

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2012 – 7:00 P.M.
Town Hall, 109 Front Street, 2nd Floor Auditorium**

Present: Robert M. O’Keefe, Chairman
Elizabeth R. Hunt, Vice-Chairwoman
Keith R. Barrows
C. Jackson Blair

Linda A. Daigle, Executive Assistant

Absent: James M. Kreidler, Jr., Town Manager

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- WIC announcement regarding move to Winchendon
 - Proclamation for retired DPW Supt. Michael Murphy
 - Memo dated 2/3/12 from DPW Supt. Deline regarding Water/Sewer Abatement for Il Italiano’s
 - Memo dated 2/3/12 from DPW Supt. Deline requesting consideration of water/sewer abatement policy change
 - Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources (DAR) notification of intent to acquire interest in Elmwood Rd. property
 - DAR request to waive 120 Public Notice to Purchase Development Rights on Farmland
 - Email from Mr. Paul Daniello of Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust regarding support of Elmwood Rd. APR
 - Town Manager’s Report
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Chairman O’Keefe called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. Chairman O’Keefe announced that they would be rearranging the agenda a bit by taking Old Business up after Selectmen’s Comments. The meeting aired live on local cable access channel 8. No response came forth from the audience when the Chairman asked if anyone else would be audio or video recording the meeting this evening besides the Board.

Public Comments and Announcements: Chairman O’Keefe announced for the WIC program that they have moved to a new location located in Winchendon at the CAC, 273 Central St. The program offers families with personalized nutritional services, checks for free healthy food, referrals for medical and dental care, fuel assistance, child care and more. Call the Gardner office at 978-630-3344 for appointments and for more information.

Selectmen’s Comments:

PROCLAMATION – Mike Murphy, Sr.: Selectwoman Hunt was honored to read the proclamation for our DPW Supt. Mike Murphy, Sr. who was present this evening to accept it. He was being recognized on the occasion of his retirement and the Board proclaimed February 11, 2012 “Mike Murphy Day.” Mr. Murphy was applauded in appreciation of his service to the town. Mr. Murphy said he was proud to have served the town and enjoyed it and commented how fast the time went by. He wished his

successor, John Deline, who was also present for the meeting, all the luck. He added he always tried to do his best and sometimes it was difficult. He said he worked for eleven Town Managers and a dozen Selectmen and is now looking forward to the next chapter in his life. He thanked the Board for the acknowledgement and the Board thanked him in response.

Old Business:

Water/Sewer Abatement – Ashraf Solimon came to the meeting but mistakenly went to the Board of Health meeting that was being held on the fourth floor of town hall at the same time. Supt. John Deline was present on this issue. Blair moved to accept the recommendation of the DPW Superintendent and deny this abatement. O’Keefe suggested it might be best to table indefinitely than to deny and so moved; Hunt seconded. Barrows pointed out the DPW Superintendent’s explanation cleared up confusion on what a leak is considered, in this particular case, and if such a leak occurred giving this volume of water, it would have been substantial and devastating to the business and obviously that didn’t occur. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Water/Sewer Abatement Policy: Supt. Deline submitted to the Board for first consideration a change to their policy. The Board agreed to place it on the next meeting agenda. Mr. Deline is of the opinion that no abatements to water and sewer charges should be granted in this type of situation, where leaks are attributed to leaks in the plumbing systems in property owners’ buildings. Someone has to bear that cost and he didn’t feel it was fair to spread those costs across the other users of the town. O’Keefe responded that people should be checking their meters. Deline offered help to folks to determine if there is a leak and mentioned the new radio frequency readers also help them to determine if there is a leak in the average home. O’Keefe closed the discussion by stating he looked forward to changing/improving the policy.

Chairman O’Keefe called a recess at 7:18 p.m. noticing Mr. Ashraf Soliman had entered the meeting room.

The meeting reconvened at 7:21 p.m.

Public Comments:

O’Keefe opened Public Comments back up for those who had been accidentally at the Board of Health meeting. Sheila Luma, Community Coordinator for the North Central WIC program, came before the Board to speak on the move to the Community Action Center (CAC) from United Parish. She announced the new number again and said a Winchendon number would get hooked up. Appointments are available the 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. She asked those listening to call in advance. The program is a nutrition and education program for pregnant woman and children under five. Health fairs are being planned and she will be working closely with the CAC. Information is available at the Winchendon library during children story hour and toddler play group and at various locations throughout town. The WIC program is available for health fairs and other programs. They have a strong presence at head start and pre-kindergarten.

Ashraf Solimon, owner of Il Italianos Restaurant, announced he is going to open up his restaurant the first Monday of July for a Community Appreciation Day. He will open his doors from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. to feed the public for free, sharing in his cooking. It will be an open buffet and invited those listening to please come eat for free.

