

Board of Health Updates Board of Selectmen on Town Health Topics and Town-wide Clean-up



Yvonne Senecal addresses the Board of Selectmen
Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

At their meeting on Monday, January 12, the Board of Selectmen heard from Chair of the Board of Health Yvonne Senecal about the concerns and business that have come before the BOH in the past year, and projects coming up.

"I would like to recap some of the activities done by the Board of Health this past year," Ms. Senecal began. "In 2025 the Board of Health issued 110 food permits, 10 new and 15 repair soil testing permits, and we reviewed and approved 32 new septic system permits. Other licenses, such as recreational camps for children, trash and sewage haulers, septic installers, food and tobacco licenses and chemical toilet licenses are just to name a few of the permits that were issued this last year. Currently, there is one court case pending regarding a digital couponing issue that involved Cumberland Farms that has yet to be resolved."

She went on to say, "We hope the Board of Health's involvement with the Old Centre veterans residence is nearing resolution. The court has approved a receiver to oversee the necessary repairs, and we hope this ends our involvement with this property. This was the same property that had the barn fire just recently. I do believe there were just two people that were still living there, so no loss of life or harm to people. I think we lost a couple farm animals like chickens and ducks and stuff, and [the Fire Department] were very good at not letting that fire go on to the main house. So that was certainly a plus."

The BOH will be meeting with Joan Hammlett to review and update Winchendon's tobacco regulations, Ms. Senecal said.

"We are reviewing all food licenses and inspection fees to be in alignment with neighboring communities. We plan to strike a balance between generating revenue and encouraging business development. We are dedicated to enhancing the health and well being of our citizens and being transparent in dealing with issues under our purview. We have developed an informal worksheet to track issues in the resolution to prevent them from falling off our radar. We are still down one member, and so we need another volunteer, and would encourage anyone interested to step up," Ms. Senecal concluded.

Ms. Senecal also mentioned, "We are scheduling a spring cleanup,

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Friends of the Beals Memorial Library Keep on Growing and Innovating 27 Years After They Were Founded

by Inanna Arthen

The Friends of the Beals Memorial Library has been a familiar name to residents of Winchendon for several decades. Many people have visited the Friends' Book Sale room at the library, or the book sale tables at town events like Solstice Fair. Library users have noticed the Friends' name as a sponsor on all kinds of library events, offered free to the public thanks to fundraising done by the Friends to pay for them. But who are the Friends, what is their relationship to the library, and how much do they really do? With a brand new Friends project coming up—a Valentine's Cookie Bake Sale—the *Courier* sat down with Friends President Sheila Sbrogna to learn more.

The Friends is an incorporated non-profit organization that was founded in October, 1999. In its original Articles of Organization, the Statement of Purpose reads, "The purpose of this organization shall be to maintain an association of persons interested in and working for the Beals Memorial Library and its welfare, to promote and encourage gifts and donations to the Library, and to provide such support and educational activities to the Library as are appropriate."

Ms. Sbrogna explained, "When it initially started, the mission was to help with providing funding for educational programs for the library, to support the library, to provide volunteers for whatever the library needed. Over the years, the mission has developed into a little more than that. We also are here to promote and to assist in the funding of cultural events, not just educational events."

The Beals Memorial Library has several sources of funding, Ms. Sbrogna said. It had a \$20,000 American Library Association (ALA) grant last year; it receives funds from the Winchendon Cultural Council; it has its own budget from the town; and it gets funds from the Friends.

"The library develops different program ideas," Ms. Sbrogna said. "We have meetings once a month on Wednesdays, and we have the Friends there. We have representatives from the [Beals Memorial Library Board of] Trustees there, and we have representatives from the library there. And the library presents thoughts that they have for different programs that they will offer that season or that part of the year. Then they demonstrate what the Cultural Council will pick up, what they will use grant money for, what Beals will pay for. And then they ask the Friends for a portion of that. The Executive Committee that meets on Wednesdays, votes and approves the amounts, and we give thousands of dollars every year to the library for their programming. Not only do we provide some of the funding, but our members attend the events and volunteer at the events, whether we're baking food or if it's a sensory friendly program where they have to help with the children, to supervise and guide them through whatever the program is."

Ms. Sbrogna said that the Friends currently have 30 to 40 members, with a core group of around 12 of the most actively involved members. They are



Beals Memorial Library Trustee Suzanne Rader shows some of the items on sale in the Friends' book sale besides books!

Photo by Inanna Arthen

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.

For this printed paper to be sustainable in the long term, it needs support from the community and from you, its readers. The *Courier* needs business people and organizations who will advertise regularly, and sponsors who know that a local newspaper is one of the best things a community can have. Hundreds of Winchendon residents see every edition, both digital and online. If you'd like to find out more about sponsoring the *Courier* or becoming an advertiser, please contact the publisher at editor@winchenconcourier.net.

Turn to **FRIENDS** page 5

Winchendon School Committee Approves Three-Year Contract with Supt. Charlotte King

by Inanna Arthen

At their meeting on Thursday, January 8, the three members of the Winchendon School Committee in attendance (Greg Vine, Tara Teixeira and Chair Mike Barbaro) voted to approve the negotiated contract with Superintendent Charlotte King to serve as Superintendent from July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2029. The committee members agreed to skip Executive Session on the agenda, saying that no further deliberation was needed.

Mr. Barbaro read into the record a statement from absent Committee member David Iannacone, which said, “As one of the School Committee members participating in the contract negotiations with the Superintendent, I want to share my thoughts on the deliberation. I believe the district needs the stability in leadership Mrs. King has brought as part of the district for over three years. I believe she has the support of the leadership team, and this is an important factor. Mrs. King was extremely cordial during the negotiation. She wanted the terms of the contract to be transparent. I believe the terms of the contract are fair. I believe the contract gives Mrs. King and the Committee the opportunity to grow and move forward, and move the district forward. I urge an affirmative vote on the contract.”

The contract was executed on the spot with the signatures of the three Committee members and Mrs. King. The superintendent’s contract is a public document and will be posted on the town website “tomorrow,” Mr. Barbaro said.

Mrs. King said, “I just want to say thank you for your support and your trust in me. And I’m honored to be in this district. We have an amazing team, amazing students, amazing families, and I am happy to come to work every day, no matter how difficult those days can be, but I thank you all, and I appreciate your support going forward.”

Mr. Vine said, “I really, really hope that this is going to provide, as David said in his letter, the stability that this district has been lacking for so

long. Having been on and off the Committee for 13 years now, I’ve seen more superintendents in and out of this place than we ever should have seen in and out of this place. It’s been ridiculous, and I hope that the community as a whole will give Mrs. King the support that she needs to do the job that’s ahead of her, and I hope this Committee as a whole will give her the support she needs for the job. We’re going to make an occasional mistake, but we can’t let nitpicking and personalities, and we can’t base decisions on whatever group of people is [criticising]. We have to keep moving forward and do what’s best for the district and support her as much as we possibly can.”

Ms. Teixeira said, “I’m also really excited that I feel like Mrs. King, Charlotte, you’re so open to new things and to being innovative about stuff, which is something you really need, eagerness to work with the community and to try to fill in some of the voids with community resources. And that’s very admirable. And I don’t think that we’ve seen a collaboration with the town so strong. So maybe that is something that you’re going to bring to the table that’s really changed stuff for the kids too. So I’m very excited. Congratulations.”

Mr. Barbaro said, “Having watched for the last few years all the roles you’ve taken on and just plowed through them, ‘Yep, I’ll do it,’ ‘Yep, I’ll do it,’ and just went about your business. And the whole time, you were working for the kids. Not for me, not for them, but for the children. And that proved to me that you were the right person for the job, knowing what we know about this district, having been around in different positions, you got that lens that my friend used to tell me about, the lens that you see through in that position, and it’s given you the ability to see our strengths, our weaknesses, and you have attacked them.

“With our Special Ed, when you went into that department, you attacked it, and you helped



It’s official! Winchendon Public Schools Superintendent Charlotte King
Photo by Inanna Arthen

bring it into a turnaround that is continuing. You were Dean of Students. You got to see the kids and see the ground floor. You got to be Assistant Superintendent, and got the role from behind the scenes, and got the knowledge and the support to work with the staff and understand and to meet with us and talk with us about what’s going on. And you met stakeholders. You met the state. You work with the state regularly during our meetings. All these things rolled into me to say that I believe that we had the right person for the job, and so I’m extremely pleased that we’re able to fulfill this for this district, because we will continue to move forward, as always, to the hard work and dedication of our staff and our administrative staff and our leadership team. And so with that, I say thank you for staying with us. I’m pleased that you have your contract finally, and I think we are in a good place and continue to move forward.”

Warming Centers and Road Salt Shortage as Winchendon Braces for Grand-Slam Double Header: Bitter Cold and Biggest Snow Storm of the Season

by Inanna Arthen

Along with almost the entire eastern half of the United States, Winchendon braced itself for a double whammy from Mother Nature the weekend of January 24: a long-duration return of the “polar vortex” bringing bitterly cold temperatures for a stretch of days into February, and a massive winter storm that brought the Northeast some of the heaviest snow it’s seen for years, while southern states were paralyzed with icing and days-long power outages.

For North Central Massachusetts, this was weather we’re very familiar with, although we haven’t had to plow and shovel the amounts of snow being forecast for this storm in quite a while. The deep cold is a concern, and several Winchendon organizations and facilities offered warming centers during their regular operating hours. These included the Clark Memorial YMCA, Beals Memorial Library, the Old Murdock Senior Center, the Winchendon CAC/The HUB and Immaculate Heart of Mary church.

Complicating the preparations for towns was a local shortage of road salt for treating roads, which led Winchendon and Templeton Departments of Public Works to issue advisories to residents. On Wednesday, January 21, Winchendon Town Hall posted, “Due to a regional shortage of road salt deliveries, the Town’s ability to fully treat all roadways is limited at this time. With inclement weather expected tonight and continuing through the weekend, residents are urged to use extreme caution when traveling.

“Road conditions may be icy and slippery, particularly on untreated side streets, hills, bridges, and shaded areas. Please slow down, allow extra travel time, and avoid unnecessary travel if possible. Pedestrians are also reminded to use caution on sidewalks and walkways.

“DPW crews will continue to monitor conditions and prioritize main roads, emergency routes, and public safety areas as resources allow. We appreciate residents’ patience and cooperation as we work through this temporary supply issue.”

The town of Templeton issued a similar message but expanded on the reason, saying, “We have been notified by our road salt vendor of a regional shortage of road salt due to salt vessels stuck out at sea in storms.

Templeton has several loads ordered but will not receive anymore deliveries until middle of next week.”

Local residents sometimes had trouble finding salt and ice melt for their own use—some businesses, such as Good Earth Farm & Garden Center in Gardner, advertised it prominently when it was in stock. Belletetes in Winchendon was well-supplied, however. Winchendon residents had reported being unable to pick up sand placed in a shed by the Winchendon DPW for the use of residents, but the shed was well-stocked by the weekend. Residents are asked to limit themselves to two 5-gallon buckets at a time. The shed is in the DPW yard on Glenallen Street.

After nighttime lows dropped into the negative numbers on Friday and Saturday, the big storm arrived on Sunday morning, January 25. It continued to snow through Monday night. By noon on Sunday, the Old Murdock Senior Center and the Winchendon Public Schools had announced that they would be closed on Monday, with all programs, services, meals and transportation cancelled. Beals Memorial Library and Town Hall announced that they also would be closed on Monday, and the Board of Selectmen’s meeting scheduled for January 26 was cancelled. A Winchendon Music Festival concert scheduled for Sunday afternoon had already been postponed to Friday, January 30. Several local businesses opened on Sunday but closed early. On Monday, as residents wearily plowed, shoveled and snow-blown their way out from under more than 12 inches of light, dry, fluffy snow, Winchendon Public Schools announced that schools would delay opening by two hours on Tuesday, January 27.

While Winchendon does not have an official observer to report on weather conditions here, the *Courier* measured 12 inches of snow in multiple locations outside its office on Lakeview Drive on Monday, with about two more inches falling during the afternoon and evening. Athol reported 12.8 inches of snow on Monday, while Rindge reported 13 inches. Some Winchendon residents reported at least 21 inches in their locations.

The bitter cold is forecast to lock in until the first week of February, with nightly lows a few degrees above or below 0°. Weathercasters are watching another winter storm that may impact the region next Sunday, February 1.

