled these until the next meeting.

12. COMMUNICATIONS: Selectwoman Eitland said the Taste of Home will be having a community lunch this Thursday and also the WCAC is handing out over 150 meals to residents.

13. AGENDA ITEMS: Acting Chair LaBrie said the next regular Board of Selectmen meeting is December 9th @ 6:30pm.

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

15. ADJOURNMENT: Selectwoman Eitland moved to adjourn. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Vote: All aye.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23pm.

Respectfully submitted

Debra Dennis
Debra Dennis, Executive Assistant