

**TOWN OF WINCHENDON  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, APRIL 4, 2016  
Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Auditorium  
109 Front Street, Winchendon, Mass.**

Present:

Michael Barbaro, Chairman  
Barbara Anderson, Vice-Chair  
Amy Salter  
Austin Cyganiewicz  
Audrey LaBrie

Keith R. Hickey, Town Manager  
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant

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List of Documents Presented at Meeting:

- Draft Letter of Request to DOT for Guardrails to be placed on Rt. 12 (filed)
- Draft Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant – May 16, 2016 (filed)
- Suggested Traffic Patterns from the DOT for Blair Square and Tannery Hill Intersections (filed)
- Town Manager Memo dated March 31, 2016 regarding Recommended Amendments to FY17 Proposed Budget (attached)
- Town Manager’s FY16 & FY17 Water and Wastewater Calculation (attached)

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Chairman Barbaro called the meeting to order at 6:31 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 - When asked by the Chairman if anyone would be audio or video recording the meeting this evening, there was no response.

**SELECTMEN’S COMMENTS:**

Selectwoman Salter asked in the future when rescheduling meetings to do it within a meeting.

Chairman Barbaro pointed out the Converse Tournament of Plays was at the High School and was a great evening with the kids and volunteers working hard. He congratulated the winners.

Chairman Barbaro welcomed spring with the weather playing tricks on us today. He thanked the Dept. Of Public Works for their hard work on Sunday and today.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:** There were none.

**APPOINTMENTS/RESIGNATIONS:** None this evening.

**BOARDS/COMMITTEES/DEPARTMENT HEADS:** N/A

**PERMIT/LICENSE APPLICATIONS:** None this evening.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Request to DOT for Guardrails to be placed on Rt. 12 \_\_\_\_\_ :

Town Manager Hickey spoke about the enclosed draft letter to put guardrails up on the bike trails for some additional safety for users of the bike trails. Tracy Murphy, our Director of Development, reached out to Mass Dept. of Transportation (DOT) who said they would be happy to put guardrails up that they needed just a request from the Town. Hickey asked the Board to vote to support sending the letter to the DOT requesting guardrails be put up for safety reasons on the section of the bike path near Rt. 12.

**LaBrie moved to instruct the Town Manager to send the letter to the Mass DOT requesting guardrails be put up on the bike path on Rte. 12; Salter seconded. By a vote of all aye, the motion carried unanimously.**

Traffic Patterns for Blair Square and Tannery Hill Intersections:

Hickey talked about a meeting with DPW Director Al Gallant and representatives from the DOT regarding intersections not operating as efficiently as they should be. DOT provided us a couple different options more beneficial to the Town than the current traffic patterns. Each has two alternates for Tannery Hill Intersection and Blair Square. The State will engineer the options at their expense. The Town is responsible to do the capital work to make the physical changes. Al Gallant, DPW Director, came forward. They reviewed the options presented. It was noted both the Police Chief and Fire Chief have reviewed the suggestions and are in support of the rotary option for Blair Square. After some discussion, everyone thought the rotary would keep traffic flowing the best. There was some concern of losing parking spaces and to see the truck lane delineated and used so that it doesn't even enter the rotary at Blair Square. Cumberland Farms would be contacted and any plans would be addressed with them. Hickey would take back their comments to the DOT and have them refine the rotary design a bit and bring back a final design for the Board.

Tannery Hill was then discussed. A rotary was not one of the options because of the hill. The two options presented are similar with looking to block off one of the entry ways. The green square on the map shows where it will be blocked with no entry from there. The Fire Chief and the Police Chief both like Alternative I with the one island and keeping traffic flowing down the hill with a yield sign.

Mr. Gallant noted he has a list of traffic accidents in these two areas totaling fifty-four with six injuries.

Anderson said they like the turning lane in Alternative 2 and asked if it could be put in Alternative 1 on Tannery Hill. Mr. Gallant would address this with DOT and was thanked by the Board for working on this.

Draft Special and Annual Town Meeting Warrant – May 16, 2016

Hickey noted there was an update to the draft warrant in their packet stating it is a work in progress and that he has been working with the Town's attorney. He has talked with the School Superintendent and the Business Office who informed him they are going to overspend the transportation article estimated around \$35,000.00. They indicated the deadline to determine any additional costs to be incurred or savings to be had would have to be done statutorily by April 1<sup>st</sup>. The Business Office is working with the Superintendent to get that number by the end of the week. He has put an amount in of \$40,000 and had to add a Special Town Meeting (STM) to address it. There are three articles for the STM warrant.

STM Article 1 is a housekeeping article where the Finance Committee can speak on the articles on the warrant.

STM Article 2 is the School Transportation Article.

