

In a 4 Hour Marathon, Winchendon Town Meeting Passes \$1.9M Override Budgets for Town and Schools



Town Manager Bill McKinney answers questions from voters.
Image copyright Town of Winchendon



Moderator Grout holds the mike for a voter asking a question.
Image copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

At a high energy and sometimes raucous Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 19, Winchendon voters followed up their approval of a \$1.9 million Proposition 2-1/2 override at the polls on May 5 by approving override budgets for both the town and the school district as presented, by large majorities. While the override ballot vote on May 5 succeeded by a slender margin of less than 1 percent, Town Meeting approved the town budget with 61 percent in favor, 39 percent opposed, and the school budget with 73 percent in favor, 27 percent opposed.

815 voters signed in for the largest Winchendon Town Meeting in at least a couple of decades. In order to accommodate the anticipated attendance, Town Meeting was held in the Murdock Middle High School gymnasium, with rented

chairs filling the entire floor and bleachers opened up on both sides. The town rented 1,000 additional wireless electronic voting clickers to supplement the 400 which the town owns. Projection and television screens were set up in front and to the sides, and the sound system included multiple speakers and wireless microphones which volunteers took to voters who were not close to the lectern in the front of the room. Video camera operators from WinchendonTV recorded the meeting. Live CART captioning was provided on a screen at the front of the room.

Town Moderator Coral Grout, presiding over her last Town Meeting before passing on the gavel to newly elected Moderator Glenn LaRochelle, delayed calling the meeting to order for almost 15 minutes because so many voters were still in the four check-in lines.

After the meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance, Moderator Grout tested the clickers by asking voters to press 1 if this was the first Town Meeting they had ever attended, and 2 if not. 31 percent of voters present were at their first Town Meeting.

Moderator Grout began by emphasizing the rules and procedures for Town Meeting. She added, "Now I'd like to talk about inappropriate behavior. We are here to take care of the business of the town. As I said, there are opposing viewpoints on every single article. Tonight, the Chair will not allow inappropriate behavior. This includes, but is not limited to heckling, yelling, name calling, hissing, stomping, and you get it—inappropriate behavior that wastes your time and mine and a lot of energy. So as always, I appreciate your understanding and your respect of each other. However, we

have some of Winchendon's finest police officers in the hall tonight, and I'll tell you when my father was Moderator, he threw one person out in his 25 years. I don't want to throw anybody out."

Article 1, accepting Board and Committee reports, began with Finance Committee Chair Tom Kane giving his report on the town's financial situation. He started by quoting an editorial in the previous day's Boston Globe about the high number of override votes this year in Massachusetts, which mentioned Winchendon. During this report, Mr. Kane mentioned that Free Cash was not yet certified, although Town Manager Bill McKinney had expected it to be certified by Town Meeting. This included the Retained Earnings for the four Enterprise Accounts, which constitute the "free cash" for those

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BOS Vote to Approve Formation of Economic Development Task Force

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, May 12, Board members Andrew Beauvais and Erika Eitland brought their revised proposal for an Economic Development Task Force to the Board.

Mr. Beauvais said, "What we are proposing is a seven member task force. Two of the members would be representatives from the Board of Selectmen. We would ask that the Town Manager or a designee would be present during these meetings to provide non-voting staff support. Also the Land Use Coordinator or equivalent, also for non-voting staff support. The reason for that is because we feel that individual would bring a lot of relevant experience to the table, so they could tell us when we're doing something wrong or out of step. The additional five members would be residents with relevant experience. We didn't want to single out specific things, whether it was business owners or the like. So we felt opening it up to just five residents would allow anyone to come forward that has the experience we're looking for."

Ms. Eitland said that they wanted the criteria for members to be flexible and not just about filling specific roles. "Last week, I spoke with Senator Comerford about what are grants that are available," she said. "So there's already a set of lists. One of her big takeaways for us, and I think the timing of this task force is really helpful, is we need to come up with our strategic vision, beyond the Winchendon Master Plan. What are the big priority

things that are going to unlock that economic development. And being able to start to organize and communicate to our state legislator, Hey, these are things that are important to us, and we need support in order to unlock the economic development piece." She added that this will take time, and they need to "tap into those resources outside of our own town, what sort of brain trust do we have."

Mr. Beauvais said "We're thinking big, right? Nothing's off the table and where we are Toy Town, there are some companies out there, Hasbro, Lego, some of these bigger companies that are looking for new homes, and what better place than Toy Town? So we're thinking big, because we have to, and so nothing is off limits. So the goal for this would be to bring in, of course, bigger industry that will create more jobs, but most importantly, more revenue in a commercial tax base, so it takes the burden off of our residents."

Ms. Eitland made a motion "that the Board of Selectmen establish the Economic Development Task Force to promote sustainable economic growth in Winchendon. The task force will consist of seven members, two Selectmen, five residents with relevant experience, and two non-voting staff, Town Manager or designee and Land Use Coordinator. I further move to begin recruitment and planning efforts."

The Board members present approved the motion unanimously.

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Taste of Winchendon Merges with Senior Center Open House as Festivities are “Rained In”



Taste of Winchendon volunteers line up for a group photo.
Photo by Inanna Arthen

by Inanna Arthen

The 5th Annual Taste of Winchendon was planned to take place in conjunction with the Old Murdock Senior Center’s Open House on Saturday, May 10. This was the first time Taste of Winchendon had not been held on the lawns around Beals Memorial Library. The decision turned out to be serendipitous. After five years, this was the first time Taste of Winchendon was hit by seriously inclement weather--and they had a place to go. Kit’n’kaboodle, Taste of Winchendon moved into the Old Murdock, which was bustling with activity from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The full schedule of events was held on the Old Murdock Auditorium stage rather than an outdoor platform.

The colorful Lickity Splitz ice cream truck greeted visitors, and offered a range of hard-serve cones and dishes throughout the day--and yes, you could bring your ice cream inside, although Lickity Splitz set up a canopy tent next to the truck for those waiting in line for their orders. Next to the ice cream truck was a van with Fresh Boxes from Growing Places, filled with fresh local produce and free for anyone to take home.

The front doors to the building were open. The Winchendon Garden Club set up its plant sale on the front porch along with a free sunflower-seed planting activity (for all ages!). Visitors could fill a cup with damp potting soil, plant three seeds, cover it with a plastic bag and take it home to sprout for their garden.

Inside the main hall, the Garden Club had a table, and a welcome table was set up for the Old Murdock Open House, now doing double-duty for Taste of Winchendon. In the first floor Community Room, GALA was running art activities and raffles.

On the second floor the annual tie-dye table and face-painting, run with the assistance of volunteers from Cornerstone Church, were accommodated by heavy plastic tarps protecting the floors of the former classrooms. Ikiaremy Sweets had a table in the hall, along with the Friends of the Beals Memorial Library, distributing information about library events and the upcoming Town Meeting vote on the override town budget.

The core attraction of Taste of Winchendon, the food, was set up in the

Old Murdock dining hall. Visitors could get their free ticket for food at the welcome desk. Beef empanadillas, Ka Lia’s hand-made egg rolls, rice, Ian Plourde’s amazing sourdough bread, chicken, and even that all-American icon, hot dogs, were all in the offering. As visitors entered the dining room, the Senior Center’s David Alexander, dressed as Winchendon town father Morton E. Converse in weskit, cravat, top hat and tails, offered them map pins. Visitors could place pins on two large maps to show where their ancestors came from, and interesting places they’d visited.

There was only space for a few chairs left in the dining room, so most visitors took their food upstairs. The Old Murdock Auditorium, so often doing yeoman’s duty as the town polls and a pickleball court, was set up with tablecloth-covered round tables and the international decorations traditional for Taste of Winchendon. Paper lanterns printed like globes of the world accompanied small flags, and streamers of flags were stretched across the proscenium of the stage. Around the room were tables for the Sunshine Cafe (with a bake sale), the Transportation initiative, the Winchendon Cultural Council, the HINT (Hate Is Not Tolerated) initiative, TKO Laser and United Native American Cultural Center. The traditional Taste of Winchendon raffle baskets were displayed, with chances to win swag from local businesses, a vintage Star Wars board game and more. Visitors with stamped Taste of Winchendon Passports from local businesses earned free raffle tickets.

Dennis Cormier and Cailte Kelley performed live music on the stage, while DJ Jeremy Diaz spun a hip hop dance party and filled in the breaks between acts. Daniel Narcisse of Simplytiva taught a salsa dance lesson. The United Native American Cultural Center performed a drum circle of traditional Indigenous American drumming and songs. The Kashibahagua dancers, Guaribono Nakan and Diego Barahona, performed traditional Indigenous dance, and then led visitors in a free-form dance circle.

Ms. Jennings told the Courier that over 450 people passed through the Murdock halls, and Mr. Alexander’s bowl of food tickets was piled high. Despite the uncooperative weather, Taste of Winchendon and the Old Murdock Open House seemed very successful, and a great time appeared to be had by all.



The Lickity Splitz ice cream truck served dishes and cones
Photo by Inanna Arthen



The Winchendon Garden Club offered a sunflower-seed planting activity on the front porch
Photo by Inanna Arthen



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Gail greets visitors at the info desk inside
Photo by Inanna Arthen



This gateway to TOW was set up in the Senior Center dining room
Photo by Inanna Arthen



United Native American Cultural Center drum circle
Photo by Inanna Arthen



The Kashibahagua Dancers perform
Photo by Inanna Arthen



The Senior Center Auditorium was bustling and full.
Photo by Inanna Arthen



Lynn shows off her original Murdock High School Band cap
Photo by Inanna Arthen



CONGRATULATIONS

Murdock HS Class of 2025!

Murdock High School Graduation
Sunday, June 1
2:00 p.m.

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TOWN MEETING

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accounts and also must be certified by the state. Mr. Kane clarified that taxes will not be raised more than voters appropriate tonight, and that the increase in health insurance has been reduced from 16 percent to 9 percent. Voters approved a motion to accept the report with 79 percent in favor, 21 percent opposed.

Throughout Town Meeting, voters rose to ask questions about topics that had been explained repeatedly and in great detail here in the Courier, at Board of Selectmen and FinCom meetings and public hearings, on the town website, by the library and Senior Center at multiple town events, and at the twelve public Override Information Sessions over the past eight weeks. A few voters mentioned that they had recently moved to Winchendon. Voters asked how they could get “context” for articles, and whether information and the warrant could be posted online before Town Meeting. This highlighted and underscored the intractable dilemma the town is wrestling with: how to make residents aware of all these sources for information that they need and want to know?

After clarification of why past bills were being paid, the fact that the funds will come from unexpended health insurance money and not Free Cash, and the fact that the town is reimbursed 75 percent for veterans’ services, Article 2, to pay some past due veterans’ medication bills, was approved with 81 percent in favor, 19 percent opposed.

Voters approved passing over Article 3 (86 percent in favor, 14 percent opposed to passing over) and Article 4 (89 percent in favor, 11 percent opposed to passing over) because they required Free Cash.

