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New Veterinary Clinic Proposed for Property Next to Lickity Splitz



Molly Velasco (left) and Dr. Christy Cox (right) speaking to the ZBA
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Concept drawing of what the clinic may look like
Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

On Wednesday, August 20, Dr. Christy Cox, a licensed veterinarian currently practicing at Gardner Animal Care Center in Gardner, appeared before the Winchendon Zoning Board of Appeals seeking a Special Permit to build a new veterinary clinic on the undeveloped property at 0 Sibley Road. This property is on the corner of Sibley Road and Main Street (Rte 202), just north of Lickity Splitz. Dr. Cox has established the entity QC Unlimited LLC for this project—QC Unlimited was organized on July 8, 2025 and states a purpose “that includes, but is not limited to, veterinary services.” The clinic will be named Tranquility Veterinary Care.

Dr. Cox appeared before the ZBA because according to the Zoning Bylaws, a veterinary clinic is an allowed use “by special permit” in the two zones (C2 and R80) the property straddles. This will be Dr. Cox’s first step toward constructing the clinic.

Dr. Cox explained that Tranquility will be a “small animal and exotics clinic”—that is, they will treat cats, dogs, and small exotic pets, no large animals or livestock. The building will be one story with a basement, 6,000 square feet with a wrap-around porch, with 21 parking spaces and 2 handicap-accessible spaces. The practice will begin with one doctor, but

may expand to include more. Dr. Cox plans to start out opening on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from approximately 8:00 a.m. to, at the latest, 8:00 p.m., and possibly one Saturday morning a month. There will be no overnight hours, and no emergency care at the clinic—it will be restricted to those times. There will also be no boarding at the clinic. Dr. Cox estimated that the clinic would average about 40 appointments per day.

The Board discussed the parameters around signage and exterior lighting, given that part of the property is a residential zone. Town Engineer and DPW Director Pat Wood would review the plans as they evolve, looking at details such as driveways, how much of the lot needed to be cleared of trees, and so on. Dr. Cox would prefer to keep as many trees on the wooded lot in place as possible, but factors such as line of sight might come into play.

Two abutters who had been notified of the hearing came forward. They were largely positive about the project, but expressed some concerns about the condition of Sibley Road and the amount of traffic on it, especially school buses during the school year. They were surprised that the entrance to the clinic parking lots would be from Sibley and not Main Street. Land Use Coordinator Nicole Roberts explained that Dr. Cox doesn’t own

the strip along Main Street, it belongs to Lickity Splitz. The ground is also very wet, with a culvert, and traffic is even faster and busier on Main Street.

Most of the specific questions about site design don’t fall under the purview of the ZBA—their decision was whether to issue a special permit for the use of the property for a clinic. Everyone present agreed that both a new business in town, and a veterinary clinic specifically, was a great idea.

Ms. Roberts, who is also the executive director of Ahimsa Haven Animal Rescue, said, “There’s a need, period, for a veterinarian, a lot of people that own animals and not enough veterinarians to service them. So yeah, it definitely is a big need. Great asset to the town absolutely, and it’s nice to have a nice new business coming into town too. That’s very exciting.”

Resident Molly Velasco came forward to say, “Dr. Christy is my vet, so she has taken care of my pets for many, many, many years, and I have quite the feisty little kitty that does not like the vet, and she’s the only vet, out of eight vets, that hasn’t fired us. So I just wanted to say I know Christy, personally and professionally. She always goes above and beyond. When I found a stray rat that was injured in town, I was able to bring it to her current practice, and she took care of it...

also just putting in the kindness and consideration, my mom is currently house bound, diagnosed with ALS, and Dr Cox has offered to come do home visits so she can be still part of her dog’s care. She treats our special needs blind dog, Javier, who has exceeding needs and is so troublesome, and she always picks up the phone, always fits him in. And so I can really see the asset to having that in town. I’m very involved in the community, and it aligns with our town plan of getting more small businesses into the area, creating potential job opportunities for the future and growth. So really, just here to speak on the fact that Christy is not only an amazing vet, but also just an incredible person with strong moral values and kindness and consideration. So we’d be very lucky to have her.”

Ms. Velasco said Dr. Cox had talked to her about having a “tranquility garden” on the property, where animals would feel more comfortable than in a clinical office.

Ms. Roberts said, “Christy and I have been working together for quite a few months with going back and forth with different things. She’s put a lot of thought and a lot of time into finding that perfect spot for her practice.”

Dr. Cox told the Board that she is a resident of Winchendon.

The Board voted to approve the

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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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Fire Chief Smith Presents Concerns About Department Staffing Levels to BOS

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen meeting on Monday, August 11, Winchendon Fire Chief Tom Smith came before the Board with a detailed written report and an explanation of how staffing levels in the Winchendon Fire Department were below the standards they needed to be, and potentially put the town at risk should there be a major fire and rescue situation like the recent assisted living home fire in New Bedford.

“Right now, the Winchendon Fire department staffs three people around the clock,” Chief Smith said. “That is below what’s recommended from not only the National Fire Protection Association to even staff an engine, it also goes against OSHA’s, where we are an OSHA state now, the ‘two in, two out’ policy of attacking any interior fire. Basically, what that means is that you should have four people on scene prior to engaging in a fire-fighting interior operation.”

Chief Smith explained that Winchendon has a combination department with a small number of call firefighters. All the Winchendon firefighters are cross-trained as firefighter paramedics or at minimum, firefighter EMTs.

It’s common to have multiple calls at the same time, Chief Smith said. An ambulance call keeps the crew out for at least three hours. Sometimes there is only one person left on duty in town, not even enough to staff an ambulance. The department can call for mutual aid, but that means a longer wait time for a response.

Chief Smith said that he had a major concern about all the large old houses converted into apartments

in town. “That in itself would be very difficult for a three man crew, if not impossible, to perform efficient rescues, or anything of that nature,” he said. Increasing staffing would improve response time and the reliance of the department on mutual aid, as well as bring the department up to standards. “Right now, zero percent of our fire attacks are OSHA compliant when it comes to interior firefighting. I think that’s wrong,” he said.

The National Fire Protection Agency recommends a town’s department have 1.7 career firefighters per 1000 people, which for Winchendon would be 14 to 18 full time firefighters. Winchendon currently has 10. Some towns, not necessarily wealthier than Winchendon, have four to six full time firefighters on every shift. “A lot of it has to do with they are planning to move their staffing forward so they get to a level where the town is protected adequately as it should be,” Chief Smith said.

“We’ve had calls over the last year alone, where I’ve had to send one firefighter multiple times to fires while the other two are off on ambulance calls, one of them being a structure fire up on Mill Circle,” Chief Smith said. “We’ve had a barn fire where the initial attack was one firefighter and an intern. This is a recipe for disaster that we try to avoid. We do know that everything’s not perfect when it comes to emergencies, and there’s a lot that goes into it. We greatly appreciate the staffing we have been given. By no means is any of this an attack on what we’ve been given as far as staffing goes, or budgeting goes, but it’s more of an awareness and an attempt to move forward

and create a plan.”

There are grants available for staffing, Chief Smith said. Over the past 13 years that he had been heading the department, they had been awarded over \$2.5 million in grant funding. But it’s never guaranteed.

Chief Smith said that he estimated it would cost \$438,000 in the first year to bring staffing up where it needed to be, including additional gear and uniforms that have a 10-year lifespan. The following years would be an increased cost of \$398,000 annually.

“Obviously, adding \$400,000 plus to an annual payroll does create a increase in the Fire Department budget,” he said. “We’re attempting to utilize SAFER grants. Optimistically, we should have four firefighters on a fire call. We do understand that not always is that possible. Performing a ‘two in, two out’ is a safety thing. We also would expect that as far as having the fourth person on round the clock, it would reduce overtime costs.”

More staffing would also make ambulance calls more competitive. Even as things are, ambulance revenue is going up. July was the highest month for ambulance fee collections since Chief Smith has been fire chief in Winchendon. With the recent increase in fees, Winchendon is looking at a potential increase in annual ambulance revenue of \$250,000 to \$300,000.

Chief Smith said they proposed bring on additional firefighters gradually. “There is some revenue strategies and budget justifications to adding firefighters. It does increase your expense, but it also increases revenues, the increased ambulance revenue of not losing second ambulance calls to other

towns and ultimately the service improvement. That’s our ultimate goal.”

Chief Smith suggested that the town could create an account for ambulance revenues, such as a return receipts account or enterprise fund, that would keep those revenues dedicated to offsetting department expenses rather than just going into the town’s General Fund as they do now.

Chief Smith wrapped up his presentation with, “You know, we’re doing our best with our funding. I just wanted to, again, put together plans, start figuring out something with you guys on the options. I do think it’s something that we have to look at sooner rather than later, just out of the fact that we currently, if we’re not covering the OSHA stuff, if we’re not covering the national standards, we really aren’t providing the townspeople with what they might be expecting if they’re moving here from other areas of the country or in the state, as well as what they deserve.”

The Board members thanked Chief Smith for his detailed report and presentation (the written document was nine pages long) and discussed the challenges presented by the clear need for more staffing, versus the question of how it could be funded. They asked if Chief Smith could make his written report available to the public. All agreed that this was a critical issue that needed to be addressed. “We don’t know what the future holds, but it starts now, and it starts with having these open discussions and planning for the future,” Board Chair Andrew Beauvais said.

