

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2019 6:30 P.M.
Town Hall, 4th Floor Conference Room
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present:

Audrey LaBrie, Chairwoman
Michael Barbaro, Vice-Chairman
Barbara Anderson

Keith R. Hickey, Town Manager
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant
Lindsay Kuchta, Recording Secretary

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Road Race Application for April 6, 2019, Tracy Flagg- Boston Strong 5K (filed)
- Smith's Country Cheese Annual "Cheese Festival"- May 5, 2019 (filed)
 - Entertainment Permit Application
 - Road Race Application- Holstein Hustle Kids Fun Run
 - Road Race Application- 5-5-5K Cheese Chase
 - Special One Day Wine & Malt Beverages License Application
- Fire Department's Hardship/Bill Reduction Proposal- 1st Reading (filed)
- Ambulance Billing/Collections Policy Review- 1st Reading (filed)
- Proposed Amendment to Personnel Rules and Regulations- 1st Reading (filed)
- Report of the Town Manager (attached)
- Minutes approved:
 - Monday, February 4, 2019 Special Meeting
 - Monday, February 11, 2019 Regular Meeting
 - Monday, February 11, 2019 Executive Session
 - Thursday, February 14, 2019 Joint Meeting with School Committee

LaBrie called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

No one announced they were audio recording the meeting this evening.

1. SELECTMEN'S COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- 1.1. Announcement - MassDOT Public Hearing on the Reconstruction of Central Street – Thurs. Feb. 28, 2019- LaBrie noted MassDOT is holding a public hearing on Thursday, February 28th to discuss the proposed improvements to be done on Central Street from Front Street to Maple Street. The hearing will be held in the 2nd Floor Auditorium here at Town Hall at 7:00 P.M. Anyone interested in seeing what is being proposed is invited to attend and ask any questions or give any input they may have. LaBrie added the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission will be holding a public hearing on Wednesday, February 27th at Town Hall at 6:30PM in the 2nd Floor auditorium to put together a plan for transportation improvement. Finally, the Murdock Blue Devils basketball team is playing their first round in the Western Massachusetts District Tournament tonight; LaBrie wished them the best of luck!

Anderson said she attended the Moonlight Walk held Tuesday, February 19th at the Winchendon Community Park and stated it was a wonderful event. Many people were in attendance and brought their kids as well. She thanked the Ingleside Utilization Committee for all of their work putting it together. Anderson added that Saturday, February 23rd the Board was invited to attend the ribbon cutting for Ruschioni's Cruisin 12 Diner; she attended along with Hickey, LaBrie and several other community members to welcome Mr. Ruschioni's business to the town. According to the diner's Facebook page there will be a grand opening held on Friday, March 1st.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS: There were no public comments or announcements this evening.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- 3.1 National Grid and Verizon New England Petition- One Join Owned Pole, Mill Glen Road- Hickey informed the Board, due to inclement weather, National Grid called and asked to reschedule the hearing for the Board's next meeting.

Barbaro moved to table the Pole Petition until next meeting, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all ayes.

4. APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS: There were none this evening.

5. PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:

- 5.1. Road Race Permit for April 6, 2019 – Boston Strong 5K, Tracy Flagg- Tracy Flagg came forward and stated she applied to be part of the Mass General Hospital First Responder Team to run the Boston Marathon, but in order to be accepted, she needs to raise money. The race will take place the weekend before the Boston Marathon, with proceeds going towards the Mass General Emergency Responders. The race will begin at 10:00AM.

Anderson asked how this will raise money to which Ms. Flagg replied the race will be posted to Race Wire where the registration fee will be \$30 to participate, a portion will go towards the shirt given to participants, and the remainder will go towards the fundraiser. Anderson then asked how many participants Ms. Flagg is hoping to have to which Ms. Flagg replied 100, though she would be more than satisfied with 50. A few things are being incorporated to make the event family friendly like a lap around the gym for kids. 5K races typically get a lot of participants, and it is a run/walk so all are welcome to participate. Anderson asked how people could make a donation to the fundraiser to which Ms. Flagg replied interested donors can reach out to her and she will ensure it goes through.

Barbaro moved the Board approve the 5K Road Race presented by Tracy Flagg to be held on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at 10:00 a.m., seconded by Anderson with a vote of all ayes.

- 5.2. Smith's Country Cheese Annual "Cheese Festival" - May 5, 2019- Leah Catlin came forward and thanked the Board for having her this evening. Ms. Catlin continued, stating the business is excited to have this annual offering at the farm on May 5, 2019 as well as their second annual Cheese Chase race; the 5-5-5K. All proceeds from the race will go to the Clark Memorial YMCA this year. Additionally, there will be a Holstein Hustle kids fun run, a quarter mile run that loops through the barn where the cows will be kept safely in their stalls and then back up the driveway to finish in the parking lot. At the end of the race the Spring Cheese Festival will start with food vendors, food trucks, live music, and beer and wine.

