

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2014
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Auditorium
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present: Fedor Berndt, Chairman
Elizabeth R. Hunt, Vice-Chair
Robert O’Keefe
Keith Barrows

James M. Kreidler, Jr., Town Manager
Linda A. Daigle, Executive Assistant

List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant Nov. 24, 2014 (filed)
 - Special Election Ballot (attached)
 - Permit Application – Sunday Hour Change – Winchendon Irving, 93 Gardner Rd. (filed)
 - Permit Application – Christmas Tree Sale Permit – Byron Beauregard, 80 Old Center (filed)
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Chairman Berndt called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America. The meeting aired live on local cable access channel 8.

Announce audio/video recording disclosure – Ms. Dianna Kreidler announced she would be recording the meeting this evening.

SELECTMEN’S COMMENTS:

O’Keefe announced that Kinder Morgan has postponed all of the Open Houses scheduled for November and December and when they reschedule the updates will be placed on the website.

Ms. Audrey LaBrie called for a Point of Information asking for clarification about the prioritization of business listed on the agenda this evening having the Town Manager’s report up front prior to Public Comments. First, O’Keefe explained that Ms. LaBrie is not a voting member of the Board and can’t call for a motion but her question would certainly be addressed. She requested the Board take any public comments before the Town Manager’s Report where the Board would be finalizing the warrant and special election ballot. Kreidler explained the reason the agenda is ordered that way was due to a timing deadline to get the warrant posted. There are a substantial number of articles to be addressed before the posting.

TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT:

Deficit Resolution Plan Discussion
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING NOVEMBER 24, 2014

Kreidler stated the above two agenda items were one and the same. He reviewed the draft Special Town Meeting warrant before them.

Article 1 – Are reports of the Finance Committee and also the Winchendon Enhancement Committee who have asked to speak and give a brief update.

Article 2 - This is to revote the format of the FY15 budget at the request of the Department of Revenue (DOR). He read the Article and added this is DOR's request we change the format and move away from a bottom line budget to a departmental line budget to give the Town Accountant more control over monitoring expenditures.

Article 3 – This article reflects the FY15 General Government budget cuts of \$175,000 listed in the warrant and referenced in the Deficit Reduction Plan. Kreidler ran through the cuts and informed them this may be fine-tuned between now and the 24th.

Article 4 – Kreidler read the Special Legislation borrowing article. He said what this articles stands for is proposition deficit revenue bond pursuant to the Plan you adopted last Thursday and submitted to DOR. This writing was worked on jointly by Town Counsel and Chief Legal Counsel of the DOR.

Article 5 – Kreidler read the Proposition 2 ½ override article. He said the Board may be surprised to see an override article on the warrant as he had said last week that DOR informed him it was not necessary in the warrant and only required to be held in the ballot box. He reached out to Town Counsel about this, as it was contrary to his experience. With consulting with Town Counsel and DOR, it was determined to be most protective to have this language in the warrant because we wouldn't have a corresponding piece of language from Town Meeting vote to have direction of where the amount of the override would go. There is a way to do this without Town Meeting; but it is more protective to do it this way. As a side note, he thought it would afford the taxpayer an opportunity to have a meaningful discussion and express themselves by vote. The other way, if the Board made a presentation under reports, it wouldn't afford them an actual opportunity for an actual response and vote. He explained the law specifies that no dollar amount is to be listed in the warrant for the general operating override but it is listed in the ballot question. The \$700,000 isn't listed in the article but you will see it in the special election warrant.

Barrows clarified Article 4 and 5 in regards to property tax. The impact of Article 5, the proposition 2 ½ override, if voted in the affirmative and a corresponding affirmative vote at the ballot, would result in an increase in property tax. Article 4, a Deficit Bond, is a borrowing with an anticipated payback coming through the General Operating budget and not via a tax increase.

Article 6 – Is Special Legislation to file to repeal the Infrastructure Investment Fund. Kreidler explained this is included to be done in the Plan to the DOR. If they chose not to consider it, this article provides us the opportunity to do as standalone and ultimately gets us to the same place. These funds would then be able to buy down part of the deficit.

