

WPS Superintendent Dr. Marc Gosselin Leaves District

by Inanna Arthen

The Superintendent of the Winchendon School District, Dr. Marc Gosselin, “has fulfilled his contract with the Winchendon Public Schools and has moved on,” according to a statement released by the Winchendon School Committee and signed by Chair Michael Barbaro on Tuesday, July 8. Many people in town reacted with shock when they heard the news.

Former Assistant Superintendent Charlotte King was serving as Acting Superintendent, according to the Winchendon Public Schools website. “We are going to do a 90 day contract” with Ms. King “and go from there,” Mr. Barbaro told the *Courier*.

Dr. Gosselin was named Interim Superintendent in summer of 2024 following the departure of previous Interim Superintendent Dr. Ruthann Petrundo-Goguen. In December 2024, he signed a contract to take the permanent Superintendent position until June 30, 2025, when it would be renegotiated.

The *Courier* found that Dr. Gosselin was recently a finalist for the position of Superintendent in the Monson Public School District. The Monson School Committee chose another candidate in early June, hiring Roland Joyal Jr., who interviewed with the Winchendon School Committee during their Superintendent search in summer of 2023. The Monson position, according to the school district’s published FY26 budget, offers a salary \$20,000 lower than the FY26 salary budgeted for Superintendent in the Winchendon School District.

In a message to the *Courier* via LinkedIn, Dr. Gosselin said, “Winchendon is a wonderful community, and I will miss it deeply. I’m proud that we improved scores, improved attendance, and improved graduation rates. More importantly I am proud of the connections and relationships that I had with students. I loved the conversations and fist-bumps in the hallways, and found so much joy in eating lunch with the kids, attending their games and shows, and working out with our athletes in the weight room.

“As Winchendon looks ahead I hope that they continue a laser focus on improving learning in every classroom, every period, every day. Our kids and community deserve nothing less. Continued efforts to improve early reading and math skills will remain crucial to the success of the schools and unlocking the greatest potential for our kids’ future dreams.”

For More Winchendon Public Schools News, see pages 4-6

Bombastic Finale to Winchendon Winds 10th Anniversary Concert Series

by Jill Nicholson Sackett

What a season finale! Winchendon Winds’ ten-year residency at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon reached a pinnacle on Sunday June 29 with a concert finale unlike anything ever executed at the church, or likely anywhere in Winchendon. “Win Winds” combined woodwinds, brass, percussion, grand piano and pipe organ for a special concert titled “Organ, the Pipes, the Pipes are Calling.” The church pews were packed with over 250 attendees, spilling over onto folding chairs set up in the back.

Conductor Dr. Lindsay Bronnenkant led the group in a series of popular selections ranging from Mozart’s *Marriage of Figaro* to Webber’s *Phantom of the Opera*. Guest organist Peter Krasinski thrilled everyone at the keyboard, performing a solo Bach toccata and “pulling out all the stops” for the

Saint-Saens Organ Symphony No. 3 finale with all musicians which left the floor vibrating and the audience leaping to their feet in a standing ovation. The concert closed with a cake reception on the front lawn for all attendees.

Win Winds was founded in 2015 by the late music educator and Winchendon resident Dr. Jon Nicholson. It is now managed by his daughters Jill Nicholson Sackett and Inanna Arthen. The 40-piece ensemble is comprised of skilled musicians from all over central New England; most make music their livelihood. They assemble each year to perform a concert series in the May-June time frame here in Winchendon. Concerts are free, thanks to grants from the Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation and numerous Local Cultural Councils, including the Winchendon Cultural Council. For more information visit winchendonwinds.org.



The pews were packed for Winchendon Winds’ final 2025 performance with guest organist Peter Krasinski.

Photo by Guy Corbosiero



Peter Krasinski and Lindsay Bronnenkant

Photo by Joe Sackett

The Courier Needs You!

This special print edition of *The Winchendon Courier*, which includes the center “Community Connector” calendar section, is made possible by a grant to the town from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). This same grant is also helping to launch Winchendon’s new “microtransit system” and update the town website. But it won’t keep the newspaper going forever.

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Winchendon News

2025 Food Truck Festival and Battle of the Bands Draws Thousands

by Inanna Arthen

Despite yet another Saturday getting off to a damp start, the 4th Annual Winchendon Food Truck Festival on June 28 took over the entire G.A.R. Park and enjoyed a very successful day. With more food trucks, vendors and bands than ever before, the Festival had something to offer to everyone. Crafter, vendor and organization tables and tents ran along all the interior pathways of the park, and included local crafters and vendors and those from the surrounding area. Jewelry, books, body and face decorations, fiber crafts, vinyl craft, and many others circled the park’s central monument. Food trucks lined two sides of the park, offering Italian, Asian, Southern, and Mexican fare, along with sweet treats and American favorites. Parks & Recreation Director Shaina Cunningham estimated the Festival “easily” had a couple thousand attendees through the course of the seven-hour-long event. Attendance picked up as the clouds slowly cleared from the sky, and by 4:00 p.m. the park was packed. Vendors reported good sales, with one local crafter, TMO Laser, telling Ms. Cunningham that he’d

sold out of stock. The winners of the Battle of the Bands popular vote were Down Daizy, an 80s rock cover band that wowed the audience. Congratulations to musicians Bill Leger, Jay Sharron, Joe Hazelwood and Jamie Gauthier! At 1:00 p.m., between the first and second band sets, T-Mobile officially presented the \$50,000 grant award check to the Winchendon Community Action Committee, to re-make the space behind the building at 5 Summer Drive into an outdoor, day-and-night finished activity area. This area, which overlooks Whitney Pond, will be used for classes, social and community events, al fresco meetings and much more. Ms. Cunningham told the *Courier* that adding so many more trucks and vendors was a bit of a risk— would the event attract enough people to make it worth all the vendors’ investment? But the risk paid off, as the more things to see and do, the more families come to check it all out. Below are some photos of the biggest Food Truck Festival yet!



Photos by Inanna Arthen

Winchendon News

T-Mobile Presents \$50K Check to Winchendon CAC for The HUB Outdoor Space



Photo by Inanna Arthen

by Inanna Arthen

During the Winchendon Food Truck Festival on Saturday, June 28 at the G.A.R. Park, representatives from T-Mobile formally presented a check for \$50,000 to the Director, Board and Advisory Board of the Winchendon Community Action Committee, as recipients of T-Mobile's Hometown Grant. The only recipient in the state of Massachusetts, the Winchendon CAC is one of just 25 grantees for 2025, out of nearly 1,000 applicants nationwide. The funds will go toward expanding the community space named The HUB at 5 Summer Drive.

CAC Director Miranda Jennings began by recognizing and thanking the members of the CAC Board of Directors, the CAC Community Advisory Committee, CAC staff, the Youth Changemakers and the CAC volunteers for all their hard work and dedication. "So the [CAC's] goal is to help everybody, no matter where you are in life and on your journey, we have a place for you at The HUB. And to make that happen, we have to do a lot of remodeling, which costs a lot of money but more than money, it also takes a lot of love and people power," Ms. Jennings said.

"We were fortunate enough to have a architectural firm called Perkins and Will, which is one of the top architectural firms in the entire world, pick us, the CAC and Winchendon as their social purpose project, and do a free design for The HUB," Ms. Jennings said. "You can see that design in the back under the T-Mobile tent. We have a beautiful rendering that you can check out and give us your feedback on. A lot of that was made possible by our Board of Selectwoman, Dr. Erika Eitland, who helped to co-write the grants for T-Mobile. We honestly never thought we would win this. We're just like little Winchendon. This is a national grant, and we were the only community in Massachusetts to win it, and only 25 communities were selected."

Chair of the Winchendon Board of Selectmen Andrew Beauvais said, "On behalf of the Winchendon Board of Selectmen and the Town of Winchendon, thank you for all the dedication and hard work that all of these folks and everybody out there has put into this. Bringing this to our town is going to be instrumental in bringing a lot of additional services and programming, some crucial stuff that plays a very important role in a lot of our lives. And a huge thanks to T-Mobile for selecting us for this opportunity."

Ms. Eitland said, "I think one thing that's really special about this Hometown Grant for Winchendon is, it's a reflection of how hard you all have worked with the CAC. This didn't happen because this one grant. It has happened because of so much commitment over the years, for the transformation that this place has taken under all of your shared leadership, your volunteering, that level of hard work, the long nights, the early mornings. It's paid off. And it is so exciting that these types of grants are the ones that led us to the community behind all that hard work. And so it's such a huge shout out to everybody who's on the stage with us, because we make this town better and make it richer."

Jodelle Holliday, the Senior Program Manager for T-Mobile, then took the mic, and urged the audience to put some oomph into returning her "How are you" greeting. "I am super duper excited to be here," she said. "I get the fun job of being able to call folks when they've won a T-Mobile Hometown Grant. And I will tell you, CAC, I gave it a new name, it's an acronym for a Community that's in Action with Commitment. That is what we saw when we read the grant. We do our due diligence, we went into Google to see all the hard work and how the community just really gets together to back whatever the community needs are. So we really, really appreciate this organization. We appreciate all that it's doing, and we appreciate the community for all the support, because it could not have been done just by themselves. We always say, Yes, we can come out and hand a check, but it's all of these great organizations and these beautiful communities that do the work."

She went on to explain, "Just a little bit about T-Mobile Hometown Grants. Back in April 2020, T-Mobile made a commitment to invest and re-invest in small towns and rural areas, and that is how the Hometown Grant program actually came about. So since that time, 2021, we have granted 400 hometown grants, 25 each quarter, up to \$50,000 each. So we're so excited. I know Erica mentioned 900 but there were actually 991 submissions for Q1 2025, so not only are you guys one of 25, but you're one out of 991 submissions."

Ms. Holliday urged everyone in the audience to stop by the CAC/T-Mobile table at the Festival, not only to enjoy some free swag like bright pink T-Mobile bags and complimentary cupcakes, but to leave their feedback on the CAC and the designs for The HUB's outdoor space. Ms. Holliday then formally presented the giant \$50,000 check to the CAC.