Winchendon CAC Awarded Activation Fund Grant to Expand The Hub and Fully Launch Winchendon Works Youth Workforce & Service Learning Program

The Winchendon Community Action Committee (WCAC) is proud to announce that it has been awarded an Activation Fund grant to fully activate The HUB and scale up Winchendon Works – Youth Workforce & Service Learning Program. This milestone builds on momentum from last year’s T-Mobile Hometown Grant and the longstanding partnership of the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, a backbone supporter of WCAC and major funder of the first phase of The HUB’s remodel. Together, these investments are transforming The HUB into a vibrant, sustainable center for opportunity, health, and equity in Winchendon.

Through its programs, WCAC currently serves over 10 percent of Winchendon’s population each year. With this new support, The HUB will expand its reach as a co-located community center connecting education, workforce, food access, housing, transportation, and social services under one roof.

Renovations and Expansion

The Activation Fund will support ADA-accessible renovations to classrooms and event spaces and add new features that expand both impact and sustainability. Planned upgrades include:

- New commercial-grade flooring for the food pantry.
- ADA-compliant ramps and doors throughout the facility.
- Indoor/outdoor classrooms and event spaces.
- Installation of a solar array, reducing energy costs and making the building more environmentally sustainable.

These improvements will nearly double WCAC’s community impact by expanding space for youth, families, and seniors, while lowering overhead

costs so more resources can be directed to programs.

Youth Workforce & Service Learning

This summer, Winchendon Works launched with 15 local youth, each completing real-world job experiences and training in areas such as:

- Automotive basics (changing a tire, checking oil)
- Public speaking and resume building
- Customer service and cleaning
- Cooking and food safety (ServSafe® and allergen certification)
- Running the food pantry
- Supporting seniors at the Winchendon Senior Center

The program also created direct employment pathways with local businesses. Pilot partners included Not Just Produced, Farming is Life, Sippin’ Serendipity, and Ikiaremy Sweets & Restaurant, who provided training and interviews. As a result, half of the participating students were offered part-time jobs by local employers.

With the Activation Fund, Winchendon Works will expand into a year-round program integrated with schools, community partners, and businesses—ensuring every Murdock High School student has access to workforce readiness, leadership, and service-learning opportunities before graduation.

Participants described the program as “life-changing,” giving them first jobs, certifications, and real skills like customer service, car maintenance, food safety, and public speaking. Many spoke about confidence and leadership growth—from learning to run the food pantry to leading debates

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A Special Message from the Beals Memorial Library

After wrapping up their annual Summer Reading Club, the Beals Memorial Library is extending their heartfelt thanks to everyone in the Winchendon community who participated this year! Together, participating readers contributed to a grand total of 10,839 hours of reading over the course of this year’s eight-week program. Here are this year’s top readers in each category:

- Annabelle White (Preschool) with a total of 140 hours
- Walden Reedy (Elementary) with a total of 131 hours
- Anthony Correa (Teen) with a total of 107 hours
- Rick Mccomsey (Adult) with a total of 383 hours
- Kayla Charlonne (Staff/Trustees) with a total of 202 hours.

The library would also like to thank everyone in the community who came to any of this summer’s programs and events.

Finally, the library’s staff and trustees are also thankful to all of this year’s community sponsors, including the Friends of the Beals Library, the Winchendon CFCE, the Winchendon Cultural Council, the Winchendon Public Schools and the See Beyond the Spectrum Initiative, all of whom partnered with them to bring our community this year’s programs and events.

Carnival Coming Back to Winchendon Sept 25-28

by Inanna Arthen

John Fanelli of Fanelli Amusements appeared before the Board of Selectmen on Monday, August 11 to request a permit for the 2025 town carnival, which will set up on the soccer field next to the Clark Memorial YMCA, times to be announced.

“There’s going to be fireworks, one way or another,” Mr. Fanelli told the Board in response to their question. “I’m working with Mike Quinn at the YMCA, trying to get some sponsorship money so that we can have a bigger display than we did last year. But I’ve already been in communication with the provider that we used last year. Gave them dates, and I just got a follow-up later this week, Mike has a meeting with a few prospective donors, so that we have a better idea of how much of a budget we’re gonna have for the display this year.”

There will not be any large tents requiring special inspections or permits, Mr. Fanelli said, and the state inspects all the rides. The police details, food permits and similar arrangements should all be the same as last year.

Board member Erika Eitland asked, “Since you all operated here last

year, is there anything you learned from last year that you’re going to be carrying over and making this year successful, or things that, ‘we’re not going to do that again?’”

“I think everything went really well [last year],” Mr. Fanelli said. “The only issues we had was, honestly, the last day, the last hour there was unfortunately not police presence at that time, and some adults got into it over I don’t know what. Those are things I can’t really control, but we follow the protocols of the police department, what they requested for detail, and we plan to do that again.”

He continued, “But beyond that, it was a great success, and I know the town really enjoyed it, because it was something that hadn’t been here for, I think, at least 20 years, maybe longer. I know there’s a lot of concern based on past events that happened from carnivals a long time ago, and I believe we reassure the community that we can have this type of event and it will not be over the top or crazy, just something for folks to do, and kind of nostalgic, and I hope that we can continue to do this for many years to come, make it a new tradition in town.”

Board Chair Andrew Beauvais said, “I was really excited last year when you folks came into town, and I thought, Well, I hope this continues. So it was good to see that you guys are coming back and that we didn’t scare you away. Hopefully, as you said, this becomes a reoccurrence and a tradition. It’s nice to put Winchendon on the map and to draw folks here.” He added that in all his years living in town he had never seen a carnival here before.

Mr. Fanelli said, “I’ve been in this business my whole life, and my family’s had carnivals here a long time ago. And my grandfather always spoke highly of Winchendon. Said it’s a carnival town. And I always kept it in the back of my head that I would like to have one here, because we’re kind of local. We’re just over the border in Greenville, so I wanted to come back and try it and see if it was true. And we had a great response last year.”

Board member Audrey LaBrie said they shouldn’t discount “the entertainment factor of watching the rides go up. Last fall, I was working the before-school program at the YMCA in the community building, that back building, and the kids got the biggest kick out of watching through those windows, watching the guys moving things around, and just, ‘wow! So they live in those trailers?’ just explaining to them a little bit about what goes on to put something like that on. So that was really fascinating for the kids.”

“I appreciate that,” Mr. Fanelli said. “We have a really great staff, and they are really efficient and get things moved quickly. Without them, we wouldn’t be able to do what we do. But I know it’s something rare to be seen, everything getting put together and set up, and it all comes together so quickly. I’m glad that they were able to see that.”

The Board voted unanimously to approve the entertainment permit for the carnival.

As of Monday, August 25, information about the Winchendon Fair and advance tickets are available on the Fanelli Amusements website at <https://fanelliamusements.com/events/31>.

The Beals Memorial Library Goes Fine Free for September

Do you have overdue library items at home or have you returned items late? Have you been concerned about the fines you have accumulated? Worry no more! For the month of September, the Beals Memorial Library will be going fine free!

From September 1 through September 30, library patrons can return any overdue materials to the Winchendon library, and the library will waive any fines as a thank-you. This applies to materials that may be overdue by a week, two months, or even two years. Two decades? That’s okay too! Just bring them back! This includes most items checked out from the library: books, audiobooks, music CDs, magazines, DVDs, large print books, and more. There are some exceptions; the library will not waive fees for lost items, video game rentals, museum passes, or items from their Library of Things collection.

Do you have old, overdue fines on your account? Simply present your library card or ID to erase any fines up to \$10 from your account. Can’t find your library card? Visit the library to get a new one for free!

The Beals Memorial Library is located at 50 Pleasant Street in Winchendon. For more information, contact the library at 978-297-0300 or visit their website at bealslibrary.org/finefree.

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Great Weather and Great Turnout for “Winchendon’s Best Kept Secret” – the 2025 Massachusetts Chili Cook-Off



by Inanna Arthen

The 2025 Massachusetts Chili Cook-Off, affectionately known as “The Beast of the East,” sponsored by the Kiwanis of Winchendon and officially sanctioned by the International Chili Society (ICS) which runs the World Championship Chili Cook-Off, assembled at the Winchendon Community Park on Saturday, August 2 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The Kiwanis may have broken the “Saturday rain curse” this year and run the first Saturday event to enjoy perfect weather and not a single drop of rain.

Close to a dozen contestants set up booths around the grassy field next to the amphitheater, festooned with chili-themed banners, tablecloths and swags, large banners with their company or brand names, and decorations. Cooks and their teams dished out small tasting cups of chili, with many also offering snacks, condiments, and extras. Attendees voted for their favorites by dropping a “tip” – a quarter – into a container at the booth. Meanwhile, the official panel of judges at the judging tent tried each chili and conferred with clipboards of chili rubric for assessing the cooks’ creations.

As the event ran for quite a long time, there was a steady flow of residents going in and out. The “gate” was a canopy tent with tables and volunteers from the Kiwanis, collecting the \$5 entrance fee for adults (kids 12 and under got in free), and handing out information on the “People’s Choice” voting procedure, brochures about the Kiwanis and their programs, and coupons for a free can of Bush beans (Bush being a sponsor of ICS).

Bands Robbie B and Wylie and The Boogiemens played from the amphitheater stage during the day. With the bright, strong summer sun, many attendees were listening from the shady areas to the sides of the amphitheater tiers, where picnic tables are set up for park visitors. Along with the chili cooks, several local makers and vendors had booths set up, and an ice cream truck was vending welcome “chasers” to the mouth-warming spicy cuisine. The CAC and Youth Changemakers ran a beverage concession, while the Kiwanis Famous Food Tent sold hamburgers, hot dogs and other lunch food.

The *Courier* spoke to a couple of the teams vying for Saturday’s top award.