Article 7 – Adoption of the Mass. Meals Tax - Kreidler read the article and explained you can view what the projected meals tax revenue would be for the town on the State's website. It is projected to be \$78,000 based on last year's actual data.

Article 8 – This article is for a Forensic Audit not to exceed \$50,000 and was submitted by the School Department. The article doesn't identify a source/fund and would need to be before it is moved at Town Meeting. Kreidler noted he did not submit the article and noted a School Committee member was seated in the audience. O'Keefe asked the Town Manager if in his conversations with DOR had they expressed any interest in them having articles dealing with new appropriations in this upcoming meeting. Kreidler replied they did not have that conversation, specifically; but absence specific reference and lack of reference, everything they talked about was in fact that we need to fill holes, not grow expenses. Kreidler didn't know of a fund that could be identified with \$50,000. O'Keefe was concerned that we were adding an expense when the DOR essentially commanded us to make cuts. We know there is a need and a desire to look at the books, especially these accounts referenced by the School Committee; but at the same time, we need DOR's assistance and we don't want to be upsetting them. Kreidler said it has been publicly stated by this Board that this type of review is needed, the importance of it by the Finance Committee and the School Committee. Already established by a vote of this Board, with the concurrence of the Finance Committee Chair and the School Committee Chair, that the Finance Committee will take the lead in crafting an Request for Proposal (RFP) to do an investigate audit. If it was determined to go further with a forensic audit, then we go down that path. Each year the Finance Committee has a reserve fund for unforeseen expenditures. Each year in its entirety, it has gone to the veteran's budget. This year, based on current actions, there will be an additional \$100,000 made available to the Veteran's budget. The reserve fund might be a source. The Finance Committee themselves could authorize this for this very purpose. Hunt was confused questioning if we are going down two different roads asking if this was a separate article than what we talked about with the Finance Committee. Is the School Committee submitting this as a standalone article? Kreidler said he believes it's a standalone article that the School Committee must have recently taken a vote at their midday meeting last Thursday. The School Committee member in attendance was asked to speak to the issue.

School Committee member Ms. Susan Burdsall said the intent was to make sure that collectively we have all of the bases covered at Town Meeting floor. There has been different discussions on different levels with different Boards at different committee meetings on whether or not there is a more in depth audit to be done, or whether its more in depth of specific accounts and whether there is a forensic audit or investigative audit done on both municipal and school department accounts. There seems to be a great deal of confusion over that. The School spoke with a representative from the State Auditor's office to get more information from them because there are a lot of questions that the community has obviously. There is a great deal of confusion or perhaps misunderstandings to the point that it comes close to smearing some people's reputations. The State Auditor's office was concerned with putting anything forth that had an open ended amount listed but that it seemed like a forensic audit at this point clearly identified in front of the voters would make things so much easier and so much more clear for people. When they spoke with the State Auditors they questioned how this could be done with the cost potentially being astronomical. They were assured even though their organization, Mass. Association of School Committees, that complete forensic audits, even with multiple years, might be around \$45,000-\$50,000. The state auditor's office said they could do it for much less than that being a public office and that being their business. The School Committee thought it was important to bring this to Town Meeting and if there was agreement, perhaps the Finance Committee would come forward with the funding. Whether it moves forward at Town Meeting or with an RFP with the Finance Committee, people have a chance to hear it and vote on it. O'Keefe said he didn't understand the reason for this if they had all agreed the Finance Committee would head this up. Why would the School Committee do this asking her if the Committee didn't trust the Finance Committee to do their job? She said no, not at all. O'Keefe said it feels like you are trying to force the Finance Committee's hand or the Town's hand. Burdsall replied she could see how