Winchendon News

BOS Ask Parks & Rec to Reconsider Proposed Rental Fees



Melanie Franklin (left) and Shaina Cunningham address the BOS
Image copyright Town of Winchendon

What Changed at a Glance		
Facility / Category	Current Pricing	Updated Pricing
Soccer Field	Res \$75/\$150 NR \$150/\$225	Res \$75/\$150 NR \$150/\$300
Amphitheater	Res \$150/\$300 NR \$300/\$600	Res \$200/\$400 NR \$400/\$800
Trails	Res \$50/\$75 NR \$75/\$100	Res \$50/\$100 NR \$100/\$200
Field by Garage	Res \$75/\$150 NR \$150/\$200	Res \$75/\$150 NR \$150/\$300
Entire WCP Venue	Res \$750/\$1,000 NR \$1,000/\$1,500	Res \$750/\$1,250 NR \$1,250/\$1750
Gazebo GAR Park	Res \$75/\$150 NR \$150/\$200	Res \$75/\$150 NR \$150/\$300
Entire GAR Park	Res \$150/\$300 NR \$300/\$450	Res \$150/\$300 NR \$300/\$600
Ticketed Events	\$3,200 or 10% NR \$4,500 or 20%	\$3,200 or 10% NR \$4,500 or 10% Capped at \$6,000 Which ever is greater
Non-Profit	Weekday: Cost to Operate + \$15 Weekend: Resident Rate	\$200 Any day of the week
Non-Profit Ticketed Event	N/A	\$400 Any day of week

Slide of proposed rental rates
Image copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

At their meeting on Monday, January 12, The Board of Selectmen reviewed the proposed new rental fees for use of Winchendon’s parks by outside groups (that is, anyone other than the Parks & Recreation Department) which were presented at the BOS meeting on Monday, December 22. Shaina Cunningham, Recreation Coordinator, and Melanie Franklin, Commission Secretary, attended to answer any questions, although Board Chair Andrew Beauvais said that it wasn’t necessary for them to come forward.

Mr. Beauvais said, “I like what you’ve done with the resident and non-resident breakdowns. I think it makes sense that residents would pay less than a non-resident. It’s just common sense. I had a bit of a reservation about the fee increase. The ticketed events, specifically for residents, the \$3,200 per day, or 10 percent of gross receipts, whichever is greater, capped at \$6,000. I gave it a lot of thought, and I went back and forth on it, and considering where \$3,200 is a bit much, I think, for a resident. So if you could explain again, and you may have done this last time, so I apologize if you’re repeating yourself, but could you tell us how you came up with the \$3,200.”

Ms. Cunningham explained, “So we compared other amphitheaters that were owned by municipalities. Granted, there’s not a lot of them in this hyperlocal area. So where we were looking at was essentially nationwide, but we crunched three comparables together, one of them being Mable House amphitheater (mablehouse.org/amphitheatre/rent-the-venue), and that was in Georgia. You see Sea Breeze amphitheater (discover.pbc.gov/parks/amphitheaters/Pages/Seabreeze.aspx, rental flyer linked as a PDF)

that’s in Florida, and Round Rock amphitheater (roundrockamp.com), which is located in Texas. All of them fall within the resident and non-resident rate with a percentage of gross ticket sales, whichever would be greater. So for that specific ticketed event fee, that’s some of the research that we had done. Melanie and I had worked on that quite a bit.”

“My thought was \$2,500 per day, or 10 percent of gross receipts with a cap of \$6,000, so it looks like the entry level fee, if you will, is a little bit more reasonable, but you can still cap out at \$6,000, if that makes sense,” Mr. Beauvais said.

Ms. Cunningham said that the Commission was meeting again next Tuesday and they could certainly review the Board’s feedback “and look over where we had come at, where we’re at currently, and see what type of adjustments we can make.”

Board member Erika Eitland said, “I understand the \$3,200 or 10 percent, is there a reason to have the “or?” Why can’t it just be 10 percent, because I think whatever is greater is, if they don’t do particularly well, they only make \$5,000 for the whole event, and we’re taking \$3,200, it feels bad. To me, if we just do a 10 percent I feel like there’s this opportunity to buffer—say the weather’s crappy, nobody shows up. I just don’t want us to be carving out a big chunk when we’re trying to encourage people to be there.”

Ms. Franklin responded, “I think that having the beginning number gives us a deposit beforehand, versus having to have to wait till the end of the event.”

Board member Tiffany Newton said, “I tend to agree that there should be a base pay, not just 10 percent, because you don’t necessarily even know the company coming in. How are ticket sales being tracked? Are they being honest about how much they made, if they don’t want to pay that kind of money and they need to cover their costs? Add to that that there’s already a base fee just to use the park, that’s also much more reasonable. This is just specifically ticketed events.

When you first started talking, I thought it should be \$3,000. I mean, \$2,500 is fine. I think that is fine. Seeing these are new rates that were not ticketed rates before on the approved schedule. So it is new. So I think easing into it and increasing them over time might be more appealing and beneficial. But I was thinking that \$3,200-\$2,500 plus 10 percent, you’re guaranteed that much plus 10 percent of sales, still capping out at \$6,000 so they’ll never pay more than the \$6,000, but instead of this or that and trying to calculate it, it’s this plus 10 percent until you hit that maximum.”

Board member Melissa Blanchard asked, “Have you guys had many ticketed events there? Have you found that there’s been a problem with what you were charging before? Was there a demand?”

Ms. Cunningham said, “With it being a newer venue, a part of our strategy moving forward is really to promote the private rentals as a source of revenue generation for the town. And so that’s where we really tried to take a look at what other communities with venues were charging and how they were charging it. But we have not had an excessive amount of ticketed events at the venue previously.”

Board member Audrey LaBrie said, “I understand a deposit of something up front, so they have some skin in the game. I like Ms. Newton’s suggestion, a lower, flat fee plus 10 percent so we have some up front money, and then we get some afterwards. My suggestion would be, Ms. Cunningham, you’re meeting again next week, I think you said. Have them go back and discuss a little bit more and see what they think about our suggestion, and then come back to the board and let us know how they how they feel about it. That would be my suggestion.”

The Board voted to unanimously to “postpone a decision on this issue until Parks & Rec Department does some more research and comes back to us at our next meeting or at a later meeting.”

Winchendon FD Awarded Grant from the Tom Fors Memorial Fund

The Winchendon Fire Department posted on their Facebook page, “The Winchendon Fire Department is proud to announce we have been awarded \$9,560.95 from the Tom Fors Memorial Fund to purchase a cardiac rhythm generator training system.

“This advanced training equipment is critically important to our department. The cardiac rhythm generator will allow our firefighters and EMS providers to train on realistic heart rhythms, improving their ability to rapidly recognize and treat life-threatening cardiac emergencies. Hands-on, scenario-based training like this directly translates to better patient outcomes and a higher level of emergency care for our community.

“We are extremely grateful to the Tom Fors Foundation for their continued support of public safety and emergency medical training. We are especially honored to have met Davin and Karen Fors to show them the equipment that we will be using in Tom’s memory. If this equipment helps save one life it is worth it to all involved.”

Edward Jones

> edwardjones.com | Member SIPC



Valentine’s Day reminds us why we plan:

The people who depend on us and the future we want to build together. We’re grateful for the trust you place in us and wish you a day filled with the things — and people — you cherish most.

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Winchendon News

HEALTH
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hopefully with the Winchendon Springs Lake Association and any other interested groups, preferably on Earth Day. More willing hands can make a bigger impact on a town wide cleanup.” The BOS picked up on this plan.

“You know, the town cleanup is one thing that I’m really fond of, not just on Earth Day, but throughout the year,” BOS Chair Andrew Beauvais said. “You know, a clean town shows a lot of pride, right? So I’m wondering if the Board has ever considered possibly doing them maybe more frequently.”

“We had looked at doing a fall cleanup, but unfortunately, the weather and things kind of got away from us,” Ms. Senecal said. “We would have, in my mind, been appropriate to do it before Fall Fest. And unfortunately, we didn’t get to it before Fall Fest, and then the weather just deteriorated. So some of it is weather related. Hopefully this next year, because we do have money to do two, it was budgeted to do two. What we didn’t use went back into the General Fund. So hopefully next year we’ll be able to schedule two. I’d like to do it on Earth Day. I think that was initially the plan. I don’t know why we got away from that, but it just makes it more appropriate. And then to do another one before Fall Fest, because we want to put our best foot forward.”

Mr. Beauvais asked how many people usually took part in the town-wide clean-up. Ms. Senecal said, “It does fluctuate, and it definitely fluctuates on the weather, if you have a better day. Last year we did it, unfortunately, it was black fly season, and I didn’t even want to be out there. It was awful. But I think we had somewhere between 10 and 12 volunteers, which I think is not terribly bad. It wasn’t the best day. And I think certainly, if we have better weather, and can get more organizations working together with us, with Scouts, Cub Scouts, you know, any school groups. The Lake



Democratic Town Committee Members Bill O’Neill, Joe & Jill Sackett and Mike D’Intinosanto were among the many volunteers participating in the May, 2025 Town-Wide Clean-up
Photo courtesy of Jill Nicholson Sackett

Association approached me and wanted a firm date. We weren’t able to give that to them. So hopefully, as soon as we get the next meeting when we have a quorum, we can set a firm date, and I think Earth Day is an appropriate day.”

Earth Day has been celebrated on April 22 since 1970. April 22 falls on a Wednesday in 2026; the closest Saturdays would be April 18 and April 25. The week of April 20-24 is spring break for the Winchendon Public Schools. Monday, April 20 is a state holiday in Massachusetts, Patriots Day.

Mr. Beauvais asked how the clean-up will be publicized to residents. “I think social media, I think certainly bulletin boards around town. I think it’s important. Word of mouth is huge, and then getting the different organizations involved. I think that’s important,” Ms. Senecal said.

The *Courier* will also be publicizing the town-wide clean-up dates and all information that volunteers will need to know.

“Do you approach local businesses to see if they are interested in participating, doing volunteerism days? I know some some organizations or companies, they have those options for their employees,” Mr. Beauvais suggested.

Ms. Senecal said, “It was my understanding that Belletetes did at one point donate gloves and bags and things like that. Certainly it would be helpful to get some local businesses involved.”

Going back to another point Ms. Senecal mentioned, Board member Audrey LaBrie asked about the 32 septic permits – were those all new construction, or were they things like replacing a failed system? “No, because those would be repairs,” Ms. Senecal said. These were new construction. She didn’t know if that number was average or not.

“We’re going to try to survey similar towns in size and scope, so that we can get a real grasp of what our neighbors are charging for some of these fees,” Ms. Senecal said. “My sense is they haven’t been updated in at least five years, maybe more than that. And certainly talking to our health agent, we want to encourage people, if they have a failed system, to keep it cheaper to repair a failed system, because I think it’s ecologically appropriate. There’s things that we could be charging more for, but until we get the survey done, we won’t know, and as soon as I have that, hopefully it won’t take but a couple months we can get that to you for approval.”

Board member Erika Eitland said, “Chairwoman, you’ve been busy, and hearing all of the permitting, I’m like, holy cow, there’s a lot happening. I wonder, because you have a better pulse of this town, tell me what you imagine are, based on what you’re seeing, the two to three biggest health challenges facing Winchendon, as well as the things that we do really well, that we’re really proud of.”

“I’m not seeing any major health issues,” Ms. Senecal said. “I’ve been a nurse for 50 years, so, you’re kind of on to that pulse. It seems to be a bad flu season. So if people are sick, stay home. If your kids are sick, keep them home. But I think that generally, you have a season, it’s cyclical, you go a couple years where it’s bad, and then it’s not so bad. Sometimes the flu shot works and sometimes it doesn’t. But I’m not seeing anything in that area.

“I’m happy that there’s businesses that we’re inspecting, and that, to me, is a big plus. And then I see growth and development. I see septic systems. I think there’s a whole lot of licensing that we do that we’re not necessarily aware of. There are trash hauler companies, sewage hauler companies, chemical toilet companies. I had no idea that we were doing these things.

“I’m also on the Charter and Bylaw Review Committee. I spoke to our health agent, because it’s very scant in the bylaws, I said, What is it you do? What do you spend the most time doing? And I said, this is an opportunity for us to really identify what you do, how you earn your salary, how you serve the town. And I think looking at an overview of what the Board of Health does is really helpful for people to understand what’s going on in their town. How are we staying healthy? What, and I haven’t even talked about, if there’s an outbreak or a flood or the ice storm we had 10-15 years ago, those kinds of things, natural disasters, the emergency preparedness stuff that the Board of Health does. There’s a lot to it, and I wasn’t aware of it either, until you kind of dip your toes in the water and find out what’s involved. So it’s been a good learning curve.”