Michael Allsup, of Fire Belly Chili from Loudon, NH, has already been a state champion in several events. The *Courier* asked him how he and his wife Jessica got started. “I had it as a bucket list item, enter a chili cook-off,” he said. “That was one of the things. And I went against like 80 people in Henniker, and I got third place off the bat with the family recipe. And I was like, that was fun. Very cool. People were great. I love all of the people who come to visit. And I was like, yeah, maybe we could go and do another one. And now it’s been eight years.”

He won his first championship in 2023. “The very first ICS Cook-Off we ever went to was here in Winchendon. The field over there [by the Clark YMCA], and we got fifth place there.” Fire Belly has been at every

Winchendon Cook-Off, since 2017.

Asked where his brand name came from, Mr. Allsup said, “We like dragons. It’s like you get that fire in your belly. You’re competitive. You want to go out and try your hardest. And it just seemed to fit, honestly, the fire belly and the flavor of the chili too, to bring the fire in our chili, the heat.”

Fire Belly also competes in the World Championships, and went to Myrtle Beach last year, and will be in Indianapolis this year and next year.

Asked how he thought things went today, Mr. Allsup said, “It’s a great turnout. It’s a great crowd. Everybody wants to talk about recipes, and I don’t know if you can see, but we’re cooking a recipe for an old World Champion who passed away last year. So it’s his recipe. Everybody was really happy. And it’s kind of like, in a way, he’s still with us.”

Jessica Allsup added, “Winchendon is a fantastic community. The Kiwanis, they do such a great job putting this event on every single year. So we’re really happy to be here and help support them, too.” Accompanying Michael and Jessica was their very young daughter, the next generation of chili chefs getting an early start!



Roxanne Ballachino of Baboo’s Breath, from Manchester, CT, echoed the Allsup’s warm feelings about Winchendon’s event. “All I can say is, this is an amazing event,” she said. “This is my, I don’t know, sixth, seventh, eighth year here. And the people are always the nicest of any chili cook-off that I go to. Bruce runs an amazing program. The Kiwanis do an amazing job. It’s always a pleasure to come back. And I only do three or four cook-offs a year, and I make sure I don’t miss this one.”

Ms. Ballachino said her brand’s catchy name had a simple origin: “I had to come up with a name when I registered for my first competition, and that was the first thing that came to my mind. It’s all about my dog.”

Asked how she got started, Ms. Ballachino said, “I’m from Connecticut, and there was quite a large cook-off in Connecticut. I worked at a technical high school in the culinary department. I got a call from the gentleman who organized that one looking for youth to cook. So he’s talking, talking, talking. I’m like, the heck with the kids, I want to cook. The first two years, I cooked with my kids from school, my students. And from that, it just went on. I just wanted to do it more and more.”

Asked how the day had gone, Ms. Ballachino said it had been very busy. Her partner, Laurie, “hasn’t had a chance to sit down for more than three minutes.”

Attendees expressed similar enthusiasm for Winchendon’s Cook-Off event.

Winchendon resident and chili fan Jill Sackett told the *Courier*, “It was a great day. Nice variety of chili. I was impressed with them. All the vendors were super friendly, and there were even two vegetarian options. Everything ranged – there were sweet, sweet and barbecue, savory, very savory choices, different types of beans, different types of chilies. It was a very enjoyable day, taste testing, going through and getting little flights

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of chili and trying them all out.”

Asked if this was her first Chili Cook-Off, Ms. Sackett said, “No, I had been to one or two others years before, but there has been a gap of time since I had gone, and I was looking forward to getting back to them. And this is one of the big ones. This is one of the best kept secrets in Winchendon, that we managed to get to host a state chili cook-off here in Winchendon. And, you know, the place is just not overrun with people. It should be. It’s a fun time. It’s delicious food and and a good cause. You know, it helps the Kiwanis.”

“It was a gorgeous day, and as a former resident of the Southwest, I was ready to be extra-critical of the cook-off contestants,” Winchendon resident Dani Cutler said. “I was pleasantly surprised over and over. So many tasty (and spicy!) entries, it was difficult to decide who would get most of my quarters.

“In-between taste-testing we sat in the amphitheater and were entertained by excellent blues music. A perfect day. Any larger events in the North-central Mass area need to utilize our Community Park. It’s a perfect multi-use facility.”

Winchendon Kiwanis member and event organizer Cailte Kelley said via email to the *Courier*, “I’d like to thank the Town of Winchendon and

all its departments for coming together to support this annual event. The Winchendon Community Park is such an amazing location and it makes our entire club proud to have been able to show it off to attendees from as close as across the street to as far as New York, New Jersey, Maine and all points in between. We’d also like to thank the tremendous partnership of the Winchendon CAC and the Youth Changemakers. Kiwanis of Winchendon is turning 100 years old and we can’t pull these events off without our members, both past and present so if you’re looking for a way to be involved with the community, we’d be honored to have you. We’re already planning next years event!”

Mr. Kelley also said there were 478 paid admissions for the event. The winning contestants were:

- People’s Choice: Dan Parmenter, Winchendon
- Homestyle: Mario Saccoccio, Ohio
- Chili Verde, green: Justin Martinek
- Veggie: Michael Allsup, Fire Belly, Milton, New Hampshire
- Red Chili: Kurt Leithner, Dirty Kurty, New Jersey

Congratulations to all the winners!



In First Official Update as Interim Superintendent, Charlotte King Fills In the School Committee

by Inanna Arthen

In an extra meeting held on Thursday, July 31, Charlotte King gave her first official update to the School Committee as Interim Superintendent, apologizing for the length—"there's been a lot going on, as you know."

The administration met with Renee Eldridge about the Handle With Care program, which trains staff in how to work with students who may have experienced trauma in their lives that impacts their actions and reactions in the school environment. Ms. Eldridge "has invited us to participate in a round table. We're going to try to do that quarterly, where a number of agencies and board members are going to come, with me and other district leaders, to talk about possible services that we could connect students and families with that are in our region," Ms. King said, adding that it would be "the first that's been done in Winchendon for a number of years."

Another "exciting" piece of news, she said, is that the school district will be working again with the Lynch Leadership Academy. "The grant was rewritten in the fall, and we are participating again. The Lynch Leadership Academy is an academy for leader retention. So it's to provide professional development and coaching to promote leader retention in our district and in area districts...we didn't fully utilize the grant this year and access all of the services that we could have, but we plan on going 100 percent this next year. So that grant and leadership and coaching services come in various levels, depending on what the leaders have participated in before. So some will participate in their micro-academies, where they do some on site [professional development], and some will participate in the coaching. A couple of our principals have done the full Leadership Academy before, so they will just access the coaching this time. It's an unbelievable opportunity, and we're going to start to invite some teacher leaders so that we can really grow people within district, so that when positions do become available, it's people that know the district, it's people that are ready to move up and learn things from the ground up."

Ms. King said that she has connected with a company called Attuned "who will assist us with strategic planning. And that is very exciting for the district, because at least in my estimation, I haven't seen a strategic plan for at least in the time that I've been here. So I think in other districts, the strategic plan is really what drives us forward. And so having that work take place is going to be really exciting. So Attuned was able to connect us with the Bar Foundation, and they're going to partially fund that process for us. So they'll start by helping us get surveys out to all the stakeholders, staff, families, community members, to really see what they have to say and what they've experienced and what they would like to see in a plan going forward. So all voices will be part of this plan, which I think makes it more authentic and more exciting for us."

The Robinson Broadhurst Foundation funded a project to increase safety and ADA accessibility around the entrance to the High School, Ms. King said, and that work should be done by the start of classes on August 27.

The school district will be holding a Back to School Community night on August 21, before that evening's School Committee meeting, Ms. King said. "It will be at G.A.R. Park. The details we have so far, we've invited every community organization that we could think of, so right now, confirmed coming, we have Handle With Care, the Child and Family Wellness Center, Growing Places, Heywood Healthcare Community Based Services, the Beals Library, the Choices program and LUK, in addition to, obviously, our own schools. So that's going to be very exciting."

"We will keep everybody informed and send out community invites," Ms. King continued. "That's kind of a new endeavor that we thought was really important. I think that we have a lot of great things going on in our community, and the feedback that we consistently get is that people don't know how to access these things, or actually don't even know they exist, which is such a shame, because we really do have a wealth of things out there."

The upcoming Leadership Retreat days in the next two days

will work on a District Instructional Priority Plan (DIPP) that focuses on writing and improving student writing skills, Ms. King said.

Ms. King mentioned the Yondr bags, designed to secure students' cell phones during the school day. These were purchased two years ago with grant funds, and fully implemented last year in the middle school; the high school so far has done a "soft rollout." The Massachusetts state legislature has been debating a bill that would make the bags mandatory, or ban cell phones from schools altogether. While the state Senate passed their version of the bill (S.381) on Thursday, July 31, "the House has no plans to pick up the legislation" according to the Boston Globe.

The district will be posting two positions, Ms. King said. One will be a new assistant superintendent. The second will be a Director of Facilities. With the departure of former Department of Public Works Director Brian Croteau, who held a dual position serving the DPW and the schools, the district will be returning to its previous Facilities model. "This position would be under the supervision of the school business manager," Ms. King said. "This person will evaluate custodial and maintenance staff. They will create maintain performance standards and training for all custodians and maintenance staff. They will coordinate an inventory control, maintenance schedule and work order system for building maintenance requests, and they'll act as a liaison between the custodians, the maintenance and building principles. They'll also assist with on site construction oversight and coordination with vendors."

Some changes and tweaks have come up with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) project. Ms. King explained that as they work with the project manager and architect, it was found that the windows at Memorial Elementary aren't old enough to meet the funding requirements, so they've been taken off the proposal. School Committee Chair Mike Barbaro added that state law now requires that new roofs be "solar ready," which the high school roof is not, so that will involve some changes.