it might be perceived that way but the intent is to add a voice of support as well. They wanted to also make sure though that if the audit has been laid out by the Finance Committee with only a certain more in depth audit of only certain accounts because they were afraid of the costs, this could be addressed. After speaking with the State Auditor's office and finding out this could actually be done, they had to put together something in a short order to put on the Special Town Meeting warrant. No, she said, it's not a lack of trust at all. O'Keefe asked if she was told a Forensic audit would cost \$40,000 to \$50,000. Burdsall replied that was the ball park estimate put out there from the MESE. O'Keefe said that is approximately the cost of our regular annual audit. If that's the price we pay for a standard audit, that can't be the cost for the forensic audit. Burdsall said the State Auditor's office was not surprised at all to hear that kind of amount from MESE but they have told us an even lower amount for a forensic audit. They justified offering it at a cheaper price because they are a state agency. O'Keefe said but now we will confuse the public. We had all agreed the Finance Committee was going to do this and now we have an article that handicaps the Finance Committee because it stipulates the audit is to be formed by the office of the State Auditor. No reason to go out for an RFP then because that would go out to every auditing firm in the state. In this article, you are saying an RFP is not allowed as you want only the state auditor and we are telling the public that we are going to get it done for \$50,000 yet we know that's the approximate cost of our normal audit. Burdsall said they are getting all this information from... O'Keefe interjected and said "but that's the problem. This isn't the job of the School Committee. We all agreed the Finance Committee was going to do it." Burdsall said she understands, they rushed putting it together with a very good intent and clearly there are a lot of reasons at this point why we would want to see a forensic audit done. If it helps they would have a discussion with the Finance Committee before Town Meeting and give them the information they have. If you want to submit something in this format or if they ask us to withdraw it or if they ask us to move forward on this instead of theirs, that would be fine. O'Keefe said, "This isn't fine." We may hit 300 people for town meeting out of 10,000; but, this entire warrant will be printed in the newspaper and posted all over the community and what people are going to see is that the School Committee, for \$50,000 is going to get the office of the State Auditor to do a complete forensic audit. We know that can't happen. You may have other communication with the Finance Committee and maybe on the floor of Town Meeting we come up with a better article. But upwards of 10,000 people are going to read this and they are not going to know about the rest. That's why, he continued, this is a very bad idea because now we are confusing people rather than helping them. He realizes that wasn't her intent. The intent was to help but this is also why we asked and agreed to let the Finance Committee run with this. It doesn't appear the School committee wants the Finance Committee to do its job. Burdsall concluded saying she hopes it gets worked out jointly as the intent and understands how this might be confusing coming from the School Committee. Ms. Burdsall was thanked for coming forward.

Article 9 – Kreidler read the article which would, if approved, reduce the number of members of the Conservation Commission from seven to five. The Commission has issues with quorum requirements and is seeking this reduction of members. The blanks in the draft regarding amending a prior Town Meeting article will need to be filled in.

Article 10 – Kreidler read the article which exempts the Town from a provision in the Bylaw prohibiting signs in all zones. He explained the Town received a grant from Robinson-Broadhurst to install a landscape area in the triangle intersection of Glenallen and Spring and within that area have an electronic sign which would alert people to public safety issues and information of events happening in Town. Public Works Director was advised this wouldn't be allowed unless this exemption was granted.

Article 11 through 15 – Kreidler said these articles have been submitted by the Planning Board. Planning Board Vice-Chairman came forward on the articles.

Article 11 – Mr. Corbosiero said this article is a redo of an article approved at Special Town Meeting in December last year. It was rejected by Attorney General due to a notification issue. The article spells out what the Planning Board can do with “Criteria” and “Conditions.”

Article 12 – Mr. Corbosiero explained this article pertains to new definitions that have been vetted with the Building Inspector. O’Keefe noted they would apply to new zones and that any existing are grandfathered with the current language unless they came before the Planning for a change.

Article 13 – Mr. Corbosiero said this article seeks to strike out the dimensional requirement and adds “does not create any new nonconformity.” It will allow in some cases for people to seek a “Special Permit” from the Zoning Board of Appeals versus a variance with a Special Permit from the Planning Board making it a lot easier to do.