For the same reason--Retained Earnings in the Enterprise Accounts not yet certified--voters approved passing over Article 5, Water Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings (86 percent in favor, 14 percent opposed to passing over), Article 6, Wastewater Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings (87 percent in favor, 13 percent opposed to passing over), and Article 7, Transfer Station Enterprise Fund Retained Earnings (80 percent in favor, 20 percent opposed to passing over). Department of Public Works Director Brian Croteau explained that the transfer station is seeing more usage than in the past and that’s why its funding numbers are higher. He also explained that residents of neighboring Templeton can pay to use the Winchendon Transfer Station.

At this point several voters rose to question why Free Cash was not certified and how the town could proceed with planning and approving a budget without knowing what it had for existing funds. Mr. McKinney rose to explain why Free Cash wasn’t certified, and to

apologize repeatedly. “This has been a very challenging year for finances, for the town specifically,” he said. The audit for FY 23 was “very negative,” the Treasurer stole funds and was fired, the town has had “three Treasurers in a row that just have not worked out” and the retired former Treasurer has had to come back to help out. He assured voters that Free Cash doesn’t impact the coming year’s budget, and that everyone has been working very hard, but “one thing that really has bothered me and kept me up at night, is the fact that we haven’t been able to get that done.” He said that items passed over now will be brought back at Fall Special Town Meeting. “I ask you to be patient as we try to finish this, finish the certification, get an answer from the state and get those numbers, and as soon as we can get those numbers, we’ll publish them so that you’ll know what those are. Again, there’s no impact on fiscal 26 because we’re not using Free Cash to balance the fiscal 26 budget,” he said.

In answer to a question, Mr. McKinney said that the town is audited every year, and the audit reports are public and on the town website. [They are under “Town Manager” at <https://www.town-ofwinchendon.com/town-manager/pages/annual-audited-financial-statements>]

Article 8, approving the spending limits for departments’ Revolving Funds, is on every Annual Town Meeting warrant. Many voters were not sure what these were and thought that they were appropriating money to these departments. Agricultural Commission Chair Jordyn Lynds rose to make an amendment raising the Commission’s spending limit from \$1,000 to \$10,000 because the Commission was applying for grants. The amendment lost with 47 percent in favor, 53 percent opposed. After a voter rose to clarify that the Revolving Accounts are essentially the departments “spending their own money,” other voters moved to bring Ms. Lynds’ amendment back to the floor, and it then was approved with 78 percent in favor, 22 percent opposed. No other amendments were proposed, although a voter rose to ask why the library needed an account for copying fees “in this age when everything is digital and we’re digitizing everything.” Beals Memorial Library Director Manuel King rose to explain how much the library collects in fees from people using the copy and fax machines. Article 8 as amended was approved with 85 percent in favor, 15 percent opposed.

Article 9, the Senior Tax Workoff program, was explained by Board of Selectmen Chair Rick Ward as a program that credits seniors over age 60 \$15 an hour, up to a total of \$1,100, to offset their property tax, by doing odd jobs for the town. Voter Frank Allen rose to

ask why this was only budgeted at \$7,700, and proposed amending the amount to \$10,000, which was then raised to \$11,000. The amendment was approved with 63 percent in favor, 37 percent opposed. Article 9 as amended was then approved with 76 percent in favor, 24 percent opposed.

Article 10, the town budget contingent on the \$2.9 million override, was passed over, with 88 percent in favor, 12 percent opposed to passing over.

“I think this is what everybody came for,” Moderator Grout said as she introduced Article 11, the town budget contingent on the \$1.9 million override. Passing this budget without amendments would raise and spend all of the town’s portion of the override amount.

Following the customary practice, Moderator Grout read each separate department of the budget, asking anyone who wanted to discuss a particular department to call out “Hold”. Each time, at least one voice called out “Hold” so that every department was flagged to be discussed one by one. This turned out not to be one voter’s intention, however. Voter Peter Greenan rose to say, “I moved to hold all of these because I believe the majority of us are here for a simple yes or no vote to amend this and remove the \$1.9 million override.” An outcry from the floor disagreed with him, which Moderator Grout shushed. Mr. Kane, and voter Danielle LaPointe, explained that Mr. Greenan was essentially turning Article 11 into Article 12. Mr. Greenan persisted that he wanted to amend Article 11 “to remove the \$1.9 million override and go back to a basic budget.”

FinCom member Dr. Maureen Ward explained that only \$1,063,100 of the override applied to the town budget. Mr. Greenan changed his amendment to specify removing that amount. Town Counsel Tim Zessin of KP Law said that unless specific reductions were made to each department, the town would not have a working budget that could be passed by Town Meeting. Mr. Greenan then withdrew his proposed amendment to remove the override money from Article 11, and made a motion for Town Meeting to take Article 12 out of order, and take it up before Article 11.

A voter suggested voting down both budgets and returning with one that funded the three departments slated to be eliminated in Article 12 (the library, Senior Center and Recreation Department) but made deeper cuts elsewhere. Mr. Ward pointed out that if Article 11 failed, voters could vote to add the funding for the three departments to Article 12, because the override includes the funding for them. Mr. McKinney clarified, “as we stated during all the different listening sessions and feedback,” what the two different votes mean, what the two budgets are (level service and level funded) and what would

happen if Town Meeting fails to pass either budget.

Voters rejected taking Article 12 out of order with 27 percent in favor, 73 percent opposed. BOS member Dr. Erika Eitland explained that Article 11 was a level-service budget which was the basic amount required to run the town. She pointed out that Winchendon gets more money from the state than from local taxes.

A voter asked why there was not equivalent information about the town’s revenue in the warrant. What about the payments from the landfill capping project? Mr. McKinney explained at some length that voters don’t approve revenues, only expenditures (which is why revenue doesn’t appear in the warrant), and went over some of the categories of revenue, including the \$140,000 Winchendon gets in cannabis local retail sales tax. The very phlegmatic Mr. McKinney evoked a ripple of laughter when he said, “However, if New Hampshire ever legalizes it, they won’t be coming over the border to buy our weed.”

In response to voter questions, Mr. King and Senior Center Director Miranda Jennings rose to explain how much funding they obtained through grants for the library and Senior Center programs.

All of that extra funding will be lost, including the transportation grant money, if Article 11 doesn’t pass. School Committee Chair Karen Kast pointed out that the town would lose \$35,000 in state aid money if it defunds the library.

Voter Lisa Gauthier proposed an amendment to zero out the entire school transportation line item, totalling \$1,755,000, arguing that families should pay as they go for transportation, the buses were often half-empty because many parents drive their kids to school, and so on. Other voters pointed out that transportation was mandated by the state for children with IEPs, and the budget included different categories of transportation, some of which can’t be dropped. The amendment failed with 19 percent in favor, 81 percent opposed.

Following some statements from voters in favor of Article 11 and some expressing concern about the cost, Moderator Grout called the vote. Article 11 was approved with 61 percent in favor, 39 percent opposed. There was a loud burst of applause, cheers and whistles. A voter called a point of order because the motion to call the question on Article 11 was not voted on. Moderator Grout checked with Atty. Zessin and said the decision was proper.

Some voters left Town Meeting after the vote, to protests from other voters of “Don’t leave!” Those not on their feet voted to pass over Article 12 with 78 percent in favor, 22 percent opposed to passing over.

Article 13, to approve the Water

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Department Enterprise Fund budget, was approved with 78 percent in favor, 27 percent opposed. Voter Rick Lucier rose to ask why the water rates were not in the article. Mr. Croteau explained that the rates had already been set, and the state could step in and set the rates if the budget wasn't passed.

At this point, a voter moved to "suspend" (he meant adjourn to another night) Town Meeting, as it was then about 9:45 p.m. The squeals of children from the babysitting area outside the gym had been audible throughout the meeting. Mr. Ward explained that continuing Town Meeting to a second night would cost some \$13,000 because the chairs and clickers were rented and there were many other expenses involved in putting on the meeting (these include the CART captioner accessibility service). Voters rejected the motion with 8 percent in favor, 91 percent opposed.

Article 14, to approve the Wastewater Department Enterprise Fund budget, was approved with 80 percent in favor, 20 percent opposed. A voter asked why Winchendon's wastewater costs were so much higher than other towns'. Mr. Croteau explained that it depended on how much it costs to treat the wastewater. Gardner, for example, has more users to spread the cost so their rates can be lower.

Article 15, to approve the Transfer Station Enterprise Fund budget, was approved with 86 percent in favor, 14 percent opposed.

Article 16, to approve the Cable Public Access Enterprise Fund budget, was approved with 82 percent in favor, 18 percent opposed.

Voters approved passing over Article 17, the higher school budget, with 94 percent in favor, 6 percent opposed to passing over.

Article 18, the school district level-service budget, was approved with 73 percent in favor, 27 percent opposed. Ms. LaPointe asked why there were no recommendations by the FinCom or BOS. Dr. Ward explained that board recommendations were made before the May 5 vote so they couldn't be sure what the budget would be.

Article 19, the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School budget, was approved with 88 percent in favor, 12 percent opposed. Mr. Ward explained that the number had decreased because Winchendon has 10 fewer students attending--down to 86 from 96. Responding to questions, Ms. Kast and Mr. Ward explained that the amount can't be amended, we pay for the number of spaces we're given. The spaces are allotted by town population. Monty Tech has a waiting list of 450.

Article 20, to approve the annual town support to the Winchendon Community Action Committee, was approved with 87 percent in favor, 13 percent opposed. It was announced that the Winchendon CAC had just been awarded a grant for \$50,000.

Article 21, to approve borrowing funds for a feasibility study for repairs to several of the school buildings, was approved with 81 percent in favor, 19 percent opposed. No voter had a question. Dr. Eitland told voters that Senator Jo Comerford had gotten an earmark for the project passed in the State Senate, and this is headed to the House for approval there.

Article 22, to approve borrowing \$500,000 for repairs to one of two boilers in Murdock Middle High School, was approved with 82 percent in favor, 18 percent opposed. In response to questions, Mr. Croteau explained that this was not one of the pieces of equipment that failed a year ago--that was an oil-fired water heater. The boilers are original to the construction of the building (which was in 1990s). Mr. Lucier said he "wasn't happy about giving someone a \$500,000 blank check" and asked why there wasn't a concrete bid amount. Mr. Croteau explained that the town didn't have money to put out a bid without the \$500,000 loan. If the cost of the boiler is less, the town will borrow less. School Business Manager Liz Latoria rose to say that five years ago, the schools were told the boilers were past their prime, and the schools got designs to replace them with propane fired boilers. They have also applied for a Green School Works grant.

Article 23, to approve the

purchase of a new police cruiser with 911 Grant funds, was approved with 82 percent in favor, 18 percent opposed.

Voters approved passing over Article 24, to transfer funds from Free Cash into the Stabilization, OPEB and Separation Benefits accounts, with 93 percent in favor, 7 percent opposed to passing over.