Mr. Beauvais said that it would be good for the town to offer ongoing updates on what all the different town departments were doing, similar to the Fire Department displaying the number of calls it has responded to on its electronic message board, because many residents don’t have any idea how much their town boards do. Maybe the town boards and committees could put a quarterly newsletter or report out on the town website, or information could be incorporated in the “What’s Up, Winchendon?” videos on WinchendonTV.

Ms. Senecal added, “One of my main concerns, with new members coming onto the board, was to be transparent, so that when people bring you an issue, it’s like you bring an issue and there’s no solution or resolution, and things just kind of fall off because they’re not forefront in your mind, even from month to month. So we wanted to try to track when people call with complaints, so that there’s an investigation, there’s a fact finding, there’s an initial response, there’s a follow-up, nothing official, but just so we can then keep an agenda item, so that we can be responsive. People come to us with an issue that it’s like, well, I brought it up, but nothing happened. That’s a concern, and we want to be transparent and accountable.”

The Board of Health is an elected Board. Residents who are interested in being elected to the Board need to pull nomination papers, get signatures from registered voters in town, and run in the town election in May. Vacant seats, like the one on the Board now, are filled by appointment, but only until the end of the unexpired term for that seat. All Board members must pull nomination papers and run for re-election at the end of their term, if they wish to continue serving. For more information about the Board of Health, see www.townofwinchendon.com/286/Board-of-Health. Interested residents can also attend any Board of Health meeting, or talk to the Chair, Yvonne Senecal. The Board of Health has changed its meeting time, and now meets at 10:00 a.m. on the first Monday of each month.

For more information about the process of running in the town election, see the Town Clerk (www.townofwinchendon.com/208/Town-Clerk).

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Winchendon News

FRIENDS

continued from page 1

working to bring in more members, of all ages and groups represented in the town. “We want to be a diverse organization. The library is very committed to diversity. We also commit to that. We would like to have cross generational members. We really do welcome new members,” she said. The Friends do not currently have youth members but they may be collaborating with the library’s Teen Advisory Board in the future.

Asked what some of the Friends-sponsored programs she’s most excited about, Ms. Sbrogna said they strongly support the library’s cultural events. They sponsored an a capella singing group last year at Christmas. The Friends funded the prize awards for the Beals Poetry contests. They sponsor the Summer Reading Program, the various science programs offered for kids, and the Toy Town Tree Festival. This past spring, the Friends organized a library Open House.

“We worked hard on the campaign to educate the public about the override and to help save the library in the spring,” Ms. Sbrogna said. “That was probably our biggest commitment for our last fiscal year, because it involved a great deal of hard work. We tried to be present everywhere and get lots of information out there. And it was successful. So that was very exciting.” Because the Friends are an independent organization, they had free rein to speak as citizens about the issues before voters. Library employees had to avoid any conflict of interest.

“We are separate. We are totally autonomous,” she emphasized. “We like to interface with the library. For example, if we’re planning a new program, we always go to them first and say, this is the time frame we’re thinking. Is there anything that would conflict with that, that the library’s planning? Would you support this? Do you think this is a good event? Do you see it as a fundraiser? We work in harmony, but we are autonomous.”

The *Courier* asked where the inspiration for their newest fundraiser, the Valentine’s Cookie Bake Sale, came from. Ms. Sbrogna said, “Another thing that changed for our organization in the past year was we were invited to join a new coalition, called the North Central Mass Coalition for Friends of the Library. We were very excited to be invited, and we went to the first meeting last year, I think late winter or spring. Now there are seven libraries involved in this: Ashby, Ashburnham, Lunenburg, Fitchburg, Hubbardston, Beals, and then there’s one more.

“The goal of this coalition is for sharing. The libraries get together, and they talk about what kinds of programs they have had and what kinds of fundraisers they have had that have been the most successful, and why and how they did it, and they talk about the ones that they tried and weren’t successful. So we are learning from each other before trying something, and we’re learning how to best tailor our programs so that they can be more successful.

“We’ve had bake sales here before, but we’ve never done a pre-order by the box type of sale. We are learning from other libraries that there was a flat rate, \$20 for a bag or \$25 for a box. So this is the first time we’re taking that approach where people can pre-order and they can actually get a dozen or two dozen or order a variety pack. The Unitarian church actually does that at Christmas time – you can pre-order their boxes. So through this coalition, we’ve learned quite a few things, and we’re trying some of them. That’s where we have all these new ideas. We’re not a huge town and we don’t have a huge group, so we’re trying to also be realistic about what we can achieve.”

The cookies for the bake sale come in six different varieties and are being baked by members of the Friends. “An announcement was sent out a week or two ago, calling all bakers,” Ms. Sbrogna said. “So people signed up. We picked, six kinds of cookies, and then the variety pack, and people who were willing to bake picked the type of cookie they wanted to make, or

made a proposal for something they’d like to make. The volunteers buy the materials and donate those.”

The Valentine’s Cookie Bake Sale will end on Saturday, February 14, when people can come to the library to pick up their pre-orders, or buy cookies on the spot. Cookies are \$10 a dozen or \$20 for “two baker’s dozens” (26). Cookie varieties are Peanut Blossoms, Scotch shortbread, a stenciled butter cookie, Raspberry Almond Scandinavian cookie, M&M Valentine sugar cookie, Chocolate Peppermint Splash, or a variety pack with samples of all the different varieties. Pre-orders must be received by February 9 (so the bakers know how many to make). To pre-order, fill out an order form at the library, or email Paula Whitaker at jimpaulawhitaker@gmail.com.

The *Courier* asked about the Friends’ book sale, which is one of their biggest fundraisers. It started back in the 80s or 90s with just a few books, Ms. Sbrogna said, but it has now grown to fill a good-sized room and is open three days a week. Many libraries do a big book sale once or maybe twice a year, but the Beals’ book sale goes on continuously and brings in hundreds of dollars a year. Community members can donate items to the sale, but there are some parameters on what is accepted. The book sale will not accept donations of textbooks, encyclopedias, dictionaries, non-fiction with obsolete information, items in poor condition, or video or audio cassette tapes.

“People in the community can donate books, puzzles, DVDs, games, and we have one section of our library for children and the other section is for adults,” Ms. Sbrogna said. “When people come in to shop there, there are no prices. They just give whatever donation they want for what they find that they need or want.” There are shelves full of DVDs and shelves of jigsaw puzzles, and some board games, and many shelves of books.

“Our homeschoolers love it as a resource,” Ms. Sbrogna said. “They come in and pick up books that are nonfiction or fiction, and we do have a lot of adults who are interested in historical fiction. Mysteries seem to be a pretty good seller, and book biographies tend to be popular, and our puzzles are popular, and our DVDs, we have a children’s section of DVDs and an adult section.”

The book sale has thousands of books and other items, Ms. Sbrogna said. “We did get a big influx in the spring. It took us most of the summer to shelve them. The schools donated a lot of children’s books to us, and in those books, we found a lot of Newbery Medalist books and Caldecotts [Award] and famous authors. So it was like a treasure trove.” At the end of last year, she said, the Friends did a promotional sale, offering books for a dollar a bag, which helped clear some space on the shelves.

The space itself once hosted the entire museum collection of the Winchendon Historical Society, many years ago. In the future, it may become a new Children’s Library room. Where the book sale will go then will have to be decided. For now, it is open on Mondays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., Thursdays from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. (In the summer, when the library closes on Saturday, the book sale has Friday hours.) The room has a wheelchair ramp and is fully accessible.

Ms. Sbrogna said, “The Friends want to make the townspeople in the community aware that when we develop programs, or when we assist with the funding of programs, or we volunteer, these programs are not just for people who are patrons of the library, who have library cards. They’re not just for children. They’re for everyone in the community, all ages. And we also outreach to other communities. For example, when we had the Sensory Friendly Touch-a-Truck program in the spring, people came from other towns, from Jaffrey, and not even just the state. So we want people to be aware that they are for everyone. They’re inclusive. Some people think the programs are just for children. They’re not.”

For more information about the Friends, including how to contact them and how to learn more about becoming a member, see www.bealslibrary.org/friends.



The Friends of the Library book sale room on the Beals lower level, next to the Equal Access entryway
Photos by Inanna Arthen

BOS Discuss Request to Allow Overspending on Snow and Ice Account

by Inanna Arthen

At their meeting on Monday, January 12, the Board of Selectmen considered a request to approve overspending against the budgeted amount for snow and ice removal and road treatments for FY2026. The Snow and Ice account is allowed to overspend, due to the difficulty of predicting snow and ice needs in advance and the fact that safe roads are critically important to the town and its residents. But the Board must approve a request to overspend.

Department of Public Works Director Pat Wood opened the discussion, saying “This is just a request to overspend our existing budget of \$160,000. To date, we’ve ordered roughly 3000 tons of salt, which will put us over the limit, as is, and that’s not including any kind of operation and maintenance for equipment that we’ve already had to spend the money on. It’s been a rough start to the winter. Haven’t had too many plowable snow events, it’s been mostly treated with salt.”

Board member Melissa Blanchard asked, “Can I ask a question on the area in the DPW where we can collect the salt for the townspeople? Do you have any cameras there? Because I’ve heard a lot of issues with commercial vehicles filling their trucks up with the salt for the residents.” She said she had heard that many residents had not been able to get salt (it’s actually sand, the same kind the DPW sanders use on the roads) at that location.

Mr. Wood said, “I recently heard the same thing. So we just ordered the sign. We just put it up, limiting it to two buckets. We will be looking at getting some kind of security system down there too to monitor it, to help that as well. It’s an announcement that I wanted to make to the public as well. It’s all hearsay, of course, because I’ve

heard the same concerns, but we’re going to do something about it. So the first step is get the sign up, and we’ll be working on some kind of surveillance.”

Ms. Blanchard said, “Some commercial vehicles could be the residents, like myself, my pickup truck has my husband’s letter. I’m not going to pick up salt in my residential car. I’m going to pick it up in the pickup truck. So there could be some of the conflict there you see a commercial vehicle, which is a resident that that’s their vehicle. So just for people that do see those commercial vehicles doing that? In some cases, it is the resident’s only vehicle.”

Board member Tiffany Newton asked, “Are we using the reserve that [the Finance Committee] has set aside for snow and ice? Is that where the money will come from at the end of the year?”

Town Manager Bill McKinney said, “We don’t know yet. We wait till the end of the year and see what happens. Because snow and ice, you can overspend and if needed, you can carry a deficit into the next fiscal year. We’ve been fortunate that we’ve been able to keep it within the budget, some unspent line items. So we wait till the end of the year, and then we’ll see what happens.”

Ms. Blanchard asked if the DPW was using the liquid brine pre-treatment for the roads. Mr. Wood said, “We use it on surfaces. So lately, it’s been very wet. But we have already been able to go down to Templeton and fill up and use it, and when we do, it’s pretty successful. So we’re hoping to get to use it more often. It’s a lot cheaper.”

Board Chair Andrew Beauvais said, “I don’t like the term overspending. I don’t think anybody does. I don’t want to sit up here and carte blanche, just say yes, overspend. But I understand that it’s a necessity when you’re talking

about public safety. So my question is, do we have any specifics? How much are you asking for? Do we not know what’s the process? Because I think this is the first time that I’ve been on the Board that this question has come before us.”

Mr. McKinney said that this is an annual decision, “it’s required every year to get authorization to overspend. And there is no monetary number. It’s just the authorization to overspend because you don’t know. You just don’t, and that’s why the Department of Revenue allows you to overspend on snow and ice and carry deficit because you just don’t know what the weather is going to be for the rest of the year.”

Mr. Beauvais said that it “seems a bit messy to just approve a random number.”

Mr. Wood said, “I went through the same questions in my head. So I looked at what we had been spending the last three years, and obviously it depends on how severe the winter is. I have it in front of me... fiscal year 2023, \$660,000, in 2024, \$310,000 and then in 2025, \$435,000. Right now, in salt alone, we’ve ordered about \$260,000 so I would say we’re on track to probably be around \$500,000 if the winter continues like this.”

Mr. Beauvais said that gave him a better idea, and knowing the breakdown of the past three years, he was okay with giving the DPW what they need to keep the roads clear for residents.

Ms. LaBrie summarized the numbers as being short about \$270,000 from the total budgeted amount if the DPW was projecting to need \$500,000.