Article 14 – Mr. Corbosiero said this article seeks to change the principal use categories for conservation and recreation in an Industrial Zone from no to a Special Permit. He said this has come up with the Lost Lake Campground that became industrial at one time. People now are thinking of bringing it back to a campground. This would be a way to allow that.

Article 15 – Mr. Corbosiero said this article seeks to change use table to allow retail sales and services facility for boats and marine equipment in the Neighborhood Commercial District. He said the Planning Board wants to make things easier for businesses to do things. We zone for the worst case scenario; but for those who do things right, you want to make it as easy as possible.

Ms. Daigle asked to add “submitted by Planning Board” to those Planning articles as it was missing from the written article.

Article 16 – Kreidler read the article which is a citizen’s petition seeking the Board of Selectmen to take affirmative action terminating or otherwise removing the current Town Manager from his position whether through terminating him or seeking his resignation.

Article 17 – Kreidler stated this is also a citizen’s petition. He read the list of “Whereas” in the article which conclude with voters seeking the resignation of the Town Manager and affirmative action by the Board of Selectmen to achieve this resignation or otherwise terminate him from his position.

O’Keefe said many of the “Whereas” are factual. Under the Town Charter, the Town Manager is our Chief Administrative Office and the Town Manager should keep the Board fully informed. However, he said, there is a very clear error in the second “Whereas” regarding sharing the deficit information with the Board. He said the Town Manager did share information with us. We all remember back in the beginning of the summer when the Town first became aware of this issue, that the Town Manager contacted each of us. He did completely share and when the numbers changed over time, he shared those numbers as well. Some of the “Whereas” are false.

Kreidler said that completes the warrant and it is in order for the Board to approve the warrant, take a brief adjournment so we can go upstairs and remove the “draft” off of it, add the “Planning Board” as the

submitter of the Planning articles and then we can get it executed. O’Keefe moved to approve the warrant; Barrows seconded. By a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

The Board recessed at 7:19 p.m. to execute the Special Town Meeting warrant and hand over to the Town Clerk and Constable for posting. The meeting reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

Approve Special Election Ballot for Posting

Hunt read the Election Ballot for Saturday, December 20, 2014. Polls will be open from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. The question on the ballot for voters is:

“Shall the Town of Winchendon be allowed to assess an additional \$700,000.00 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of funding the operating budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1st, 2014?”

Barrows moved to approve the Election Warrant and to execute; O’Keefe seconded for discussion. He asked the Town Manager what would happen at the ballot if Town Meeting does not pass the override article. Kreidler said if it fails at Town Meeting, we still have to go to the ballot because it has been called and it can pass there. If you don’t have the two votes, it could die or if it passes at the ballot, another Town Meeting could be called again. O’Keefe clarified that at Special Town Meeting if people vote no and then at the Special Election some people don’t show up because they think its dead and those who go to the ballot vote and it passes, the Town could have another Town Meeting and re-ask the question and the override would be in effect. Kreidler confirmed his scenario of what could take place and stressed that if you want this vote to die, you must also go to the ballot and vote. O’Keefe said whether you are for or against the override, show up at Town Meeting and then at the Special Election. You need to do both to defeat or support it.

Kreidler pointed out that leading up to this warrant this evening, there has been a lot of discussion the last couple months of things that could have negatively impacted the School Dept. There could have been a Finance Director included in the legislation request. The School Dept. was clear they didn’t want that so it was removed from the warrant. There could have been an article with School Dept. cuts. The School made it clear by their lack of response that they were not interested in that and that too was removed and doesn’t appear in the warrant. And, lastly there could have been the more draconian version of the same thing which would have been a warrant article to increase the Indirect Cost in the School Dept. budget which would have had the net effect of reducing the all other available for instructional purposes. That too did not make the warrant. The overarching point he was trying to make is that there could have been things that were school unfriendly that you could have included in this warrant. It is worthy to note that none of those things made it in the warrant and that was a direct result of your direction. O’Keefe wanted to be clear for those watching, the vote they were taking was to send the election to the ballot. This is not the Board of Selectmen saying in any way that we approve or disapprove the particular item on the ballot. We are simply sending the ballot to be published. Hunt asked about the necessity of having another Special Town Meeting if the votes were “No” at Town Meeting and “Yes” at the ballot. O’Keefe believed it was moot and didn’t believe that any member of the Board would call another Town Meeting if people say “no” at Town Meeting. Barrows added the Board should take the position they have at Town Meeting. If it fails at Town Meeting, that’s it. The only reason there would be a ballot question is due to a timing issue; otherwise with a no vote, there would be no ballot question. By a vote of all aye, the Special Election warrant was approved. O’Keefe moved the Board would follow the wishes of Town Meeting and not call a Special Town Meeting should the first Town Meeting vote “no” and the ballot box