Ms. Holliday concluded by saying that this was a one-time grant, but T-Mobile has other grants available, including one for high school football teams called the Friday Night 5G Lights. Last year this program awarded more than \$2 million to in \$5,000 grants 300 different schools, and it's being expanded this year.

Beals Prize for Poetry - Call for Entries

WINCHENDON, MA, July 10 - The Beals Memorial Library in Winchendon, Massachusetts seeks entries into the sixth annual Beals Prize for Poetry. Ten finalists will be chosen by the judges to read their work at the awards presentation on Thursday, September 25, 2025. Prize money of \$250, \$100 and \$50 will be awarded to the top three competition finalists. Submissions for the contest are now being accepted through Friday, August 15.

Entrants may submit only one, original and unpublished poem. Contestants must live in Massachusetts or in one of these New Hampshire towns: Keene, Swanzey, Richmond, Fitzwilliam, Troy, Marlborough, Dublin, Peterborough, Jaffrey, Rindge, New Ipswich, Greenville, and Sharon. Submissions must be emailed to: bealspoetryprize@gmail.com (Word docs preferred). Competition finalists will be notified on or before Friday, September 12. All entries will be judged blindly. Previous Beals Prize first place winners are not eligible to participate, and submitters should be at least 18 years of age.

The judges for this year's competition are poets Sara Letourneau, 2023 winner of the Beals Prize for Poetry, Managing Editor at Heart of the Story Editorial & Coaching Services and author of "Wild Gardens"; Maria Williams, author of White Doe, which won the 2023 Verse Daily Prize, and A Love Letter to Say There is No Love; and Cleo Rohn, current holder of the 2024 Beals Prize for Poetry.

The Beals Prize for Poetry is funded in part by the Winchendon Cultural Council and by the Friends of the Beals Memorial Library. Call the Library at 978-297-0300 or go to bealslibrary.org for more information.

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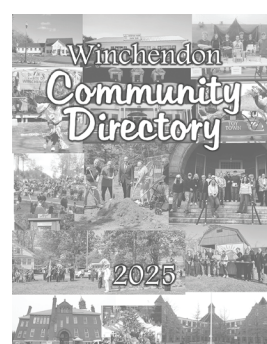
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The printed Winchendon Community Directory, listing businesses, organizations, groups, entrepreneurs and crafters in Winchendon, is now available! Look for it in local stores and community centers. Supplies are limited!

Winchendon News

In First School Committee Meeting of FY26, Residents and Members Voice Concerns About Superintendent Changes

Former Assistant Superintendent Charlotte King Appointed Interim Superintendent



From left, School Committee members Greg Vine, Tara Teixeira, Mike Barbaro (Chair), David Iannacone and Karen Kast
Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

On Thursday, July 17, the Winchendon School Committee held its first meeting of FY26, and the first meeting following the departure of Superintendent Dr. Marc Gosselin from the district. Charlotte King, previously Assistant Superintendent, was listed on the school website as "Acting Superintendent," and Item 7-a of the July 17 meeting agenda was "Approval of Appointment of Acting Superintendent." These items, along with School Committee Chair Mike Barbaro's brief statement posted to the district website and on Facebook on July 8, comprised everything that the school district and School Committee had officially communicated to the public about the change in administration.

At the public comment period at the beginning of the meeting, two residents rose to express concerns.

Renee Eldredge began, "I live in town. I've lived here for quite some time. My children have gone through the school system here. I'm very vested in our community. I sit on quite a few committees, and want to thank each of you for doing this role. It's not easy, and I appreciate your efforts." Pointing out the agenda item about the Acting Superintendent, she continued, "In the short time that I have been helping out with Superintendent searches that I've done, I'm flabbergasted, and I sit before you asking if the Committee would please have discussions around why is it that we cannot seem to keep a superintendent in our district? I was very disheartened to see that Dr Gosselin is not with us any longer, and the memo that went out did not really share a whole lot, and I address that to you, Chair, it didn't say what was happening. It didn't say next steps, it didn't share, it was just 'he's no longer with us.' That's really not transparent, and it's not addressing the community and sharing information, even if you don't know, 'we are in the works of doing a, b and c,' something so that we can, as a community feel comfortable in knowing that the Committee as a whole is doing their job." She added, "We're looking at, and correct me if I'm wrong, at least

four, if not five, superintendents in the last six years. That's too much for our community."

Following Ms. Eldredge, resident Yvonne Senecal came forward. Saying that she was also a long-time Winchendon resident, Ms. Senecal said, "I was on the last superintendent search, we put forth three good candidates, and the process was stopped precipitously on behalf of selection of Marc Gosselin, which having been on the committee and having looked at all this, the candidates that we had put forth, I didn't feel he was the strongest candidate. But it was a done deal. And I wish if it was a done deal, that you would have been up front with people and said, This is who we want. This is who we're going to pick, instead of letting everybody spin their wheels, go through the process and then, oh, wait, no, we're not going to do that anymore. We're going to stop right now."

Ms. Senecal went on to say that "not only is inconsistency in the school system an issue, it's also an issue" compared to the costs of doing a full search for a new superintendent. Ms. Senecal said they had been told it cost "anywhere from \$20,000 to \$30,000," but School Committee member Karen Kast challenged this, saying the cost was \$10,500. Ms. Senecal conceded, but said it was still a lot of money, and "the dollars are not going to a good place." She said that the state website said the student-teacher ratio at the high school last year was 11 to 1. [The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] gives the actual ratio as 11.2 to 1. For comparison, the student-teacher ratio at Oakmont Regional High School is 13.5 to 1, and at Narragansett Regional High School it is 13.2 to 1.]

When agenda item 7-a was brought to the table, Mr. Barbaro began by saying, "As you know, Superintendent Gosselin has left the district and as Assistant Superintendent, Charlotte moves up automatically to run the district. This is just a formal presentation to work out the salary for her as she does the job right now. She did this for us last year over the summer while we were in the process of a search."

School Committee member

Greg Vine said that rather than have Ms. King serve as "Acting Superintendent" while the Committee did a search for an Interim Superintendent, he would make a motion to appoint Charlotte King Interim Superintendent. Committee member Tara Teixeira seconded the motion.

Mr. Barbaro said, "So my feelings on the matter of this is that Charlotte has worked for this district for many years, and she's worked through the ranks. Anything we've asked her to do, she's done for us. She is passionate about the school district. She cares about our children, and she works very hard to keep moving the district forward. And working with the administrative team throughout this whole year, they have formed a great bond. To me, it makes no sense to continue to bring in strangers who come in with different philosophies and trying to rock the world, when we have someone that knows the district, understands what goes on here and is fully invested here. So I am fully in favor of that motion."

Ms. Kast disputed Mr. Barbaro's statement that an assistant superintendent "automatically" moves up to the superintendent role. She went on, "I like Charlotte, she's fine, but she has very little experience in any administrative role, and she's a very nice person, but she doesn't have the experience that this district needs. And the fact of matter is that what this district actually needs is a superintendent that actually has experience, and we've now had two very experienced superintendents run out of this district, and we need to question why... They weren't run out by the people of the district, but by the actions taken by others. And the fact of the matter is, you started this process today by saying that we were automatically moving her up, and that was just to have her pay approved, and it just says on our agenda that we're approving her as Acting Superintendent. So I understand the motion was changed to appoint her as Interim...if you want to discuss pay, I really would like to know what that amount is, because there's no automatic pay increase involved in this."

Mr. Barbaro said that Ms. King's pay would be negotiated "with the

blessing of the Committee" and would "tag off of" the arrangement made with Ms. King last year.

Ms. Kast stated that Ms. King's budgeted salary [in her previous role] was \$143,000. Mr. Barbaro said that in discussions "last year," the Committee had agreed on a salary of \$165,000.

Ms. Kast then asked, "How much did we pay Marc [Gosselin] to leave?" Mr. Barbaro said that Ms. Kast knew what he was paid and this was not a topic for discussion. Ms. Kast stated that the Committee had a non-disparagement agreement with Dr. Gosselin, not a non-disclosure agreement, and she was trying to be transparent. She added, "should we go onward with this, that's going to be well over the amount that you objected to paying Marc."

Mr. Barbaro called for a vote to appoint Ms. King Interim Superintendent, which was approved 4 to 1, with Ms. Kast voting no. He requested a second motion to open negotiations with Ms. King for a salary contract, which was approved 4 to 1, with Ms. Kast voting no.

During the Closing Member Comments period at the end of the meeting, Ms. Kast said, "I think that we need to do better with transparency as a district. Unfortunately, Mr. Chair, your letter about Dr. Gosselin leaving left a lot to be desired. I would like to thank Dr. Gosselin for the hard work that he did for the district. I'm very disappointed that he left, and I think that going forward, that when we have an announcement like that, it should be shared with the other Committee members before it goes out." She referred to some highly negative Facebook comments made by people who identified themselves as educators about the tone of the letter. "It made the entire Committee appear petty and very short sighted," she said. "So I would ask that we be very careful in how we work things going forward."

Mr. Barbaro said, "The statement was one I was given by legal advice to say, which was not to say much of anything, and I know that people are not happy with that.

Turn to COMMITTEE page 6

Winchendon News

Interim Superintendent Charlotte King Excited to Begin New Year in a New Role for WPS

by Inanna Arthen

Following up with the Winchendon School Committee's appointment of former Assistant Superintendent Charlotte King to the position of Interim Superintendent, the *Courier* sat down with Ms. King between meetings to ask her about what lies ahead with the unexpected changes of the last few weeks. Ms. King began as the Dean of Toy Town Elementary School, became Director of Pupil Services and then served as Assistant Superintendent to Supt. Gosselin. She is still in the process of moving into the Superintendent's office on Grove Street.

"It was unexpected, but welcomed," Ms. King said. "I'm happy to be in this role and excited about the work. We started a lot of great work last year, and over all the time I've been here, we've been doing great work, but last year we really got some nice plans in place for the kids, and I'm looking forward to keeping that momentum going, keeping consistency. All of our administrators are returning, which is great, because we've had so much turnover. All the principals, the assistant principals, our dean at Toy Town, everybody's returning. Our Business Director, she's working remotely now, but she's still on board. Our IT director is still here. Kelsey Garcia, the Director of Student Services, is still here. Hopefully we will keep as much continuity as possible."