STM Article 3 is to fund the above article and cover the snow and ice deficit of \$25,000 by decreasing Health Insurance Employer portion of \$65,000 in the FY16 Operating Budget. He explained the surplus in this account was due to twenty-four employees who left the Town's health insurance plan during the fiscal year.

Annual Town Meeting – The Town Manager noted there were a couple changes here as well and reviewed the warrant articles with the Board.

Article 1 is a normal function of the Finance Committee.

Article 2 assigns or discharges committees and might be passed over.

Article 3 is the Revolving Funds Authorizations - With advice from Town Counsel the list has been decreased as permission isn't needed to expend the ones eliminated. They have statutory permission to expend those. He has shared the legal comments with Supt. Haddad.

Article 4 was requested by the School Committee to allow a fund to be established for tuition payments for non-resident students along with the depositing of state reimbursements for students that are under foster care in a separate account to be expended by the School Committee for educational costs for those subsidized students. He believes it is happening now; the School Committee is looking to formalize it. This article should be a separate article and not in with the revolving accounts. Barbaro mentioned the School Choice in account is already established. This may be the account they are looking to formalize. The Town Manager would confirm.

Article 5 is a usual and customary article for the Senior Work-off Program of \$7,500.00.

Article 6 is also a usual and customary article for the Community Action Committee for non-profit assistance in the amount of \$18,000.00.

Articles 7, 8, 9 and 10 are the General Government Operating Budget Articles including the Water, Sewer and Transfer Station Enterprise budgets. Hickey informed them the Indirect Cost has dropped for all three enterprise budgets after his presentation. The Finance Committee brought up valuable points at their meeting that he took into consideration. They questioned the amount for the Town Manager being included in these expenses so he removed them even though he believes he has spent the time in those areas since he's been here. He also removed \$16,500 out of the Transfer Station budget shifting it back to the general fund. Landfill monitoring was also shifted back to the general fund. He recalculated the indirect cost and all three funds have dropped. He is able to offset it in FY16 budget through savings in the Health Insurance line. The FY17 Health Insurance line will also have some savings so he is proposing to use \$130,000 in savings and absorb the \$16,500 to do the monitoring for the landfill and to offset the reductions in the indirect costs.

The estimated revenue for motor vehicle excise tax was just under \$44,000.00. He has dropped that number down to have a bit more comfort to reach that number.

Article 11 is the School Committee's article and is the same article submitted last year and is supported by the School Committee and Superintendent.

Article 12 is the Monty Tech assessment.

Article 13 is language for the repair of the water tanks.

Article 14 is language for the disposition for the disposal of Marvin School.

Lastly, there is a nonbinding referendum submitted late last week by petition asking, "Do you support the acquisition of the Ingleside property by the Town of Winchendon." The signatures have been validated by the Town Clerk last week. The petitioners want to have this on the ballot for guidance from the voters to the Board of Selectmen. They simply want to know if the Town wants to move forward with Ingleside.

Hickey asked if they had any questions. He mentioned the memo in the packets where he summarizes the amendments to the initial budget. He reviewed the memo, said we still have a balanced budget and that we are fortunate the health insurance costs have dropped with the loss of people taking the health insurance allowing him

to address the concerns of the Finance Committee and to reduce the water and sewer fees which will reduce the water, sewer rates originally proposed. The originally proposed water rates will go from \$6.19 to \$6.04 and wastewater from \$9.11 to \$8.79. He will be massaging numbers to compile a defensible step fee based on consumption for them next week and ultimately make a decision before Town Meeting.

Hickey said he did some homework this afternoon wanting to put into perspective what the rate changes are and why the rate increases are so significant this year. He passed out his Water and Wastewater Calculation FY16 and FY17 comparison spreadsheet. In FY16 for the rates to support the operating budget the water rate should have been \$5.34. They increased the rate July 1<sup>st</sup> 6% to \$5.06. That water rate was still short .28 cents to support the operating budget. More money would have to be taken out of retained earnings to not lose money. The wastewater rate for FY16 was \$8.03; to support the budget it should have been \$8.61. He is trying to make up for these shortfalls. He informed them that the number of water users in town is 2,150; sewer users there are 1,349.

Anderson asked if the Clark YMCA is charged water. Hickey responded that they are charged for water. It was his understanding years ago they use to get free water. It was suggested years ago, the water users shouldn't be subsidizing their water usage. It is in his budget and has been historically that the Town provide \$10,000 to the Clark YMCA in lieu of the Town using all the outside courts and the Clark YMCA maintaining a location twelve months a year for an emergency helicopter landing.