vote “yes” on this override question; Barrows seconded. By a vote of all aye, the motion passed unanimously. O’Keefe concluded with asking everyone to still show up at the ballot.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. LaBrie came forward to remind the Board and citizens that this Saturday, November 15th at Monty Tech Regional School is the “Stop the Pipeline Statewide Summit.” It will be held from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. There will be a lot of information on how to address some of the FERC filing requirements. She urged everyone to attend.

Mr. Joe Snow came forward asking about a member who sits on an appointing board could not then sit on a board that they appoint. He questioned whether the Chairman of the Selectboard, who also sits as the Chairman of the Planning Board would be a conflict. Kreidler said the Charter or local Bylaw specifies which Boards you can sit on concurrently and which you can’t; that would be the effective law. He believes it is covered in the Charter and would review for him. Mr. Snow then questioned if someone wanted to run for an elected Board and was currently on an appointed Board, they would then have to resign thirty days before they take papers out to run for that elected board. Berndt said if he’s not mistaken, the Board was called in his case and was told you could be on one elected seat and one appointed seat. Barrows said he appreciates Mr. Snow’s questions and something he has been thinking about. With the number of questions coming forward lately, and it’s a good thing, the question is important to the individual posing them and to this Board; the response doesn’t warrant an off the cuff or on the spot answer. They need to be researched and suggested a formal response so the answers are clear and so they are not misconstrued. We could have an RFQ and a list of responses so when the question comes up we have that response in writing that we can share. He suggested when they get a question requiring detail or research, that they take the question and compile the answers in writing and distribute at the next meeting. Obviously, it will take a little extra time, but the trade off will be worth it. They need to start considering this procedure. It would also be good to get the citation of state law, Board of Selectmen policy, etc. that is referred to in the question or answer. O’Keefe added it would also be important to add which document would supersede the other documents. O’Keefe asked that a written answer will be provided to him at the next meeting and if Mr. Snow is not present, it could be sent to him.

Kreidler spoke about the Board’s Policies and Procedures with a specific policy that encourages citizen involvement and participation. It does encourage people who have questions of substance to identify a spokesperson and have them submit the questions in writing. The questions will be researched thoroughly and responded to in writing. The policy goes a little more in detail to say that those types of issues of substance should be handled that way because we don’t have anything else on the agenda as it is currently laid out to provide the citizens the opportunity to get those substantive questions answered. In your Policies and Procedures, there is an agenda format which has “Public Comments and Announcements.” Over time and under different Chairs, there has been some slippage as to how that agenda item has been used. Sometimes in the past we went over an hour with people coming one after another with questions. This is not the way the policy reads and it does not give the citizen the best answer necessarily each time. Towards Selectman Barrows point and your policy, Public Comments and Announcements, is meant and has always meant to be more of quick announcements of upcoming things similar to what Ms. LaBrie did this evening with the reminder of the Pipeline Summit, anything more than that, questions should be submitted and a spokesperson identified and brought to the next meeting. It’s more appropriate to citizens to get accurate answers with research done in advance. Hunt asked about timelines in the policy to respond to citizens questions. The Town Manager thought that had been rescinded and would check the policy. The Board discussed implementing a timeline for response to citizens written questions. It would

be part of the annual review of the Board's Policies and Procedures. Selectmen Barrows and Berndt would work together on this annual review.