As for teaching staff, "we do have a few openings," people who retired, or left for different reasons. "But we were able to post earlier than we were last year," she said. "So we've been able to keep interviewing and hopefully getting some really great candidates."

With school opening on August 27, just about one month from now, the *Courier* asked Ms. King what her biggest challenges were right now.

"The good news is that we had already set a lot of things in place in the spring," Ms. King said. "So we had already set a retreat for the administrators. We did two days in June, so those are already hammered out. We set some plans for the fall, and then we're going to have two days in August where we all get together again, to spend the full day together, planning out the beginning of the year, planning all the professional development for the year. So I really feel confident that we're ready to move forward

and just keep that momentum with our plans." She added, "We have a great team, and everybody's always here been willing to pitch in and do things outside of their role, which is great. It's one of the things that I really love about working here, is that you can go ask anybody at any time for help, and everybody's willing to jump in."

A big concern of the previous superintendent was student retention and how to improve it. The elementary and middle school grades each have 80 to 115 students, but this year's Murdock High School graduating class numbered only 52. Ms. King nodded at this question.

"We're still doing a lot of analyzing of that chronic absenteeism, and potentially why students are looking to drop out and or transfer out," she said. "We did a lot of work with that. That's actually part of our plan going forward, is how to make our instructional practices more engaging, to keep kids here, to offer more courses, to increase our dual enrollment. Those are a lot of the things that Dr Gosselin worked on and that we'll continue to work on. I actually met with the high school administration this week, just about that very same thing."

There was a high dropout rate for students with disabilities, which caused the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] to give the district a Needs Improvement ranking, but there has been a positive change in those numbers, Ms. King said.

Ms. King said they won't have final numbers for school choice students under closer to the start of school, and it's not clear, aside from Monty Tech, why students choose other districts. "We're very small, so we can only offer a limited number of programs. So I think for a variety in programming, kids are leaving and so that's something. That's really why we've looked at that dual enrollment piece, because we offer classes for college credit, which is amazing. Students can go with a whole year under their belt of college and not have to pay that tuition which is really a huge opportunity."

The schools need to do "exit interviews" with students choosing out, Ms. King said, and find out: "What are you going to that we can't offer you, and if we can't offer it, why? And what can we do to try to obviously change that?"

The *Courier* asked about how

the district would be addressing bullying, since some students and parents have mentioned this as a reason for choosing alternatives. Ms. King said, "Last year, 23-24, the Office of Student Support really homed in on creating a new bullying and intervention plan. The one the district had was out of date, and so we worked with various stakeholders to create a new plan. It went out for public review and things like that, and it was approved by the School Committee about a year ago. So with that in place, we have a more streamlined procedure, a consistent response to bullying. So I think that we're moving in the right direction, that plans have been put in place for kids, whether bullying was found or not, this safety plan is being put in place. So I think we're moving in the right direction, and I think that all of the administrators have now been trained in that, and so we have consistent paperwork, we have consistent policy and procedure. So I think that is the groundwork that you need to make sure that kids feel safe, because that's our top priority."

Ms. King said, "We actually just talked about...putting out to the public more of what we do, because we do these really great things, these Art Expos and concerts and things like that, and really just kind of sharing that out, because people don't know what's going on unless you have kids in the schools and you're invited. We actually just talked about partnering with our community resources to do a Back to School event, so that people from the town can come and see what we're doing and what we're excited about."

Writing skills are going to be a huge focus this coming year, for all grade levels and across all content areas, Ms. King said. The district has developed a plan with the assistance of DESE. "So any classroom that you go in, we should see writing. We talked about partnering with the community restaurants to have kids' writing displayed. I think it's going to be really powerful. And that speaks to that engagement piece, because the kids are really involved in interesting and exciting work. They're going to want to come to school, and they're going to want to be involved."

Ms. King said the schools have different plans for outreach to the community about what's happening in the district. "We have tried to



New Interim Superintendent Charlotte King

Photo by Inanna Arthen

replicate most of the ParentSquare communication onto the Facebook page. So our executive assistant does a lot of that, making sure that the community is becoming more aware, because that was feedback that was given over the past couple of years. People aren't sure what's going on, or people sometimes assume some program has been dropped, when it actually hasn't."

The *Courier* mentioned some of the past superintendents' videos or newsletters and how informative they were, but they tended to be irregular. Ms. King said, "Last year we did Coffees with the Central Office, and it was once a month at the library on Fridays. It was spotty attendance. It would be nice to have it be more well attended. One of the suggestions that people asked us to look at was rotating locations—that maybe sometimes it could be at a school or sometimes it could be at a different time of day. So we would like to continue with those, because I think it's a nice forum for anyone in the community to come in and ask us specific questions, or just general questions, or hear what we have to say of what's going on." They might focus on different administrators talking about their specific projects and plans.

Asked what she'd really like to say to Winchendon people as we look forward to the new school year, Ms. King said, "I'm really excited. I knew four years ago—this will be my fourth year coming up—I knew when I came here I was in the right place. I immediately felt that coming through the doors at Toy Town. And that hasn't changed, even though my roles have changed every year, that hasn't changed. I'm committed to improving the educational experience for our kids. We have awesome students here, and I feel very connected to them, and want the best for them. So I'm excited and I'm hoping to keep all our administrators and teachers here, and keep moving forward with the plans that we created, because we did some really great work last year."



"Laugh Your Tail Off" Comedy Night to Benefit Ahimsa Haven Animal Rescue

On Saturday, September 13, come enjoy a fun night including a silent auction and raffles, with comedians Lenny Clark and Jason Merrill. Tickets are \$40 for Premiere Seating, \$30 for regular seating, at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/laugh-your-tail-off-comedy-show-tickets-1442653127339> or scan QR code to the left. Doors open at 7:00 p.m., show starts at 8:00 p.m. All proceeds go to benefit the kitties at Ahimsa Haven. Event will be held at the Gardner Fish & Gun Club, 538 Clark St, Gardner, MA.

COMMITTEE
continued from page 4

And so you know, when you enter into agreements with people, there are sometimes the things that are said, and sometimes they tell you, don't say anything because it could put the district in some jeopardy. So that's why the statement was short. And so for that, I will take responsibility, because that was what I talked to our lawyer about, and he suggested, the shorter, the sweeter, and not to go into much detail about why the former superintendent left, and so I took that advice." He asserted that Ms. King was doing a good job getting things ready for the new school year. In the past, the Committee had felt a change was needed and brought in an "outsider"

and it didn't work out. One notified the district that she was leaving a week before the school year ended.

"I am truly confident in Charlotte King and her ability to lead this district moving forward," Mr. Barbaro said. "She has been working with us through different positions, as I stated, through the ranks, she is caring. She is all in with this district, and wants to do the best job that she can, and I believe true to my heart that we will find out how good of a leader she will be for us."

Senator Comerford Secures Hoped-For Earmark for Winchendon Public Schools to Fund School Building Repair Feasibility Study

by Inanna Arthen

On Tuesday, June 24, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey signed into law H.4227, An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2025 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects, which appropriates excess Fair Share amendment revenue. This one-time revenue amount comes from the so-called "Millionaires' Tax" in the state. Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton), who represents Winchendon, is Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and served on the committee that reconciled the House and Senate versions of the bill. She secured \$750,000 in direct earmarks for her district, including \$200,000 for Winchendon.

The earmark will pay for a feasibility study and schematic designs for repairs to windows, roofs and doors at Toy Town Elementary and Memorial Elementary, and potential replacement of the roof at Murdock Middle High School. This is the first step in what will be a multi-year process, in which the Winchendon Public Schools

will work with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and may be eligible for reimbursement of up to 77.5 percent of costs.

The article as presented in the Town Meeting Warrant (Article 21) evoked considerable discussion among the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and School Committee because as written, it did not include a dollar amount. In a joint meeting of the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen on April 29, 2025 going through the 2025 draft Town Meeting warrant, FinCom member Dr. Maureen Ward raised objections to this, saying that without a dollar amount, the town would be approving "a blank check." Town Manager Bill McKinney explained that the MSBA dictated the exact wording of the article, and it had been vetted by town counsel. The dollar amount would be given in the motion on Town Meeting floor.

Board members were also concerned about the fact that the earmark was not a certainty. According to School Committee Chair Karen Kast, Sen. Comerford was "fairly confident," while state Representatives Jon Zlotnik and

Susannah Whipps felt that the town was "a little late on getting earmarks for the town" in this year's budget process.

Member of the Board of Selectmen Erika Eitland said, "If we are to accept this money from MSBA, they will reimburse us up to 77.5 percent. The most that they can reimburse is 80 percent so we are getting the most we possibly can from the state on that project. And I think one thing that we talked about as a Board yesterday was the fact that if we have to get a new school, something happens to these existing schools, we don't have the budget for them. To me, this \$200,000 that we're talking about becomes an easier pill to swallow if the earmarks come through. The world is very uncertain. If that isn't the case, though, it is still a pretty good deal for this town in terms of its being more proactive than reactive. Because we know what happened with the boiler in the past and the consequences of that. So the fact that roofs, windows, doors, those are things that just help secure those buildings for a longer lifetime."

Ms. Kast continued that after

the feasibility study, the schematic design "takes a good two years." It wasn't as though the schools would be coming back next year asking for a huge appropriation for the repair work. The town and school district would have a lot of time to find other funding sources, and meanwhile the town's overall financial status could be improved.

At Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 19, voters approved Article 21, authorizing the town to seek funding for the feasibility study, by a majority vote of 81 percent in favor, 19 percent opposed. At that time, Ms. Eitland told Town Meeting that Sen. Comerford had gotten the earmark passed in the Senate version of the bill, but it still needed to be passed by the House.

At the School Committee meeting on June 5, 2025, Winchendon Schools Superintendent Dr. Marc Gosselin told the Committee that the MSBA had contacted them to tell them that they have assigned the district its Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and a design firm for these projects. "So, we're moving forward with the process," he said.