“I’ll also add that the majority of the expenses have been in the salt that we use, and since it’s such a major component of the budget, we really track how much salt we’re using,” Mr. Wood said. “We’ve

been doing a lot of calculations to make sure that we’re spreading the appropriate amount. So it’s what we’re using as backup to make sure that we’re not frivolously using any kind of salt.”

Board member Erika Eitland said, “This term overspending is... we’re spending what is necessary, and we’ve underbudgeted how much we need for this year because we didn’t know how bad it was going to be. Living at the corner of Water Street and High Street, so in front of Front Street, there has been multiple accidents on these icy days, and so DPW comes out and will salt to make sure that they’re not pulling another car out of the ditch. So I think it’s one of these things that this is very much, again, to our theme of health and safety today, making sure that residents are staying safe on our roads, especially when we have cooling conditions and it just sneaks up on people. So I see this is not overspending, but spending to make sure that the roads are safe at a minimum.”

Mr. Beauvais asked why the town always underbudgets when year after year has shown that larger amounts are needed. Mr. McKinney explained, “Because that’s how every town does it, but once you go up, you can never bring it back down. So that’s why towns keep it artificially low, because you just never know what it’s going to be. And if you budget much higher, that squeezes something else out of the budget.”

Ms. LaBrie said, “I’d like to make a recommendation on the bill. Again, I don’t care for that term overspending. So my motion is that I move the Board authorize the expenditure in the FY 26 snow and ice budget line item in excess of the budgeted amounts.”

The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Volunteers Needed for the Board of Health, Winchendon Redevelopment Authority and Winchendon Parks & Recreation Commission

The **Board of Health** is seeking qualified members to fill recent vacancies. If you are a registered voter of Winchendon, please consider sending in your letter of interest to serve on this very important Board. This term will run only until the next Town Election in May, 2026.

Duties & Responsibilities:
Winchendon has a five member Board of Health who work along with a Health Agent and Health Inspector. According to various statutes in the Massachusetts General Laws, the Board of Health is responsible for inspecting, licensing and enforcing regulations for recreational camps, food establishments, indoor ice rinks, public swimming pools, tanning facilities, body art establishments, and public lodging facilities. The Board is also responsible for enforcement of state regulations regarding housing as well as the disposal of solid waste and subsurface sanitary sewage disposal (Title V).

The Board of Health meets on the first Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m.
The **Winchendon Redevelopment Authority** has a member vacancy. If you are interested, please reach out to ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov by February 2, 2026. For more information on the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority, including its members, mission statement and meeting times, see www.townofwinchendon.com/410/Winchendon-Redevelopment-Authority. The WRA meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m.

The **Winchendon Parks & Recreation Commission** has several open seats. The Commission plans town events and activities throughout the year and manages the use of town parks, including the Winchendon Community Park on Ingleside Drive and G.A.R. Park next to the Old Murdock Senior Center. If you’d like to serve on the Commission, send a Letter of Interest of Shaina Cunningham at SCunningham@winchendon-ma.gov and Deb Dennis at DDennis@winchendon-ma.gov. If you have questions about the Commission and its activities, reach out to Ms. Cunningham. The Commission meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 p.m.



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).

Old Murdock Senior Center 52 Murdock Ave

Saturday February 28 2 for 1 Crafternoon - Stained Glass Art & Snow Globe Magic

2-for-1 CRAFTERNOON: Stained Glass Art & Snow Globe Magic!

Why choose one craft when you can enjoy TWO in one creative afternoon? Join us for a special 2-for-1 Crafternoon, where participants will create stained glass-style artwork AND a handmade winter snow globe — all in one session!

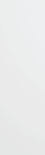
Stained Glass Drawing Workshop

Under the guidance of Brenda, artists will design up to five vibrant stained glass-inspired drawings using pencils and markers. Learn how to play with shape, color, and shading to create luminous designs that look like real stained glass. Relax, experiment, and let your creativity shine!

Winter Snow Globe Craft

Get into the winter spirit by creating your own magical snow globe! Each participant will design and take home a unique globe filled with sparkle, seasonal elements, and winter charm. Shake it up and watch your creation come to life!

✓ No experience needed. ✓ All supplies included. ✓ Perfect to do with a friend or family member



Friday February 6



KARAOKE

Monthly on the First Friday

THE HUB 5 SUMMER DRIVE WINCHENDON 6:30 - 9:30 PM

The HUB 5 Summer Dr

Saturday February 7



SCAN ME

**MARDI GRAS
MURDER MYSTERY**

THE HUB, 5 SUMMER DRIVE
SATURDAY, FEB 7, 6:00 PM

Saturday February 14

THE HUB PRESENTS:



**TOY TOWN
Swing**

2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
6:00 - 8:00 PM
\$10 COVERCHARGE

- NO PARTNER NEEDED
- NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED
- DROP IN IS WELCOME
- FREESTYLE, LEARN & HAVE FUN!
- FOOD, DRINKS, WINE & BEER FOR SALE
- 100% PROCEEDS BENEFIT CAC

THE HUB
WINCHENDON, MA

Friday February 27



**Friday Night
Frequencies**

Live Music Last Friday of the Month
Sponsored by
Winchendon Parks & Recreation
at the HUB
5 Summer Dr
7:00 - 9:00 PM

Friday
February 27th 7:00 PM
PLUNGE POOL

THE HUB
WINCHENDON, MA

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.

Saturday March 21



COMEDY NIGHT

MARCH 21ST 2026

TIME: 7-9PM

**WHERE: THE HUB
5 SUMMER DR WINCHENDON**

Headliners: John Perrotta + Joe Hebert

Tickets: \$30

THE HUB
WINCHENDON, MA

Attention! WE HAVE OPEN SEATS ON THE PARKS AND REC COMMISSION

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER OF INTEREST TODAY!



Interested?

Submit your letter of interest to:

Shaina Cunningham - SCunningham@winchendon-ma.gov

Deb Dennis - DDennis@winchendon-ma.gov

Have questions?

Reach out to Shaina Cunningham:
(SCunningham@winchendon-ma.gov)

Want to Add YOUR Event to the Town Calendar?

Contact

winchendonparksandrec@gmail.com

Sponsorship Opportunities

Building Community, Creating Memories, Together.

2026 Winchendon Parks & Recreation

**PARTNER WITH WINCHENDON PARKS
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Here to See Our
Events!



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sponsorship
magazine!



PHOTO: ABACUS ARCHITECTS

Ready to sponsor or donate? We'd love to hear from you!

Contact:

Shaina Cunningham

Email: scunningham@winchendon-ma.gov

Phone: (978) 297-3155

Address: 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon, MA 01475

www.townofwinchendon.com

DON'T MISS OUR NEXT BIG EVENT!

BE THE FIRST TO KNOW ABOUT UPCOMING
EVENTS & RECEIVE SPECIAL DISCOUNTS



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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL!



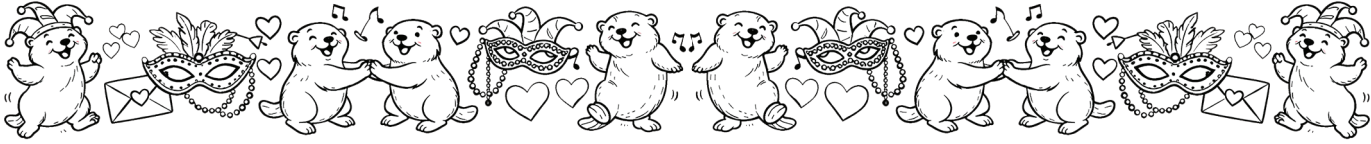
@WINCHPARKSANDREC



@WINCHENDONAMPHITHEATER



@WINCHPARKSANDREC



FEBRUARY

MONDAY FEBRUARY 2

Music with Bob Jordan

10:30-11:30 a.m. Come and join us for some folk music with Bob Jordan! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Teen Chaotic Paint Night

6:00-7:00 p.m. For teens in grades 5-12. This isn't your average paint night. After a few minutes of painting, you switch your canvas with someone else, but every time you switch, the time you have with your canvas gets smaller and smaller. Space limited, registration required—call the library at 978-297-0300. Sponsored by Beals Teen Advisory Board. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 3

Social Art Circle with GALA

1:00-3:00 p.m. Explore a variety of art in a supportive social environment—a group with different skill levels who wish to learn, explore, laugh, share, connect, and be inspired in a safe, low key, non-intimidating space. Bring your portable works in progress or try and pick from the shared community art supplies we have on hand. This is a self-led group, but there will be classroom monitors who will assist you. No cost, but registration required, at <https://form.jotform.com/253415023143949>. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 4

Integrity Medicare Appointments

10:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Have questions about insurance? Call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155 and make an appointment with Margaret from Integrity Medicare! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Ukulele Group

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

Teen Cooking Class

3:00-5:00 p.m. Calling all Youth Change-Makers! we have an opportunity for you to receive free cooking lessons at the HUB. Come on out and join us for a wonderful time of learning how to make delicious food. 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.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 5

Valentine Bingo with Lifecare Centers

10:30-11:30 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Trip to the Fitchburg Art Museum

bus departs at 12:00 p.m., returns by 4:00 p.m. Free Admission! Leaves from Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 6

Karaoke Night at The HUB

6:30-9:30 p.m. Come one, Come all to The HUB for Karaoke! Join the Winchendon Parks and Rec and have a blast singing and building community together! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Trivia Night Fundraiser for the Winchendon Skate Club

6:30-9:00 p.m. A Trivia Night fund raiser facilitated by Jon of Potty's Pub Trivia! \$10 per team member with a maximum of 8 members per team. Cash prize for the winning team! Cash bar, Raffles and a 50/50. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

“Mamma Mia!” at Murdock High School

7:00 p.m. Murdock Middle/High School Music Department presents the musical, “Mamma Mia!” featuring the hit songs of ABBA! Tickets \$15 adults, \$10 kids under 10, Seniors free. Get tickets by calling or texting Tina Santos, 978-855-9358, sending a check (payable to Friends of Music), or pay at the door. At Murdock Middle High School Auditorium, 3 Memorial Drive.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7

Operation Winchendon Cares

9:00-10:30 a.m. “Show some love to our military” drive! Come help fill boxes for Winchendon's active military, or drop off donations for them. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

Winter Market

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Winchendon Farmers Market Winter Market—produce, preserves, salsa, crafts, jewelry, baked goods and more! Inside the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Art Critique with GALA

10:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Are you looking for encouragement and support from other artists? Bring up to 2 pieces of your artwork (finished or unfinished) to share with your circle of artist friends. You may bring snacks to share with the group. Free to all GALA members. New artists, first 2 classes are free. Janet Dupuis will help guide us during our time together. Email Janet to RSVP at Jandu516@gmail.com. For more info about GALA see www.galagardner.org. In the 1st floor Gallery of the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Toy Town Bridge Artists Circle

10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Come and join the Bridge Artistic Network for a time of encouragement, to engage and empower each other to keep creating and become who we were created to be. Bring your art supplies! This is a free event and Lunch is provided. At Cornerstone Church, 122 Gardner Rd, Winchendon.

Intro to ChatGPT Workshop

10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. FREE! Curious about ChatGPT and how it can actually help in everyday life? This hands-on, beginner-friendly course will show you how to use ChatGPT as a practical tool for writing, organizing ideas, planning events, and more. This session is designed for real-world use—not technical or coding skills. Whether you're a volunteer, community member, or just curious about AI, you'll leave with skills you can use right away. Bring a laptop if you have one. Please pre-register at <https://forms.gle/VPfzNQUHcbjcnJyv9>. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Mardi Gras Murder Mystery Night

6:00-9:00 p.m. Step into the colorful intrigue of Mardi Gras right here in Winchendon! Kick off your evening with a fresh Baby Greens Salad, then enjoy your choice from a delicious entrée selection from The Farm Stand—including tender chicken & andouille sausage, garlic shrimp, or savory mixed vegetables—all served with Southern-inspired flavors. Finish with sweet mini beignets dusted in powdered sugar! But that's not all...as you dine, a thrilling murder mystery will unfold! Become part of the story, solve clues, and uncover the culprit in this interactive experience. \$50 per person. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/ticket/?id=25073. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Bingo Night Benefiting Ahimsa Haven Animal Rescue

6:00-9:00 p.m. Raffles, light fare, 50-cent cards. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. At Gardner American Legion, 22 Elm St, Gardner, MA.