Article 25, to approve the conveyance of land at 4 Summer Drive (formerly intended to be the Bull Spit Brewing tap room) to the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority, caused some puzzlement among voters. Resident James Roth, who introduced himself as representing Robert Grady, rose to make a motion to "remove" Article 25 from the warrant on the grounds that 4 Summer Drive is not owned by the town but was purchased by Mr. Grady from Bull Spit's owners. Mr. Roth had attended two BOS meetings with Mr. Grady on speakerphone to object to this warrant article. His proposal was recorded as a motion to postpone [and take no action] Article 25. Mr. Roth stated that Mr. Grady had met with officials in Town Hall a year ago and planned to put a supermarket into the building.

Ms. LaPointe rose to say that Mr. Grady is incarcerated and urged voters to "keep this in our hands." Mr. Roth stated that "this was a recorded conversation" and the town was facing litigation for breach of contract. "The town has not had a grocery store in twenty something years," he said, adding, "This person is not even going to be around to see the grocery store. They're just helping the community." (FTR, the IGA closed in 2017, 8 years ago.)

Voters rejected postponing Article 25 with 20 percent in favor, 80 percent opposed. Discussion continued with questions about contamination at the site (it was formerly a foundry). Mr. Roth stated that Mr. Grady has a major supermarket chain promising to come in, and he's offering them five years rent-free. However, voters approved conveying the land to the Redevelopment Authority, 78 percent in favor, 22 percent opposed.

Article 26, to amend the General Bylaws to remove the requirement for the town to send voters a

postcard as part of notification of Town Meeting, was approved with 62 percent in favor, 38 percent opposed. Although it was printed in the warrant that a two-thirds majority was required, Atty. Zessin confirmed that only a simple majority is required to amend the General Bylaws. Zoning Bylaws require a two-thirds majority. Mr. Ward asked voters how they learned about Town Meeting--was it by receiving a postcard? If the postcards are just being thrown away, the town is wasting \$3,000 a year.

Article 27, to approve increasing the property tax exemption for disabled veterans by 25 percent according to the state "Heroes Act," was approved with 91 percent in favor, 9 percent opposed.

Article 28, to approve a 12-month moratorium on high-heat plastics recycling in Winchendon, was approved with 91 percent in favor, 9 percent opposed. Voter Theresa Langdon rose to read an explanation of this article, but she was definitely preaching to the choir.

Article 29, to approve amending the General Bylaws by prohibiting COMM-97 contaminated soils from being brought into, used in, or transported through town, and designating any for-profit business that deals in COMM-97 soils as a nuisance trade, was approved with 96 percent in favor, 4 percent opposed.

Article 30, to approve the Winchendon Zoning Bylaws to allow the number of multi-unit housing units on private lots to be granted by Special Permit at the discretion of the Zoning Board of Appeals, rather than being arbitrarily limited, was approved with 84 percent in favor, 16 percent opposed. There were some questions about just what this was allowing, but the Bylaw allows the ZBA to consider and issue Special Permits, it is not a rubber stamp approval for property owners.

As it was about 11:00 p.m., Moderator Grout asked for a motion to adjourn, which was enthusiastically approved.

The full Town Meeting video is available for viewing on WinchendonTV, at <https://winchendon.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/>

Winchendon Farmers Market Kicks Off Its Summer 2025 Season on Saturday, May 24

by Inanna Arthen

The Winchendon Farmers Market launched its Opening Day on Saturday, May 24, exactly as planned, despite chilly temperatures, clouds and sprinkles of rain. The Lickity Splitz Ice Cream Truck joined the market at 11:00 a.m., serving up cones, dishes, and for those in a hurry, hand-packed pints and quarts to take home.

Vendors had hand-crafted knitted goods, local honey, baked goods, vegetable and herb plants ready to set out in purchasers' home gardens, and craft items for sale.

Winchendon Agricultural Commission Chair Jordyn Lynds told the *Courier* that in the first hour, more than 40 people had stopped by the market, even with the dreary weather.

The Market will be set up every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at G.A.R. Park, Murdock Avenue and Grove Street, next to the Old Murdock Senior Center. Plans for this season's Markets include live musicians, food trucks, activities for kids, special guest visitors and more. Follow the Market on Facebook (www.facebook.com/WinchendonFarmersMarket) for information and updates on what's coming up (so to speak!). If you're interested in being a vendor, information and the 2025 Vendor Application may be found on the Market's new website, winchendonfarmersmarket.org.



Winchendon’s Third Proposed Marijuana Dispensary Still Trying



by Inanna Arthen

A cannabis growing facility and retail store that has been on the drawing boards since 2017 has appeared before several town boards this year in a new effort to move forward. Justin LeClair of McCarty Companies in Leominster, working with 701 School Street LLC, appeared before the Conservation Commission in January, and before the Planning Board on Tuesday, May 20, to present plans for developing the property.

Mr. LeClair’s focus was to discuss the architectural and engineering aspects of the work on the exterior of the building. He did not say anything about the operation of the cannabis business or what its scope would be – whether the earlier plans to grow cannabis, manufacture refined products and sell directly to the public were all still part of the business plan. Only direct retail sales to consumers are subject to the 3 percent local sales tax.

Mr. LeClair explained how concerns about the abutting wetlands on the sides of the building would be protected, how the house behind the building would have access, and other considerations. The town engineer, Pat Wood, is reviewing the plans. Mr. LeClair referred numerous times to “the owners” but did not name them. He was certain that they had an updated Host Community Agreement with Winchendon.

Three members of the Rossi family all attended the hearing. Sharon Rossi asked about the cannabis retail tax—how much it was, how much the town was already collecting, and what would be the projected sales growth of a third dispensary. Planning Board Chair Guy Corbosiero said that the tax was 3 percent and the amount collected was around \$380,000, so a third store might bring in close to \$200,000. As far as the market potential, Mr. Corbosiero noted that the location on School Street was very close to the New Hampshire border, which might be fruitful unless NH legalizes recreational marijuana. The market is also saturated in Massachusetts.

Alejandra Rossi said, “My question was just where this was at in the process, and where we do have dispensaries in a town that of this size, just wondering if enough residents wanted to limit or restrict the number of marijuana dispensaries in the town, what that process would be, and how far this particular project was along in the way, if it was already exempt from any concern of the residents, or if there was still time for people of the town to put in some restrictions if they wanted to limit the number of dispensaries coming in.” She also asked how a Host Community Agreement

was done.

Mr. Corbosiero explained that the number of licenses had been set at a maximum of three. The Host Community Agreement was negotiated among the applicant, the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager.

The Planning Board hearing on this current iteration of the 703 School Street project was continued to June 3.

A bit of history...

After November of 2016, when Massachusetts voters legalized recreational marijuana, Winchendon (whose voters had approved the state ballot question by a 60 percent majority) instituted a one-year moratorium on cannabis businesses so the town could develop bylaws and a zoning overlay district for them. Winchendon decided to limit the number of retail dispensaries allowed in town to three. There is no limit on the number of growing or processing facilities that don’t sell product to the public.

At that time, three groups of town residents expressed interest in starting retail cannabis stores. Two of them are now operating as Toy Town THC on Maple Street and The Bud Barn on Spring Street. The third planned to utilize the old auction house at 703 School Street under the name Not Grampa’s Tobacco Inc. They acquired a provisional license from the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission (CCC). Although the provisional license does not mention Isaac Stahl, he is listed as the sole officer of Not Grampa’s Tobacco, Inc. in the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth Corporations database. Not Grampa’s Tobacco, Inc. is listed as being organized on May 6, 2018 and is still active and in good standing.

In April of 2021, Isaac Stahl and Tolla Sears of Izapa Stela 5 LLC appeared several times before the Board of Selectmen seeking the town’s consent to transfer ownership and control of of Not Grampa’s Tobacco, Inc. to Izapa Stela 5 LLC, which would be the new name of the business. In May of 2022, Mr. Stahl, Mr. Sears and Nicholas Mortillaro, a chemical engineer and cannabis industry advisor to Izapa Stela 5 LLC appeared before the Board to talk in detail about their business plans. They asked not to have a new Host Community Agreement (HCA), but transfer the existing HCA from Not Grampa’s Tobacco Inc to Izapa Stela 5 LLC, so that they could keep the existing provisional license intact and not have to “reset the clock with the CCC.” The Board voted to authorize then Town Manager Justin Sultzbach to negotiate a new HCA with Izapa Stela LLC.

(See “Izapa Stela 5 LLC Moving Forward with Cannabis Facility on School Street” in the May 26-June 2 2022 edition of the Winchendon Courier.)

That was the last that Winchendon heard from them before Mr. LeClair began appearing before Town Boards this year.

According to the Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth Corporations Division, 701 School Street LLC was registered on January 11, 2022. Its Manager was listed as Isaac Stahl, 6 River St, Natick MA and its attorney as Jeffrey C. Doherty, Esq., of MacLean Holloway Doherty & Sheehan, P.C., 8 Essex Center Dr, Peabody, MA. 701 School Street LLC was dissolved by court order as of December 31, 2024 after failing to file its required annual report for three consecutive years.

701 School Street LLC acquired the properties at 703 School St (the auction building), 701 School St (the house) and a parcel to the northwest of them as of December 12, 2022, for a sale price of \$1,250,000, according to the Winchendon Assessor’s database.

Izapa Stela 5 LLC is still active and in good standing with the state of Massachusetts.

Buy Local Winchendon is Coming to Your Mailbox!

Watch your USPS mail! The Buy Local Initiative is wrapping up its second year with a postcard mailing to all Winchendon residents, and a new project: a print version of the online Community Directory, distributed around town free of charge.

WHAT'S SPENT IN WINCHENDON
STAYS IN WINCHENDON
When You Shop Local!
Did you know...

For every **\$10.00**
you spend in a
big box store

\$1.36 stays local

For every **\$10.00**
you spend in a
local business

\$5.30 stays local

Wages
Local Taxes
Community Donations
Local Purchases
Local Services
Local Supplies

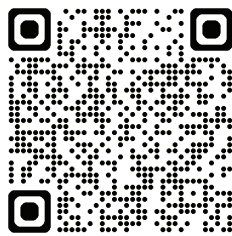
The postcard will introduce you to the “Local Multiplier effect” –a snapshot of how much money spent at local businesses circulates back around to the community, as opposed to money spent in a big national brand store, most of which does not stay in the local area where it was spent.

On the back of the postcard, you’ll see three opportunities to “be a Buy Local Champion” by taking action (and possibly getting a freebie or two, as well!).

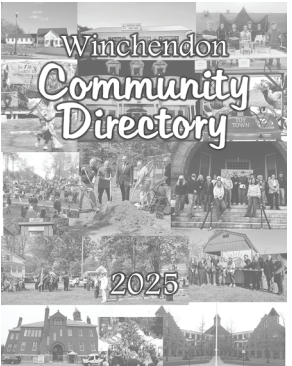
The print version of the Community Directory has been planned for a long time. It will be distributed to stores and to locations like the Beals Memorial Library and Senior Center, first-come, first-served.