MMS Principal Proposes Replacing Music Teacher with new Business Teacher Position

by Inanna Arthen

At the Winchendon School Committee meeting on Thursday, June 5, Murdock Middle School Principal Dr. Nate Mayo appeared before the committee to propose creating a new position at the Middle School, teacher of Business, and for this position to replace the existing middle school music teacher position.

Dr. Mayo explained that his background is in vocational education, and that he sees tremendous potential benefit for the district in implementing a business-themed program. The district already has the curriculum for the program, which was purchased through grants. It could collaterally improve student outcomes for STEM, math and other areas. The business program can be "hands on learning," Dr. Mayo said—the students could run a school store, they can learn about marketing and entrepreneurship. There is a second-floor space in the middle school that could be

turned into a student-run store.

"This will not mean music is gone. We're just going to eliminate Introduction to Music," Dr. Mayo said firmly. Middle School students grades 6 to 8 will have band and chorus. They will be taught by the high school music teacher. They will also be during the school day, rather than being after-school programs which some students might be unable to stay after to attend. Chorus will be a first period class and band will be last period.

"We have what we call an activity period now in which we're going to offer a number of different courses taught by our teachers," Dr. Mayo said. "One of our new hires has a background in music and wants to teach a music appreciation class, and that will be offered as well. So really, all we'll lose is Fundamentals of Music. Having one teacher that we have in high school for band and chorus creates a smooth transition between middle and high school programs. And

historically, Murdock Middle High School has had one music teacher between the two.

"This year, we've had a real struggle hiring music teachers," he went on. "We went through a couple, and I know, previous to me arriving, that they had a similar structure. I've seen, to be honest with you, in our hiring practice, that what a lot of these teachers want to do is they want to be band directors or they want to do choral, but then when you explain that they're going to have to do a fundamental music class, we lost a lot of our candidates on that. They really were probably better fits for the high school than middle school. And a couple of our candidates really wanted to deal with the younger population. That's why I said we have no luck in hiring qualified music teachers that can be reliable."

The high school music teacher has two extra blocks in her schedule, Dr. Mayo said, and he was working with high school Principal

Dr. Fredette to work out the logistics. This will take students out of a general music classroom class "that just have no concern for music, that couldn't care less about music. It's going to put them into something that at least we're going to get something out of," he said. Meanwhile the students who really want band and chorus, "whatever music that they like, or whatever music that inspires or motivates them, that's what they're going to be able to do."

Dr. Mayo said he gave the Middle School students a survey that asked which the students would most be interested in: business or music? The results came back in a nearly 50/50 split for each one.

After some discussion about the shape business teaching might take in the schools, the Committee was called back to the specific question on the table, and voted unanimously to approve the creation of the new Business teacher position at the Middle School.



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).

August is HOT at Winchendon Parks & Rec!

Winchendon Community Park 86 Ingleside Dr

Saturday August 2

Saturday August 16

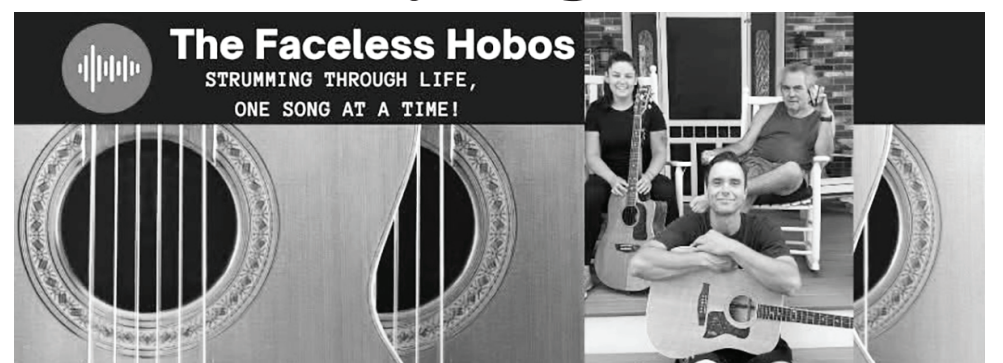


Saturday August 9

Saturday August 23



G.A.R. Park Murdock Ave & Grove St Friday August 8



Need a Ride?

Book a ride with the Community Connector app, or call 978-297-3155. All rides are FREE! Please book your ride at least one week in advance.

The HUB 5 Summer Dr Thursday August 28





AUGUST

FRIDAY AUGUST 1

Nathan Wesley at the Snowbound Club

8:00-11:00 p.m. We are excited to have Nathan join us for the first time at our club. You don't want to miss this incredibly talented musician. No cover charge. Cash bar available. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

SATURDAY AUGUST 2

Massachusetts State Chili Cookoff

10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. "The Beast of the East" hosted by the Kiwanis of Winchendon! Come to cook, come to taste, or just come to have a little family fun! Live music, food, vendors. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

TUESDAY AUGUST 5

Ukulele Class with Julie

10-00-11:00 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Sippin' Seniors

6:30-9:30 a.m. Drop by Sippin' Serendipity Cafe at 206 Main street and grab some locally roasted coffee and pastries while socializing with other Seniors! The Senior Center will provide some free pastries to sample and all Seniors get a 10% discount for any purchases. Just show them your My Senior Center Key Tag!

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 6

Integrity Medicare

10:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Appointment required. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

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.

Teen GSA Meeting at the Beals

3:30-4:30 p.m. A safe space for teens to meet, exchange information, receive support, socialize, build a community, and talk about issues and concerns related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon..

Adult GSA Meeting at the Beals

6:30-7:30 p.m. A safe space for LGBTQIA+ adults to meet, exchange information, receive support, socialize, build a community, and talk about issues and concerns related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon..

THURSDAY AUGUST 7

Bill O'Connor Life Care: Brain Games

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

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 pulled pork and fixings by Bob & Sue Polcari. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Astronomy: Seeing the Colors of the Night Sky! at the Beals

6:30 p.m. This family-friendly presentation explores and better understands the night sky using all the wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum available to astronomers and space explorers! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

FRIDAY AUGUST 8

Concert at G.A.R. Park: Faceless Hobos

5:00-7:00 p.m. Pat Townsend and Dave Romanowski first started playing together in 2019. Their style leans toward Americana, influenced by legends like Guy Clark, John Prine, and Hayes Carll, with a few original tunes in the mix. Free to all, bring your own lawn chairs or blankets. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Grove St, Winchendon.

SATURDAY AUGUST 9

Town Wide Yard Sale

8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. No cost to be listed or participate! To put your sale on the map, email info@ahimsahaven.org with your address and info. To pick up a map, visit Ahimsa Haven, 273 Central St, Winchendon (adoption side, on the right) on Saturday morning.

Operation Winchendon Cares "Summer Wind Down" Package Drive

9:00-10:30 a.m. Come help fill packages for our enlisted military personnel, or drop off some donations. See <https://www.winchendoncares.com/WP/sample-page> for a list of "most wanted" care package stuffers. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

Summer Beach Sunset Social

6:00-10:00 p.m. Beach vibes take over with reggae and dancehall performances, island cuisine and dance-offs. The amphitheater will transform into a tropical paradise with inflatable beach floats, tiki bars, and sand-inspired decor to bring the ultimate summer party experience.. Sponsored by Winchendon Community Park and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. Questions? contact info@farmingislife.org or richypena@yahoo.com. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

MONDAY AUGUST 11

Jigsaw Puzzle Race at the Beals

6:00 p.m. How fast can you finish a puzzle? Find out at our puzzle race! Teams of 2-4 people will race to see who can assemble a 500-piece puzzle first. Think a 500-piece puzzle is too easy? We challenge you to try a 1000-piece puzzle. This event is for all ages! Limited space; registration required—visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

TUESDAY AUGUST 12

Vet to Vet Cafe

10:00-11:00 a.m. Are you a Veteran looking to connect with fellow vets and share experiences from your time in service? Join us for coffee, refreshments, and meaningful discussions with others who have served. Open to all Veterans in the local community. 2nd Tuesday of each month. At Broadview Assisted Living, 547 Central St, Winchendon.

Teen Dungeons & Dragons

3:30-5:00 p.m. This is for kids in grades 8-12. Membership is limited, contact the library to sign up. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 13

Lunch at the Park Theatre

11:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.. Lunch and virtual art gallery tour at the Park Theatre in Jaffrey, NH. Van leaves the Senior Center at 11:30 a.m. For more information, contact the Center. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

THURSDAY AUGUST 14

Card Making Class with Merrily

10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Sponsored by GALA., free of charge. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Denis Cormier Concert

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

Beals Book Club

3:00-4:00 p.m. Contact the library for the title being discussed. Books available at the circulation desk. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, 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 Alaskan fish filets baked in lemon dill butter sauce. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Outdoor Movie Night at the Beals

Movie starts at dark. Now showing: *Minecraft*. "Four misfits find themselves struggling with ordinary problems when they are suddenly pulled through a mysterious portal into the Overworld: a bizarre, cubic wonderland that thrives on imagination. To get back home, they'll have to master this world while embarking on a magical quest with an unexpected expert crafter, Steve." Rated PG. Call 978-297-0300 for more info. Join us for a great family-friendly film on the library lawn. (If it rains, movie will be shown in the library auditorium.) Bring the whole family, some snacks, a blanket and lawn chairs. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

SATURDAY AUGUST 16

Teen Night at the HUB

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

Winchendon Comedy Fest: LOL Entertainment Night - a Summer Evening of Magic, Music and Comedy!

4:00-8:00 p.m. (ticketed) From 6:00 to 8:00, "Magic & Music"—strolling magician dazzles the crowd with up-close tricks and illusions, while DJ spins music from 60s to today. From 6:00 to 8:00, Get ready to laugh out loud with an outstanding lineup of professional comedians: Headliner: John Perrotta; Featuring: Annie Powell, Rockin Joe Hebert, & Ace Aceto. Humor is PG-13. Food trucks and beer & wine, too! \$15 per person. Tickets (and vendor applications) at <https://www.eventeny.com/events/comedy-night-at-the-park-2025-17201/>. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

SUNDAY AUGUST 17

Toy Town Swing at The HUB

5:00-9:00 p.m. No partner needed! \$10 per person includes lesson. Dance class 5:00-5:30, no experience needed. Drop-ins welcome. Food, drink, wine and beer for sale. Live music by Steve and Anna of TakeJazz. 100% of proceeds go to benefit the Winchendon CAC. 3rd Sunday of every month. For info and to register, go to <https://www.the-hub.org/event-details/toy-town-swing-the-hub-2025-08-17-17-00>. Presented by The HUB and TakeJazz. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

MONDAY AUGUST 18

Hampton Beach Day Trip

8:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. Van departs from the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon. For more information, contact the Senior Center.

