

TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, December 9, 2024 6:30pm
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium, 109 Front St., 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-Katrina Fleming-Winchendon Commission on Disabilities
 - Certificate of Appreciation-Burton Gould
 - Tax Classification Hearing FY25 dated December 9, 2024
 - Draft November 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
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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 said two weeks ago there was a fire at 1012 School Square. People are struggling. It is important to insure renter safety. She commented about a way the Board can work with the Fire Chief about getting information out about fire safety. She also said there is the Fuel Assistant Program and Live Heat available.

Selectman Beauvais said the Winter Parking Ban is now in effect as of December 1st. Parking is prohibited on all public ways between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., annually from December 1st through April 15th. In addition, any vehicle, other than one acting in an emergency, parked, day or night, on any street in the Town, so as to interfere with the work of removing or plowing snow, removing ice, or sanding the street may be removed or towed away under the authority, discretion and direction of the Chief of Police or the Chief's designee. The registered owner of a motor vehicle which is removed pursuant to this bylaw shall be fully responsible for all charges and expenses incurred for the removal and storage of said motor vehicle.

Selectwoman LaBrie said she would like the Building Inspector to come before the Board to state where he stands as far as inspections and discuss renter safety.

Chair Ward said to find out what is going on in town you can check out the Winchendon Courier online, just scroll down to Clyde's Corner. Tree Festival at the Library, Sensory Friendly event on Sunday. Sad note morning the passing of Peter Antonellis. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife and family.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Jane LaPointe said she is here as a Library Trustee. A notice went out today stating the elevator has been repaired. There will be a Sensory Friendly event the same as they did last year and it was well attended. Dec 15th and 16th American Library Association sending someone selected our library to be a case study to see our program in action. Dec 18th classic movie It's A Wonderful Life at 3pm.

Selectwoman LaBrie moved to take 4.1 out of order. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: All aye.

3. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- 3.1 Selectman Beauvais read the public hearing-Pursuant to Chapter 40 Section 46 M.G.L. the Select Board will hold a public hearing on Monday evening, December 9, 2024 at 6:30pm at Town Hall 109 Front Street Winchendon MA. Regarding property tax classification according to use.

The Select Board must make a determination on the factor to be used among the classes of real property, residential, open space, commercial, and industrial, and of personal property for the Fiscal Year 2025 tax rate. Interested taxpayers may present written or oral comments on their views at the time of said Public Hearing. Winchendon Board of Selectmen

Selectwoman LaBrie moved to open the public hearing. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: Selectwoman Eitland aye, Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaBrie aye, Selectman Beauvais aye, and Chair Ward aye.

Rob Heckman-Assessor-put together a pamphlet. Proposed tax rate for FY2025 is \$11.90 estimate. In FY2024 it was \$12.54. Chair Ward if tax rate goes down then valuation of the property has gone up. The average residential tax bill calculation will change as follows: FY2025 Average Single-Family valuation \$340,978 the taxes at \$11.90 per thousand would be \$4,057.64. The FY2024 Average Single Family Valuation \$310,525 the taxes at \$12.54 per thousand would be \$3,893.99. The Board of Assessors recommends that the Select Board adopt a residential shift factor of 1.000 with a corresponding CIP factor of 1.000, thereby maintaining the relative shares of overall tax burden borne by the residential property owners in past years. Based on the above assumptions and a single tax rate. With a single tax rate, the estimated levy to be raised by taxation would be \$15,148,346.

Selectwoman LaBrie brought up raising the commercial rate. Making that change could put a burden on small businesses. Recognize would like to have a large commercial base. Chair Ward said we don't have a large commercial base in town.

Public Comments-Jane LaPointe questioned the levy ceiling and limit.

Selectwoman LaBrie moved to close the public hearing. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: Selectwoman Eitland aye, Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaBrie aye, Selectman Beauvais aye, and Chair Ward aye.

Selectman Beauvais moved the Board votes in accordance with M.G.L., Ch. 40, Sec. 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2025 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.000, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.000, pending certification of the Town's annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of

Revenue. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: Selectwoman Eitland aye, Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaBrie aye, Selectman Beauvais aye, and Chair Ward aye.

4. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:

4.1 Certificate of Appreciation-Burton Gould Jr. - Chair Ward said a couple meetings ago Mr. Gould resigned from the Planning Board to let younger people have an opportunity to serve.

Selectman Beauvais-thanked Mr. Gould for all of your service to this town. He inspired me to run for the position I am in now. Selectwoman LaBrie thanked him. Selectwoman Eitland thanked him for carving out a path to make change and do better. Selectwoman Blanchard thanked him, and said it has been an honor to know you. Chair Ward-shared a story about 200th Winchendon Annual Town Celebration. Burt has always been there.

Chair Ward read the following Certificate of Appreciation-For some 260 years our town has relied on its citizens to step up and volunteer their time and energy in running our local government. We have asked them not only to keep the wheels of local government running, but to also help shape the future of the community.