BOARDS/COMMITTEES: N/A

APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS: N/A

PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS, HEARINGS:

Sunday Hours Change to 10:00 a.m. for Section 15 Package Store Licenses

- Nouria Energy Retail, Inc., d/b/a Winchendon Irving, 93 Gardner Road – O'Keefe explained this request is to allow the ability to sell liquor starting at 10:00 a.m on Sunday. O'Keefe moved to approve; Hunt seconded. By a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

Christmas Tree Permit Sale – Byron Beauregard, 80 Old Center – Mr. Beauregard came forward on his annual application to sell Christmas trees at his home. Hunt moved to accept; O'Keefe seconded. By a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Kreidler asked now that the warrant for Town Meeting is approved would the Board consider voting their recommendations this evening due to their next meeting not being until Town Meeting. It would give the public a chance to see what the Board's recommendations are for each article. It was agreed.

Board of Selectmen Voted Recommendations of Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Article 1 – O'Keefe moved to recommend; Barrows seconded. Vote taken – all aye to recommend.

Article 2 – Barrows moved to recommend; Hunt seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 3 – O'Keefe moved to recommend; Barrows seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 4 – O'Keefe moved to recommend; Hunt seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 5 – O'Keefe asked to pass over and come back after getting through the easy articles.

Article 6 – Barrows moved to recommend; Hunt seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 7 – O'Keefe asked to pass over and come back to discuss.

Article 8 – O'Keefe moved to *not* recommend – Barrows seconded. Vote taken-all aye to not recommend.

Article 9 – O'Keefe moved to recommend; Hunt seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 10 – Barrows moved to recommend; Hunt seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 11 – Hunt moved to recommend; Barrows seconded Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 12 – Barrows moved to recommend; Hunt seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 13 – Hunt moved to recommend; Barrows seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 14 – Hunt moved to recommend; Barrows seconded. Vote taken - all aye to recommend.

Article 15 – O'Keefe stated he would abstain without a zoning map available to see if he owns any property in zone C2. Hunt also abstained for potential conflict. Barrows moved *no* recommendation. Vote of 2-0 no recommendation.

Article 16–O'Keefe moved to *not* recommend; Barrows seconded. Vote taken-all aye to not recommend.

Article 17–O'Keefe moved to *not* recommend; Barrows seconded. Vote taken–all aye to not recommend.

Kreidler commented on the last article saying it has been offered this evening that some of those "Whereas's" may be in fact true and some of them may not be true. Since the "Whereas'" were about him

he wanted to publicly state that even if all of them were true, his perspective is they do not equate to the ask at the end of the article. To the extent that it would be asking for his resignation, he wanted to be clear and in fairness to answer that he would not be offering a resignation. Barrows wanted to point out that the first “Whereas” statement is a false belief about the Town Manager failing to or refusing to share information with the Selectmen. That is categorically false and it continues to be repeated and unfortunately it is not being heard. What needs to be heard is it is categorically false. He knew one of his Board members felt as he did and asked the other members if they believe information was being withheld from them. Berndt said absolutely not. He’s asked questions at all times and at all hours and forty-five minutes was the longest time he has had to wait for an answer. Hunt replied, in this case, she watched the numbers start at a \$20,000 deficit and go up every day. She spoke with both the Town Accountant and Town Manager every day as she watched it move. In twenty-four hours she couldn’t believe the spikes and what they came across with it jumping \$75,000. She supported the Town Manager with not going public with the numbers until you get the real numbers. Wait until the final numbers come in. The numbers fluctuated so much that she couldn’t go public with them because there was that much fluctuation of what you saw. She saw the numbers right away and communicated with the Town Accountant and Town Manager every day and it was a moving target. She’s still waiting for the final number. O’Keefe said we won’t actually see the final number until the end of the fiscal year. He asked the Town Manager about the FY14 audit that they were waiting to be completed. Kreidler said in a public communication with Roselli and Clark at a School Committee meeting two weeks ago, they indicated they hoped to have the draft Management letter available at the end of last week. We have not seen that yet. They have put in an inordinate amount of effort toward the actual financial side versus just the management side and it didn’t surprise them that they are a little later than they had hoped they would be. On that point, the audited financials for FY14 are known. They are the numbers that you see in the Deficit Reduction Plan. Those are the numbers agreed to by the independent auditors, our special auditor, the Town Accountant and the DOR. The FY15 number is clearly indicated in that Deficit Reduction Plan as well and is DOR’s best estimate projected for FY15. We won’t know if those are real numbers or not until we close FY15. The big number that we don’t know and won’t know until likely this Thursday we were told is what the authorization number will be. We talked at length last week between the difference in the real number we have of as deficit and the amount that will be authorized by the Commonwealth in a deficit bond which is akin to a credit limit. We’ll know that number this Thursday.