Mr. Barbaro told Ms. King that they will have a contract

ready to discuss at the next School Committee meeting, which will be next Thursday, August 7.

During the closing comments by the Committee members, member Tara Teixeira said, "I wanted to say that misinformation can be extremely dangerous. I was in a taxi and I heard information about the school district that wasn't true. And I think that we are turning a page onto a new chapter of unity and really putting energy into what's going to be the best for the kids. And I think that if anyone is confused about what's going on in the school system, we are always looking for substitute teachers and help. So if you'd like to have a better understanding of what's going on, getting involved in any way, shape or form, is always welcomed. We want people to be involved and to know what's happening, so that the opinions and the things that are being talked about are educated and well informed, because it can cause a little bit of panic, and for the kids as well, and they don't need to be panicked. They need to know that we're all unified."

Picking up on this, Mr. Barbaro said, "As far as the stuff that was brought to my attention, as all of you are aware, we are School Committee members, we're elected, and sometimes things we say, whether it's our opinion or not, our opinion can be misinterpreted as part of the School Committee. So you really need to choose your words carefully when you put stuff out online, because it causes a lot of anxiety, to the point where some people have to reach out to find out if something's true or not. It is not true, the statement made was totally misinformed...This district is moving forward. We have some great news with our Special Ed department moving forward, and some of the great work that's been done there, and some of the great work that's going on in our schools."

"So please, all of you be aware of when you make statements online that you are an individual, but because you're an elected position, people think you're speaking as a School Committee member, and you're always 'on'. So please choose your words carefully when you go online, it can cause great angst within the staff and the public and cause people to panic."

VETERINARY

continued from page 1

special permit for Tranquility Veterinary Care, with stipulations as discussed about controlling noise, hours of operation, exterior lighting and so on.

According to her bio on the Gardner Animal Care Center website, Dr. Cox, who is listed as Medical Director, "is originally from CT and joined Gardner Animal Care Center in 2022 when she added exotic companion animal species to our list of patients. She received her undergraduate degree from Boston University and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from North Carolina State University. Dr. Cox works with dogs and cats as well

as a wide variety of exotic species including reptiles, birds, and small mammals. She is experienced in husbandry, handling, medicine, and surgery of all exotic species.

"Dr. Cox shares her home with her husband and their 'Island of Misfit Toys,' which includes two dogs, a one-eyed cat, a guinea pig, and three pet store-reject Budgies.

"Her special interests include backyard poultry, soft tissue surgery, and wildlife medicine. Outside of veterinary medicine, she enjoys playing pool as well as hiking and kayaking."



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).

Winchendon Community Park 86 Ingleside Dr

Friday September 12



Sponsored by
Winchendon Parks and
Rec

FREE!



MOVIE NIGHT

WICKED

SING-ALONG

Movie Night at the Park
Friday, September 12th
Gates Open: 6:30 PM
Movie Starts: At Dusk
Winchendon Community Park
88 Ingleside Rd, Winchendon

Come dressed as your favorite character.

Bring a blanket, snacks, and your whole crew for a family-friendly movie night under the stars!

Saturday September 13



Farm Harvest Social
September 13, 2025
6:00 to 10:00

Adult Activities and People to Meet:

- Local IPA Bar featuring Moon Hill Brewery and the season's best pumpkin brews from + Massachusetts
- Sangria Stand with farm fresh flavored organic wine
- Main Bar with a special menu celebrating Fall Flavors
- Hot Mulled Cider & Apple Cider Donuts
- Ask all of your farm questions to MDAR representatives
- Join Michael Del Rio, farmer teacher at The Farm School in Orange
- Meet the "Farming is Life" and "The Farm Stand" crews who bring you locally grown, regeneratively farmed organic produce every day!

Farm Harvest Social Activities for Teens and Kids

- Boba Tea Bar featuring TikTok trending beverages
- Seasonal Mocktails and Handmade Lemonade made by our teen Mixologists
- Hot Chocolate, Apple Cider & Apple Cider Donuts
- Caramel Apples & Cotton Candy
- Play Clue Hunt and win \$100
- Bubble Machines, chalk painting, corn hole
- Face Painting

The Amphitheater at Winchendon Community Park
**86 Ingleside Road
Winchendon, MA 01475**
www.sunsetsocialsma.com brought to you by Winchendon Parks and Recreation and The Farm Stand
or 978.863.1010

Saturday September 20

September 20, 2025
HARVEST FESTIVAL
Winchendon Community Park
88 Ingleside Rd

04.00 PM - 9.00 PM

Music from
Winchendon's Own New Release
and Maggie Neff

Only \$10 per person
Food, Beer & Wine

Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Rec



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 September 25



BINGO
At the Bowling Alley

Get ready to shout "BINGO" at this fun-filled event.

5 Summer Drive, Winchendon
4TH THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

HOSTED BY
TOWN OF WINCHENDON PARKS & RECREATION

Get ready to shout "BINGO" with your friends at this fun-filled event.

Beer & Wine For Purchase

Saturday September 27

Winchendon Parks Commission
Presents:

**CENTRAL MASS
IRISH FESTIVAL**

Slainte The Pourmen Devri

Irish Dancers Harper Jen O'Shea
Rogue & Raven Pipes & Drums
Open Irish Music Seisun Irish Vendor Village
Raffles Kids Activities
Irish Line Dancing Irish Food & Drink

September 27th 2025
12 PM - 8 PM

**Winchendon
Community Park
Amphitheatre**

Winchendon, MA
CentralMassIrishFest.com





SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 2

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

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 3

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

Teen Cooking Class
3:00-5:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, 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 SEPTEMBER 4

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 Macaroni with ham and salad by Darlene Rossi. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 5

Mick Lorden at the Snowbound Club
7:00-10:00 p.m. Join us for a night of live music by the legendary Mick Lordan. No cover charge. Cash bar available. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 9

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 SEPTEMBER 10

Lunch and Art Gallery Tour at the Park
12:00-2:30 p.m. Van departs from the Senior Center for the Park Theatre in Jaffrey at 11:30 a.m. and returns at 3:30 p.m. Enjoy lunch in Jaffrey along with a virtual art gallery tour in the theatre auditorium. For more information, contact the Senior Center. Sponsored by the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11

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 TBA. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12

Movie Night at the Park: Wicked Sing-Along
7:00 p.m. Free to all! Join us for a magical evening under the stars! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and favorite snacks for a family-friendly sing-along screening of *Wicked* that everyone will enjoy! Gates open at 7:00 p.m., movie starts at dusk. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Line Dancing Lessons with Marylee
7:00-8:30 p.m. Beginner lessons and open to anyone who wants to join. No need to sign up in advance. \$10 per person to join. Wear comfortable clothing. Cash bar available no outside drinks allowed. Come join the fun! At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13

Fall Jam Fest at the Snowbound Club
1:00-8:00 p.m. Featuring The Soul Sisters, Fern & Friends, Rusty Truck Band & Roadhouse Romeos! \$20 cover at the door, \$15 in advance. Rain date of Sunday the 14th. Concession & cash bar available. Bring a lawn chair. Join the fun! There will be a 50/50 Raffle and Basket Raffles to benefit our member Anthony St. Pierre who is recovering from an accident. Thank you for your support. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Farm Harvest Social
6:00-10:00 p.m. Celebrate the Season! Embrace the cozy vibes of fall and the richness of the harvest with Sunset Socials and Farming is Life! Savor pumpkin-flavored treats - Warm up with spiced beverages - Enjoy live music - Take part in fun, seasonal activities for all ages - It's the perfect way to welcome autumn—filled with comfort, community, and the crisp joy of the season. To Register & For More Information see www.sunsetsocialsma.com/event/farm-harvest-social-4/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.

Laugh Your Tail Off Comedy Night - Benefiting Ahimsa Haven Animal Rescue
7:00 p.m. A fun night including silent auction and raffles, with comedians Lenny Clark and Jason Merrill. Tickets \$40 for Premiere Seating, \$30 for regular seating, at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/laugh-your-tail-off-comedy-show-tickets-1442653127339>. At the Gardner Fish & Gun Club, 538 Clark St, Gardner, MA. MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

Growing Places Mobile Market
10:30-11:30 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17

Teen Cooking Class
3:00-5:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Winchendon Cultural Council Meet & Greet
6:00-8:00 p.m. Meet the Cultural Council members, learn about the grant cycle! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18

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

Pancake Brunch
11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Movie Night at the Beals
6:00-9:30 p.m. Screening this month: *Sinners*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20

Sensory Friendly Browsing Hour at the Beals
9:00-10:00 a.m. Part of the Beals Library's Autism Inclusion initiative, this is a quiet time for people on the spectrum and their families to explore the library. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Harvest Festival at Winchendon Community Park
4:00-9:00 p.m. Celebrate the season at Winchendon's annual Harvest Festival, a free evening of live music—including a special performance by headliner New Release and a performance by Local Musician Maggie Neff—plus mouthwatering food trucks, local vendors, and festive fall fun the whole community will enjoy! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

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

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 21

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 SEPTEMBER 22

Music with Bob Jordan
11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

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.

Toy Town Elementary Open House
6:00-7:00 p.m. At Toy Town Elementary School, 175 Grove St, Winchendon.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 23

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.

Murdock Middle High School Open House
6:00-7:00 p.m. At Murdock Middle High School, 3 Memorial Dr, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24

Music with Bob Jordan
10:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

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

Zumbini
11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Come to the Senior Center with your little ones and join the Zumbini group! Please call Mary Lee at 978-870-8041 to reserve your spot. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

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.