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. We aim to create a safe space to come together, support each other, and share the joys and challenges of raising individuals with unique needs. This group will also be a space to gain information, get advice, and hear about valuable community resources. 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 AUGUST 19

Growing Places Mobile Market

11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Fresh local produce. SNAP and HIP accepted. at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 20

Integrity Medicare

10:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Appointment required. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Jr. Adventurer Club

3:00-4:00 p.m. A tabletop roleplaying adventure club for kids! This is for kids in grades 4-6. Membership is limited, contact the library to sign up. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

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 AUGUST 21

Red Cross Emergency Preparedness

11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

T 2025



SATURDAY AUGUST 23

Classic Cars and Music at Winchendon Community Park

3:00-8:00 p.m. (ticketed) Step back in time and enjoy an evening filled with vintage vibes, featuring classic cars, live music, and great food and drinks. Groove to the timeless tunes of The Reminisants and the Fred Ellsworth Band as they bring back the hits you know and love. Bring your lawn chairs, your dancing shoes, and your love for all things retro. This is a celebration you won’t want to miss! Food, beer and wine available. \$15 per person. Tickets (and vendor applications) at <https://www.eventeny.com/events/a-nostalgic-celebration-of-classic-cars-and-music-19583/>. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

TUESDAY AUGUST 26

Senior Rockers at Sippin’ Serendipity

9:00-10:00 a.m. Rock Painting with Susan. At Sippin’ Serendipity, 206 Central St, Winchendon..

Teen Dungeons & Dragons

3:30-5:00 p.m. This is for kids in grades 8-12. Membership is limited, contact the library to sign up. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 27

Taste of Home Lunch and Birthday Celebrations

11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Community cooked meal prepared by volunteers and celebrations of August birthdays. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Thriller & Mystery Book Club

6:30-7:30 p.m. Contact the library for the title being discussed. Books available at the circulation desk. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

THURSDAY AUGUST 28

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 TBA. 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!

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.

Chair 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 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.

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.

Pickleball - Workshop Series, Beginner Level

9:30 a.m. 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.

Yoga at the Beals Memorial Library

10:30 a.m. All skill levels welcomed! Mats and Blocks are available, if needed. These FREE classes are open for adults and teens. For more info, contact 978-297-0300, bealsmemoriallibrary@gmail.com or visit www.bealslibrary.org. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

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.

Garden Series Class

12:30-1:30 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

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.

Chair 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.

Ukulele Group

5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Food Pantry

10:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Appointment required. At Winchendon CAC, 5 Summer Dr.

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, 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.

Food Pantry

10:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Appointment required. At Winchendon CAC, 5 Summer Dr.

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.

Open House “Porch Night” at the WHCC

6:00-8:30 p.m. Bring some wine, cheese, or snack and beverage of your choice and enjoy the beautiful mansion! Tour our buildings at your leisure and go back in time at these beautiful properties! There is NO CHARGE for this event! At Winchendon History and Cultural Center, 151 Front St.

FRIDAYS

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

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.

Food Pantry

10:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Appointment required. At Winchendon CAC, 5 Summer Dr.

Friends’ Book and Used Media Sale

12:00-2:00 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.

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. Rain or shine! Moves inside Old Murdock Senior Center next to park if it’s rainy.

Food Pantry

10:30 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Appointment required. At Winchendon CAC, 5 Summer Dr.

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.

North Central Collective Greenhouse

5:30-7:00 p.m. Join us for a meal, message and worship. NCC is a collective of likeminded churches who purpose to establish a Gospel presence that leads to Gospel proclamation in our region. At The Chapel Downtown, 286 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.

Astronomy: Seeing the Colors of the Night Sky! at the Beals

August 7, 6:30 p.m. This family-friendly presentation explores and better understands the night sky using all the wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum available to astronomers and space explorers! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Jigsaw Puzzle Race at the Beals

August 11, 6:00 p.m. How fast can you finish a puzzle? Find out at our puzzle race! Teams of 2-4 people will race to see who can assemble a 500-piece puzzle first. Think a 500-piece puzzle is too easy? We challenge you to try a 1000-piece puzzle. This event is for all ages! Limited space; registration required—visit the library or call 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Excursions

Fitchburg Art Museum and Farmers Market Trip

August 7, 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.

Lunch at the Park Theatre

August 13, 11:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.. Lunch and virtual art gallery tour at the Park Theatre in Jaffrey, NH. Van leaves the Senior Center at 11:30 a.m. For more information, contact the Center. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Hampton Beach Day Trip

August 18, 8:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. Van departs from the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon. For more information, contact the Senior Center.

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.

Bingo at the HUB

August 28, 7:00 p.m. Join Winchendon Parks and Recreation for Bingo at the HUB!

Toy Town Swing at The HUB

August 17, 5:00-9:00 p.m. No partner needed! \$10 per person includes lesson. Dance class 5:00-5:30, no experience needed. Drop-ins welcome. Food, drink, wine and beer for sale. Live music by Steve and Anna of TakeJazz. 100% of proceeds go to benefit the Winchendon CAC. 3rd Sunday of every month. For info and to register, go to <https://www.the-hub.org/event-details/toy-town-swing-the-hub-2025-08-17-17-00>. Presented by The HUB and TakeJazz. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

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	

Check out the full online town directory at winchendoncourier.net/directory.htm and the online community calendar at winchendoncourier.net/index.html#connector

Food and Meals

Massachusetts State Chili Cookoff

August 2, 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. “The Beast of the East” hosted by the Kiwanis of Winchendon! Come to cook, come to taste, or just come to have a little family fun! Live music, food, vendors. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Sippin’ Seniors

August 5, 6:30-9:30 a.m. Drop by Sippin’ Serendipity Cafe at 206 Main street and grab some locally roasted coffee and pastries while socializing with other Seniors! The Senior Center will provide some free pastries to sample and all Seniors get a 10% discount for any purchases. Just show them your My Senior Center Key Tag!

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

August 7, 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.

Vet to Vet Cafe

August 12, 10:00-11:00 a.m. Are you a Veteran looking to connect with fellow vets and share experiences from your time in service? Join us for coffee, refreshments, and meaningful discussions with others who have served. Open to all Veterans in the local community. 2nd Tuesday of each month. At Broadview Assisted Living, 547 Central St, Winchendon.

Lunch at the Park Theatre

August 13, 11:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.. Lunch and virtual art gallery tour at the Park Theatre in Jaffrey, NH. Van leaves the Senior Center at 11:30 a.m. For more information, contact the Center. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

August 14 & 28, 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.

Taste of Home Lunch & Birthday Celebration

August 27, 11:00 a.m. Share in a home-style lunch cooked in the Old Murdock kitchen, and celebrate July birthdays! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., 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. Rain or shine! Moves inside Old Murdock Senior Center next to park if it’s rainy.

Growing Places Mobile Market

August 19, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Fresh local produce. SNAP and HIP accepted. at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Entertainment

Nathan Wesley at the Snowbound Club

August 1, 8:00-11:00 p.m. We are excited to have Nathan join us for the first time at our club. You don’t want to miss this incredibly talented musician. No cover charge. Cash bar available. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Denis Cormier Concert

August 14, 10:45 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

G.A.R. Park Concert Featuring Faceless Hobos

August 8, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Pat Townsend and Dave Romanowski first started playing together in 2019. Their style leans toward Americana, influenced by legends like Guy Clark, John Prine, and Hayes Carll, with a few original tunes in the mix. Free to all, bring your own lawn chairs or blankets. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Grove St, Winchendon.

Summer Beach Party Sunset Social

August 9, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Light Up the Night! Wear your brightest neon - Dance under UV lights - Enjoy live DJ sets spinning the hottest tracks - Capture glowing memories with friends. To Register & For More Information see www.sunsetsocialsma.com/event/neon-party-social-2/register. Sponsored by Winchendon Community Park and Winchendon Parks & Recreation. Questions? contact info@farmingislife.org or richypena@yahoo.com. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Outdoor Movie Night at the Beals

August 14, Movie starts at dark. Now showing: *Minecraft*. “Four misfits find themselves struggling with ordinary problems when they are suddenly pulled through a mysterious portal into the Overworld: a bizarre, cubic wonderland that thrives on imagination. To get back home, they’ll have to master this world while embarking on a magical quest with an unexpected expert crafter, Steve.” Rated PG. Call 978-297-0300 for more info. Join us for a great family-friendly film on the library lawn. (If it rains, movie will be shown in the library auditorium.) Bring the whole family, some snacks, a blanket and lawn chairs. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Winchendon Comedy Fest: LOL Entertainment Night - a Summer Evening of Magic, Music and Comedy!

August 16, 4:00-8:00 p.m. (ticketed) From 6:00 to 8:00, “Magic & Music”—strolling magician dazzles the crowd with up-close tricks and illusions, while DJ spins music from 60s to today. From 6:00 to 8:00, Get ready to laugh out loud with an outstanding lineup of professional comedians: Headliner: John Perrotta; Featuring: Annie Powell, Rockin Joe Hebert, & Ace Aceto. Humor is PG-13. Food trucks and beer & wine, too! \$15 per person. Tickets (and vendor applications) at <https://www.eventeny.com/events/comedy-night-at-the-park-2025-17201/>. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Classic Cars and Music at Winchendon Community Park

August 23, 3:00-8:00 p.m. (ticketed) Step back in time and enjoy an evening filled with vintage vibes, featuring classic cars, live music, and great food and drinks. Groove to the timeless tunes of The Reminisants and the Fred Ellsworth Band as they bring back the hits you know and love. Bring your lawn chairs, your dancing shoes, and your love for all things retro. This is a celebration you won’t want to miss! Food, beer and wine available. \$15 per person. Tickets (and vendor applications) at <https://www.eventeny.com/events/a-nostalgic-celebration-of-classic-cars-and-music-19583/>. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

For Teens

Teen Night at the HUB

August 16, 5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr.