Buy Local Winchendon has been promoting local business since it launched at Fall Fest 2023. It is funded by the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation and organized through the cooperation of Growing Places, Inc. and the HEAL Collaborative. Growing Places and the HEAL Collaborative are grateful to the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation for empowering local businesses, makers, and the community in Winchendon.

Follow Buy Local Winchendon on Facebook @buylocalwinchendon, and check out the website at buylocalwinchendon.com.



Find local businesses, organizations and services in the online Community Directory!
winchendoncourier.net/directory.htm





Community Connector

Welcome to The Community Connector! In this pull-out section of the printed *Winchendon Courier*, you'll find a complete calendar of local events, a page of events and activities by category, and where to find more details about the organizations and groups that help make Winchendon a great place to live. The Community Connector is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

Community Connector Officially Launches June 2

The Community Connector is a microtransit system run by the Winchendon Senior Center and the Winchendon CAC. A microtransit system is a public transportation rideshare program that picks people up at their home and brings them straight to their destination or drops them at regional transportation hubs.

Community Connector launches and officially opens to the public on June 2. Our FREE rider app is now available in both the Google Play and Apple app stores. Download the "Community Connector Transit" app with our logo to start booking rides in the app! For those who still want to book rides over the phone, you can still call (978) 297-3155 to request a ride.

Community Connector is providing free rides for all of June. However, with the expiration of our original grant on June 30, we will start charging fares for rides on July 1, 2025. **The first 50 riders to book a ride with Community Connector will receive a \$20 credit to use once fares are implemented in July.** Fare prices are based on trip distance.

If you have any questions, please reach out to us at Katie@communityconnector.co or (978) 297-3155.

The Toy Town Trolley

The Toy Town Trolley is a fixed route run by The Community Connector every Saturday. It connects Winchendon riders to important hubs in town as well as important shopping centers in Rindge. Get copies of the schedules at the Winchendon Senior Center, the Winchendon CAC, the YMCA, or Not Just Produced.

1:1 Trip Planning

The town Transportation Coordinator, Katie Johnson, is available to help folks plan transportation to work, medical appointments, social outings, and more. Learn how to read a bus schedule, use a fixed route, or how to plan a trip. Schedule an appointment with her by emailing her at KJohnson@winchendon-ma.gov.

MART Routes

Winchendon's regional transit authority, MART, has two bus routes through Winchendon. These routes are the Gardner Winchendon Ashburnham Shuttle and the Winchendon Link. Find schedules for these routes and more at mrta.us. Looking for help navigating MART? Reach out to their Outreach Coordinator, Kathryn Witherow, at kathryn.witherow@mrta.us or schedule an appointment with the town Transportation Coordinator.



Get to Know Our Drivers!

We asked several of our drivers the same set of "ice-breaker" questions...and here's what they said!

The Questions

1. When did you start driving for the town?
2. Where do you live/are you from?
3. Why do you drive for the town?
4. What's your favorite part of driving?
5. 3 interesting hobbies/facts about yourself

Ken

Ken started driving for the Community Connector in November 2024. Ken lives in Winchendon and grew up in Bellingham, MA. Ken's favorite parts of driving for the Connector are socializing with people. Ken loves meeting new people, engaging them in conversation, and hearing their stories. Ken loves winter, and staying physically fit. Get a ride with Ken and chat with him about his favorite hobbies like golfing and hiking.

1. November 2024
2. Live in Winchendon, originally from Bellingham
3. I enjoy talking to people and meeting new people, engaging in conversation
3. You meet so many interesting people.
4. Socialization and stories

5. I love winter, an outdoorsman (golfing, hiking), i like to stay physically fit and mentally aware

Traci

Traci started driving for Old Murdock Senior Center almost two years ago. Traci's favorite part of driving for the Senior Center/Community Connector is helping people, especially the seniors. Traci drives seniors to lunch at Old Murdock Senior Center every day and she likes to be there for them and listen to their stories. Traci grew up in Ashby and now lives in Winchendon. Traci enjoys walking and checking out yard sales. Get a ride with Traci and chat with her about her dog and kids.

1. July 2023
2. Live in Winchendon, originally from Ashby
3. I like helping people, love the seniors, they are great to work with and she likes being there for them.
4. Listening to the seniors
5. Taking care of my dog and kids, walking, yard saling

Tom

Tom has been driving for

Old Murdock Senior Center for over a year now. He was recruited by his neighbor, Cindy. A retired teacher, Tom loves being on the road and being outside. It's a nice change of pace for him after being stuck in a classroom for 30 years. Ride with Tom on weekdays. Tom lives in Jaffrey, NH and grew up in the metro west area of MA. Tom is a motorcycle enthusiast. He also owns a boat that he likes to use in the summer and enjoys hiking.

1. December 2023
2. Lived in Jaffrey for last 30 years, Massachusetts metro west native
3. Cindy, our old dispatcher, is his neighbor and she asked Tom to work as a driver
4. Likes being on the road and being outside, nice change of pace from being a teacher for 30 years
5. Motorcycle enthusiast - owns and rides a couple, has a boat that he likes to go out on in the summer, hiking enthusiast

Jay

Jay started driving for the Community Connector in November 2024. Jay grew up in Winchendon and loves

serving the people in his community. As a Winchendon resident, Jay understands the need for alternative transportation options for Winchendon. Jay loves driving and finds it relaxing, especially in Winchendon with all the beautiful forest and views. You can get a ride with Jay in the evenings and you'll be able to listen to any and all music in his vehicle. Jay loves all music, from classical to heavy metal. Chat with Jay about his interests - technology, computers, and sports cars.

1. November 2024
2. Winchendon, grew up in Winchendon
3. Two reasons - we need a source of transportation that's affordable and I like to drive. It relaxes me, especially in Winchendon with the woods and the views.
4. I like being able to work evenings.
5. Very tech savvy, likes music - always playing music in the car - listens to literally anything from classical to heavy metal, gearhead - likes working on sports cars



June

SUNDAY JUNE 1

4-Year Anniversary Prayer Conference

6:00-8:30 p.m. All Town Prayer Meeting. Guest speaker, Zac Acosta Pihop. Register at <https://twrhouseofprayer.org/4years/>. At TWR House of Prayer, 10 Pond St, Winchendon.

MONDAY JUNE 2

Winchendon Music Festival - John Arcaro & Band (jazz)

7:00 p.m. Berklee College of Music professor, John Arcaro, leads a program of works from the “Great American Songbook”, complemented by contemporary jazz compositions. At Murdock-Whitney House, 151 Front St. Winchendon.

TUESDAY JUNE 3

Winchendon Music Festival - Duo Sorolla: Ismar Gomes, cello & Wan-Chi Su, piano (classical)

7:00 p.m. Works by Reynaldo Hahn de Echenagucia (1874-1947), Constantino Vicente Gaito (1878-1945), Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), Gaspar Cassadó i Moreu (1897-1966), and Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla (1921-1992). More information: www.duosorolla.com At Murdock-Whitney House, 151 Front St. Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 4

Mount Wachusett Community College Outreach

11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Curious About College? Meet Michelle from MWCC! Michelle, a Recruitment Counselor from Mount Wachusett Community College, will be at the CAC. No appointment needed--just bring your curiosity and questions. At Winchendon CAC, 5 Summer Dr.

Chair Yoga Class

6:30-8:00 p.m. Come join us! \$15 per person. No need to sign up in advance. Water and Gatorade available for purchase. Any questions text Marti @ #978-821-9318. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

THURSDAY JUNE 5

Fitchburg Art Museum and Farmers Market Trip

2:00-5:00 p.m. Free admission to the Art Museum! Sponsored by Old Murdock Senior Center. Home pick up available upon request or meet at the Senior Center (52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon) at 1:30 to get a ride. RIDES MUST BE SCHEDULED TO CONFIRM YOUR SEAT ON THE BUS. You can sign up online at www.townofwinchendon.com/council-aging or call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. This week the menu is Enchiladas by Beverly & Christine. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

SATURDAY JUNE 7

Founders Day

12:00-9:00 p.m. Join us for a fun-filled day of live music, delicious food, and family-friendly activities! Bring your family, friends, and lawn chairs for a full day of entertainment, local vendors, and community fun.

Live Music Schedule:

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM - Winchendon Winds Professional Concert Band

2:00 PM - 4:00 PM - Jared Moore

4:30 PM - 6:30 PM - BriezyJane and the Hurricane

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Anderson Daniels (Headliner)

Food Trucks & Local Vendors! Games & Activities for All Ages! Don’t miss out on this amazing day of community celebration. See you there! At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

TUESDAY JUNE 10

Dementia Caregiver Support Group

5:30 p.m. Meets second Tuesday of each month. Facilitator: Olivia Companion, certified Dementia Practitioner and Montessori Dementia Care Professional. Free of charge. Call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155 to register. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 11

Chair Yoga Class

6:30-8:00 p.m. Come join us! \$15 per person. No need to sign up in advance. Water and Gatorade available for purchase. Any questions text Marti @ #978-821-9318. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

THURSDAY JUNE 12

Denis Cormier Concert

10:45 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Culinary Workshop for Teens

3:00-5:00 p.m. Cooking lessons with Growing Places for youth age 13-18. Every other Thursday, free of charge. Register each attendee at www.the-hub.org/event-details/culinary-workshop. Workshop is held at The HUB, 5 Summer Dr., Winchendon.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. This week’s menu is Mexican casserole and southwest corn & black bean salad. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

FRIDAY JUNE 13

Strawberry Festival BBQ

5:00-7:00 p.m. Pre-orders only! \$25 per person gets you four meats and three sides. Order your meals at <https://forms.gle/XjySHeuFvxakoCpL8> All by June 6. Eat under the Big Tent or take home. Drinks and desserts will be available to purchase. Rain or shine! At Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 52 Spruce St, Winchendon. Contact Bob Polcari with questions, at 978-265-4699.

Nick Staples

7:00-10:00 p.m. Local country singer Nick Staples takes the stage! Come join us. No cover charge. Cash bar available. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

SATURDAY JUNE 14

Annual Summer Lawn Fair

9:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Crafts, retail items, raffle baskets, concessions, freecycle table and more! Fundraiser to support Set in Stone masonry restoration and operations. 126 Central Street.

Annual Strawberry Festival

9:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m. Raffles, sale tables, kids’ activities, food. Bingo for prizes at 2:00 p.m., Country Auction at 5:30 p.m., followed by live music from the Rindge Road Rockers. Continues on Sunday. At Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 52 Spruce St, Winchendon.

Solstice Fair

Through the day, times TBA. Road race, parade, vendors, town organizations, food and live music. On Central Street and around the Clark Memorial YMCA, 155 Central St, Winchendon.

Salsa & Sangria Sunset Social

6:00-10:00 p.m. Join us for an unforgettable evening of dance, drinks, and delicious local fare! Farm fresh food and snacks, themed mocktails and cocktails, live music. Gate opens at 6:00, dance lesson at 7:00, live performance at 9:00. \$10/\$15 per person. Register at <https://www.sunsetsocialsma.com/event/salsa-sangria-summer-kickoff-1/register>. Brought to you by The Farm Stand Winchendon and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. Questions? Text or call 978-863-1010. Learn more: www.sunsetsocialsma.com. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

SUNDAY JUNE 15

Annual Strawberry Festival

9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Breakfast 9:00-11:30, booths and tables, raffle drawings at noon. At Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 52 Spruce St, Winchendon.