Classic Movie Night at the Beals
3:00-5:30 p.m. Screening this month: *Jaws*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, 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.

BER 2025



THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 25

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

Winchendon Fair Carnival
Times TBA. Operated by Fanelli Amusements. Sponsored by Clark Memorial YMCA. At Clark YMCA Soccer Field, 155 Central 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 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!

Beals Prize for Poetry Award Night
7:00-8:30 p.m. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 26

Winchendon Fair Carnival
Times TBA. Operated by Fanelli Amusements. Sponsored by Clark Memorial YMCA. At Clark YMCA Soccer Field, 155 Central St, Winchendon.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 27

The 2025 Central Mass. Irish Festival at Winchendon Community Park
12:00 p.m. (ticketed) Irish roots in the heart of New England. This fall, the best in Irish entertainment comes to The Robinson Broadhurst Foundation Performing Arts Amphitheater for the first annual Central Mass. Irish Festival. Three of New England’s premiere Irish bands, dancers, harps, pipes and drums, Irish food and drink, Irish vendors, and an open trad seison come together for an all day celebration of all things Irish at a brand new lakeside amphitheatre. For more info, see <https://www.centralmassirishfestival.com/>. Early bird tickets \$15 per person. Tickets (and vendor applications) at <https://www.eventeny.com/events/central-mass-irish-festival-2025-19621/>. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Winchendon Fair Carnival
Times TBA. Operated by Fanelli Amusements. Sponsored by Clark Memorial YMCA. At Clark YMCA Soccer Field, 155 Central St, Winchendon.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 28

Winchendon Fair Carnival
Times TBA. Operated by Fanelli Amusements. Sponsored by Clark Memorial YMCA. At Clark YMCA Soccer Field, 155 Central St, Winchendon.

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 for information, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

TUESDAYS

Strength Training with Mary Lee
8:30-9:15 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.

Pickleball - Open Courts
9:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. 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.

Taste of Home Lunch
11:00 a.m. Enjoy a homecooked lunch made by volunteers! 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

Toy Town Trolley
9:00 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. Circles around town and up to Rindge Rte 202 shopping areas and back. Sponsored by the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon, call 978-297-3155 for more info.

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.



Town Events

Winchendon Cultural Council Meet & Greet

September 17, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Meet the Cultural Council members, learn about the grant cycle! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Toy Town Elementary Open House

September 22, 6:00-7:00 p.m. At Toy Town Elementary School, 175 Grove St, Winchendon.

Murdock Middle High School Open House

September 23, 6:00-7:00 p.m. At Murdock Middle High School, 3 Memorial Dr, Winchendon.

For Kids

Winchendon Fair Carnival

September 25, 26, 27 & 28, Times TBA. Operated by Fanelli Amusements. Sponsored by Clark Memorial YMCA. At Clark YMCA Soccer Field, 155 Central St, Winchendon.

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.

Excursions

Fitchburg Art Museum and Farmers Market Trip

September 4, 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 and Art Gallery Tour at the Park

September 10, 12:00-2:30 p.m. Van departs from the Senior Center for the Park Theatre in Jaffrey at 11:30 a.m. and returns at 3:30 p.m. Enjoy lunch in Jaffrey along with a virtual art gallery tour in the theatre auditorium. For more information, contact the Senior Center. Sponsored by the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Recreation

Pickleball - Open Courts

Mon-Fri, 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

September 25, 7:00 p.m. Join Winchendon Parks and Recreation for Bingo at the HUB!

Toy Town Swing at The HUB

September 21, 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

Old Murdock Senior Center
52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon
978-297-3155
facebook.com/oldmurdock

The HUB / Winchendon CAC
5 Summer Dr, Winchendon
978-287-1667
www.the-hub.org
facebook.com/winchendoncac

UU Church of Winchendon
126 Central St, Winchendon
978-297-0554
uucw.ncmuuc.org

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church
52 Spruce St, Winchendon
978-297-0280
www.heartofmary.net

Winchendon American Legion Post #193
295 School St., Winchendon
978-297-0754

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

Murdock Middle High School
3 Memorial Dr, Winchendon
978-297-1256
www.winchendonk12.org

Clark Memorial YMCA
155 Central St
978-297-9622
www.theclarkymca.org

Food and Meals

Vet to Vet Cafe

September 9, 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.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

Setember 11 & 25, 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

Tuesdays, 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

September 16, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Fresh local produce. SNAP and HIP accepted. at Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Entertainment

Mick Lorden at the Snowbound Club

September 5, 7:00-10:00 p.m. Join us for a night of live music by the legendary Mick Lordan. No cover charge. Cash bar available. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Denis Cormier Concert

September 11, 10:45 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Movie Night at the Park: Wicked Sing-Along

September 12, 7:00 p.m. Free to all! Join us for a magical evening under the stars! Bring your blankets, lawn chairs, and favorite snacks for a family-friendly sing-along screening of *Wicked* that everyone will enjoy! Gates open at 7:00 p.m., movie starts at dusk. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Farm Harvest Social

September 13, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Celebrate the Season! Embrace the cozy vibes of fall and the richness of the harvest with Sunset Socials and Farming is Life! Savor pumpkin-flavored treats - Warm up with spiced beverages - Enjoy live acoustic music - Take part in fun, seasonal activities for all ages - It's the perfect way to welcome autumn—filled with comfort, community, and the crisp joy of the season. To Register & For More Information see <https://www.sunsetsocialsma.com/event/farm-harvest-social-4/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.

Fall Jam Fest at the Snowbound Club

September 13, 1:00-8:00 p.m. Featuring The Soul Sisters, Fern & Friends, Rusty Truck Band & Roadhouse Romeos! \$20 cover at the door, \$15 in advance. Rain date of Sunday the 14th. Concession & cash bar available. Bring a lawn chair. Join the fun! There will be a 50/50 Raffle and Basket Raffles to benefit our member Anthony St. Pierre who is recovering from an accident. Thank you for your support.At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Harvest Festival at Winchendon Community Park

September 20, 4:00-9:00 p.m. Celebrate the season at Winchendon's annual Harvest Festival, a free evening of live music—including a special performance by headliner New Release and a performance by Local Musician Maggie Neff—plus mouthwatering food trucks, local vendors, and festive fall fun the whole community will enjoy! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Laugh Your Tail Off Comedy Night - Benefiting Ahimsa Haven Animal Rescue

September 13, 7:00 p.m. A fun night including silent auction and raffles, with comedians Lenny Clark and Jason Merrill. Tickets \$40 for Premiere Seating, \$30 for regular seating, at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/laugh-your-tail-off-comedy-show-tickets-1442653127339>. At the Gardner Fish & Gun Club, 538 Clark St, Gardner, MA.

Movie Night at the Beals

September 18, 6:00-9:30 p.m. Screening this month: *Sinners*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Classic Movie Night at the Beals

September 24, 3:00-5:30 p.m. Screening this month: *Jaws*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

The 2025 Central Mass. Irish Festival at Winchendon Community Park

September 27, 12:00 p.m. (ticketed) Irish roots in the heart of New England. This fall, the best in Irish entertainment comes to The Robinson Broadhurst Foundation Performing Arts Amphitheater for the first annual Central Mass. Irish Festival. Three of New England's premiere Irish bands, dancers, harps, pipes and drums, Irish food and drink, Irish vendors, and an open trad seisu come together for an all day celebration of all things Irish at a brand new lakeside amphitheatre. For more info, see <https://www.centralmassirishfestival.com/>. Early bird tickets \$15 per person. Tickets (and vendor applications) at <https://www.eventeny.com/events/central-mass-irish-festival-2025-19621/>. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks and Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

For Teens

Teen Cooking Class

September 3 & 17, 3:00-5:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Teen GSA Meeting at the Beals

September 3, 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..

Teen Night at the HUB

September 20, 5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr.

Teen Dungeons & Dragons

September 9 & 23, 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.

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

Winchendon News

First Back to School Bazaar Draws Families and Organizers For Meet and Greet Opportunities in G.A.R. Park

by Inanna Arthen

The Winchendon Public Schools hosted what they hope will be an annual event, the first “Back to School Bazaar” on Thursday afternoon, August 21. From the event start time of 3:00 p.m, families crowded around the gazebo at G.A.R. Park, talking to representatives from the schools and organizations that had set up tables around the gazebo. Perhaps the fully extended Fire Department ladder and bucket truck, visible for blocks around, helped attract the curious—at one point Town Manager Bill McKinney was seen stepping off the bucket. School staff who helped organize the event were wearing cheerful blue t-shirts. The Murdock High School football team tossed a ball across the open lawn nearby.

Organizations with tables, most of them covered with colorful brochures and flyers (and some with candy and “swag”) included Murdock Middle School, Growing Places Inc. with information about home delivery of fresh produce, Memorial Elementary School with free children’s books, ABA Centers of America, Heywood Health Care with information about the Handle With Care Initiative, L.U.K., Beals Memorial Library, Toy Town Elementary with supplies lists for each grade, Winchendon Fire Department, PPAL, ParentChild+ and the Child & Family Wellness Center. Thumbs Up Barbershop was offering free back-to-school haircuts with a line that ran down the walk from the gazebo to Murdock Avenue. A table filled with free school supplies such as binders and notebooks was quickly emptied.

Amidst all the busy bustle, the *Courier* caught Kelsey Garcia, Director of Special Education for Winchendon Public Schools and chief organizer of the whole event, for some comments.