Teen Dungeons & Dragons

August 12 & 26, 3:30-5:00 p.m. This is for kids in grades 8-12. Membership is limited, contact the library to sign up. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Winchendon News

Robinson Broadhurst Foundation Awards More Than \$1.3M in Funding to Winchendon Organizations and Projects

by Inanna Arthen

The Robinson Broadhurst Foundation has released the names of its FY2026 grant recipients, who were notified of their awards individually in May. Winchendon received \$1,362,395.45 in funding from the Foundation in this round. This is an increase of \$199,759 over their total grant funding to the town for FY2025.

Applicants must be non-profit organizations, and must be requesting funding for a project that directly and primarily benefits the town of Winchendon.

The FY26 recipients are:

Ahimsa Haven Animal Rescue
BSA Scout Troop 193
Cornerstone Church
Friends of Veterans' Memorial Cemetery of Winchendon
GAMMHA Inc.
Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA)
Growing Places Inc.
Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
Montachusett Veterans Outreach
Mount Wachusett Community College (2 grants)
BSA Scout Troop 7193
Second Chance Animal Services

Town of Winchendon (6 grants)
Unitarian Universalist Church of Winchendon
United Parish (2 grants)
Wendell P. Clark Memorial YMCA (2 grants)
Winchendon Community Action Committee (CAC)
Winchendon Council on Aging (Senior Center)
Winchendon Cub Scout Pack 193
Winchendon Fire Department (2 grants)
Winchendon History & Cultural Center
Winchendon Music Festival
Winchendon Parks & Recreation Commission
Winchendon Police Department
Winchendon Public Schools
Winchendon Springs Lake Association
Winchendon Winds Inc.
Winchendon Wreath Fund
Winchendon Youth Baseball/Softball

Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, Inc. was incorporated on March 24, 1984 and recognized as a 501 (c)(3) charitable foundation by the IRS on June 10, 1985. Today, with over \$55 million in assets, RBFI serves to improve the lives of the residents of Stamford and Worcester, New York and Winchendon, Massachusetts.

Three New Members Appointed to Winchendon Youth Ad Hoc Committee



From left, applicants Madison Bradley, Bruanna Touseul and Ty Bishoff, and Youth Changemakers mentor Bonnie Lynn.

Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, July 14, three Winchendon young people were appointed to the Winchendon Youth Ad Hoc Committee. Madison Bradley, Ty Bishoff and Bruanna Touseul came before the Board to explain why they wanted to serve, with moral support from youth mentor Bonnie Lynn and numerous family members in the audience.

Board Chair Andrew Beauvais thanked the applicants and asked them to introduce themselves and say a few words about their interest in the Committee.

Ty said, "I've lived in this town for about a good ten years, and for a while I didn't really know much about the town, and more recently, I've started opening up and wanting to help out around the town and learn more about the people in it and the place that I live."

Bruanna said, "I just moved here totally two years ago, and I just want to be more involved in making town decisions and including more youth."

Finally, Madison said, "I've lived here my whole life. I've always been involved with the town, and I've been trying to, as I'm getting older, get more exposed to what's going on, and understand the decisions that are being made. So Youth Changemakers is how I started, and I'd like to just keep going, and I feel like this is a good opportunity to do that."

Mr. Beauvais said, "It's exciting to see Winchendon's future come before us and being engaged. So thank you all for coming and thank you all for sitting through what was an exciting session." (The appointments having come to the table after a joint hearing with the Finance Committee that ran for more than an hour, and two five-minute recesses.)

He opened the floor to questions for the applicants from members of the Board. Board Member Erika Eitland said, "I don't have questions because I think already to step forward in this capacity means that, leadership starts at any age, and so the fact that you want to get involved, whether you've been here two years, ten years, your whole life, really makes a big difference, because we are looking for that commitment."

Dr. Eitland said that as Mr. Beauvais said, the applicants weren't just inheriting a future from their elders, they were contributing to it. "I really want you to see the five of us here as allies, as supporters, as partners of that, and we are fun. We may be old, but we are fun. So if there are things that we can help support, whether it's logistics, whether it's bouncing ideas,

whether it's torturing Mr. McKinney, we're here to help you, because I think you are providing a really important voice, and we know from everything from schools to recreation that you all are contributing to. I think it's already a brave move to be up here tonight."

Board Member Melissa Blanchard said, "Echo all of that. I just want to say thank you. Thank you very much for stepping up. I know it's not easy coming up and speaking out in front of everybody, but I want thank you for that."

The Board voted unanimously to appoint all three candidates to the Youth Ad Hoc Committee.

A Bit of History...

The Winchendon Youth Ad Hoc Committee was formed in 2024 by members of the Winchendon Youth Changemakers and the Heal Collaborative. The initial team working on forming the Committee—Ben Fuller, Addison Mistler, Abigail Bradley, Tora Estes, Emily Croteau, Nikolaus Brauer-Chagnon, Kaiya Jess, Aden Pimentel and Eva Martin—appeared together at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, April 22, 2024 to give a group presentation about the Committee and its purpose. Forming the Ad Hoc Committee was the first step toward creating a formal Youth Commission for Winchendon as defined in Mass General Laws Chapter 40, Section 8E.

The team explained that they proposed an Ad Hoc Committee of seven members, age 14 to 19, all residents of Winchendon, to be appointed by the Board of Selectmen. They would work with other town boards and committees and offer a youth voice. The Committee would meet biweekly and continue projects launched by the Youth Changemakers beyond the scope of the HEAL Collaborative grants, which wouldn't continue indefinitely. Some of these included Teen Nights at The HUB, the Sunshine Cafe, and especially, the annual Taste of Winchendon festival. Eventually the Committee would be the core players in creating a formal Youth Commission.

At the 2024 Annual Town Meeting on Monday, May 20, voters were asked to approve the formation of the Youth Ad Hoc Committee, and did so resoundingly, with 89 percent in favor, 11 percent opposed.

For more details, see "Youth Changemakers Present Plan for a Town Youth Commission to the BOS" in the May 2-9, 2024 edition of the Winchendon Courier (available online at winchendoncourier.net, in the Archives section).

Winchendon News

Community Connector “Microtransit” Launches with Official Ribbon Cutting



Community Connector van with its brand new “wrap”
Photo by Inanna Arthen



The ribbon is officially snipped by the Connector’s first rider, Joe, as Rep. Jon Zlotnik (at left) and members of the Community Connector team look on
Photo by Jill Nicholson Sackett

by Inanna Arthen

During the bi-monthly Community Partnership Breakfast on Tuesday, July 8, Winchendon’s new “microtransit” system, The Community Connector, got its official ribbon-cutting ceremony in front of the Old Murdock Senior Center. The system has been running for several months, “leveling up” continuously as different components came online. The ribbon cutting had been planned to take place during the Food Truck Festival on June 28, but was bumped ahead so that everyone could attend.

Parked in front of the Senior Center was a Community Connector van with brand new “wrapping” displaying the Community Connector logo and icon. Chairs were set up under popup tents, the Community Connector’s shiny new banner was displayed, there were flowers and swag bags for drivers and team members, brand new Community Connector t-shirts, and complimentary mini-cupcakes for everyone.

Program Director Miranda Jennings thanked everyone for being there. “We had to do this,” she explained, “the transportation program has been running and in creation for about a year, but we had to do some special thing because it is just so special, and it has been made possible by a whole community of people. It started when Chelsea [Patriss] from the Health Equity Partnership called and said, ‘Hey, does the town of Winchendon want to apply for this grant?’” Said grant, from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), being for \$500,000 and due in a week.

“I didn’t think little Winchendon would get this grant,” Ms. Jennings said, “but we did, and it’s been an amazing opportunity. It’s an innovation grant. So it was for us to do something innovative that wasn’t the run of the mill, and it’s not fair that to live in a rural community, you have to own a car. That’s not how it should be. So this grant is all about building universal access to transportation, so that whether you live in the city or a rural town, you have access to transportation. We formed a task force of residents, of many of whom are up here today – Inanna, Jane, Nancy, Paul, and Bonnie. This group of people met every other week to design what this transportation system would be.”

The Transportation Coordinator who guided the process was Katie Johnson, who recently left to take a full time job as she finishes getting her Masters in Social Work. She was not able to attend the ceremony. Ms. Jennings went on, “But they just worked so hard and made this all possible and built off what was already a really solid team of people and a transportation system here at the Senior Center, but brought it to a whole other level.”

The Community Connector now has an app which riders can download from the Apple or Google Play stores and use to schedule their rides. The number of rides provided by the system has already tripled from what it was a year ago.

“We also really thought about the name,” Ms. Jennings said. “It wasn’t just a transportation project. It was about connecting our community – to food, to health, to jobs, to recreation. We’re bringing people to work every day. We’re bringing people to medical appointments, to the amphitheater, to all the wonderful places around town, to Hampton Beach...it’s a web, here we go with the web analogy again, that it’s not just about vehicles. We put a lot of effort into communication. So the grant is funding for a year the print copy of the Winchendon Courier. We’re excited to partner with Inanna to do that, but that is why the paper is free. It’s through this grant we also...instead of creating a standalone webpage for transportation, we are investing in the entire website for the town. So we’ve really used it to try to

connect all of the pieces, because it is really interconnected, and the vehicles are what’s connecting all of it.”

Ms. Jennings called the drivers and Senior Center team up, including Jen, the dispatcher who has been juggling it all for so long, saying, “They have all been driven to the brink of insanity, and they’re still here.” She passed out flowers and swag bags to each of them.