Winchendon Winds Concert Band Performance

2:00 p.m. Conductor Lindsay Bronnenkant leads this professional wind ensemble in a program titled Heroes.” Selections will honor the military, James Bond, Luke Skywalker, the Lone Ranger, the Man of La Mancha and of course the “common man.” Free and open to all. Refreshments sold before the concert. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, 126 Central St.

MONDAY JUNE 16

Walking Beside You: Caregiver Support Group

6:00-7:00 p.m. We invite all parents, grandparents, and caregivers raising individuals who are neurodivergent, on the autism spectrum, or have other special needs to join us. Sponsored by See Beyond the Spectrum Initiative. For more information visit the library or see bealslibrary.org. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

TUESDAY JUNE 17

Growing Places Mobile Market

10:00-11:00 a.m. Fresh local produce. SNAP and HIP accepted. at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 18

Chair Yoga Class

6:30-8:00 p.m. Come join us! \$15 per person. No need to sign up in advance. Water and Gatorade available for purchase. Any questions text Marti @ #978-821-9318. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

SATURDAY JUNE 21

Snowbound Annual Brewfest 2025

2:00-8:00 p.m. Kick off summer with us! Tickets \$30 per person for brew tasting. Positive ID required. Includes sampling glass. General admission with the no brew tasting \$5. Entertainment by Two for the Road and The Willies. Portion of proceeds to benefit local animal rescue. There will be food trucks, raffles, and shopping from local artisans. This is a family and dog friendly event. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Teen Night at the HUB

5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr.

SUNDAY JUNE 22

Winchendon Winds Concert Band Performance

2:00 p.m. Conductor Lindsay Bronnenkant leads this professional wind ensemble in a program titled “Holiday” as they “visit” the deep South, Europe, Scotland, and the Arabian desert. Free and open to all. Refreshments sold before the concert. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, 126 Central St.

TUESDAY JUNE 24

Dementia Care Training at the Senior Center

5:30 p.m. This month, “Dementia Challenges: A Montessori Approach to Success.” Trainer: Olivia Companion, certified Dementia Practitioner and Montessori Dementia Care Professional. Fee: \$25. Call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155 to register. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY JUNE 25

Taste of Home Lunch & Birthday Celebration

11:00 a.m. Share in a home-style lunch cooked in the Old Murdock kitchen, and celebrate May birthdays! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon.

2025



THURSDAY JUNE 26

Culinary Workshop for Teens

3:00-5:00 p.m. Cooking lessons with Growing Places for youth age 13-18. Every other Thursday, free of charge. Products made will be sold at The HUB and served to seniors every other Friday! Please fill out a separate RSVP form for each participant you are registering at <https://www.the-hub.org/event-details/culinary-workshop>. Workshop is held at The HUB, 5 Summer Dr., Winchendon.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. This week’s menu is is BBQ ribs, sides and dessert. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Bingo at the HUB

7:00 p.m. Join the Winchendon Parks and Recreation for Bingo at the HUB!

SATURDAY JUNE 28

Food Truck Festival and Battle of the Bands

12:00-7:00 p.m. Featuring over 15 incredible food trucks serving up a diverse selection of ethnic cuisine. Plus, craft beer and wine, local crafters and artisans. Vote for your favorite in the Battle of the Bands, where talented musicians compete for the top spot. Free admission! Sponsored by WooTrucks and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Spruce St, Winchendon.

SUNDAY JUNE 29

Winchendon Winds Concert Band Performance

2:00 p.m. Conductor Lindsay Bronnenkant leads this professional wind ensemble in their final program for the season titled “Organ - The Pipes, the Pipes are Calling.” Musical selections will feature the band with both grand piano and international pipe organist Peter Krasinski. Free and open to all. Refreshments sold before the concert. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, 126 Central St.

RECURRING WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAYS

Bowling

12:00-5:00 p.m. \$25 for a lane per hour for up to 5 people. “Sober Sundays.” At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

MONDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Gentle Yoga with Paula

10:00 a.m. \$5 suggested donation per class. This class is suitable for all abilities. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Friends’ Book and Used Media Sale

1:00-3:00 p.m. The Friends of the Library Book Sale is back! Browse a wide selection of used books, DVDs, puzzles, music and more. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

AA Meeting

7:30 p.m. Open meeting, all are welcome. UU Church of Winchendon, 126 Central Street.

Lego Club for Kids at the Beals

4:00-5:00 p.m. Join us for fun-filled afternoons building Lego creations straight from your imagination! For for information, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

TUESDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Pickleball - Workshop Series, Beginner Level

9:30 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Beginner Strength Training with Mary Lee

9:15-9:45 a.m. Get fit with these fun exercise classes that are customized for all abilities. \$5 suggested donation. Sign up online at www.townofwinchendon.com/council-aging or call the Senior Center. Rides available upon request. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Intermediate Strength Training with Mary Lee

9:45-10:15 a.m. Get fit with these fun exercise classes that are customized for all abilities. \$5 suggested donation. Sign up online at www.townofwinchendon.com/council-aging or call the Senior Center. Rides available upon request. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Family Friendly Story Hour at the Chapel

10:00-11:00 a.m. For preschool age children. Parents must stay with their children for the story time. At the Chapel Downtown, 286 Central St, Winchendon.

Line Dancing with Mary Lee

10:30 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Pickleball - Workshop Series, Intermediate Level

11:30 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Yoga Classes with Paula Lashua-Brisbois

4:30-5:30 p.m. All skill levels welcome, mats and blocks available if needed. Open to adults and teens. \$10 per class. For more info, contact 978-297-0300, bealsmemoriallibrary@gmail.com or visit <https://www.bealslibrary.org>. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

WEDNESDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Ukelele Class

10:00 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Gentle Yoga with Paula

10:00 a.m. \$5 suggested donation per class. This class is suitable for all abilities. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Zumbini

11:00 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Bingo!

12:30 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Meet-Up With the Kiwanis

6:30 p.m. 2ND AND 4TH WEDNESDAYS EACH MONTH. All are welcome! Come join in community projects, make new friends, make your community better, have some fun! Younger folks welcome. For more information, call Cailte Kelly, 978-413-9930. Hosted by Kiwanis of Winchendon MA. At the Clark Memorial YMCA Community Room (in new gymnastics building down by the bike path), 155 Central St., Winchendon.

THURSDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Congregate Lunch

11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

CFCE Preschool Playgroup at the Beals

1:00-2:00 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of free play, a craft, story time and music & movement. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Friends’ Book and Used Media Sale

5:00-7:00 p.m. The Friends of the Library Book Sale is back! Browse a wide selection of used books, DVDs, puzzles, music and more. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

FRIDAYS

Story Time at the Beals

10:00 a.m. Join us for a fun half hour of stories with Ms. Kristin and Ms. Melissa. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon Community Playgroups & CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Lunch and Free Bowling for Seniors

10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Please call 978-297-3155 at least 24 hours in advance to reserve a lunch. Bowling is free for all seniors 55+. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Bowling at the HUB

5:00-9:00 p.m. \$25 Lane/Hour/Up to 5 People, and shoes included! Sunshine cafe selling snack and beverages. Beer and wine for sale. 100% proceeds go to fundraise for the CAC programs and services. At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

SATURDAYS

Shopping Transportation for Seniors

9:00 a.m. Leaves from the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. Must reserve your ride one week in advance. Call 978-297-3155.

Winchendon Farmers Market

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave & Grove St,, Winchendon.

Bowling at the HUB

5:00-9:00 p.m. \$25 Lane/Hour/Up to 5 People, and shoes included! Sunshine cafe selling snack and beverages Beer and wine for sale. 100% proceeds go to fundraise for the CAC programs and services. At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

Town Events

Founders Day

June 7, 12:00-9:00 p.m. Join us for a fun-filled day of live music, delicious food, and family-friendly activities! Bring your family, friends, and lawn chairs for a full day of entertainment, local vendors, and community fun. Live Music Schedule:
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM - Winchendon Winds Professional Concert Band
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM - Jared Moore
4:30 PM - 6:30 PM - BriezyJane and the Hurricane
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM - Anderson Daniels (Headliner)
Food Trucks & Local Vendors! Games & Activities for All Ages! Don't miss out on this amazing day of community celebration. See you there! At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Solstice Fair

June 14, Through the day, times TBA. Road race, parade, vendors, town organizations, food and live music. On Central Street and around the Clark Memorial YMCA, 155 Central St, Winchendon.

For Kids

Lego Club for Kids at the Beals

Mondays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Join us for fun-filled afternoons building Lego creations straight from your imagination! For for information, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Family Friendly Story Hour at the Chapel

Tuesdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m. For preschool age children. Parents must stay with their children for the story time. At the Chapel Downtown, 286 Central St, Winchendon.

CFCE Preschool Playgroup at the Beals

Thursdays, 1:00-2:00 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of free play, a craft, story time and music & movement. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Story Time at the Beals

Fridays, 10:00 a.m. Join us for a fun half hour of stories with Ms. Kristin and Ms. Melissa. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon Community Playgroups & CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

For Teens

Culinary Workshop for Teens

Thursday, June 12 & 26, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Cooking lessons with Growing Places for youth age 13-18. Every other Thursday, free of charge. Products made will be sold at The HUB and served to seniors every other Friday! Please fill out a separate RSVP form for each participant you are registering at <https://www.the-hub.org/event-details/culinary-workshop>. Workshop is held at The HUB, 5 Summer Dr., Winchendon.

Teen Night at the HUB

Saturday, June 21, 5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr.

Recreation

Pickleball - Open Courts

Mon-Thur, 9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Bowling

Sun, 12:00-5:00 p.m. \$25 for a lane per hour for up to 5 people. “Sober Sundays.” At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

Bowling at the HUB

Fri-Sat, 5:00-9:00 p.m. \$25 Lane/Hour/Up to 5 People, and shoes included! Sunshine cafe selling snack and beverages Beer and wine for sale. 100% proceeds go to fundraise for the CAC programs and services. At The HUB (Winchendon CAC), 5 Summer Dr.

Bingo!

Wed, 12:30 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Beals Memorial Library 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon 978-297-0300 bealslibrary.org	Winchendon American Legion Post #193 295 School St., Winchendon 978-297-0754
Old Murdock Senior Center 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon 978-297-3155 facebook.com/oldmurdock	G.A.R. Park Grove St and Murdock Ave, Winchendon Winchendon Community Park 86 Ingleside Dr, Winchendon Winchendon Parks & Rec, 978-297-5410 facebook.com/Winchparksandrec
The HUB / Winchendon CAC 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon 978-287-1667 www.the-hub.org facebook.com/winchendoncac	Murdock Middle High School 3 Memorial Dr, Winchendon 978-297-1256 www.winchendonk12.org
UU Church of Winchendon 126 Central St, Winchendon 978-297-0554 uucw.ncmuuc.org	Clark Memorial YMCA 155 Central St 978-297-9622 www.theclarkymca.org
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church 52 Spruce St, Winchendon 978-297-0280 www.heartofmary.net	

Food and Meals

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

June 5, 5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

June 12 & 26, 5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Strawberry Festival BBQ

June 13, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Pre-orders only! \$25 per person gets you four meats and three sides. Order your meals at <https://forms.gle/XjySHeuFvxakoCpL8All>. At Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, 52 Spruce St, Winchendon. Contact Bob Polcari with questions, at 978-265-4699.