Professionals from Thumbs Up Barbershop give free back-to-school haircuts
Photo by Inanna Arthen

Asked how the school administration came up with this idea, Ms. Garcia said, “Mrs. King, our new superintendent, and I had had many conversations, because there’s so many great resources in our community. And I think the consistent feedback was that the school and the community really need to link up and partner to move forward together. So we just started thinking of all the community partners we had, and what great resources they are for our families. And then we had reached out, and people started jumping at the opportunity, so we wanted to run with it.”

She went on, “The Town Manager, we have police and fire representatives, a lot of our community partners. So our health center that we actually have based out of the High School is here. We have Handle With Care, our family resource center. Thumbs up Barbershop has been great. They’re donating the free haircuts. They’re doing some back to school body art and giving out free resources, so it’s been great. Our table of free school supplies got cleaned out. So we’re excited. It’s a great event.”

Asked how they connected with Thumbs Up Barbershop, Ms. Garcia said, “we had had the idea—they do great social media advertising, and I see that they’re very involved in their community. So with the new shop in Winchendon, I had reached out and they instantly wanted to partner to come with us.”

Asked if this event would continue, Ms. Garcia said, “I keep saying it’s our ‘first annual’ because we just want to build and grow and continue to do this. It’s really what our community needs. So we’re excited for this to be the first one and see what the years to come have to bring.”



Beals Memorial Library technician Patti Stanko (left) and Library Director Manuel King host the library’s info table
Photo by Inanna Arthen

Town Manager Bill McKinney Named Head of U.S. Contingent for World Scout Jamboree

by Inanna Arthen

“I was trying to keep it quiet,” Town Manager Bill McKinney said to the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on Monday, August 11—but no such luck! Winchendon Scout troop leader Dr. Ryan Forsythe, Dr. Maureen Ward and Winchendon Scout Mason Forsythe came forward to “out” the Town Manager and make sure he got the acknowledgement he deserves.

Dr. Forsythe began, “So Scouting in Winchendon is robust. We have Girl Scouts. We have Scouting America Boy Scouts, and we have co-ed troops here in Winchendon, and for a town of 10,000 and change, to have so many Scouting opportunities and so many Scouts, really is impressive. Local Scouts do a lot for every community, and certainly here in Winchendon, but Scouting is definitely worldwide. The Scouting Jamboree takes place every year to recognize Scouts from all over the globe. The world Scout Jamboree, by the World Organization of the Scout movement, is one of the largest international youth education events in the world.

“So this is definitely a Scouting event, but on the scale of what we do for leadership and education of youth worldwide in all countries, this is one of the largest events. It’s held every four years in a different country, bringing together tens of thousands of Scouts from around the globe. The Jamboree focuses on promoting peace, mutual understanding and developing leadership and life skills. Scouts between the ages of 14 and 16, like the one we have here with us tonight, from various countries, are organized into contingents and participate in a wide variety of activities, including things you would expect like outdoor adventures, learning opportunities, cultural exchanges most currently, the 25th World Jamboree took place in Saemangeum, South Korea, in 2023 and the next World Jamboree, the next enormous educational event for youth, is going to take place in 2027 in Gdańsk, Poland.”

Dr. Ward then picked up the narrative with, “So when you have World Jamboree, each country designates a person to lead their country’s Scouts. The head of the contingent helps to coordinate events, to organize their country and participants, and this person needs to be able to handle all the issues and the stress that comes with this, with diplomacy and patience. The person selected to head the United States contingent to the World Jamboree in Poland in 2027 is recognized for his dedication to Scouting, his support of youth programming, his effective coordination and organizational skills and definitely his patience and diplomacy. I’d like to congratulate Mr. Bill McKinney, our Town Manager, on being elected to that position.”

A blushing Mr. McKinney thanked everyone as the entire room gave him a standing ovation.

“We’re expecting probably 1200 to 1500 people going, from all over the United States, over to Poland in 2027,” he said. “So yeah, it was quite an honor to be chosen to head up the group. I’m actually heading over to Poland next month, having a head of contingent meeting so they can meet the heads of all the other countries that will be there. As I mentioned, they’re expecting about 45,000 from all over the world, 140 different countries, to be there. In fact I just had an email today with the embassy over in Poland, as we try to anticipate anything that could go wrong, from someone losing their passport to things happening, and trying to get out in front of those. I was a Scoutmaster in Korea at the last World Jamboree, and they had a call to head the contingent going to Poland, and so I threw my hat in the ring and got chosen. So every night, on the way home from work, I’m making calls to people about Poland.”

Board Chair Andrew Beauvais said, “Congratulations. And hey, we’re making waves all over the world from Winchendon.”

Second Chance to Host Low-Cost Fitchburg Pet Vaccine Clinic September 13

Clinic Honors the Memory of Jeffrey Stephens of Leominster

FITCHBURG, MA (August 7, 2025) - Pet owners can now register for Second Chance Animal Services’ upcoming low-cost pet vaccine clinic on Saturday, September 13, at the Fitchburg Fire Department Headquarters. The event is held in honor of Jeffrey Stephens of Leominster, who co-founded the Fitchburg clinic series in 2011. The clinic is made possible in partnership with Be PAWsitive Therapy Pets and Friends of Fitchburg DOGS Inc.

Rabies vaccines will be offered for just \$5, the distemper/parvo combo vaccine is free, and microchips are available for \$22. This special pricing is made possible in part by the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, and Petco Love.

Second Chance CEO and founder Sheryl Blancato says the clinic is part of the nonprofit’s commitment to keeping pets healthy and in their homes. “We know that cost can be a barrier when it comes to pet care. Offering low-cost vaccines and microchips helps protect pets from preventable diseases and ensures they have a greater chance of being reunited with their family if they ever get lost.”

The Clinic is named after the late Jeffrey P. Stephens, who worked for the Board of Health in Leominster, and previously in Fitchburg. After his passing, Deana Stephens, Jeff’s widow said, “Along with all the work he did for the Fitchburg Board of Health, Jeff was extremely proud to help establish an affordable vaccine clinic for residents and their pets. Not only did he do whatever was possible for people, but his caring nature extended to their four-legged companions. Our family is comforted that his legacy continues because of Second Chance Animal Services’ long commitment to providing low-cost vaccines for pets in our community.”

Jeff Stephens began the low-cost vaccine clinic in 2011, and the partnership with Fitchburg Fire Department continues. “We love to help a great cause,” says Fitchburg Fire Department Chief Dante Suarez. “Fitchburg Fire Department is very happy to help support pet owners keeping their pets healthy.”

Fitchburg dog owners can also license their dogs on-site with the City Clerk’s office—\$9 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$15 for intact dogs.

The clinic will take place from 9 a.m. to noon at the Fitchburg Fire Department Headquarters, 33 North Street. The clinic is open to pets from any community. Space is limited, and advance registration is strongly encouraged. Limited same-day availability may be offered. To register, visit www.secondchanceanimals.org/scasconnect-north-brookfield/.

Theatre at the Mount Offering “Three-Pack” Ticket Deal

If you love musicals, you can now get a three pack of shows in one deal from Theatre at the Mount. For just \$70—a 10% discount from regular admission—you can reserve your seats for *Anything Goes* in October, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* in November/December, and *Young Frankenstein* in February/March. To purchase your three-pack, go to mwcc.universitytickets.com/w/packages/Packages.aspx.

Interested in being in a show yourself? Auditions are open and information on upcoming auditions can be found at mwcc.edu/campus-life/tam/auditions/. Auditions for *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* will be held September 2, 3 and 4 at the Mount. Theatre at the Mount auditions and roles are open to ALL.

Theatre at the Mount is part of MWCC, 444 Green St, Gardner, MA.

Ashburnham Rainbow Dinners for Seniors Celebrates 3rd Anniversary

Three years ago, Pastor Liz Magill and members of the Ashburnham Community Church observed LGBTQ+ seniors often felt isolated in the rural communities of Central Massachusetts. In an effort to address this issue the church wanted to provide a venue where they could come together, socialize, and enjoy a nice meal. They came together to devise a plan to accomplish those goals.

Hoping to reach out to the larger community the congregation invited members of the LGBTQ+ in the area to plan monthly senior dinners for LGBTQ+ community at the Ashburnham Community Church. The group met during the Spring and Summer to begin planning. They decided dinners would be held on the second Friday of each month, with the exception of January, February and March. They would serve lunch these months for the safety of our seniors who would not need to drive in winter conditions at night. All dinners would have a special theme.

The group planned an outdoor BBQ for July to cap off the year. The group of volunteers would take the month of August off.

After several months of planning, the first meal was served on Friday, September 9, 2022. Twenty people attended the “Italian Night” dinner,

Historical Piano Concerts Celebrate 40th Season in Ashburnham



Pamela Liu
Photo courtesy of Historical Piano
Concerts, Inc.



Hwaen Ch’uqi
Photo courtesy of Historical Piano
Concerts, Inc.

Ashburnham, MA - Sunday, September 7 marks the opening of Historical Piano Concerts’ fortieth fall season, with violin and piano works by composers Franz Schubert and Felix Mendelssohn, and piano solos by Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann. Pianist Hwaen Ch’uqi makes his third appearance in the concert series; violinist Pamela Liu, her first. The musicians’ title, “Duo Milü” salutes their two cultures – Pamela, originally from Taiwan, and Hwaen, an Inca Indian – since Milü is Mandarin for “Perú”. For this program, Hwaen Ch’uqi will play the ca. 1830 piano by Tröndlin of Leipzig from The Frederick Historical Piano Collection. Pamela Liu’s violin was made by George Craske (1795-1888) Birmingham, England. Her bow is by François Lotte (1889-1970), Mirecourt, France.