Audrey asked about the Transfer Station demolition tipping fee being a proposed change of \$150 to \$160 per ton covering the cost of raising the bags. Hickey stated with that increase and keeping the bags the same cost should provide a budget surplus at the end of the year of \$1,531.00.

Hickey concluded that those are his proposed budget changes and asked if the Board was comfortable with these amendments, he would provide the Finance Committee with his memo and draft warrant at their meeting next week.

Anderson said she thinks the water and sewer rates are too high. Barbaro agreed but given the limited amount of years and all of the retained earnings that have been spent down to support the budget and that Town employees were being paid out of the budget of the prior years and the Dept. of Revenue telling us we can't be doing this because that is an enterprise fund, it does force the issue. Anderson said we kept raising taxes at the 2 ½% cap and to raise water and sewer by 13%, is a lot. Barbaro explained this is a one-time catch up to balance. Prior to last year, rates haven't been raised for seven years.

Barbaro mentioned we are still paying the bond for the water line running down 140. There should have been two other users that were supposedly going to split the costs that never materialized. The regular tax payers paid for this. Anderson would like to see the gradual increases be per the amount the water is used.

Mr. Rick Lucier came forward and asked about the massive water leak on Tannery Hill and other leaks in Town asking who pays for this. Barbaro replied the rate payers. Hickey explained the run-off coming out of the hydrants is to keep the water clean. The large leak recently found was fortunate. The Town of Winchendon was provided that water by the Joint district and therefore the Town of Winchendon rate payers has to pay for it.

Lucier than commented the 2 ½% override that was given to the school doesn't necessarily have to go back to the Schools. He thinks it should go before the Town each year. Barbaro explained it has been built into the School warrant article. Lucier said it should be suggested to go to the School Committee's budget but the money is available for the Townspeople to do as they like. He would like to see what else it could be used for. Barbaro explained as a former School Committee member and fighting for this money a promise was made by the Town Manager and School Committee and Board of Selectmen that this money would be provided annually to the School. The Department is vastly underfunded. LaBrie explained the article could be amended on Town floor but it had been a gentlemen's agreement.

Continued Discussion on Draft FY17 Town Manager General Government Budget

Barbara asked about Article 11 noting the math didn't add up with the 2.5 % escalator added. Mr. Hickey will wordsmith the article and amend it to read properly.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT:**

Hickey reported that he learned today that Winchendon would be receiving the same amount of money in Chapter 90 State Transportation Aid. The amount is \$477,565.00. This budget number did not change and at least it wasn't going down.

Hickey reported out that one of the bridges in Town would start to be worked on in April and he would put the updates on the website.

Hickey updated the Board on the property tax mailers that were sent out to a number of people. They have received calls back from two property owners that have agreed to make payment plans with the Town. We also received payments in full on four properties not part of our Attorneys contacting them.

Lastly, Hickey reported on the email the Board received yesterday about Brandywine's roof. The owners are having the engineers go to the property tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. Our Fire Chief and Building Inspector will be walking the property with Brandywine folks to review the damage.

LaBrie asked about the Town Accountant's position. Hickey informed them he had three applicants who have applied for the position. The search committee comprises of the Superintendent of Schools, the Town Manager, a Board of Selectmen member, a School Committee member and a Finance Committee member. Hickey asked who of the Board would like to serve on this Committee. LaBrie volunteered. **Anderson moved to appoint Selectwoman LaBrie to the Town Accountant Search Committee; Salter seconded. By a vote of all aye, the motion carried by majority vote.**

**MINUTES:**

Monday, March 14, 2016 - Regular Meeting – Passed over, not ready for approval this evening.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Anderson asked about the additional periodic audit of our Transfer Station as mentioned by auditor Mr. Roselli when he was here last. Hickey informed the Board that Mr. Roselli will be doing this as part of the end of year fiscal audit when he comes back late fall. Collections and receivables will be reviewed.

Anderson asked about the Lincoln Ave. Extension building wondering if it had collapsed more. She had heard that the wind had blown windows in the street and someone could get hurt. The Town Manager would look into it.

Anderson asked about the status of the review of the Board's Policies and Procedures by Town Counsel. Hickey said he had sent an email to Town Counsel who is reviewing them and the he would reach back out to her.

LaBrie confirmed that Seven Points is on the agenda for April 18<sup>th</sup>. She is looking to get a sense of what type of building they are looking for. She is concerned about the location and concerned what they will see, what kind of signage they would have. Hickey said there would be no signage and he has suggested to them that they provide the Board with as much information as possible of what this would look like and provide what they have already got going.

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

Meeting Schedule – The upcoming meetings were reviewed.

**ADJOURNMENT:** With no Executive Session this evening, **LaBrie moved to adjourn; Salter seconded. By a vote of all aye, the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Daigle, Executive Assistant