Salsa & Sangria Sunset Social

June 14, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Get ready for a spicy summer night! Sunset Socials presents: Salsa & Sangria 2025. Farm fresh food and snacks, themed mocktails and cocktails, live music. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Taste of Home Lunch & Birthday Celebration

June 25, 11:00 a.m. Share in a home-style lunch cooked in the Old Murdock kitchen, and celebrate May birthdays! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon..

Food Truck Festival and Battle of the Bands

June 28, 12:00-7:00 p.m. Featuring over 15 incredible food trucks serving up a diverse selection of ethnic cuisine. Plus, craft beer and wine, local crafters and artisans. Vote for your favorite in the Battle of the BandsFree admission! Sponsored by WooTrucks and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Spruce St, Winchendon

Congregate Lunch

Mon-Thur, 11:00 a.m. \$3 suggested donation. Call the day before to reserve a lunch. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Lunch and Free Bowling for Seniors

Fridays, 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Please call 978-297-3155 at least 24 hours in advance to reserve a lunch. Bowling is free for all seniors 55+. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Winchendon Farmers Market

Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave & Grove St,, Winchendon.

Growing Places Mobile Market

June 17, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Fresh local produce. SNAP and HIP accepted. at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Entertainment

Winchendon Music Festival - John Arcaro & Band (jazz)

June 2, 7:00 p.m. Berklee College of Music professor, John Arcaro, leads a program of works from the “Great American Songbook”, complemented by contemporary jazz compositions. At Murdock-Whitney House, 151 Front St. Winchendon.

Winchendon Music Festival - Duo Sorolla: Ismar Gomes, cello & Wan-Chi Su, piano (classical)

June 3, 7:00 p.m. Works by Reynaldo Hahn de Echenagucia (1874-1947), Constantino Vicente Gaito (1878-1945), Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), Gaspar Cassadó i Moreu (1897-1966), and Astor Pantaleón Piazzolla (1921-1992). More information: <https://www.duosorolla.com> At Murdock-Whitney House, 151 Front St. Winchendon.

Denis Cormier Concert

June 12, 10:45 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Founders Day

June 7, 12:00-9:00 p.m. Join us for a fun-filled day of live music, delicious food, and family-friendly activities! Bring your family, friends, and lawn chairs for a full day of entertainment, local vendors, and community fun. Food Trucks & Local Vendors! Games & Activities for All Ages! At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Nick Staples

June 13, 7:00-10:00 p.m. Local country singer Nick Staples takes the stage! Come join us. No cover charge. Cash bar available. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Winchendon Winds Concert Band Performance

June 15, 2:00 p.m. Conductor Lindsay Bronnenkant leads this professional wind ensemble in a program titled Heroes.” Free and open to all. Refreshments sold before the concert. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, 126 Central St.

Snowbound Annual Brewfest 2025

June 21, 2:00-8:00 p.m. Kick off summer with us! Tickets \$30 per person for brew tasting. Positive ID required. General admission with the no brew tasting \$5. Entertainment by Two for the Road and The Willies. Portion of proceeds to benefit local animal rescue. There will be food trucks, raffles, and shopping from local artisans. This is a family and dog friendly event. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Winchendon Winds Concert Band Performance

June 22, 2:00 p.m. Conductor Lindsay Bronnenkant leads this professional wind ensemble in a program titled “Holiday”. Free and open to all. Refreshments sold before the concert. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, 126 Central St.

Food Truck Festival and Battle of the Bands

June 28, 12:00-7:00 p.m. Featuring over 15 incredible food trucks serving up a diverse selection of ethnic cuisine. Plus, craft beer and wine, local crafters and artisans. Vote for your favorite in the Battle of the BandsFree admission! Sponsored by WooTrucks and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Spruce St, Winchendon.

Winchendon Winds Concert Band Performance

June 29, 2:00 p.m. Conductor Lindsay Bronnenkant leads this professional wind ensemble in their final program for the season titled “Organ - The Pipes, the Pipes are Calling.” with grand piano and international pipe organist Peter Krasinski. Free and open to all. Refreshments sold before the concert. At Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon, 126 Central St.

Check out the full online town directory at winchendoncourier.net/directory.htm

Winchendon News

Murdock School's 1st Annual Arts Fest Celebrates Music, Art, Seniors



The artists with teacher Katie Walsh
Photo by Jill Nicholson Sackett



The Murdock High School Choir
Photo by Jill Nicholson Sackett

by Jill Nicholson Sackett

The Murdock Middle High School capped off its academic year with its first-ever Arts Fest on May 14, 2025. The inaugural event was the brainchild of Murdock Music Director Alison Manion and Art Teacher Katie Walsh, aiming to present an event unifying both the art and music departments. The Festival was attended by about 80-100 parents, students and others throughout the evening, including Superintendent Dr. Marc Gosselin.

The Festival kicked off with an art exhibit set up throughout the second floor of the high school. Numerous forms of student art, ranging from paintings, sketches, papier-mâché and block prints adorned the hallways. Some of the art was painted directly on the walls of the school in mural fashion. The area was alive with color and animated conversation from students and visitors alike. Art teacher Katie Walsh spoke enthusiastically about the project. Speaking of arts in the schools, she emphasized "It's just so important for to be able to express themselves in ways that they wouldn't otherwise get to, and it shows a side of them that you don't necessarily see in a written paper or in a math problem. I hope that by seeing their work in this way and showing them that the school takes pride in their work, that perhaps they'll be a lifelong supporter of the arts too, and maybe continue it in the future, whether professionally or just on the side, as something that brings them joy with whatever career they choose."

Walsh said that Unified Arts "encompasses the various arts within a district, so we're trying to get away from the general term of 'specials', or 'specialists'." Asked if the arts enhance academic achievement, she said, "I absolutely think it enhances it because you're using a different part of your brain. You're using the right side of your brain. So I think the more you can do to explore different subject matters, including art, it's going to inform other subjects as well. So creative problem solving, stick-to-itiveness, that motivation to stick through those problems and not give up. So

it absolutely helps. It helps with the growth mindset of students and it's a nice balance between the left versus the right side of the brain."

"We have a talented bunch of students in this district and we hope to have you come next year to see their work," Walsh said.

The Festival wrapped up with a music concert held in the auditorium. Music Director Alison Manion led the eight-member Murdock High School (MHS) Chorus in a variety of songs utilizing pop, folk, spiritual and traditional styles and featuring solo turns from Cody Michaud, Doris Huggins and Quinne Richard. Ms. Manion then brought nine members of the MHS Concert Band to the stage to perform the military classic "American Patrol," a riff on Van Morrison's "Moondance," and the Spanish March "Zia Zia." They closed with the feature theme from Pictures at an Exhibition featuring UMass Honors band member Bradley Wightman on trumpet.

An added highlight was the school's collaboration with guest artists Winchendon Winds. "Win Winds," a 40-piece professional concert band under the direction of Dr. Lindsay Bronnenkant, performed a John Williams medley and Gustav Holst's band classic Jupiter. The pieces showcased the variety of instruments in the group including the lesser-heard piccolo, oboe, bassoon, French horn and euphonium. The MHS Concert Band then joined Win Winds for two combined numbers. Senior vocalist Quinne Richard performed the torch ballad "Someone to Watch Over Me" with full band accompaniment. The concert closed on a "high note" with outgoing seniors receiving flowers and best wishes.

The Festival was funded by a Massachusetts Cultural Council grant that Music Director Manion pursued last fall. The funding provided for small group lessons for clarinet, trombone and saxophone students leading up to the Festival, and collaboration with Win Winds and Artist Lynda McCann Olson.



Winchendon Winds, conducted by Dr. Bronnenkant
Photo by Jill Nicholson Sackett



The Murdock High School Band
Photo by Jill Nicholson Sackett



Read the Winchendon Courier Online Every Week!

News, events, police logs, obituaries, community directory
and archives of every previous issue back to September, 2019

winchendoncourier.net

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Uploaded every
Thursday night

Regional News and Events

Mount Wachusett Community College Confers 424 Degrees and 310 Certificates to 662 Students at 60th Commencement Ceremony

GARDNER, MA - May 14, 2025 - Mount Wachusett Community College celebrated the academic achievements of its graduates during the college’s 60th Commencement on May 14, 2025. A total of 662 students graduated, with 424 associate degrees and 310 certificates being conferred.

MWCC President James Vander Hooven welcomed graduates and guests, “To Commence means to begin, to move forward. While your educational journey at the Mount may be coming to an end, this is really just a beginning. But this beginning comes with responsibility. The responsibility to use what you have gained for the betterment of your communities and families. On behalf of the entire College, congratulations on commencing today!”

The student speaker was Holden resident Lia Gomez, who began her college degree at the age of 46 after raising her three children. Gomez benefited from the federally funded TRIO Program, graduated with a 4.0 GPA, and her Associate Degree in Human Services.

“One of the greatest lessons I’ve learned here at the Mount is that education is not just about passing exams or receiving a diploma--it’s about building connections, embracing curiosity, and staying open to learning well beyond the classroom,” Gomez told her fellow students. “For me, Mount Wachusett has been more than just a college â€” it’s been a place to discover who I am and who I want to be. It’s given me the confidence to stand here today and say that I’m proud of my journey. It has allowed me to show my sons that their mother is more than a high school dropout, and that you can achieve anything you set your mind to.”

The MWCC Alumni of the Year award was presented to Dr. Ricardo Scarello of the Class of 2007. A senior software developer and subject matter expert for government services at a technology and consulting firm, Scarello credits the support and encouragement he received at MWCC with his successful completion of his advanced degrees and career success.

The Service Above Self Award was presented to Class of 2025 member Sara Leopaldi. The Service Above Self Award recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond to make significant contributions to MWCC and surrounding communities. Leopaldi’s tireless support of parenting students at MWCC and commitment to the Child Watch program helped foster a supportive environment for students navigating the challenges of balancing education and parenthood.

The ceremony also included the presentation of a posthumous degree. “On April first of this year, Mount Wachusett Community College and the Class of 2025 experienced a profound loss when student, Jon Moss, passed away unexpectedly at the age of 25. Jon was looking forward to celebrating with all of us tonight and his loss is a reminder of how fragile life can be.”