O’Keefe asked about Thursday’s meeting of last week when he unveiled a plan. It included something we hadn’t discussed in a long time which was the solar on our landfill. He asked if it would actually be on line for next fiscal year and would there be a potential dollar savings. Kreidler stated he doesn’t have the plan before him nor the specific file but it is imminent that Counsel for the Town and for Sun Edison will have agreed to terms. He can’t categorize exactly when, but was told as of Friday that it was imminent. The penny kilowatt hour that we would have seen in the Axio deal is not going to happen. Given the fact that we are at about 16.5 cents per kilowatt hour now and as of the spike that’s coming for the winter with National Grid of 37% going to .20/.22 cents per kilowatt hour, the best projection is .09 cents a kilowatt hour fixed with no escalator for twenty years. The savings, conservatively, would run about \$184,800 for year one. Kreidler pointed out that that amount wouldn’t be realized by the general government budget. A large part of our usage is the Enterprise Fund. We have quite a deal of electric on the municipal side with street lights and municipal buildings. A lion’s share of the load is actually the School Department. We spoke in the past about a cost sharing across the Board for everyone to realize. If its attributable to the Enterprise Fund that’s where it will go. If it’s attributable to the School, that’s where the savings will go; the Town, that’s where the savings would go.

Article 5 – O’Keefe said this is the override article and at our Joint meeting a month ago with the School Committee and the Finance Committee, DOR at that time was telling us we are having a shortage and we need to raise revenue not only for this year but for each year. He’s not sure about that now with the numbers that keep changing. He is cautious about putting forward an override. In theory you can reverse an override with an underride but it doesn’t happen often. He isn’t sure that the \$700,000 is a number we need to increase our tax base. He mentioned, at a minimum, the solar is going to bring in some savings. Also, Article 7 will additionally add a meals tax of ¾% that would equal \$78,000 a year, again making him wonder do we really have this structural deficit that warrants this override. He wouldn’t want to recommend or not recommend until more facts come out. O’Keefe moved to not make a recommendation on Article 5, Barrows seconded. Vote taken – all aye to no recommendation.

Article 7 – O’Keefe said this is adding a meals tax and a bit more different. We are not just asking the people of Winchendon but those that come here and eat in our restaurants. Would this tax make a difference? He felt that it wasn’t a lot of money and will help. He moved to recommend Article 7. Barrows seconded and added, in addition to Selectmen O’Keefe’s comments and reasoning’s, we also find ourselves constantly competing with cities and towns in New Hampshire. We are still a full percentage point lower than New Hampshire. Vote taken – all aye to recommend.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

MINUTES:

Monday, October 27, 2014 - Includes Joint Meeting with School Committee and Finance Committee – Minutes were not ready for consideration of approval this evening and were tabled.

COMMUNICATIONS: N/A

AGENDA ITEMS:

Selectmen’s Meeting Schedule – The Board discussed their upcoming meeting schedule and the following was decided:

Regular Meeting prior to Special Town Meeting to be held at Murdock High School at 6:15 p.m.

Regular Meeting December 8 at 6:15 p.m. Selectman Barrows noted he would not be able to attend.

The last meeting scheduled for December would be on Wednesday, December 17th at 6:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: With no Executive Session being held this evening, Barrows moved to adjourn; Hunt seconded. With a vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Daigle
Executive Assistant