State Representative Jon Zlotnik took the mic to say, “Whenever Miranda calls to ask me to help her get a grant, I’m always very happy to do it. I know that if she’s going for it, it’s something that really means a lot to the town, and something that’s been really vetted and really well thought through. And transportation is so critical in these small towns, like many of the ones I represent. And, you know, the state’s been putting a lot of money into RTAs, bolstering up the backbone of that infrastructure, but the ‘last mile’ piece can be really challenging, especially in small towns. Every town I have has some version of this. Winchendon is the first and only one with an app, which is really cool, but the solution is going to look a little bit different in each town, because the challenge is a little bit different in each town, to make sure you can get that point to point transportation, that you can get that last mile covered to make people’s lives work in rural parts of the state, rural parts of the country.”

“So I’m always thrilled to see the innovative stuff that’s going on here, cobbling together a bunch of different people, a bunch of different programs to make this work, is exactly what we need to do to make rural communities work. Very excited to be a part of this, and like I said, anytime Miranda calls me up to support something, I know it’s a good idea.”

Community Connector task force member Jane LaPointe said, “I wanted to say that when Miranda invited people to take a ride, the rides aren’t just for people who don’t have cars. We really want to encourage people who do have cars to also try using our community transportation system, the Community Connector, to connect with the community and to really help to lift this thing off the ground and keep it going.”

The honor of wielding the giant scissors went to Joe, who Miranda called one of the inspirations for the whole idea, and their “pioneer rider.” She said, “he called right when this program started, even before we got the grant, and said, I need to get to work. I want to work, and I don’t know a way to get there. Can you guys help us? And we were like, We don’t know, but we’re gonna figure it out. And then this grant happened, and Joe was here, and now there’s multiple other people that rely on the service for employment.” Joe is also going to be working in dispatch, a very large job.

With cell phones videorecording and snapping photos, the blue ribbon was snipped to cheers and applause. It was a moment that all those present had been anticipating for almost a full year.

The Winchendon Community Connector had been ramping up to begin charging fares for rides as of July 1, but will not be charging fares for the foreseeable future. Ms. Jennings was notified on Friday, June 27 that MART will be continuing to offer rides at no cost. The Community Connector closely collaborates with MART and utilizes some of MART’s vehicles, so it will be observing the same policy.

Riders can still use the Community Connector app to schedule their rides, and are strongly encouraged to do so. The app is free and can be downloaded from the Google Play or Apple app stores. The app is provided by the scheduling software, Via, and has the Community Connector icon to identify it. Riders can also call 978-297-3155 to request a ride. Riders are asked to schedule their rides 24 hours in advance.

Regional News and Events

Gardening

Harvest Garlic and Replant with Quick-Maturing Vegetables



Garlic is ready to be harvested when the cloves are plump and fill the skin.
Photo courtesy of MelindaMyers.com

by Melinda Myers

Get the best flavor and longest storage life from your homegrown garlic with proper harvesting, curing and storage. Then fill that space with a quick-maturing vegetable for a tasty fall harvest.

Harvest garlic when approximately one third, but less than half of the leaves turn brown. Start by digging one plant to check the garlic for maturity. Cloves should be plump and fill the skin.

Immature garlic does not store well, while over-mature bulbs are more subject to disease. Don't discard but rather use immature garlic as soon as possible.

Cure the garlic you plan to store for three to four weeks in a warm, well-ventilated location. Once dried, remove soil, long roots and only the damaged outermost layer of papery skin with a brush of your gloved hand. Cut off the tops being careful not to damage the papery covering that protects the cloves.

Store the garlic in a cool location with good air circulation and out of direct sunlight to prevent resprouting. Properly harvested and cured garlic will last for up to eight months.

Garlic can also be frozen. Place the whole bulb, individual cloves, or peeled, chopped cloves in a single layer in a plastic freezer bag. Use frozen garlic to flavor your favorite recipes within three to four months for the best flavor.

Once harvested, prepare the area for another planting. Spread a layer of compost over the area or incorporate an inch of compost into the top six inches of soil and fertilize if needed.

Calculate the number of frost-free days remaining in your growing season. Simply count the number of days from planting to the date of the average first fall frost in your area. Select and plant vegetable seeds and transplants that will be ready to harvest before the first killing frost in fall. Check the back of the seed packet or plant tag for the number of days from planting to harvest. If there is enough time for the summer planting to grow and produce before the first killing frost, they can be added to the garden. Or extend the season with cold frames and floating row covers to protect plantings as needed from killing frost.

Depending on the variety, cucumbers and bush beans are ready to harvest in as few as 60 days. Enjoy great flavor from summer plantings of broccoli and cabbage transplants harvested during the cooler months of fall. Sow seeds of radishes, beets, carrots and other quick-maturing vegetables for a fall harvest.

Once your seeds and transplants are in the ground, be sure to water properly. Keep the seedbed and roots of transplants moist for the first few weeks. Gradually reduce watering frequency as seedlings sprout and grow and transplants become established. Help keep the soil cool by mulching plantings with shredded leaves, evergreen needles or other organic mulch.

Enjoy the rewards of all your planning, planting and care with bountiful harvests now through the end of the season.

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 and her web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Finance

You Have an Estate Plan--Whether You Know It or Not

If you think estate planning is only for the wealthy or elderly, think again. When someone passes away without an estate plan, state laws take over, deciding who gets what and when--and that may not reflect your wishes. Instead, you can take control through a personal estate plan.

You may think that a will is all you need. But wills only take effect after death; they don't help if you're alive but unable to make decisions. For that, you may want a Power of Attorney and health care directive.

Finally, make sure you have beneficiaries named on assets like 401(k)s, IRAs and life insurance policies. That way, these assets will transfer directly to those people regardless of what your will says.

An effective estate plan can prevent costly legal battles in probate court and give loved ones a clear roadmap to follow. And it can help you feel confident, knowing that what matters most--your family, your purpose, your legacy--is protected.

PSA: Should You Trust a 'Finfluencer'?

In the age of social media, it's easy to find advice on just about everything--including how to manage your money.

Content creators known as "fin-fluencers"--short for "financial influencers"--use platforms like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram. Some may have formal training or credentials. Many do not.

When you hear financial advice on social media, here are some warning signs:

- Unrealistic "get-rich" promises: Claims like, "Turn \$500 into \$50,000 in a year," are unrealistic and may indicate a scam.
- Pressure to act fast: Important financial decisions shouldn't be rushed.
- Flashy displays of wealth. Images of luxury cars, watches or cash can be more about generating views, or making a profit, than offering sound advice.

Fin-fluencers can make financial topics more engaging. Younger investors or older investors with substantial savings sometimes like these platforms because they're easily accessible. But all investors should do their homework. Take the time to verify, research and, when in doubt, seek advice from a professional.

This content was provided by Edward Jones for use by Jordyn Lynds, your Edward Jones financial advisor at 978-297-7452 or stop by 113 Central St. Winchendon, MA 01475.

Fitzwilliam Cornhole Tournament and Fun Day

Come support the Danny Baker Fund (benefitting Fire/EMS/Public Safety) by playing in the Annual Cornhole Tournament on August 9 beginning at 11:00 a.m. Bring the family as there will be food, music, games, and raffles. A fireworks display over Bowker Pond will end the day. All games, parking, and fireworks are free of charge. There is a fee to enter the cornhole tournament, and food and raffle tickets will be for sale. The Family Fun Day will be at the Drill Yard, 156 Bowkerville Road, in Fitzwilliam NH.

For more information, contact: admin@fitzpolice.us or 603-585-6561.

The Danny Baker Fund is a 501(c)3 organization and has given over \$85,000 worth of fire/ems/public safety equipment to the towns of Troy, Fitzwilliam, and Richmond over the past 3 years. This event is the main fundraiser for the organization.

Statement from Arthur T. Demoulas

(July 22, 2025) - Mr. Arthur T. Demoulas made the following statement today on the firing of Tom Gordon and Joe Schmidt by the Market Basket Board of Directors.

"Stephen Collins called Tom Gordon and Joe Schmidt today and fired them. In addition to being men of strong character, these are two of the brightest and best grocery store operators in the business, and their extraordinary work has been key to building this company and its culture. This is among the worst decisions that could be made by this board. Steven Collins of Exeter Capital doesn't understand this company's culture. Nor do his fellow board members Jay Hachigian of Gunderson Dettmer and Michael Keyes of Intercontinental Real Estate. To them, Tom, after 50 years with the company, and Joe after 39 years, are easily cast aside. They are just collateral damage in this pre-planned coup. To Market Basket, Tom and Joe are part of the heart and soul of the company and key executives in its immense success to date. They are men of integrity and honor and belong on the Market Basket team, and we will use all efforts to reverse this heartless and unwarranted decision."

-- Arthur T. Demoulas

Community Notice Board

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
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, August 14, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Request for Notice of Intent filed by Centura Bay LLC, ownwr of 16B Maple Place parcel identified as Assessor’s Map 5A4, Parcel 18. The proposed work includes septic system upgrade 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.

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, August 14, 2025 at 6:05 pm to consider the Request for Notice of Intent filed by Patrick Brownell, ownwr of 515 Brown Street parcel identified as, Assessor’s Map 4, Parcel 143. The proposed work includes septic system replacement. 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
Winchendon, Massachusetts 01475-1758
Zoning Board of Appeals
LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a PUBLIC HEARING on Wednesday, August 20, 2025 at 7:05pm to discuss the application for a Variance submitted by owner Ryan Forsythe for 181 Lakeshore Drive (Also known as Assessor’s Map 5B4, Parcel 48) Winchendon, MA 01475. Variance request to al-low placement of a 32x16 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 Neighborhood. The hearing will be held in 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

Toy Town FYIs

Transfer Station Hours

Wednesday 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (summer hours)
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: \$85 (\$25 for additional stickers)
Pay-As-You-Throw bags required
33-gallon, \$5.00 per bag, 16-gallon, \$3.00 per bag as of July 1, 2025
2025-2026 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).

Winchendon Public Schools Open on August 27!

Watch for Children and School Buses!

Advertise in the Winchendon Courier!

The *Winchendon Courier* Online is uploaded every Thursday night and reaches hundreds of Winchendon readers every week. The monthly print edition of the *Winchendon Courier* has a press run of 500 and an uptake of over 90 percent. The press run will be increased as circulation and demand grow.