Appointments/Resignations:

Resignation: Registrar of Voters – Benjamin Miller: O’Keefe announced Mr. Miller’s resignation due to personal commitments. Mr. Miller has done a wonderful job. Barrows moved to accept the

resignation of Ben Miller and thanked him for his service to the community; Hunt seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Appointments:

Registrar of Voters Republican Vacancy – Vicki Connor: O’Keefe announced the vacancy has been posted and one individual has responded thus far. Ms. Connor was present on her interest to serve on this Board. Barrows moved the appointment of Vicki Connor to the Board of Registrar; Hunt seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Conservation Commission – Lionel Cloutier: O’Keefe announced that Lionel Cloutier has submitted a letter of interest to serve once again on this Board but was currently in a meeting with the Board of Health, serving as their Chairman. O’Keefe stated Mr. Cloutier was a member before of the Conservation Commission prior but stepped down due to a temporary charter issue. The Conservation Commission recommended unanimously approving this appointment. Blair moved to appoint Mr. Cloutier to the Committee; Barrows seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Hunt is concerned about possible conflicts with board/committee members serving on more than one board but was happy that Mr. Cloutier was willing to serve again and fill this position that has been open for months. O’Keefe asked the public if interested to serve on a board or committee, to contact the office.

Permit/License Applications, Hearings:

ABCC Population Estimates for Seasonal Licenses – Barrows stated as a usual and customary item on the agenda, it appears that the estimate of 1,000 as temporary seasonal increase in population has served us well, moved the number; Blair seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

Mass. Dept. of Agriculture (DAR) Notification of Agricultural Preservation Restriction – Elmwood Rd: Barrows explained that the DAR is looking for us to publicly announce their intentions to purchase 24 acres of land for inclusion in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program and also to waive the 120 notice and reduce it to 60 days. Mr. Paul Daniello, a Project Manager from Mount Grace Conservation Trust in Athol, came forward to explain the notices. This one is just to notify the town the Dept. is working on taking an interest in the 24 acres of Murdock Farm on Elmwood Rd. The project is part of a landscape conservation project that we were awarded a grant for. They discussed the map showing the proposed project. He said no action was required from the Board but just to make this announcement.

Mass. Dept. of Agriculture Waiver of 120 Day Public Notice to Purchase Development Rights on Farmland – Girouard/Murdock Farm, Elmwood Rd.: Mr. Daniello stated the DAR is required to do a 120 day notice for this APR and they are all allowed, through the Selectboard, to reduce this to sixty days. He said the grant award will expire in May and Mt. Grace wouldn’t have time to complete the project without expediting it. Barrows moved the Board of Selectmen hereby waive the 120 day notice requirements as set forth in Chapter 7, Section 40(I) of the Mass. General Laws and hereby approve the acquisition of a certain development rights for agricultural purposes upon land in the Town of Winchendon, now or formerly owned by the Girouard’s/Murdock Farm by the DAR within a shorter

time period than provided in said Section 40(I). Hunt seconded for discussion. Hunt asked why wasn't an extension asked for? Mr. Daniello replied in order to be funded for this project by the state, the APR needs to be recorded by May 15th. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion passed unanimously. The document was executed by the Selectboard.

Mount Grace Request Support of Agricultural Preservation Restriction – Elmwood Rd.

Mr. Paul Daniello next explained the request of support needed from the Board for the APR on Elmwood Rd. He informed the Board he had letters of support from the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. Hunt moved a letter of support be drafted by the Chairman; Barrows seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Daniello announced he would be coming back in a month or so for a Conservation Restriction. O'Keefe signed the support document. Hunt inquired what would happen if Mt. Grace were to go bankrupt. Daniello replied they would pass their interest to another conservation organization; they could be reassigned.

Town Manager's Report:

With the Town Manager out ill, Chairman O'Keefe read through his report which consisted of the following:

1. Personnel Update: The advertisement for the Fire Chief's position is running. The deadline is March 8.
2. Financial Updates
 - a. Annual and Special Town Meeting Calendar. Blair moved to adopt the calendar, open the warrant for the Special Town and Annual Town Meeting Warrants effective this evening, Feb. 6, 2012 and to close them on April 6, 2012 at 12:00 p.m. and to set the date for the Special and Annual Town Meetings for May 21, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. at the Murdock Middle High School. Hunt seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.
 - b. FY13 Budgets – Confirmation has been received of the fact that the Governor's budget plans for a General Government Local Aid payment for FY13 is flat lined against the original FY12 (pre-\$65 million reversion funds) allocation. There is a provision in the fall to provide the same \$65 million if the state books close out well again.
 - c. Streetlights – The first meeting of the review working group will be February 8, 2012. Confirmation has been received for participation from Police, Fire, Public Works, Selectboard, Planning and Toy Town Partnership. We are just waiting for a school participant at this time.
3. Project Updates
 - a. Solar Farm – Sun Edison's Planning Board approval has been recorded. They were onsite last week for a visit. The final interconnection approval is slated to be issued within the next two weeks and they are targeting being onsite, weather permitting, in late March/early April. O'Keefe mentioned the delay has been with the local utility company getting the interconnection permit.
4. Miscellaneous Updates
 - a. Public Land and Access to Firewood – After consulting with the town's insurance carrier, the liability involved in allowing citizen access to public lands for the purpose of cutting firewood for private use, is far too great to sanction such a practice.

Minutes: January 9, 2012 Regular Meeting: Blair moved to approve; Hunt seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Communications: n/a

Agenda Items: Daigle reminded the Board their next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21st for a liquor license hearing. The Board is also tentatively planning on their regular second meeting scheduled for February 27th.

Adjournment: With no Executive Session needed this evening, Barrows moved to adjourn; Blair seconded. By roll call vote of all aye, the Board adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Daigle
Executive Assistant