The following Winchendon students participated in commencement:

Alex J. Lafrennie	David P. Fortin	Justin Black	Michael S. Anderson
Amanda Elizabeth Duval	David J. Kjornes	Kaleb Richard Beasley	Primo A. Dellasanta
Anthony W. Arias	Desiree Marie Fasulo	Kalum B. Dunn	Rachael K. Legault
Ashley L. Wales	Emma Marie Nurmsen Silvia	Kelly Murphy	Rachel K. Legree
Autumn M. Garcia	Jacqueline M. Toth	Kimberly S. Andrade	Sara Danielle Hancock
Brendon K. Dellmuth	Jacqueline Louise Bussiere	Leah Pelkey	Sue A. Bennett
Chloe Jess	Jason Sousa Viveiros	Lindsey T. O’Toole	Timothy M. Lemire
Chloe Marie St Peter	Jeremy Leon Caouette	Melissa Phet Phatthammachack	Vanessa A. Prouty

Sen. Jo Comerford awarded two statewide honors

(BOSTON, MA) - Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) was awarded two statewide honors: On May 15, Disability Law Center’s 2025 Senate Legislator of the Year; and on May 21, Children’s League of Massachusetts’ 2025 Senate Champion for Children Award.

The Disability Law Center (<https://www.dlc-ma.org/>) is a statewide “private, non-profit organization responsible for providing protection and advocacy for the rights of Massachusetts residents with disabilities.” Comerford received statewide recognition for her leadership in passing legislation to curtail the state’s draconian MassHealth Estate Recovery practices, which were in excess of the federally required minimum, her continued efforts to allow spouses to be paid family caregivers, and her commitment to supporting young adults living with disabilities through the Blue Envelope Program she championed.

The Children’s League of Massachusetts (<https://www.childrensleague.org/>) is a statewide “non-profit association of child and family organizations that collectively advocate for public policies and quality services that are in the best interest of children, youth, and families in the Commonwealth.” Comerford received statewide recognition for her leadership of legislation to protect federal benefits owed to children in foster care and her leadership on a foster children’s bill of rights.

Comerford’s remarks to the Disability Law Center and wider community may be read at <https://senatorjocomerford.org/celebrating-with-the-disability-law-center/>.

Comerford’s remarks to the Children’s League of Massachusetts and wider community may be read at <https://senatorjocomerford.org/recognizing-ongoing-work-on-behalf-of-the-commonwealths-children/>.

“The legislation propelled by each organization and led by me and by our team is tremendously important. Passage of these bills will mean that life in Massachusetts is a little bit more just and compassionate to those who need and deserve justice and compassion. At a time when the U.S. presidency appears devoid of humanity, we here in Massachusetts must redouble our efforts to ensure that the Commonwealth is a place where everyone can thrive,” noted Comerford.

Call for Public Submissions : Design Sketches and Suggestions for a New Flag, Seal and Motto for Massachusetts



The current Massachusetts state seal and motto

On Thursday, May 8, the Massachusetts Flag, Seal and Motto Advisory Commission issued a call for public submissions for design sketches and ideas for a new state flag, seal and motto for the Commonwealth.

“Our seal, flag, and motto should reflect not just our history, but the vibrant, diverse community we are today – and the future we are building together. I can’t wait to see the creativity, ideas, and sense of belonging that people across Massachusetts will bring to this process,” said Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler, co-chair of the advisory commission.

Using the link below to a portal for submissions, the public - including grade school students, artists, designers, and culture bearers - are encouraged to submit design sketches and ideas for a new flag, seal and motto.

https://maexecutiveofficeofeconomicdevelopment.formstack.com/forms/massachusetts_flag_seal_and_motto_submissions

A public submission portal is available on the Advisory Commission’s website. Individuals and organizations can submit written ideas, visual sketches, or full design concepts until June 18, 2025. Following the gathering of submissions, the Advisory Commission will select three final options for each category and hold public hearings to solicit feedback and input on the state emblems.

The open call for submissions will end on June 18, 2025.

To read the full text of the call for submissions, go to:

<https://www.mass.gov/news/massachusetts-seal-flag-and-motto-advisory-commission-calls-for-public-submissions-to-reimagine-state-emblems>

Regional News and Events

Gardening



Time spent outdoors doesn't have to be ruined by ticks and mosquitoes.
Photo courtesy of MelindaMyers.com

Boost Your Outdoor Enjoyment by Managing Ticks and Mosquitoes

by Melinda Myers

Summer is synonymous with fun outdoor activities like barbeques, lawn games, hikes, and gardening. But it can also mean unwanted pests like mosquitoes and ticks. Employing a few preventative strategies can help minimize the annoyance and reduce the risk of tick- and mosquito-borne diseases.

Start by creating a landscape that is less inviting to mosquitoes and ticks. Reduce mosquitoes' daytime resting spaces by keeping your garden weeded. Removing weeds and managing neglected garden spaces will make your landscape less inviting to these pests.

Evaluate drainage patterns in your landscape. Improve drainage by amending the soil in garden beds with organic matter. Consider adding a rain garden to capture water run-off from the roof and hard surfaces, putting it to work in a garden filled with beautiful flowers for you and pollinators to enjoy. Water collected in these gardens drains within 24 to 36 hours and doesn't provide a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Drain water from toys, buckets or any object that can hold water and serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Clear debris from gutters so the water flows freely through the gutter and out the downspout.

Change the water in birdbaths at least once a week. Make it part of your routine whenever you water container gardens. Or you can install a small pump to keep the water moving, which prevents mosquito breeding.

Toss a Mosquito Dunk (SummitResponsibleSolutions.com) in birdbaths, rain barrels and water features. This certified organic insecticide only kills the larvae of mosquitoes, black flies, and fungus gnats. It won't harm bees, butterflies, birds, pets and people.

Help reduce the tick population in your landscape by keeping the grass mowed and removing brush, groundcovers, firewood piles, and bird feeders near your home or where your family frequents. Consider creating a tick-safe area where your family frequents, and limit time spent in

tick-infested areas. Widen pathways, properly prune trees to increase light, exclude deer, and discourage rodents to reduce the risk of exposure. Place children's swing sets away from the woods and cover the soil with wood-chip mulch. Eliminate invasive barberry, honeysuckle, and buckthorn that create a tick-friendly habitat.

Wear light-colored clothing to more easily spot ticks before they move onto your skin. Loose fitting, light-colored clothing is also less attractive to mosquitoes. Wear long pants and tuck them into socks and tuck your shirt into your pants. Ticks often gain access through pant legs or shirttails and crawl up, looking for a place to settle in and feed.

Consider spraying your clothing with an insecticide labeled for repelling and killing ticks and mosquitoes. Select an insecticide spray like Summit® Green Armor Insect Repellent labeled for use on clothing. Read and follow label directions and let your clothing dry before wearing it.

Remove and check your clothing for ticks anytime you have been outdoors. Showering within two hours of spending time outdoors can greatly reduce your risk of Lyme and possibly other tick-borne diseases. Always conduct a tick check, paying special attention to your underarms, belly button, in and around your ears, hair, behind your knees, and around your waist.

Keep mosquitoes away when hosting a party, gardening, or relaxing outdoors. Use a fan to create a gentle breeze that keeps weak-flying mosquitoes away from you and your guests. Some gardeners even take a small fan into the garden while weeding.

Citronella oil and scented candles have some mosquito-repelling properties. Scatter the candles in outdoor spaces within a few feet where family and friends gather for some short-term relief.

A combination of these strategies will help minimize your exposure to these biting insects so you can better enjoy the outdoors this summer.

Melinda Myers has written over 20 gardening books, including The Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the nationally-syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Myers' web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

R V

Enjoying this Special Print Edition of the Winchendon Courier Online? Please share your thoughts!

Would you like to see a regular print edition of the Courier?

- ☐ Yes, once a month
- ☐ Yes, twice a month
- ☐ Yes, every week
- ☐ No, I'm happy reading the online version

Would you pay for the Courier on a newsstand?

- ☐ Yes, more than \$1.00
- ☐ Yes, but only if it's \$1.00 or less
- ☐ No

Would you pay for a subscription to the print edition? If so, how much would seem fair?

What do you think of the new print edition of the Courier?

Before you saw the print edition, did you know about the online weekly Courier?

- ☐ Yes, I read it regularly
- ☐ Yes, but I seldom/never read it
- ☐ No, I didn't know it existed online

Please send your replies to By Light Unseen Media LLC, 325 Lakeview Dr, Winchendon, MA, 01475, or email to editor@winchendoncourier.net.

Fill out this survey online!



<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScDrTzG64NdoEsj6fasDe3Hbq8f-5JPkyQJMt8WQZmKxsrY7g/viewform?usp=header>

Town Committee Monthly Meetings by Week
All Meetings in Town Hall

week	MON	TUE	WED	THUR
1st	Communications Committee 4:30pm Board of Health 6:00pm	Planning Board 6:00pm		School Committee 6:00pm
2nd	Board of Selectmen 6:30pm	Finance Committee 7:00pm	Agricultural Commission 7:00pm	Conservation Commission 6:00pm
3rd		Planning Board 6:00pm	Winchendon Redevelopment Authority 5:00pm Zoning Board of Appeals 7:00pm	School Committee 6:00pm
4th	Board of Selectmen 6:30pm			

Agendas, minutes and meeting recordings available on the Town website at Agendas, Minutes & Past Meetings, as well as on the pages for each Board or Committee.

Boards may cancel or change times for meetings, or add extra meetings, based on specific business at hand. Check the Town Meetings Calendar tab at <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/>

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Zoning Board of Appeals
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a PUBLIC HEARING on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 7:05pm to discuss the application for a Variance submitted by owner Frank Pino for 365 Hitchcock Road (Also known as Assessor’s Map 8, Parcel 239) Winchendon, MA 01475. Variance request to allow placement of a shed within 25’ of the side setback per section 300-7.2 of the Winchendon Zoning Bylaws. Said property is located in a R80-Rural Residential district. The hearing to be held on the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. All interested persons should plan to attend. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request.
BY: Cynthia Carville, Chair
Winchendon Zoning Board of Appeals

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Zoning Board of Appeals
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a PUBLIC HEARING on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at 7:05pm to discuss the application for a Variance and Special Permit submitted by owner Zachary Stone for 166 Monomonac Road East (Also known as Assessor’s Map M8, Parcel 3) Winchendon, MA 01475. Variance request is to allow construction of a garage and mudroom addition to be added to the property per section 300-7.2 of the Winchendon Zoning Bylaws. Special Permit request is to increase the pre-existing non-conforming structure greater than fifty percent per section 300-6.2 of the Town of Winchendon Zoning Bylaws. Said property is located in a R40-Suburban Residential in the Lake Monomonac Overlay District. The hearing to be held on the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. All interested persons should plan to attend. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request.
BY: Cynthia Carville, Chair
Winchendon Zoning Board of Appeals

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To submit news, letters to the editor, obituaries or calendar listings:
email editor@winchendoncourier.net
or mail to 325 Lakeview Dr., Winchendon, MA 01475

Event listings in are free of charge for non-profit, community and town organizations and groups, and for charitable or benefit events.

Short text articles about forthcoming local events are free of charge.

For information about display and classified ad rates and requirements, contact the Publisher at the above email or address.