A Night with Patrick: A Worship Concert

6:00-8:00 p.m. Winchendon, THIS IS FOR YOU. I'm hosting an intimate, free night of music + story and I'd love to see your face in the room. No stage show energy—just real connection and raw songs. Frewe admission with love offering. At Cornerstone Church, 122 Gardner Rd, Winchendon.

“Mamma Mia!” at Murdock High School

7:00 p.m. Murdock Middle/High School Music Department presents the musical, “Mamma Mia!” featuring the hit songs of ABBA! Tickets \$15 adults, \$10 kids under 10, Seniors free. Get tickets by calling or texting Tina Santos, 978-855-9358, sending a check (payable to Friends of Music), or pay at the door. At Murdock Middle High School Auditorium, 3 Memorial Drive.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 8

Superbowl Watch Party with the Legion Riders

4:00-10:00 p.m. Snacks available at \$10 each: Chicken Wings and Fries, Chicken Tenders and Fries, Pulled Pork Sandwich and Fries, Mozzarella Sticks, Hot Dog and Fries. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

MONDAY FEBRUARY 9

Walking Beside You: Caregiver Support Group

6:00-7:30 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. For more information visit the library or see bealslibrary.org. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St,

Winchendon Wine, Cheese & Paint Night at the Snowbound Club

6:00-8:00 p.m. Join us for a fun, creative evening filled with tasty treats and good vibes. No experience needed—just bring your friends and your inner artist! Tickets \$39.19 per person, at www.eventbrite.com/e/wine-cheese-paint-night-snowbound-club-winchendon-ma-35pp-tickets-1979939762127. Event by Monadnock Canvas and Crafts LLC. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 10

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. A tabletop roleplaying club for teens! Membership is limited, contact the library at 978-297-0300 to sign up. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 11

Lunch at the Park and Virtual Art Gallery Tour

departs 11:30 a.m, returns by 3:30 p.m. Get a ride to the Park Theatre in Jaffrey NH for their monthly Exhibition on Screen series. This month's featured artist: This month's featured artist: Lorenzo Lotto, a forgotten Renaissance master, and Bernard Berenson, the American Jewish art critic who resurrected his legacy. More info at theparktheatre.org/caravaggioartscinema. Ride leaves from the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12

Denis Cormier Concert

10:45 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Beals Book Club

3:00 p.m. 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 shepherd's pie. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13

Sound Bites Dry Friday the 13th Community Jam

6:30-9:30 p.m. We're coming back with our February 13th Open Mic Community Jam. No bad luck here. Just good music and people. List will be available at the HUB at 6:00 PM on Friday the 13th. Music starts at 6:30. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 14

Valentine's Cookie Bake Sale at the Beals

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. The Friends of the Library are warming up their ovens to create Valentine-themed sweets! Pick up your pre-ordered cookies or buy at the Bake Sale. Cookies are \$10 a dozen or \$20 for “two baker's dozens” (26). To pre-order, email Paula Whitaker at jimpaulawhitaker@gmail.com by February 9. All proceeds will benefit Library programs and activities. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Toy Town Swing at The HUB

6:00-8:00 p.m. Join us for Toy Town Swing dance night at The HUB. An evening full of fun, food, drinks, and dancing—no partner or experience needed! \$10 per person cover charge. Wine, beer & snacks available. 100% of proceeds benefit the CAC! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Valentines/Mardi Gras Party at IHM Church

5:30-10:00 p.m. Appetizers, dinner and dessert from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Live music from the “Rindge Road Rockers” 7:00-10:00 p.m. Games including Ping Pong and Muffin Tin. All ages are welcome for a fun and eventful evening! \$15 per adult 18+, \$5 age 10-17, kids under 10 free. Get tickets at the Rectory office, after Masses or contact Bob Polcari, 978-265-4699. At Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 52 Spruce St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18

Integrity Medicare Appointments

10:30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Have questions about insurance? Call the Senior Center at 978-297-3155 and make an appointment with Margaret from Integrity Medicare! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Mush! with Callie the Sled Dog

2:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to meet Callie, the husky sled dog, along with her human, musher Melissa Lunch, as they visit the library to share insights into sled dog mushing with a demonstration. After the demonstration, warm up inside the library with a warm drink while listening to stories. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the Library and in partnership with Winchendon CFCE. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Teen Cooking Class

3:00-5:00 p.m. Calling all Youth Change-Makers! we have an opportunity for you to receive free cooking lessons at the HUB. Come on out and join us for a wonderful time of learning and growing. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 19

Red Cross Emergency Preparedness

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

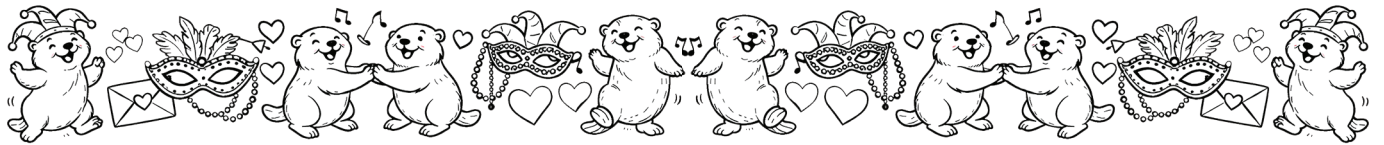
Beals Movie Night

6:00 p.m. Screening this month: One Battle After Another (2025), starring Leonardo DiCaprio. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Social Art Circle with GALA

6:00-8:00 p.m. Explore a variety of art in a supportive social environment—a group with different skill levels who wish to learn, explore, laugh, share, connect, and be inspired in a safe, low key, non-intimidating space. Bring your portable works in

RY 2026



progress or try and pick from the shared community art supplies we have on hand. This is a self-led group, but there will be classroom monitors who will assist you. No cost, but registration required, at <https://form.jotform.com/253415023143949>. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Soul Sisters at Whispered Spirits
7:00-10:00 p.m. Put on your glad rags and come on down to Whispered Spirits and enjoy some giggle juice with Soul Sisters. It's going to be the bee's knees. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20

Winter Science with Melissa the Mad Scientist
2:00 p.m. for kids ages 4-8. Explore exciting winter themed experiments with Melissa the Mad Scientist. Space limited, registration required. Call the library at 978-297-0300. Sponsored by Friends of the Beals Memorial Library. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21

Sensory Friendly Browsing Hour at the Beals
9:00-10:00 a.m. Enjoy a special library hour designed to provide a safe and friendly environment for individuals who are neurodivergent, on the autism spectrum, or have other special needs, and their families. For more information, call the library at 978-297-0300. Every 3rd Saturday of the month. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Teen Night at The HUB
6:00-10:00 p.m. Come on out and join us for a great time of community and free bowling for teens! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22

3rd Anniversary Party Potluck with the Legion Riders
12:00-4:00 p.m. \$10 per person. We will have a Potluck Dinner, Raffles, Fun and Music featuring DJ Danielle Antonellis! All are welcome to join us in this celebration! At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 24

Teen Dungeons & Dragons
3:30-5:00 p.m. A tabletop roleplaying club for teens! Membership is limited, contact the library at 978-297-0300 to sign up. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 25

Classic Movie Matinee at the Beals
3:00-5:30 p.m. Screening this month: *Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid* starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Thriller & Mystery Book Club at the Beals
6:30 p.m. If you love the thrills and chills of a good thriller, then join the Beals Mystery Book Club! Participants can share their favorites and enjoy some new ones with other fans of the genre! The library provides suggested books each month. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26

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

Bingo at The HUB
7:00-9:00 p.m. Bring your friends, grab your lucky charm, and get ready for a fun-filled evening of bingo and prizes! Play 15 exciting games. Last game is a COVERALL with a GUARANTEED \$75 pot! Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27

Friday Night Frequencies at The HUB
7:00-9:00 p.m. Whether you're coming to support local musicians, hang out with friends, or just enjoy a fun Friday night, this event is for you! Free & open to the public, all are welcome! Come out, bring a friend, and keep the music alive in Winchendon! Featured musicians this month: Plunge Pool! Check them out on YouTube: www.youtube.com/@plungepoolband4336 and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PlungePoolBand. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28

Bridging Ideas and Building Futures: Community Conversations
10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Dive into a conversation that challenges the status quo and explore whether you're genuinely thriving in a vibrant community or merely existing in a crowded world. Community Conversations #1: How does the word "Community" resonate with you? At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

2 for 1 Crafternoon - Stained Glass Art & Snow Globe Magic
1:00-3:00 p.m. Join us for a special 2-for-1 Crafternoon, where participants will create stained glass-style artwork AND a handmade winter snow globe—all in one session! Stained Glass Drawing Workshop: Under the guidance of Brenda, artists will design up to five vibrant stained glass-inspired drawings using pencils and markers. Learn how to play with shape, color, and shading to create luminous designs that look like real stained glass. Relax, experiment, and let your creativity shine! Winter Snow Globe Craft: Get into the winter spirit by creating your own magical snow globe! Each participant will design and take home a unique globe filled with sparkle, seasonal elements, and winter charm. All supplies are included, and no prior experience is needed. \$15 per person. Register at link.clover.com/urlshortener/2gRXVP or by calling 978-297-3155. For more info, email scunningham@winchendon-ma.gov. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

RECURRING WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAY through FRIDAY

Pickleball - Open Courts
9:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Drop in and play pickleball! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

MONDAYS

Gentle Yoga with Paula
10:00 a.m. Chair yoga tailored to the older generations to increase flexibility, balance, and breathwork to lower stress levels. 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.

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.

Yoga at the Beals Memorial Library
4:30-5:30 p.m. With Chantal from Shadow Academy Wellness. Unwind, relax, and celebrate the beauty of yoga. All skill levels welcomed! Mats and Blocks are available, if needed. Free with a suggested donation. For more info, contact 978-297-0300, bealsmemoriallibrary@gmail.com or visit www.bealslibrary.org. 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.

TUESDAYS

Strength Training with Mary Lee
8:30-9:15 a.m. Work at your own pace, with guidance from Marylee, to build and retain muscle utilizing handweights. You may bring your own or use the weights on hand! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Line Dancing with Mary Lee
9:15-10:15 a.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.

Taste of Home Lunch
11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Enjoy a homecooked lunch made by volunteers! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Winch Buddies Afterschool Program
3:30-5:00 p.m. FOR DETAILS and TO RSVP VISIT: <https://www.the-hub.org/event-details/winch-buddies-after-school-program>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Sons of the American Legion Tuesday Dinner
5:00-7:00 p.m. Come and join us in the downstairs hall and lounge for a wonderful time of food and fellowship. Please see our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554947800863) where we will post the menu and prices each week. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

WEDNESDAYS

Ukelele Class with Julie
9:00-10:00 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Gentle Yoga with Paula
10:00-11:00 a.m. This class is suitable for all abilities. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Bingo!
12:30-2:30 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

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.

Winch Buddies Afterschool Program
3:30-5:00 p.m. FOR DETAILS and TO RSVP VISIT: <https://www.the-hub.org/event-details/winch-buddies-after-school-program>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, 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.

Cub Scout Meetings
6:30-7:45 p.m. For more information, please contact ccpack193@gmail.com.

FRIDAYS

Story Time at the Beals
10:00 a.m. Join us for a fun half hour of stories with Ms. Kristin and Ms. Melissa. This program is in partnership with the Winchendon Community Playgroups & CFCE. Contact the library at 978-297-0300 for more information. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon. Starting Feb 16

Open Bowling for the Public
10:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. FOR DETAILS and TO RSVP VISIT: <https://www.the-hub.org/community-bowling>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon

Senior Bowling
10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Suggested donation, \$5. At the The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon

SATURDAYS

Toy Town Trolley
8:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m. Scheduled rides, call or use the Community Connector app to reserve a ride. Sponsored by the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon, call 978-297-3155 for more info.

Brunch & Bowl at The HUB
10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Come on over to The Hub and grab brunch and enjoy bowling! Fun for the whole family. PAJAMAS welcome! Continental breakfast, unlimited coffee, 1 hour of bowling (shoes included), beverages available to purchase. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Open Bowling for the Public
10:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. FOR DETAILS and TO RSVP VISIT: <https://www.the-hub.org/community-bowling>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Friends' Book and Used Media Sale
10:00 a.m.- 12:00 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.

Shopping Transportation to Rindge for Seniors
3:30-4:30 p.m. Leaves from the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. Must reserve your ride one week in advance. Call 978-297-3155.

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.