If you’re a business owner, entrepreneur, local organization or individual, contact us for information about display ad requirements and rates. We offer:

- Free ad design services for our paying advertisers, if desired
- Discounted annual rate for advertisers who commit to a full year of weekly ads
- Automatic placement of their ad in the monthly print addition, at no extra charge, for advertisers who place their ad for a full month in the online edition
- A range of sizes from business card to (in the print edition) full page
- Flexibility—if you have questions about formatting or dimensions, contact us.

For a rate card, more information or questions, contact:
editor@winchendoncourier.net



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

Read it on your phone!

Uploaded every Thursday night

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 winchendon-ccap@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 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 at: www.townofwinchendon.com/9th-annual-winchendon-fall-festival/pages/2025-fall-festival-vendor-application

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 Street List and 2024 Town Reports Available

Copies of the 2025 Winchendon Street List of Residents are available at the Town Clerk's office 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>.

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.

- Communications Committee - 1 vacancy
- 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/vyhlf8401/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.

FREE Meals for KIDS all summer long at Toy Town Elementary!

"Summer Eats" program run by Project Bread will run at Toy Town Elementary School, 175 Grove Street, Winchendon.

- All kids and teens up to age 18!
- Program runs June 23 through August 15, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Closed July 4
- Free lunch Monday through Thursday!
- NO ID or Registration required!
- Kids do not need to be residents of Winchendon or enrolled in Winchendon Public Schools
- Fun activities each day!
- No grab and go options available. Lunches will be served on site.

For more information, see <https://projectbread.org/summer-eats-program>

Senior Workoff Program Applications for FY26 Available on Town Website

Applications for the Senior Property Tax Work-Off program for FY26 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) are now available at www.townofwinchendon.com/home/news/fy26-senior-work-application.

This program allows eligible senior citizens to do odd jobs for the town in exchange for an offset in their property taxes. The credit is equivalent to \$15 per hour for a maximum of \$1,100 per household during the fiscal year.

To qualify, a senior must be at least 60 years old, own and occupy a home in Winchendon, have an annual income of less than \$40,150 if single or a combined household income of less than \$45,900 if married, have transportation to work, and be able to work during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Available jobs are variable and include work that accommodates different levels of ability. See the full application for more details.

THE WINCHENDON COURIER
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Production, Design and Pre-Press: Inanna Arthen

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

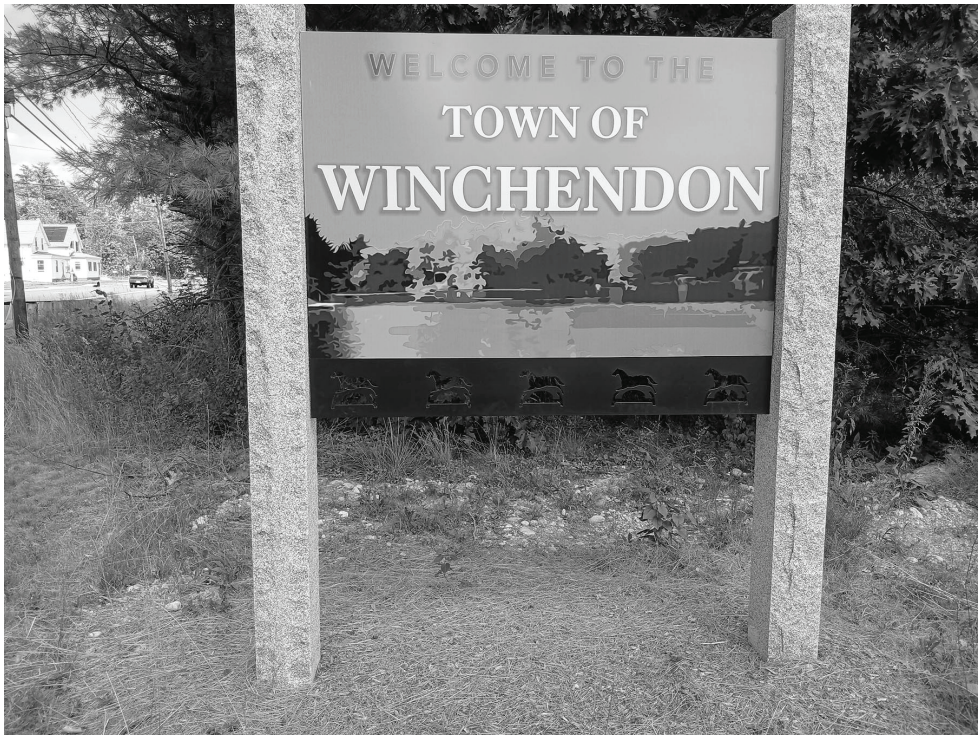
Text event listings are free of charge for non-profit, community and town organizations and groups, and for charitable or benefit events. Short text articles about forthcoming local events are free of charge. Display ads are published on a fee-only basis.

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

The print edition is printed by Eagle Printing in Pittsfield, MA.

Winchendon News

New “Welcome to Winchendon” Signs Have Been a Long Time in the Making



by Inanna Arthen

Many residents have noticed the brand new signs which were recently placed at the “gateways” (as former Town Manager Justin Sultzbach would say) to town: on Rte 202/Main Street across from Lickity Splitz, Rte 2/School Street near School Square, and Rte 12/Spring Street near El Toro restaurant. Reading “Welcome to the Town of Winchendon,” the signs have an artistic painting of a lake or river with trees along its far shore under a blue sky, and are supported on two granite posts. Along the bottom edge of each sign is a row of cut-outs in the shape of Clyde the Rocking Horse.

What many people in town may not know is that these signs are the final results of a project that began seven years ago.

According to the “Final Report of the Community Branding and Wayfinding Project,” prepared for the town by Favermann Design, “in the late spring of 2018, the Town of Winchendon received a technical services grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The grant was for design and development of a community brand and its application in signage and wayfinding. The Town Manager and

Town Planner appointed an advisory committee to work with the consultants (Favermann Design) to create a viable brand and strategic signage and wayfinding system.”

The advisory committee included:

- Keith Hickey, then Town Manager
- David Walsh, then Chief of Police
- Manuel King, Librarian at Beals Memorial Library
- David Romanowski, Winchendon Community Park Director
- Leston Goodrich of the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority and Winchendon Housing Authority
- Arthur Amenta of the Winchendon Planning Board, Toy Town Community Partnership and Council on Aging
- Dan O’Neil of the Winchendon Historic Commission and Winchendon History and Cultural Center
- Tracy Murphy, Director of Planning and Development
- Nicole Roberts, Land Use Coordinator
- Rose Goodrich, Community member
- Shirley Chodin, Community member

For several months, the committee met with Favermann Design, doing site visits, tours, presentations and “interactive descriptive discussions” to create a verbal expressive image representing the town of Winchendon. The first presentation focused on what community branding could mean and how it could be used to make a location more of a destination.

Design options aimed to capture the essence of Winchendon’s history and character, and include trees and foliage, factory buildings, toys, Clyde the Rocking Horse, and landscapes with water and woodlands.

Along with the Winchendon signs, designs for a variety of “directional” signs, pole banners, light pole decorative elements and signs for the Fire and Police departments were created. The Board of Selectmen approved the plan, and the town applied for funding to the Converse fund.

Nicole Roberts, who provided this information, wasn’t sure what happened after that, except that the town did not obtain the funding for all of the proposed signs. The Branding program was slated to be implemented in spring and summer of 2020 – which was, of course, when the COVID state shut-down happened. Two other major projects also took precedence: the expanded Winchendon Community Park and Performing Arts Amphitheater, and the Central Street Reconstruction.

The rest of the “Branding and Wayfinding” signage is still awaiting funding.

Winchendon Highlighted as a “Featured Town” by National Community Heart & Soul

by Inanna Arthen

Winchendon is prominently profiled as the “Featured Town” on the website for Community Heart & Soul, “a resident-driven process that engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love most about their community, what future they want for it, and how to achieve it.” More than 120 communities are now part of the Community Heart & Soul process.

In 2022, Winchendon was one of the first three communities in the country to receive a \$10,000 Community Heart & Soul “seed grant” to initiate the process of engaging residents, building a picture of Winchendon as a community, and developing a set of value statements based on input from residents. A Community Heart & Soul task force met regularly, interviewed residents, staffed tables at town events, and gave presentations to the Board of Selectmen.

Winchendon Community Heart & Soul has made a specific and focused effort to integrate its work with the Town of Winchendon Master Plan. It has contributed to many projects and events in Winchendon over the past three years, with outcomes that (so far) include increased empowerment and leadership among Winchendon’s youth, strengthened economic vitality, expanded access to arts and culture (both participating and enjoying), and securing a \$500,000 grant for a local microtransit system.

To read the full Winchendon Profile on the Community Heart & Soul webpage, see www.communityheartandsoul.org/towns/winchendon-massachusetts/

The Winchendon Community Heart & Soul webpage is www.thehealcollaborative.org/communityheartandsoul

Winchendon’s five core “Heart & Soul Statements” are:

Local Matters

Winchendon residents work towards a vibrant local economy that supports small businesses, provides employment, meets residents’ essential needs, and contributes to the town’s tax base.

People Matter

We value the potential for a small-town feel where all residents can know, connect, and treat one another with kindness. We embrace our different backgrounds, identities, and perspectives, and work together through our local traditions, events, and time-honored institutions to ensure that Winchendon is a viable and good home for all.

YOUTH Matters

We strive to provide safe, healthy environments throughout Winchendon where our youth feel welcomed, heard, and valued for who they are.

We work together to ensure our youth have access to activities, a quality and responsive education, integrated civic engagement, and leadership opportunities.

Town Pride Matters

Winchendon residents value living in and contributing to a town that is well cared for. We are striving to provide safe, well-maintained roads, bike paths, parks, community spaces, neighborhoods, continued beautification of the downtown area, and the preservation of historic places.

People appreciate the many town-wide events and support working towards providing an effective local communication system.

Nature Matters

We cherish the quiet beauty of Winchendon’s natural environment and all that it contributes to our lives, our health, and our sense of peace and well-being.



The September print edition of The Winchendon Courier will go to press on Tuesday, August 26 at noon.
Content for that edition must be received by the publisher before Sunday, August 24.