This fall’s seven concerts will continue every Sunday at 3:00, September 7th - October 19th at New Dawn Arts Center/Ashburnham Community Church, 84 Main Street (Rte. 12) Ashburnham, at Chapel Street. Enter at the rear of the building, from Chapel Street. The building is wheelchair accessible. The concerts will offer a variety of programs: solo piano, piano with voice, and with violin and cello. Admission is \$20.00 per adult, children and students, free. A \$100.00 season pass entitles the holder to attend all seven fall concerts for the price of five, and includes one guest pass. For details about programs and musicians, please visit the website, www.FrederickCollection.org.

The Historical Piano Concerts, begun in 1985, are built around the Frederick Collection of European grand pianos by leading makers, about 1790 – 1928. Each pianist chooses a piano from the collection, matching their musical selections to the time and place of the piano. Located in Ashburnham’s former Stevens Library building, the piano collection is open by appointment for guided tours, with musical samples played on pianos of different periods. Guests are invited to play the pianos (with some supervision by the owners, Edmund and Patricia Frederick of Ashburnham). Visitors have come from across the US and around the world.

Contact: Patricia Frederick, concert manage at piano.fred@juno.com or by phone, (978) 827-6232.

Historical Piano Concerts, Inc. is a publicly supported nonprofit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code. Donations are fully tax-deductible.

with high praises to the volunteers for bringing this opportunity to socialize and enjoy some delicious food.

Over the course of the year, an average of 20 - 30 seniors attended the dinners and lunches. The guests consistently gave glowing reviews of the meals, with thanks to the volunteers.

There are currently 10 active volunteers in the Rainbow group. They generously give of their time, and money, to provide this service to the senior LGBTQ+ communities in the North Central area.

The Rainbow Dinners (and Lunches) are for LGBTQIA+ Seniors (50+) and their friends and families. They are held at the New Dawn Art Center, 84 Main Street, Ashburnham, MA. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. for the dinners. The dinners are funded by the Ashburnham Community Church and the Montachusett Suicide Prevention Task Force. Donations are gratefully accepted but not required – meals are free to all.

Diners are asked to RSVP so that the kitchen crew can plan the amount of food. To RSVP, call 978-827-5553 or email ashburnhamcommunitychurch@gmail.com.

Upcoming dinner themes are:

- Friday, September 12: Italian Night
- Friday, October 10: Soups and Stews
- Friday, November 14: Harvest Dinner
- Friday, December 12: Comfort Foods

Regional News and Events

Gardening

Freshen Up Your Late Season Gardens and Containers with Strawflowers



Peachy Keen, Pink and White Granvia strawflowers combine nicely creating a colorful container garden.

Photo courtesy of Suntory Flowers

by Melinda Myers

As summer is winding down and fall approaches, your thoughts may turn to mums, asters, and pansies. Consider changing things up this year by adding deer-resistant strawflowers to your late summer and fall containers and gardens.

Grow strawflowers (*Xerochrysum bracteatum* formerly *Bracteantha*) in full to part sun and moist well-drained soil. They are heat and cold tolerant, grown as annuals in most areas, and short-lived perennials in zones 8 to 10. You'll enjoy continuous blooming and visiting pollinators from spring through summer and into fall until frost. Plant some now to replace fading summer annuals, freshen up your late season garden or create fall containers. The range of flower colors makes them easy to include in your late season displays.

Plant strawflowers in the garden or a container with drainage holes and fill with a quality potting mix. Select a pot, at least 12" in diameter to avoid the plant becoming rootbound and drying out too quickly. Although the flowers look dry, the plants prefer moist well-drained soil. Check containers daily and water thoroughly as needed. Those growing in the garden should be watered thoroughly when the top few inches of soil are crumbly and moist.

Strawflowers unique blossoms look and feel dry to the touch, making them extra fun for kids to grow. This straw-like texture of the flowers inspired the common name. You may also hear them referred to as everlasting flowers since they don't wilt readily when picked and retain their shape and color for years once dried.

Granvias (suntoryflowers.com) are larger, vigorous plants with much bigger blooms than other strawflowers, making them excellent thrillers in containers and showy in the garden. You can find these supersized strawflowers in gold, pink, white, Crimson Sun, Harvest Orange, Peachy Keen and Orange Flame.

Set a pot of colorful strawflowers among your pumpkins, ornamental squash and other fall décor. Combine them in containers and garden beds with other fall favorites like ornamental kale and cabbage, grasses, ornamental peppers, pansies, calibrachos, and more.

Grow plenty so you'll have enough to enjoy as cut flowers and even more to dry for crafting wreaths, garland, flower spheres, and adding to dried arrangements. Harvest strawflowers when two to three layers of their petal-like bracts have unfolded but the center is still tightly closed. The flowers will continue to open as they dry so waiting too long results in a more open bloom. Harvest regularly to encourage even more flowers.

Recut the stems at an angle and place the strawflowers in fresh water and condition them in a cool, dark place for a few hours or overnight when using in fresh arrangements.

Hang the stems in bundles upside down in a warm, dry place when preserving them dried. You may opt to remove the stem and replace it with florist wire if you plan on using the dried strawflowers in a wreath or an

arrangement where a stem is needed. As the flower dries, it secures the wire in place. Remove the flowers from the stems once dried if you plan on using just the flowers in crafting projects.

Discover the beauty and many uses of strawflowers this fall. Then next season, start early and grow even more to enjoy all season long.

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 was commissioned by Suntory Flowers for her expertise in writing this article. Myers' web site is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Financial Focus®

Life insurance: Protecting what matters most

September is Life Insurance Awareness Month and the perfect time to consider whether you have adequate coverage to protect your loved ones. While no one likes to think about what would happen if they weren't around, doing so is an act of love.

Life insurance is fundamentally about protecting your loved ones should something happen to you. If you pass away, your family will not only face the challenges of grief and loss but they could also find themselves financially strapped. Life insurance can help provide them with financial security in the event you no longer can.

Who needs life insurance: You're a good candidate if you have a spouse or partner who depends on your income or if there are children or other loved ones whom you support. Insurance protection can also be a solution if you have outstanding debts like a mortgage, credit cards or a car loan, or if you simply don't want to burden your loved ones with your final expenses.

Insurance through work: While many people have life insurance through their employers, this coverage may not be enough for you, depending on your situation. Among employers who offer group life insurance, only 2% offer more than two times the employee's annual salary — essentially just two years of income — according to the Guardian's 2023 Workplace Benefits Study. And remember that it's only good as long as you're employed there. With all this in mind, many people purchase individual insurance as a supplement to their workplace coverage.

How much: You might hear that you need life insurance equal to about seven to 10 times your pretax annual salary. That's not a bad "ballpark" figure, but not everyone is playing in the same ballpark. To get a true sense of how much of a death benefit is right for you, use the "L-I-F-E" guide to calculate your needs:

- **Liabilities:** Will your family need to pay off a mortgage, credit cards, car loan or other debt?
- **Income:** Will your family need to replace your income for a period of years?
- **Final expenses:** Do you have the resources to cover funeral and burial expenses?
- **Education needs:** Do you need to put children through a private school or college?

Which type: You can choose between two basic types of life insurance: term and permanent. As its name suggests, term insurance is designed to provide coverage for a designated period, such as 10, 15 or 20 years. In general, term insurance is quite affordable for most people, especially when they buy policies as young adults. On the other hand, permanent insurance, such as whole life or universal life, is usually considerably more expensive because in addition to providing a death benefit, your premiums build cash value. In choosing between term and permanent insurance, you'll want to evaluate several issues, such as how long you think you'll need coverage and how much annual premium you can afford to pay.

Life insurance needs can change over time, so it's important to review your coverage every three to five years or after major life events like marriage or birth of a child. Consider working with a financial advisor who can look at your complete financial situation and help you choose a policy that truly fits your family's needs. Taking action sooner rather than later could be one of the most important gifts you give your loved ones.



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MassDOT Hosting Virtual Public Hearing on Improvements to Blair Square

On Wednesday, September 10, at 6:00 p.m., A Virtual Design Public Hearing will be hosted on the MassDOT website to present the design for the proposed project in Winchendon, MA.

The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

The proposed consists of 11-foot travel lanes, delineated turn lanes, 5-foot sidewalk adjacent to a 5.5-foot unidirectional bicycle lane. A 4-foot buffer is proposed on both sides of Front Street (Route 12/202) throughout most of the project limits. The project includes pavement resurfacing within limits of work. It also includes the installation of Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) at midblock crosswalks as well as construction of ADA/AAB compliant pedestrian curb ramps at these crossings. Pedestrian facilities are proposed on both sides of Front Street and Central Street and north side of Spring Street.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The town is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT’s policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 612771. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT’s Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

This hearing will be hosted, or a cancellation announcement posted, on the MassDOT website at https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events?_page=1.

The flyer for the event may be viewed at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massdot-hearing-flyer-winchendon-91025/download>



Seen strutting its stuff at the Parks & Recreation “Classic Cruise Night” on Saturday, August 23 in the Winchendon Community Park: this glossy, mint condition ivory-colored 1965 Plymouth Fury sedan was its owner’s grandfather’s pride and joy. And it’s still on the road, engine purring like a kitten. They don’t make ‘em like this anymore!

For more great photos of classic cars on display, see the August 28-September 4 online *Winchendon Courier*!

Photo by Inanna Arthen

Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area Offers Free Webinar Series on Developing and Sustaining Education Programs for School Audiences

DEVENS, MA, August 19, 2025 - Registration is now open for Heritage in Action: Engaging the Next Generation through Educational Programs and Activities, a three-part webinar series hosted by the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area this September.