Art, Music and Dance

Line Dancing with Mary Lee
Tuesdays, 9:15-10:15 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Karaoke at The HUB
February 6, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Come one, Come all to The HUB for Karaoke! Join the Winchendon Parks and Rec and have a blast singing and building community together! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Toy Town Bridge Artists Circle
February 7, 10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Come and join the Bridge Artistic Network for a time of encouragement, to engage and empower each other to keep creating and become who we were created to be. Bring your art supplies! This is a free event and Lunch is provided. At Cornerstone Church, 122 Gardner Rd, Winchendon.

Social Art Circle with GALA
February 3, 1:00-3:00 p.m. and February 19, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Explore a variety of art in a supportive social environment—a group with different skill levels who wish to learn, explore, laugh, share, connect, and be inspired in a safe, low key, non-intimidating space. Bring your portable works in progress or try and pick from the shared community art supplies we have on hand. Spend a few hours to be a part of our social art gathering with artists, friends and seniors! Share your project and make new friends. This is a self-led group, but there will be classroom monitors who will assist you. No cost, but registration required, at <https://form.jotform.com/253415023143949>. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Ukulele Class
February 4, 9:00-10:00 a.m. Come to the Winchendon Senior Center and learn how to play the Ukulele, no experience necessary! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Toy Town Swing at The HUB
February 14, 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.

2 for 1 Crafternoon - Stained Glass Art & Snow Globe Magic
February 28, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Join us for a special 2-for-1 Crafternoon, where participants will create stained glass-style artwork AND a handmade winter snow globe—all in one session!
Stained Glass Drawing Workshop: Under the guidance of Brenda, artists will design up to five vibrant stained glass-inspired drawings using pencils and markers. Learn how to play with shape, color, and shading to create luminous designs that look like real stained glass. Relax, experiment, and let your creativity shine!
Winter Snow Globe Craft: Get into the winter spirit by creating your own magical snow globe! Each participant will design and take home a unique globe filled with sparkle, seasonal elements, and winter charm.
All supplies are included, and no prior experience is needed. \$15 per person. Register at link.clover.com/urlshortener/2gRXVP or by calling 978-297-3155. For more info, email scunningham@winchendon-ma.gov. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

For Kids

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

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

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

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

Cub Scout Meetings
Thursdays, 6:30-7:45 p.m. For more information, please contact ccpack193@gmail.com.

Winch Buddies Afterschool Program
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-5:00 p.m. FOR DETAILS and TO RSVP VISIT: <https://www.the-hub.org/event-details/winch-buddies-after-school-program>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Mush! with Callie the Sled Dog
February 18, 2:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to meet Callie, the husky sled dog, along with her human, musher Melissa Lunch, as they visit the library to share insights into sled dog mushing with a demonstration. After the demonstration, warm up inside the library with a warm drink while listening to stories. This event is sponsored by the Friends of the Library and in partnership with Winchendon CFCE. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Winter Science with Melissa the Mad Scientist
February 20, 2:00 p.m. for kids ages 4-8. Explore exciting winter themed experiments with Melissa the Mad Scientist. Space limited, registration required. Call the library at 978-297-0300. Sponsored by Friends of the Beals Memorial Library. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

For Teens

Teen Chaotic Paint Night
February 2, 6:00-7:00 p.m. For teens in grades 5-12. This isn't your average paint night. After a few minutes of painting, you switch your canvas with someone else, but every time you switch, the time you have with your canvas gets smaller and smaller. Space limited, registration required—call the library at 978-297-0300. Sponsored by Beals Teen Advisory Board. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Teen Cooking Class
February 4 and 18, 3:00-5:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Teen GSA Meeting at the Beals
February 4, 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
February 21, 5:00-9:00 p.m. At the Winchendon Community HUB, 5 Summer Dr.

Teen Dungeons & Dragons
February 10 and 24, 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

Excursions

Lunch at the Park and Virtual Art Gallery Tour
February 11, departs 11:30 a.m, returns by 3:30 p.m. Get a ride to the Park Theatre in Jaffrey NH for their monthly Exhibition on Screen series. This month's featured artist: This month's featured artist: Lorenzo Lotto, a forgotten Renaissance master, and Bernard Berenson, the American Jewish art critic who resurrected his legacy. More info at theparktheatre.org/caravaggioartscinema. Ride leaves from the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Entertainment

Music with Bob Jordan
February 2, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Come and join us for some folk music with Bob Jordan! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

“Mamma Mia!” at Murdock High School
February 6 and 7, 7:00 p.m. Murdock Middle/High School Music Department presents the musical, “Mamma Mia!” featuring the hit songs of ABBA! Tickets \$15 adults, \$10 kids under 10, Seniors free. Get tickets by calling or texting Tina Santos, 978-855-9358, sending a check (payable to Friends of Music), or pay at the door. At Murdock Middle High School Auditorium, 3 Memorial Drive.

Mardi Gras Murder Mystery Night
February 7, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Step into the colorful intrigue of Mardi Gras right here in Winchendon! Kick off your evening with a fresh Baby Greens Salad, then enjoy your choice from a delicious entrée selection from The Farm Stand—including tender chicken & andouille sausage, garlic shrimp, or savory mixed vegetables—all served with Southern-inspired flavors. Finish with sweet mini beignets dusted in powdered sugar! But that's not all...as you dine, a thrilling murder mystery will unfold! Become part of the story, solve clues, and uncover the culprit in this interactive experience. \$50 per person. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/ticket/?id=25073. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Denis Cormier Concert
February 12, 10:45 a.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Sound Bites Dry Friday the 13th Community Jam
February 13, 6:30-9:30 p.m. We're coming back with our February 13th Open Mic Community Jam. No bad luck here. Just good music and people. List will be available at the HUB at 6:00 PM on Friday the 13th. Music starts at 6:30. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Friday Night Frequencies at The HUB
February 27., 7:00-9:00 p.m. Whether you're coming to support local musicians, hang out with friends, or just enjoy a fun Friday night, this event is for you! Free & open to the public, all are welcome! Come out, bring a friend, and keep the music alive in Winchendon! Featured musicians this month: Plunge Pool! Check them out on YouTube: www.youtube.com/@plungepoolband4336 and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PlungePoolBand. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Food and Meals

Winchendon Farmers Market Winter Market
February 7, 10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. First Saturday of each month. Inside the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Vet to Vet Cafe
February 10, 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
February 12 and 26, 5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Taste of Home Lunch
Tuesdays, 11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m. Enjoy a homecooked lunch made by volunteers! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Sons of the American Legion Tuesday Dinner
Tuesdays, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Come and join us in the downstairs hall and lounge for a wonderful time of food and fellowship at the Winchendon American Legion. Please see our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61554947800863) where we will post the menu and prices each week. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

Brunch & Bowl at The HUB
Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Come on over to The Hub and grab brunch and enjoy bowling! Fun for the whole family. PAJAMAS welcome! Continental breakfast, unlimited coffee, 1 hour of bowling (shoes included), beverages available to purchase. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Recreation

Pickleball - Open Courts
Mon-Fri, 9:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Open Bowling for the Public
Fridays & Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. FOR DETAILS and TO RSVP VISIT: <https://www.the-hub.org/community-bowling>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Yoga at the Beals Memorial Library
Mondays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. With Chantal from Shadow Academy Wellness. Unwind, relax, and celebrate the beauty of yoga. All skill levels welcomed! Mats and Blocks are available, if needed. Free with a suggested donation. For more info, contact 978-297-0300, bealsmemoriallibrary@gmail.com or visit www.bealslibrary.org. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

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

Winchendon News

BOS Creates Fire Station Building Committee for Oversight on Solutions Going Forward

by Inanna Arthen

Following a debate at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, January 12, the Board is creating a Fire Station Building Committee which needs four citizens from Winchendon to join as members. The seven member committee will be made up of a member of the Board of Selectmen, a member of the Board of Health, a member of the Finance Committee and four town residents with experience in building construction and/or finance. Interested and qualified residents can email a letter of interest to Deb Dennis in the Town Manager's Office at ddennis@winchendon-ma.gov.

The formation of the Committee was initiated by recently retired Winchendon Housing Authority Executive Director David Connor at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on December 8, after the Special Town Meeting vote rejecting the funding proposal for the Fire Station Renovation and Addition Project. (See "BOS and Citizens Share Reactions to Town Meeting Fire Station Vote" in the December 18-25, 2025 edition of the *Winchendon Courier*.) In that meeting, Mr. Connor said, "I really think we need to put a committee together in this town of townspeople, taxpayers, but also some department heads. I don't want to make it too big, but I think if we can get concerned people that care about it, and also maybe a few that are naysayers, and put together a committee to look at the plan we have today, what changes can be made to it now, because it's designed and ready to go out to bid."

At the January 12 meeting, Board Chair Andrew Beauvais said, "Based on the fire station project and the upcoming MSBA [Massachusetts School Building Authority] project, it's been suggested by a number of folks, and I think it makes a lot of sense, and I know the town has done it in the past, to form a building committee comprised of representation from some of the boards and some stakeholders from the community."

Board member Tiffany Newton asked if this meant a permanent committee that worked on all kinds of building projects in the town, or individual committees that would be formed to focus on specific projects. Mr. Beauvais said, "Originally, the thought was just one committee per project, but there may be some value in having one that meets more frequently when there's something on the table, and maybe less frequently, just more for maintenance. Because right now you don't really have any discussions happening on the maintenance of our facilities, like Town Hall, school buildings, etc. But I don't want that to affect what the Capital Planning Committee does, either."

Town Manager Bill McKinney said, "My suggestion was one committee to oversee all the town buildings, because the MSBA is going to require a building committee for the window projects. So since we have the fire station as well, I decided it makes sense to have one committee

that would oversee all of the town buildings."

Board member Erika Eitland said she saw value in having a committee that did general oversight of all the buildings in town, so there would be people who acquired consistent knowledge about them, before there was an "11th hour" crisis and projects were trying to be moved forward.

Ms. Newton said she felt there should be separate, project-specific committees. "I don't necessarily negate the benefit to having an overall committee for some things, but I'm thinking of the fire station. I'm thinking that's a very specialized kind of building that you're going to want some specialized insight from people on that board. And you make a board that's just a general board for all projects around town, but if you're soliciting for a specific project, you may get those people that have that kind of knowledge for that project over just a general board."

Board member Audrey LeBrie said she saw pros and cons to both types of committees. However, the most urgent need before them right now is the fire station. "If we have a standing committee to keep the eye on all of the town buildings, that's a much more rigid organization. So it will need to have, like you said, terms and outlines, and what are they going to be doing, requirements, policies and procedures. There may be some out there that we could use as examples from other towns, but I think that'll take a little bit of time to actually get it to a point where it's feasible to launch. And I don't think we can really wait on the fire station building...Let's take care of this one, and let's research and find out what it would take to actually launch a standing committee on the town infrastructure, or the town buildings."

Board member Melissa Blanchard pointed out that a building committee was a requirement for the MSBA project, and it might be hard to find enough volunteers for two committees, schools and fire department.

Ms. Eitland expressed concern that a members of a general committee might have stronger sympathies toward one project than another. A committee considering a building project needed to look at the issues with "unbiased eyes" and be able to think about what the town actually needs and then at how it could be funded.

Mr. Beauvais asked Mr. McKinney about the composition he proposed for the committee, and Mr. McKinney said he was suggesting one member each from the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee, and four citizens with experience in buildings, construction or finance. Mr. Beauvais said that if they had to set up two such committees, for the fire station and the MSBA project, there was bound to be some overlap in the membership of the two. Mr. McKinney said that a meeting about the MSBA project was scheduled for February 5. "My proposition would be to form two separate committees, one for MSBA, one for fire, and then

we could re-evaluate once the school project is complete," Mr. Beauvais said.

There was some discussion about the exact purpose of the committees, and whether it would be valuable to have people on both sides of the issue, as Mr. Beauvais suggested, or people whose focus was on moving a project forward in a timely manner, as Ms. Eitland suggested. The Board seemed to have varying concepts of what the building committees would have as their core purpose. Mr. McKinney said, "these are big projects, multi-million dollar projects that we want to make sure that we have a large enough committee to be able to get a wide, diverse viewpoint." Ms. LaBrie said, "Let's see who applies and go from there."

Mr. Beauvais and Ms. Eitland suggested that given the health implications of the fire station project especially, and aging buildings generally (with factors such as mold and so on), the Board of Health should be represented on the committees.

Fire Chief Tom Smith came forward to say that the composition of the committees needed to reflect the unique needs of each building. He wouldn't know what the needs were for a school building, and a School Committee person wouldn't be familiar with the needs for a fire station.