Anderson added there will be parking at Mizhir field for the event, which is very generous of the family to allow.

LaBrie added that with the understanding that proceeds for the race will be donated to the Clark Memorial YMCA, she wanted to ask the Board if they could waive the \$25.00 fee for the road race permit.

Barbaro moved to waive the fee for the road race permit, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all ayes.

Barbaro moved the Board approve the following licenses/permits for Smith's Country Cheese Annual "Cheese Festival to be held on Sunday, May 5, 2019 with a rain date of Sunday, May 19, 2019:

Entertainment Permit

Road Race - Holstein Hustle Kids Fun Run

Road Race - 5-5-5K Cheese Chase

Special One Day Wine & Malt Beverages License.

Motion seconded by LaBrie with a vote of all ayes.

6. BOARDS/COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENTS: There were none this evening.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

- 7.1. Fire Department's Hardship/Bill Reduction Proposal – 1st Reading- Chief Tom Smith came forward and LaBrie mentioned he was before the Board this evening for the first reading of the Fire Department's Hardship/Bill Reduction Proposal, which will give qualified individuals the opportunity to request relief due to hardship.

Chief Smith stated the purpose of the policy is to relieve hardship for individuals without exposing their personal information. It's a pretty basic policy; individuals would fill out a request form which would be reviewed by the Chief and the billing company, and research would be done to see if any payment attempts have been made. The applicant will then be notified of the decision. If they are unhappy with the decision made by the Chief, they may appeal it with the Board of Selectmen. Any decision made by the Board through the appeal process will be final.

Hickey added this appeal process is a little different than others because of the sensitivity of health records, and he believes the Chief should vet the applications to determine whether the bill can justifiably be reduced or eliminated or not. If the individual doesn't agree with the Chief's decision, they can go to the Board for their review, which would take place in Executive Session.

Anderson commended the Chief for his effort in creating the policy. Some people are afraid to call for help because they fear the cost of the treatment, but it can cause bigger problems down the road. Chief Smith noted that it is explained to individuals that before they sign a refusal of treatment, they should consider their health first. There is no reason for people to believe they would be refused treatment.

Barbaro moved the Board approve the first reading of the Fire Department's Hardship/Bill Reduction Proposal and to place it on the agenda at the next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen for further review and/or adoption, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all ayes.

- 7.2. Ambulance Billing / Collections Policy Review – 1st Reading- Chief Smith stated this policy is in effect already, but at the time of approval by the Board, it was decided it would be brought back for review down the road. After being in place for a bit, it was discovered that the time frames set up are not as realistic as he had hoped. He wanted to change the time frame from 145 days to 12 months to give the insurance and supplemental companies and the community the best opportunity to collect the full amount in the process, however still allowing us, if there is no action and no reimbursement collected, to send to the collections agency as it will still be a fairly fresh case.

Barbaro asked if the policy is working well, to which Chief Smith replied yes, they have collected \$10,000, and have encouraged people to make payment plans with the billing company. The combination of the two policies will help both the Town and its residents financially.

Barbaro moved the Board approve the first reading of the amended Ambulance Billing / Collections Policy and to place it on the agenda at the next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen for further review and/or adoption, seconded by LaBrie with a vote of all ayes.

- 7.3. Proposed Amendment to Personnel Rules and Regulations – 1st Reading- Hickey stated a couple years ago, the Board adopted a non-affiliated rules and regulation policy for non-union employees. He is asking the Board to consider updating section 8.7 of the policy titled "Substance Abuse Policy", and modify it to "Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace." It was proposed by KP Law that the Town contain something in its collective bargaining to have a drug and alcohol free work place, and Hickey is just looking to modify the Non-Union Personnel Rules and Regulations as it has been discussed with all five collective bargaining units as well. The policy takes into consideration the changes the Town should consider with regards to marijuana now being legal and how it can be utilized in the work place. He is asking to have a workplace free of problems associated with controlled substances and alcohol and provide a process of what is allowed in and outside of the workplace. In the case that an employee is struggling with substance or alcohol abuse, the policy would refer them to an employee assistance program if they are willing to take advantage.

Barbaro moved the Board approve the first reading of the amended Personnel Rules and Regulations and to place it on the agenda at the next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen for further review and/or adoption, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all ayes.

8. **OLD BUSINESS:** There was none this evening.

9. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:**

1. Financial Updates-

- a. The FY20-25 Capital Improvement Plan was presented to the Finance Committee on February 19th.
- b. I requested the Finance Committee pass over my request to transfer \$78,400 from the Finance Committee Snow and Ice Reserve Account to fund the demolition of a portion of the dilapidated private property on Lincoln Ave. Extension. I have some FY19 budget concerns and may need some of that reserve for other possible department budget shortfalls. I hope to revisit the transfer in closer to the end of the fiscal year.