Toy Town FYIs

Transfer Station Hours

Wednesday 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.
653 River Street
978-297-0395
Sticker price: \$75 (\$25 for additional stickers)
Pay-As-You-Throw bags required
33-gallon, \$4.25 per bag, 16-gallon, \$2.25 per bag
2023-2024 Transfer Station sticker now on sale in Town Hall and at the Transfer Station.

Sign up for Code Red Emergency Alerts

Sign up for our emergency notification program today! Receive up-to-date information before, during and after an emergency in your neighborhood. You can choose to be notified via voice, text and email notifications of emergency and inclement weather alerts. Click the link below for information and sign-up.
www.townofwinchendon.com/home/news/sign-code-red-emergency-alerts

Is Your House Number Clearly Visible from the Street?

The Winchendon Fire Department reminds all residents to make sure their house number is clearly visible for first responders who may need to find you. Numbers should be at least four inches high and facing the street, with lighting if possible. Put numbers on a contrasting background so they will stand out. If your driveway is long, put the number on a mailbox or pole on the street or at the end of driveway, facing in both directions. (Reflective numbers are helpful.) Check your house numbers to make sure foliage has not grown up in front of them without your being aware of it.

Report a Pothole to the DPW

You can report potholes directly to the DPW using this form on the town website:
www.townofwinchendon.com/public-works/webforms/report-pothole

Winchendon Town Hall & Transfer Station Now Accepting Credit/Debit Payments

We are excited to announce that the DPW, Treasurer/Collector’s Office and the Transfer Station can all now accept in-person credit and debit card payments. This means next time you need to purchase or pay for:
Trash bags
Transfer station stickers
Excise bills
Tax bills
Water & Sewer bills
And more
You can pay with a credit or debit card! (subject to a convenience fee).

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Legal Notice
Winchendon Conservation Commission

Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, and the Town of Winchendon Wetlands Protection Bylaw, the Winchendon Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Request for Determination of Applicability filed by Timothy Sullivan for proposed work within the 100-foot Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetlands at 44 West Shore Drive, Assessor’s Map 6, Parcel 35. The proposed work includes removal of dead trees, branches and two (2) live trees. The hearing will be held in the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request. For additional information email mmarro@townofwinchendon.com.

Town of Winchendon
109 Front Street
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Legal Notice
Winchendon Conservation Commission

Pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40, and the Town of Winchendon Wetlands Protection Bylaw, the Winchendon Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Notice of Intent filed by BSC Group Inc. on behalf of the Town of Winchendon. The proposed work includes activities associated with the replacement of the bridge which carries Mill Circle over Whites Mill Pond Brook in Winchendon, MA within the 100 foot buffer zone. The hearing will be held in the Second Floor Auditorium at Town Hall - 109 Front St., Winchendon, MA 01475. Alternative translation and accommodation for disabled persons is available by advance request. For additional information email mmarro@townofwinchendon.com.

Community Notice Board

Take the TOY TOWN TROLLEY On Saturdays! FREE!

Beginning on Saturday, January 11, the Toy Town Trolley will be making three circuits around Winchendon and up to the Rindge shopping areas every Saturday. Rides are FREE to all residents! This service is funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and sponsored by the Town of Winchendon, the Winchendon CAC, the Winchendon Council on Aging and the Winchendon CCAP Task Force.

Each circuit will start at Hyde Park and stop at the end of Pearl Drive, the Town Hall bus shelter, Dollar Tree Plaza, the YMCA/GFA bus shelter, CVS, the fire station bus shelter, Ipswich Drive, the end of Ready Drive, the end of Goodrich Drive and the Winchendon Community Park. From there the trolley will head up 202 (so you don't have to!) and stop to let off shoppers at Tractor Supply, Market Basket/Marshalls, Walmart and Hannaford. It then returns to Not Just Produced and Sippin' Serendipity and immediately starts its next circuit with Hyde Park. Shoppers who were let off on the first through fourth circuits can reboard the trolley for home when it returns.

The first circuit starts at Hyde Park at 9:15 a.m. and the last circuit leaves Hannaford at 2:51 p.m.

For a grid of the complete updated schedule with times, see https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/0/d/1E0NiGrFeB_wtjV61TCosVYm0p-5g4dKQ6vExvOrI9288/htmlview. For a map of the route, see bit.ly/3W9g-GYG. Printed copies are available at the Senior Center (52 Murdock Ave), Winchendon CAC/The Hub (5 Summer Dr), the Clark YMCA (155 Central St) and Not Just Produced (290 Central St).

If you have questions, concerns or suggestions, contact winchendonccap@gmail.com or call 978-297-3155.

Questions or Concerns? Email the Town Manager!

A one-click email form has been added to the town website for all residents who would like to contact the Town Manager with concerns and questions about things happening in the community. The button is at the top of the left column of buttons under "Citizen Action Center" on the left side of the website's front page. The direct link is: <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/home/webforms/contact-us>

Applications Open for Crafts Vendors at 4th Annual Food Truck Festival

Winchendon Parks & Recreation is looking for craft vendors for our 2025 food truck festival and Battle of the Bands event. The event will be at the G.A.R. Park, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon on Saturday, June 28 from 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. If interested, please fill out a vendor application here: <https://www.eventeny.com/events/foodtruckfestivalandbattleofthebands-17886/>

Applications Open for Vendor Spaces at the 2025 Fall Festival

The 9th Annual Winchendon Fall Festival, to be held on Saturday, October 11, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., is now accepting applications for vendor spaces on Central Street. Contact Nicole Roberts at nroberts@winchendon-ma.gov or 978-297-3537 with any questions or if you wish to volunteer on the day of the event. (We always need more help!) Again, we wish to express our gratitude to everyone for their continued support of this great event.

Access the application information here: [fall_festival_application_tow_2025.pdf](#)

Winchendon Lions Want to Welcome You!

The Winchendon Lions meet at the Winchendon American Legion Post 193, 295 School St., downstairs hall, 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month, September through June. Dues are used for all Administrative cost, which is why we can say "All money received through fundraisers go back to the community, eye research, or other natural disasters around the world!"

Feel free to join us and try it out. We would love to see you!

If you have any questions feel free to call Joni 978-297-2753. Please leave a message if no answer!

"WHERE THERE'S A NEED, THERE IS A LION"

Did You Forget to Cash a Check? Town of Winchendon Unclaimed Monies List

The Winchendon Collector/Treasurer has released the current list of tailings (uncashed checks). You can view it at <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/home/news/town-winchendon-notice-unclaimed-monies>. If your name is on the list, please contact the Collector/Treasurer at 978-297-0152 so you can be provided with the proper claim forms.

Town Committee Vacancies as of April 14, 2025

If you'd like to be an active participant in decision-making and management for your community, consider joining a town committee or board. There are a number of vacancies currently open.

- Cultural Council - 13 vacancies
- Fence Viewer and Field Driver - 1 vacancy
- Finance Committee - 1 vacancy
- Historical District Commission - 2 alternate vacancies
- Parks & Recreation - 1 vacancy
- Zoning Board of Appeals - 1 alternate vacancy

If you'd like more information about any of these positions or are interested in being considered for an appointment, contact the Town Manager's office at 978-297-0085, or send a letter of interest to ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov or Town Manager, 109 Front Street Dept. 1, Winchendon MA 01475.

For a description of each board or committee, see: https://www.townofwinchendon.com/sites/g/files/vyhli8401/f/uploads/july_town_boards_and_commissions.pdf (PDF).

Fire Department Offering Free COVID-19 Test Kits to Residents

To all Winchendon residents, the Winchendon Fire Department has been able to secure multiple boxes of COVID-19 home test kits at no cost through a program with MA State DPH. Feel free to stop by the station and pick up what you need for you and your family. Here at WFD we will continue to search for ways to bring any additional care possible to our residents. The Fire Department is located at 405 Central St, Winchendon, and the business phone number is 978-297-2324.

Opening on the Finance Committee as of July 1

The Finance Committee will have a vacancy effective July 1, 2025. The duty of the Committee is to investigate the financial affairs of the town, including receipts of and expenditures by the different departments, or any Town Officer; the methods in which the town business is conducted; the general conduct of the town affairs; and all the articles in town warrants for town meetings referred to it; and, in the discharge of its duties, shall have free access to all books of accounts, books of record and all accounts, bills, and vouchers on which money has been or may be paid from the town treasury. If interested in serving on the Finance Committee, send letters of interest with your experience to ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov or mail to Town of Winchendon Attn: Debra Dennis 109 Front Street Winchendon MA 01475

Need a Ride?

Check out these transportation services and resources available through the Winchendon Community Connection and Access Project

Rides available as far as Worcester for medical appointments, shopping, recreation, employment and more!

All residents can get a ride. Priority is given to Senior Citizens and residents with disabilities.

Most rides are FREE through MART or at a low suggested donation to the Winchendon Senior Center.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles available.

Request a ride over the phone by calling 978-297-3155, Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Request a ride online at www.winchendon-cac.org

Request a ride in person at the Winchendon Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., or the Winchendon CAC, 5 Summer Dr, Wednesday to Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

If you have questions, reach out to winchendonccap@gmail.com or call 978-297-3155.

Let us help you get where you need to go!

Town Street List and 2024 Town Reports Available

Copies of the 2025 Winchendon Street List of Residents are available at the Town Clerk's in Winchendon Town Hall, 109 Front St. The cost is \$17 each, \$14 for seniors.

The 2024 Town Report is available as a downloadable PDF on the town website at <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/home/pages/2024-annual-report>.

Advertise in the Winchendon Courier Online!

The Winchendon Courier Online is uploaded every Thursday night and reaches hundreds of Winchendon readers every week. If you're a business owner, entrepreneur, local organization or individual, contact us for information about display ad requirements and rates. Free ad design services are available for our paying advertisers! Contact:

editor@winchendoncourier.net

Memorial Day in Winchendon

Winchendon says, “Thank You For Your Service”



Winchendon Town Manager Bill McKinney, State Representative Jon Zlotnik and Winchendon Board of Selectmen Vice Chair Andrew Beauvais march in the Memorial Day parade



Scout Troops 193 carried a flag as wide as the street stretched tightly between them for the entire parade



Winchendon Chief of Police Dan Wolski supervised the numerous police cruisers and officers making sure the marchers stayed safe



Veterans, the color guard, town and state officials gather at the parade’s second stop at VFW Park on School Street



Mark Desmarais places a memorial wreath for Gold Star military families at the gazebo in G.A.R. Park



Local business To Each His Own Design donated this wreath of red, white and blue carnations placed by the memorial at Grout Park

“Every day that I drive into town and I see the flags that are hanging high throughout the town, whether they be on the poles or on trees or wherever they are, I feel so patriotic. I say this is a town that really, really honors its veterans and honors those veterans’ families. It makes me proud to be working for each and every one of you, and I hope that you know, when we mentioned the day of service and sacrifice, that it’s not just Memorial Day, that it’s every day that we honor our veterans and we honor their families.”

Winchendon Town Manager Bill McKinney