As a life-long resident of Winchendon, graduate of Murdock High School (Class of 1952), and life member of the Eugene M. Connor American Legion Post 193 (for service with the U.S. Army during the Korean War Conflict), you have always made time to serve your hometown. Your record of local service is remarkable: 37 years as a Selectman; 40 years as a member of the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School Committee; three years on the Board of Health; six years on the Planning Board, and multiple years on the Finance Committee and other town committees.

In grateful recognition of your many years of public service, the Board of Selectmen, on behalf of the Town of Winchendon, issues you this much deserved Certificate of Appreciation. Thank you for stepping up all these years.

On this 9th day of December, 2024 Winchendon Board of Selectmen

Mr. Gould thanked Coral Grout for getting him up here. He said he is glad he came tonight. All the years I have been involved was worth it. Until up to the 60's it was a three member board. I have had an opportunity to work with the Town Manager make sure you keep him.

Chair Ward said Mr. Gould is still on the Winchendon Housing Authority.

4.2 Appointment-Katrina Fleming-Winchendon Commission on Disabilities

Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board approve the appointment of Katrina Fleming to the Winchendon Commission on Disabilities with a term expiration of June 30, 2026. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Vote: All aye.

5. PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:

5.1 Annual Renewals of Licenses- Selectwoman LaBrie said she wanted to hold all license renewals that haven't supplied all the documentation or have not had an inspection yet. The other members agree. **Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board approve the completed annual license renewals for 2025 as presented, and to execute the Renewal Certification 2025 form to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.**

Chair Ward said a Thank you goes out to all the Departments for their part in this renewal process. A special thank-you to Tara Rivers for assisting in handling the many business licenses coming through this office in the last few months.

New Year's Eve Closing for Section 12 Liquor License Holders- Chair Ward said it has been customary in the past that the Board, acting as the Local Licensing Authority, extend the hours of operation for Section 12 (on premises pouring) liquor license holders until 2:00 a.m. on New Year's Day.

Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board of Selectmen authorize to extend the hours of operation for Section 12 liquor license holders until 2:00AM on New Year's Day. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.

Town Manager Bill McKinney asked if the Board could take action tonight about Camelot Farms. Selectwoman LaBrie moved to not renew the 2025 lodging license for Camelot Farm. Selectwoman Eitland seconded. Vote: All aye.

6. BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS:

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Discussion on the Town's Right of First Refusal-64 Lincoln Avenue Parcel ID#2-0-64 approximately 34.40 acres-Mr. McKinney said Chapter 61 land. Received reduced tax rate. Town isn't interested in purchasing. Chair Ward explained where this land is located. Selectwoman Eitland feels not take any action. Selectwoman LaBrie asked about the taxes. This was continued until the next meeting.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT: William McKinney thanked the DPW who have been out doing roads. He also thanked the Fire Department for all the work fighting fires. There will be Christmas Tree Lighting at Grout Park. Selectwoman LaBrie asked Brian Croteau how the salt brining machine was working out. Mr. Croteau said it's done. It has reduced the salt usage.

10. TOWN MANAGER FINANCIAL UPDATE: Town Manager, William McKinney went over the financial updates. Chair Wards said the motor vehicle section has the oldest date. Mr. McKinney said he has to start at earlier years owed to reconcile going forward. Chair Ward good commented it is good news we are making progress. Selectwoman LaBrie agreed. She said she spoke to Donna Spellman and she feels confident we are in better shape. Selectwoman Eitland said we need to figure out what we have left. Getting additional resources is important.

11. MINUTES:

11.1 November 12, 2024 Regular Meeting

Selectman Beauvais moved the Board approve the meeting minutes of November 12, 2024 as presented this evening. Selectwoman Blanchard seconded. Vote: Selectwoman Eitland abstained, Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaBrie abstained, Selectman Beauvais aye, and Chair Ward aye.

11.2 November 25, 2024 Regular Meeting-This was tabled until the next meeting.

12. COMMUNICATIONS: There was no communications discussed this evening.

13. AGENDA ITEMS: Chair Ward said the Tri Board meeting is usually scheduled for January 23rd. We won't know about state funding until usually January 24th. Chair Ward said if we don't know what is coming from the state we shouldn't have the meeting until mid-February. Mr. McKinney said it would be better to get the initial number from the state.

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION: To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual

Selectwoman LaBrie moved the Board enter into Executive Session under Exemption #1 to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. (The meeting will reconvene in Open Session for the sole purpose of adjournment. Selectman Beauvais seconded. Roll Call Vote: Selectwoman Eitland aye, Selectwoman Blanchard aye, Selectwoman LaBrie aye, Selectman Beauvais aye, and Chair Ward aye.

15. ADJOURNMENT: The Board went into executive session at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted


Debra Dennis
Executive Assistant