Board members agreed. "I don't think that it makes sense to have somebody from the School Committee on the fire station," Mr. Beauvais said.

Ms. Eitland said that in a FAQ on the MSBA website, it says that towns with a permanent Building Committee still have to submit a form with their school building committee. "So even if we have it, they're still going to be looking for other people working to meet the designation from MSBA. So I think the approach of having one for fire and having one for schools is going to be [the best] approach, and I think we should be very tailored in who is applying and who is accepted. I think so often we're just grateful we have volunteers. I think we need to make sure that we're getting the right people who are able to actually make informed decisions, because this is too expensive of a project to not have the expertise to make the right choice."

The Board voted in favor of a motion to create a committee for the Fire Station with the membership composition as noted in the first paragraph of this article.

Addressing the public at large, Mr. Beauvais said, "A lot of you have voiced your concerns, and this is your opportunity to step forward and have a part in this process. So I encourage all of you that are listening, that have relevant experience, that you submit your letter of interest to the Town Manager's office as soon as possible."

The Board then voted to appoint Ms. Eitland as the representative from the Board of Selectmen on the committee.

Open Burning Season January 15 to May 1

The Open Burning Season runs from January 15 through May 1. Residents must get a seasonal permit for the current year from the Fire Department before they burn. A permit is \$10.00. Residents must also call the Fire Department at 978-297-6346 after 9:00 a.m. each day that they plan a burn, and get permission for that day. Burning may not be allowed on days with high-risk fire conditions.

Fires should consist of only brush and forest debris. Burning of grass, hay, leaves, stumps, tires, rubbish, building material or construction debris is prohibited. Be sure to check the weather and wind conditions. NEVER LEAVE A FIRE UNATTENDED.

For more information and to get a permit, see www.winchendonfire.org/open-burning

Lions Club Supports K9 Blitz

The Winchendon Police Department posted on their Facebook page, "We would like to thank the Winchendon Lions Club for their generous donation of \$1,000 to the K9 Blitz Fund. The Lions Club has been a steadfast supporter of the police department's K9 program for many years. Our K9 program relies on donations from individuals, businesses and civic groups such as the Lions Club. We greatly appreciate the continued support."



Support Our Local Businesses!

Check out the online Community Directory at winchendoncourier.net/directory.htm

or the print Directory, available at Not Just Produced!

Regional News

The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts Announces Opening of 2026 Activation Fund Grant Cycle

WORCESTER, Mass. (Jan. 12, 2026) - The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts today announced the opening of the application period for its 2026 Activation Fund grants, which will provide capacity-building support for organizations working to address community-identified health needs of those living or working in Central Massachusetts.

With grants typically ranging between \$50,000 and \$125,000, the Activation Fund supports discrete, one-year projects in Central Massachusetts aimed at helping organizations advance to their next level of capacity and effectiveness that can be sustained over time. The deadline for submission of a brief concept paper to express interest is March 1. Organizations invited to submit full applications will be notified in late March and final funding decisions will be made in mid-June so that projects can launch in July.

“Over the years, we have seen how strategic one-time investments can transform the capacity of organizations and achieve sustained health impacts,” said Dr. Amie Shei, president and CEO of The Health Foundation. “The Activation Fund allows us to support innovations and improvements beyond organizations’ regular activities to activate greater change and improve health in Central Massachusetts.”

The Health Foundation has awarded nearly \$13 million in Activation Fund grants in its 26-year history. Examples of previously funded projects include requests for building or renovation projects, or equipment purchases that enable the expansion of service delivery and professional development activities aimed at building internal capacity for upskilling staff. A list of Activation Fund grant recipients from 2020-2025 with brief project descriptions may be found on The Health Foundation’s website at thfcm.org/grantmaking/grant-recipients.

Those interested in applying for an Activation Fund grant should visit The Health Foundation’s website to access information on the application guidelines and register for a virtual information session to learn more about the grant opportunity.

This year also marks the launch of The Health Foundation’s new 2026-2030 strategic framework, which outlines priorities for strengthening community-based organizations, empowering local communities, promoting effective and equitable policies and systems, and stewarding assets. These strategies will guide The Health Foundation’s grantmaking and broader work in Central Massachusetts in the years to come.

About the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts

The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts is dedicated to improving the health of those who live or work in Central Massachusetts, with particular emphasis on vulnerable populations and unmet needs. Through its unique and impactful approach to grantmaking, The Health Foundation supports community-identified health issues, with health defined broadly to include social determinants of health and with a focus on promoting health equity. As a health conversion foundation launched in 1999 following the sale of the not-for-profit HMO Central Massachusetts Health Care Inc., The Health Foundation’s grants have totaled over \$62 million to 250 unique organizations over its history. For more information, visit www.thfcm.org.

All Aboard for *Titanic: the Musical* at Theatre at the Mount!



Theatre at the Mount is thrilled to announce the next stop on our 2026-2027 season journey: *Titanic the Musical* – a sweeping, emotionally powerful Broadway masterpiece that brings to life the hopes, dreams, and humanity of the passengers aboard the legendary ship.

Show Dates:
February 26, 27, 28; March 5, 6, 7 (2027)

Step onto the grandest ship ever built as stories of ambition, love, class, and destiny unfold against one of history’s most unforgettable events. With a soaring Tony Award-winning score, richly drawn characters, and breathtaking theatrical storytelling, *Titanic the Musical* delivers a voyage filled with heart, drama, and awe-inspiring beauty.

This exciting addition joins our already announced blockbusters:

Footloose - August 2026
Murder on the Orient Express - October 2026
White Christmas - November 2026

Don’t miss this incredible line-up! - Season tickets go on sale February 1 for renewing patrons; new subscription sales start March 1.

Theatre at the Mount is located at Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green Street, Gardner, MA. mwcc.edu/campus-life/tam

Advertise in the Winchendon Courier!

The *Winchendon Courier* Online is uploaded every Thursday night and reaches hundreds of Winchendon readers every week. In December, 2025:

- 1,437 visitors spent more than a minute on the site
- 124 visitors spent an hour or more on the site
- 92 people downloaded the PDF of the tax classification hearing packet from the article about the hearing
- 64 people downloaded the most recent Small Business Shopping Map (updated continuously!)
- 267 people reached the site through a link on Facebook

The monthly print edition of the *Winchendon Courier* has a press run of 500 and an uptake of over 90 percent. (That means 450+ copies in the hands of readers – and many copies are read by more than one person.) The press run will be increased as circulation and demand grow.

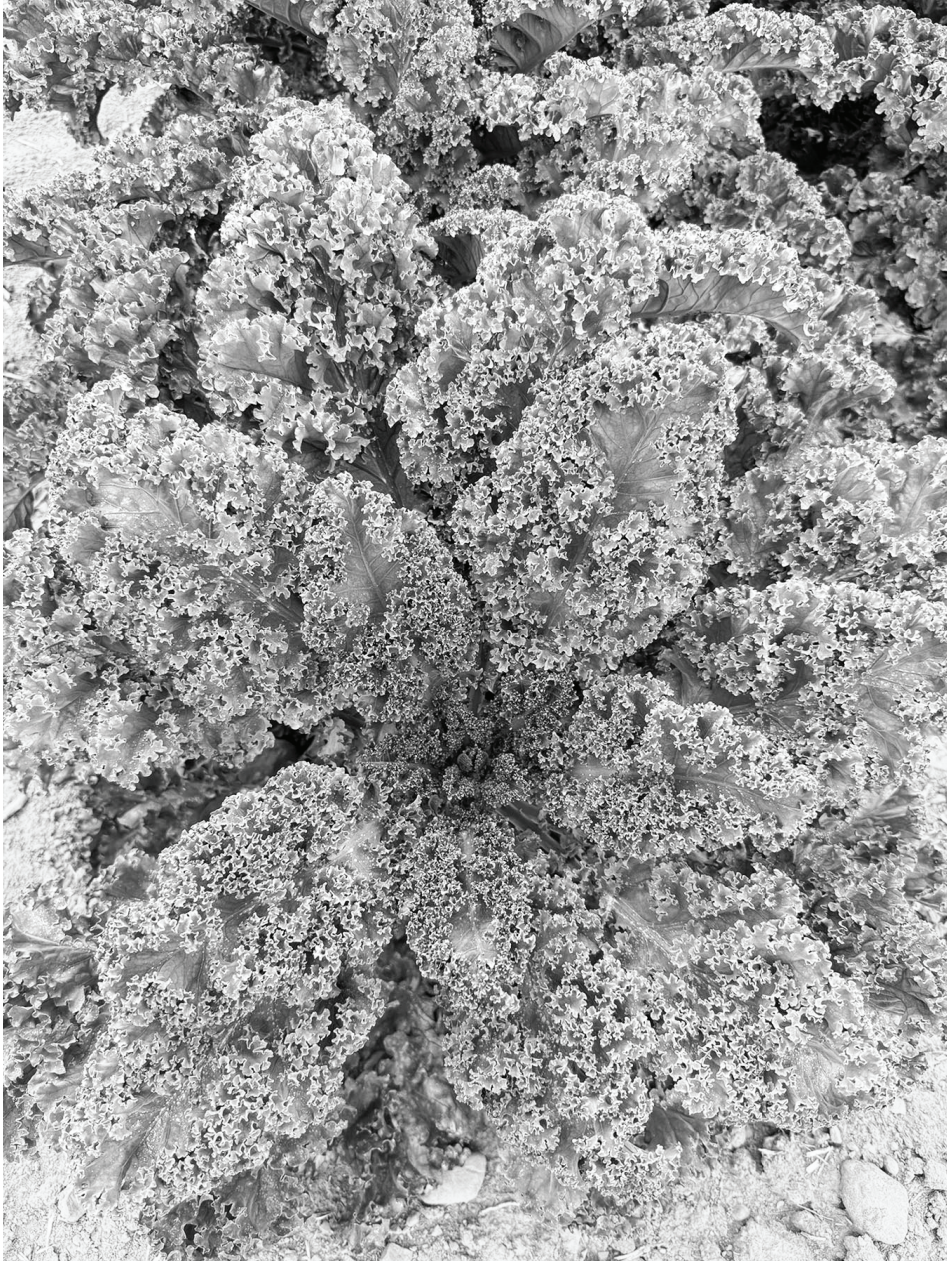
If you’re a business owner, entrepreneur, local organization or individual, contact us for information about display ad requirements and rates. We offer:

- **Free** ad design services for our paying advertisers, if desired – change your ad as often as you want, at no extra charge! (New ad every week? You’re good!)
- Discounted annual rate for advertisers who commit to a full year of weekly ads
- Automatic placement of any business card or double business card ad in the monthly print addition, at no extra charge, for advertisers who place their ad for a full month in the online edition
- Ad sizes available in the print edition range from business card size to full page. We’re flexible! If you have a specific size ad you want to use, ask us what it will cost. Questions about formatting or dimensions? Contact us!

For a rate card and/or a full information packet, contact:
editor@winchendoncourier.net

Ideas & Information

Gardening



Rubybor kale with its outstanding flavor and beauty is a 2026 All-America Selections Gold Medal Winner in both the flower and vegetable category.
Photo courtesy of All-America Selections

Winning Vegetables for Gardens and Containers

by Melinda Myers

Include some winning vegetable varieties in this year's garden. Look for the 2026 All-America Selections (AAS) winners that have been tested nationally and selected for their suitability in home gardens and containers. Winners must have improved appearance, flavor, performance or other features than those varieties already on the market.

Whether you like kale for its beauty, flavor or nutritional value, consider the Gold Medal winner Rubybor. This kale is both pretty and edible. The deep purple ruffled foliage is uniform and compact, making it perfect for ornamental planting beds, vegetable gardens and containers. You'll enjoy a continuous harvest of tender non-bitter kale all season long.

This breakthrough in breeding resulted in a kale with outstanding flavor and beauty, causing Rubybor to become an AAS Gold Medal Winner in both the flower and vegetable category. This award is only given once or twice in a decade. Some past winners include Ruby Ball Cabbage, Sugar Snap Pea, Profusion Zinnia, Purple Majesty Millet, and Fresh Look Red Celosia.

Grow the award-winning Treviso basil for use in pesto, pastas, sides and your other favorite recipes. This basil was selected for its disease resistance to powdery and downy mildew, its tight compact growth habit and season long productivity. The flavorful leaves stay tender longer and maintain quality even late in the season. The AAS judges, volunteers with horticulture expertise, were impressed with its vigor, heat tolerance and its slow-to-flower nature.