Hickey added at almost eight months into the fiscal year, the budget is fairly tight, and although there aren't any real concerns department wise, he is concerned about spending \$78,000 of \$93,000 of reserve funds set up for Snow and Ice expenses not knowing what the rest of the winter has to bring. Since last Thursday, the DPW has already used the salt that filled the shed and has spent somewhere between \$10,000 and \$15,000 out of the Reserve Fund. Hickey stated he feels badly for the residents that live in the area, and he is hopeful to bring something back in the spring to move forward with the process. Additionally, due to the high winds that occurred today, the 3rd floor wall of the building collapsed inside the building.

2. Personnel Updates-

- a. Alison Manugian has accepted the part time Planner position. Alison's first day in Winchendon will be March 18th.

Additionally, Hickey stated Ms. Manugian has a degree in engineering and thinks she will be an asset to the Planning Department and Planning Board.

- b. Part time Animal Control Officer Monica Kleber has resigned. Chief Walsh is currently interviewing candidates for the position.

3. Project Updates-

- a. Tracy Murphy, School Department Maintenance staff and Green Communities representatives toured the Library and High School to review the completed energy saving work completed with the Green Community grant awarded to Winchendon last spring. That work included:

- \$18,522 for Murdock High School for exterior LED lighting
- \$41,404 for weatherization at the Murdock High School
- \$80,457 for Building Automation System (BAS) expansion at Murdock High School
- \$85,061 for LED lighting upgrade at the Memorial School
- \$21,421 for LED lighting upgrade at the Toy Town School
- \$3,135 for weatherization at the Beal's Memorial Library

An FY19 Green Community grant application will be submitted shortly. Proposed work for the upcoming grant cycle includes replacing the furnace at the Police Department, upgrading lighting to LED at the Highway Garage Senior Center and upgrading the heating in the Memorial School Maintenance Garage.

Hickey added that over \$200,000 of the funds were spent updating the lighting at the school, from which they should see reasonable savings. We believe the requirements have all been satisfied. The Town has received over \$500,000 in Green Community grants over the last three fiscal years.

4. Miscellaneous Updates –

- a. I have had a couple of people that live on unaccepted roads contact me about the letter I sent informing the property owners that have frontage on the private roads that a citizen petition needs to be submitted to the Town Clerk by March 18th to be included on the Town ballot. I am hopeful that the petition is submitted with the necessary signatures to allow the voters of Winchendon to determine if unaccepted roads will be maintained in the winter.

Hickey stated the letter said he understands we, the Town, have maintained the road, but have been made aware that there is a process the Town needs to follow to legally allow spending public money on unaccepted or private roads. Hickey is encouraging the people to band together and get the 200 signatures needed on the petition and have it submitted to the Town Clerk's office by March 18th to be put on the ballot for voter consideration. He is not trying to be punitive, rather trying to address the situation so we cannot be challenged for spending money on private or unaccepted roads.

10. MINUTES:

10.1 Monday, February 4, 2019 Special Meeting-

Anderson moved the Board accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held Monday, February 4, 2019, seconded by Barbaro with a vote of all ayes.

10.2 Monday, February 11, 2019 Regular Meeting-

Barbaro moved the Board accept the minutes of Monday, February 11, 2019, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all ayes.

10.3 Monday, February 11, 2019 EXECUTIVE SESSION

Barbaro moved the Board accept and hold the Executive Session Minutes of Monday, February 11, 2019, seconded by Anderson. By a vote of roll call, Barbaro aye, Anderson aye and LaBrie aye the motion carried.

10.4 Thursday, February 14, 2019 Joint Meeting with School Committee-

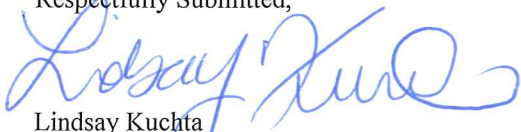
Barbaro moved the Board accept the minutes of the Joint Meeting with the School Committee held Thursday, February 14, 2019, seconded by Anderson with a vote of all ayes.

11. COMMUNICATIONS: There were none this evening.

12. **AGENDA ITEMS:** LaBrie noted the upcoming meetings for the Board are March 11th and March 25th, to which Hickey added March 11th will be a joint meeting with the Finance Committee where the FY20 Town Manager's Recommended Budget will be presented.
13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**
Barbaro moved the Board enter into Executive Session under Exemption #3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the Chair so declares and to reconvene into Public Session for the sole purpose of adjournment, LaBrie so declared, seconded by Anderson. By a vote of roll call, Barbaro aye, Anderson aye, and LaBrie aye, the Board entered into Executive Session at 7:17 p.m.

14. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Respectfully Submitted,



Lindsay Kuchta
Recording Secretary