The informational series is designed to support cultural, environmental and history organizations in developing and sustaining education programs for school audiences; a recommendation put forth in a recent comprehensive assessment of the educational opportunities available to students in the Heritage Area conducted for Freedom’s Way by Elisabeth Nevins of Seed/Ed Consulting.

Webinar topics include school program development for K-12 students, youth and family audience engagement at local heritage sites, and the creation of accessible experiences for visitors of all abilities and were developed with input from an advisory panel comprised of multi-disciplinary educators at heritage area partner organizations from across the region. Our speakers are experts in their fields and work for a variety of local institutions including Discovery Museum, Fitchburg Art Museum, Lexington History Museums, Mass Audubon, Mass Cultural Council, and the USS Constitution Museum.

The series is free and open to all. Content is relevant to both staffed and all-volunteer organizations within and beyond the Heritage Area’s geographical boundaries. Recordings will be shared with registrants following each session and additional educational resources and templates will be made available on the Freedom’s Way website for all to access.

The hour-long webinars are scheduled for Tuesdays in September at 2:00 PM EDT. Visit freedomsway.org/heritage-in-action for details and registration.

Winchendon PD Issues Advisory About Recreational Vehicle Thefts

On Monday, August 25, the Winchendon Police Department posted on Facebook, “During the month of August, the Winchendon Police Department has received two separate reports of stolen recreational vehicles. In both cases entry was made through garage windows. There has been an increased amount of similar reports in Massachusetts. In most cases these recreational vehicles have been posted for sale on Facebook Marketplace.

The police department wants to remind you to be cautious of the information contained in any Facebook Marketplace listings. Facebook will often list an approximate location of your posting depending on your settings. Be aware that your personal information such as name, birthday, and address can be found through a simple internet search. It is unknown at this time if these incidents are related. Detective Similia is currently investigating both incidents. If you have any information or questions please contact him at 978-297-1212 ext 143 or email csimilia@winchendon-ma.gov.”

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



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

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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 www.townofwinchendon.com/129/AGENDAS-MINUTES, 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 on the town website, www.townofwinchendon.com.

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 direct link is: www.townofwinchendon.com/506/QUESTIONS-COMMENTS-FOR-THE-TOWN-MANAGER

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.:

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.

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"

Town Committee Vacancies as of August 5, 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.

- Agricultural Commission - 1 vacancy, 3 alternate vacancies
- Board of Health - 1 vacancy
- Charter/Bylaw Review Committee - 1 vacancy
- Communications Committee - 1 vacancy
- Council on Aging - 3 vacancies
- Cultural Council - 12 vacancies
- Fence Viewer and Field Driver - 1 vacancy
- Historical District Commission - 1 alternate vacancy
- Parks & Recreation Commission - 2 vacancies, 1 high school rep vacancy
- Winchendon Commission on Disabilities - 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: www.townofwinchendon.com/DocumentCenter/View/440/Selectmen-Appointed-Boards-and-Committees-July-2024-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.

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/civicalerts.aspx?aid=40.

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.

Applications for the program are now available in the Town Manager's office and on the town website at <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/documentcenter/view/226>, and will be accepted until the ten (10) slots are filled. There are different types of positions that are available depending on preference and qualifications of the resident and the needs of each department.

Types of past and current positions have been: Custodial services, clerical help for both School & Town, Library Aides, Senior Center Aides, Cable Station Operator, Bike Path Clean up, Painting, Light Outdoor Work and Classroom Volunteers.

Please contact the Town Manager's Office at (978) 297-5431 or ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov for more information or if you need an application mailed to you.

Report a Pothole to the DPW

You can report potholes directly to the DPW using this form on the town website: www.townofwinchendon.com/FormCenter/Public-Works-6/Report-a-Pothole-50

Winchendon News

ACTIVATION

continued from page 2

and tackling fears of public speaking. Others highlighted how small acts of service ripple out into big impacts for families at the pantry, seniors at bowling, or teens at the Sunshine Café.

As Liam put it, “Simple small actions and the work of the community can make such a difference in a person’s life.”

Expanded Programs at The HUB

- The newly renovated spaces will also allow The HUB to host:
- After-school tutoring and mentorship in partnership with Toy Town Elementary School and The Winchendon School.
 - Free teen cooking classes in partnership with Growing Places.
 - Senior Bowling & Lunch Fridays for intergenerational connection.
 - Teen drop-ins and Teen Nights on Fridays, in collaboration with the Winchendon Youth Commission.
 - Sunshine Café, operating year-round as a youth-led café and employment program, providing teens with job skills, leadership development, and a safe, welcoming hangout space.

“Our amazing Youth Programs Coordinator, Bonnie Veilleux, has been working tirelessly to connect local kids to The HUB,” said Miranda Jennings, Executive Director of WCAC. “Last year, she coordinated community service opportunities for local students, and we plan to expand that effort again. Youth and adults alike can sign up to volunteer at The HUB through our website, www.the-hub.org. We’re also fortunate to have an incredible team of adult mentors who help run these programs. Together, we’re creating more than recreation – we’re improving health, opportunity, and happiness for everyone in our community.”

The Activation Fund, combined with longstanding support from the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, ensures both youth opportunity and family services continue to grow in sustainability and scale.

“The Activation Fund grant allows us to take The HUB to the next level—connecting education, workforce, food access, and social services in one vibrant space,” said Ms. Jennings. “This investment builds on the

foundation of the T-Mobile Hometown Grant and the incredible success of our summer youth workforce program, where local teens gained skills, certifications, and even job offers from local businesses. We are forever grateful to our donors, staff, and volunteers who make this happen. It takes a community to run The HUB—and we have the best community! THANK YOU to the Health Foundation of Central Mass for making this a reality.”

About the Winchendon CAC

Founded in 1976, the Winchendon Community Action Committee (WCAC) enhances community well-being by providing vital services to over 1,000 households in Winchendon and surrounding areas. Through its partnership with Heywood Hospital’s HEAL Collaborative and a wide network of community partners, WCAC tackles the root causes of health and economic inequities. The HUB—WCAC’s revitalized community center—centralizes food access, youth leadership, economic empowerment, and social services in one accessible, collaborative space.

Comments from Youth Participants:

“What I found most inspiring was how many people come to the CAC’s food pantry—it shows the impact we make on so many lives. One small action, like offering a few extra groceries, can mean the world to someone.”

“I thought about how far the Sunshine Café has come. Even after I move on, it will still be a safe place for teens to be themselves. I’m proud to be part of something that will last and make a difference in our community.”

“Public speaking has always been tough for me, but this program pushed me outside my comfort zone. By the end, I was shouting out orders with confidence. It showed me I can grow if I keep trying.”

“The program gave me so many life skills—from changing a tire to customer service—and the chance to serve people in my community. It helped me see what it’s like behind the scenes of a business, and gave me memories and skills that will last.”

“What inspired me most was how well everyone worked together. There were no cliques, no distractions—just youth who cared about what we were doing. It showed me the kind of workplace I want to be part of in the future.”

BOS Discuss Robinson Broadhurst Grants to the Town for 2025

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on Monday, August 11, Town Manager Bill McKinney told the Board the amounts and purposes of the grants awarded to the town by the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation for the 2025-2026 grant cycle. The grants are:

- Police Department:**
\$40,000 for taser upgrades
- Planning and Development:**
\$10,000 for Fall Fest
- Fire Department:**
\$57,000 for 15 sets of turnout gear
\$16,000 for the drone program
- Parks and Recreation:**
\$30,000 for artists and performers for the season
\$50,000 for salaries and stipends for the seasonal coordinator and support staff
\$20,000 for promotional campaigns and digital ads for social media
- Department of Public Works:**
\$10,000 for seasonal and youth banner project
\$55,000 for digital electronic signage at Grout Park
- The Senior Center:**
\$40,000 for a heat pump
\$5,000 for the Taste of Home weekly home-cooked meals
\$11,000 for various other needs at the Senior Center

Residents and BOS Discuss Concerns About Door-to-Door Solicitation in Town

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on Monday, August 11, resident Theresa Langdon rose during the public comment period to address a topic which was on the agenda for that night’s meeting: permits issued to various out of town persons to go door to door soliciting business. Ms Langdon asked the Board to consider a moratorium in such permits, or allow residents to formally “opt out”, for reasons of privacy and security. Door-to-door sales are obsolete anyway, she argued, because these days people order merchandise online.

When Agenda item 7.8, “Discussion of Solicitor Permits,” came up, Board Chair Andrew Beauvais said, “We still have this option for folks to come before us and seek a permit for a solicitation license...I’ve had some folks reach out to me stating that it’s kind of an archaic or antiquated process, and that in this day and age, we have the ability to make phone calls or purchase things online, etc, so I wanted to bring it to the Board so we could

have a discussion based on some of the resident feedback I’ve had.”

Board member Audrey LaBrie said that she agreed with Ms. Langdon’s comments about the practice being outmoded, but she suggested that this policy be considered as part of the overall body of policies and procedures that the Board was updating.

Board member Melissa Blanchard said that the Board should consider exactly what was being marketed to residents.

When Mr. Beauvais said that the Board could table this discussion and look at it along with all their policies and procedures, Ms. Blanchard moved that the Board “place a moratorium on approving any solicitor permits until such time as we review it through the course of our policy, procedure review and make any changes at that time.” Board member Tiffany Newton immediately seconded the motion.

With no further debate, the Board voted to approve Ms. Blanchard’s motion and place a moratorium on further approvals of solicitor permits.

The October print edition of The Winchendon Courier will go to press on Tuesday, September 23 at noon.
Content for that edition must be received by the publisher by Sunday, September 21.