Wait for the danger of frost to pass and air and soil to warm before planting any basil in the garden. This is about the same time you plant your tomatoes. You can start seeds indoors six to eight weeks before moving transplants into the garden. Wait for the soil to warm when planting seeds directly in the garden. Grow basil in a sunny location and water thoroughly and often enough to keep the soil consistently moist but not soggy wet.

Boost the disease resistance in your tomato patch with BadaBing! Tomato. This large cherry tomato boasts resistance to septoria leaf spot, early blight, late blight and other diseases. You'll enjoy the 1.5-inch diameter juicy red fruit that resists cracking. This indeterminate tomato will keep flowering and fruiting until frost but only grows 36" to 40" tall.

It was selected as a regional winner in the Great Lakes, Heartland,

Mountain/Southwest and the Southeast. AAS judges praised BadaBing! for its productivity, flavor and meaty texture.

Check out other AAS winning vegetable and flower varieties. This non-profit organization has been trialing never-before-sold varieties and selecting winning plants for home gardeners for more than 90 years. Trial gardens are located at seed companies, universities and botanical gardens. Judges are volunteers who monitor and rate varieties' performance compared to similar varieties already on the market.

Plan a visit to one of the nearly 200 AAS Display Gardens located at public gardens, extension offices and some retailers. You'll have a chance to see the winners in a garden setting to help you plan for future additions. In the meantime, look for the AAS Winner logo when searching catalogs and your favorite garden center.

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" instant video series and the nationally-syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Financial Focus®

Tax-saving moves you can still make for 2025

Tax season is upon us, and while April 15 may seem like it's right around the corner, you still have time to make some strategic moves that could lower your 2025 tax bill. Whether you're looking to reduce your taxable income or set yourself up for a more secure financial future, these options are worth considering.

Contribute to an IRA. One of the most popular tax-smart moves is contributing to an Individual Retirement Account. You have until the April 15 filing deadline to contribute to an IRA for the 2025 tax year. You can contribute up to \$7,000, or \$8,000 if you're 50 or older.

If you choose a traditional IRA, your contributions may be tax-deductible depending on your income level and whether you participate in an employer-sponsored retirement plan. Your earnings grow tax-deferred until you withdraw them in retirement. With a Roth IRA, you won't get an immediate tax deduction, but your earnings can grow tax-free if you follow the withdrawal rules.

Max out your Health Savings Account (HSA). If you're enrolled in a high-deductible health plan, a Health Savings Account offers triple tax advantages. You can still make HSA contributions for 2025 until April 15. The limits are \$4,300 for individual coverage and \$8,550 for family coverage. If you're 55 or older, you can contribute an additional \$1,000.

HSA contributions reduce your taxable income, the money grows tax-free, and withdrawals for qualified medical expenses are never taxed. Plus, HSAs have no "use it or lose it" rule. Your savings roll over year after year, making an HSA a valuable tool for building resources to cover healthcare costs in retirement.

Self-employed? Consider a SEP IRA. Business owners and self-employed individuals have another powerful option: the SEP IRA. You can make contributions for 2025 up until your business tax return deadline, including extensions. For 2025, you can contribute up to 25% of your compensation, with a maximum of \$70,000. This can significantly reduce your taxable income while building your retirement nest egg.

Don't forget required minimum distributions. If you turned 73 in 2025, make sure you've taken your Required Minimum Distribution from your traditional IRA or 401(k) for 2025. Missing this deadline can result in a steep penalty, so it's important to verify that if your 73rd birthday was in 2025, your RMD has been withdrawn before April 1, 2026.

Consult a professional. While these moves can help reduce your tax burden, everyone's financial situation is unique. Before making any major financial decisions, it's wise to consult with a tax advisor or financial advisor who can provide guidance tailored to your specific circumstances.

The April 15 deadline is fast approaching, but you still have opportunities to make smart choices that could benefit both your current tax return and your long-term financial health. Don't let this window of opportunity close without considering your options.



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

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Murdock MHS Presents “Mamma Mia!” February 6 and 7

by Inanna Arthen

On Friday, February 6 and Saturday, February 7, at 7:00 p.m., Murdock Middle High School will present performances of the hit rock musical “Mamma Mia!” with songs from the popular 70s Swedish singing group ABBA. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$10 for kids under 10, free for senior citizens (donations accepted!). Seating is first-come, first served. Tickets can be reserved in advance by calling or texting Tina Santos at 978-855-9358. Payment may be mailed as a check or paid at the door. Tickets will be sold at the door if supplies last—“When we sell out, we SELL OUT!”, warns the Winchendon Schools Music Department. Performances will be in the Murdock Middle High School Auditorium at 3 Memorial Drive, Winchendon.

“Mamma Mia!” is called “a jukebox musical,” with a story built around

existing songs not originally written for the show. The plot revolves around a young woman, Sophie, about to be married on a fictional Greek island in the present day. She wants her father to escort her down the aisle—but she doesn’t know who her father actually is. She reads her mother Donna’s old diary and finds three possible candidates for the honor—and invites them all to the wedding, without telling her mom. Donna and Sophie, Donna’s two best friends from the past, and Donna’s three ex-lovers all work out the tangled dilemma, coming to a surprising resolution.

ABBA was one of the most internationally popular pop/rock groups ever. Some of their hit songs in “Mamma Mia!” include “Dancing Queen,” “Knowing Me, Knowing You,” “SOS,” and “Take a Chance on Me.”

Pre-order Your Treats Now from the Friends of the Beals Library Valentine’s Cookie Fundraiser!

The Friends of the Beals Memorial Library in Winchendon are warming up their ovens to create Valentine-themed sweets! The Bake Sale fundraiser will be held through Saturday, February 14, and will offer buyers the opportunity to purchase cookies in a variety of delicious flavors. These beautifully boxed baked goods can be given as gifts or kept for yourself as a guilty pleasure.

Cookies may be pre-ordered by the dozen at \$10.00 each, or two baker’s dozens (26 cookies) at \$20.00. Order forms can be downloaded from the Beals Library website at bealslibrary.org/friends (click on the “Fundraisers” button at the far right), or picked up at the Library. Once the order form has been filled out, buyers can either email their orders to Paula Whitaker at jimpaulawhitaker@gmail.com or drop them off at the Library’s circulation desk. Order forms are due by Monday, February 9.

Buyers may also stop by the Friends Book Sale on the ground floor of the Beals Library on Saturday, February 14 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, and buy their cookies then. Payments are made when the cookies are picked up, and the Friends accept cash, check or Venmo payments.

The boxed dozens include:

Peanut Blossoms: Peanut butter cookies with a variety of

chocolate kisses on top.

Scotch Shortbread: Round-shaped, frosted shortbread with a cherry on top.

Stenciled Cookie: Heart-shaped butter cookies with stenciled heart-shaped sprinkles on top.

Raspberry Almond: Rich, buttery Scandinavian, melt-in-your-mouth tradition.

M+M Valentine Sugar Cookie: Heart-shaped cookies with white or milk chocolate swirled on half of it, and dotted with M+M’s.

Chocolate Peppermint Splash: Chocolate cookie with pink frosting and crushed peppermint on top.

Variety Pack: An assortment of each cookie featured above.

All proceeds from the Friends of the Library Valentine’s Cookie Bake Sale fundraiser will benefit future Library programs. For more information email Paula Whitaker at jimpaulawhitaker@gmail.com.

Murdock Media Production Students Go Viral With Video Response to Jimmy Fallon Trying to Say “Winchendon”

by Inanna Arthen

Residents and natives of Winchendon were highly amused by the *Tonight Show* feature, “Three Guys from Boston Say Every Town and City in Massachusetts” which was part of the *Tonight Show* broadcast on January 13. Actors Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Jimmy Fallon took turns rattling off the names of every single Bay State municipality in alphabetical order. Toy Towners were waiting eagerly for the Ws, but we didn’t expect the extra zinger Winchendon got from Jimmy—who took three tries to get the name out. He seemed to have a little trouble with the “d”.

Media Production students at Murdock High School couldn’t let this golden opportunity pass by. At the Winchendon School Committee meeting on Thursday, January 22, student liaison to the School Committee Bailey gave a complete report of how the students responded and what happened as a result.

“Last Tuesday evening, Jimmy Fallon, Matt Damon and Ben Affleck went viral during the *Tonight Show* for ‘Three Guys from Boston Saying Every Town and

City in Massachusetts,’” she began. “The next morning, clips of the bit went viral with people searching to see how their town’s name was pronounced. Winchendon had the honor of Jimmy Fallon saying our name, not once, not twice, the wrong way, saying Winchen-ton with a T, then getting it right the last time.

“After seeing the clip that morning, our Media Production teacher, Mr. Collins, shared an idea for the video in response to Jimmy mispronouncing our town. Students in Media Production quickly went to work knowing it had to be acted on quick in our social media trends. So our goal was to storyboard, rehearse, record, edit and post the video by noon, with the hopes of someone from the *Tonight Show* seeing the clips. We quickly rehearsed during our Media Production class right before lunch, and we ended up having one of our students get into the Blue Devil costume, and we got that from Miss Rondeau, and recorded two clips right before lunch, and then during lunch, as the kids walked down, a few of us were going around getting other students to join in for the last clip where we

were all cheering.

“So then it was posted onto Instagram, Tiktok and Facebook, and by the end of the day, we knew the video was taking off, but most of our posts get only a few hundred or maybe a few thousand over the course. This video was gaining three to four thousand views an hour. So what surprised us was how the video stats continue to increase, not just the next day, but throughout the week. Since we launched it last Wednesday, the video has been viewed over 153,000 times by almost 102,000 people, 10 times the population of Winchendon, and about 97 percent of the people who have seen it don’t follow our accounts. So there has been almost 4,000 recreations, likes, shares, reposts and saves from that video with hundreds of positive comments about our little town.”

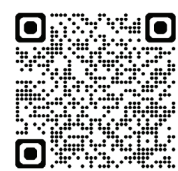
The School Committee applauded this story, as Bailey added that the Gardner News had done an article about it.

You can see the original clip on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=FhC76xAq7oE. The students’ response is a “short”



Murdock “extras” cheer Jimmy Fallon finally getting it right (image copyright MMHS)

on YouTube and you can watch it at www.youtube.com/shorts/nTX9QV3hVTo in the Blue Devil Weekly YouTube channel.



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News, events, police logs, obituaries, community directory
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Town Committee Monthly Meetings by Week
All Meetings in Town Hall

week	MON	TUE	WED	THUR
1st	Board of Health 10:00am	Planning Board 6:00pm Parks & Rec Commission 6:30pm		School Committee 6:00pm
2nd	Board of Selectmen 6:30pm	Finance Committee 7:00pm	Economic Development Task Force 5:30pm Agricultural Commission 7:00pm	Conservation Commission 6:00pm
3rd	Winchendon Redevelopment Authority 5:00pm	Planning Board 6:00pm Parks & Rec Commission 6:30pm	Zoning Board of Appeals 7:00pm	School Committee 6:00pm
4th	Board of Selectmen 6:30pm		Economic Development Task Force 5:30pm	

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.

Toy Town Trolley Now Running Later on Saturdays!

We’ve expanded service hours to help more Winchendon residents – especially those in need of transportation to warming centers, shelters, and essential services.

New Saturday Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Book ahead! Saturday rides must be scheduled by 3:00 p.m. on Friday.

Door-to-door rides within Winchendon are available for:

- Medical appointments
- Grocery shopping
- Shelter and warming center access
- Pharmacy trips
- And more

Call (978) 297-3155 or email communityconnector@winchendon-cac.org.

Prefer to book with your phone? Download the Community Connector app at www.townofwinchendon.com/577/Get-the-App

Let your neighbors know! This expanded schedule helps ensure safe, reliable transportation for those who need it most – especially during colder weather.

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.

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.

Winter Parking Ban is in Effect
No On-Street Parking Between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

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

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 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”

2026 Dog Licenses Available Now

2026 Dog licenses are now available at the Town Clerk’s office in person, or mail check with rabies certificate to Town Clerk, 109 Front St, Dept. 3, Winchendon, MA 01475. You can also put your application in the drop box outside of Town Hall or order online on the Town Clerk’s page of the town website. Cost for a Spayed/Neutered dog is \$10, Non-Spayed/Non-Neutered dog is \$20. Please provide valid rabies certificate.

Toy Town FYIs

Transfer Station Hours

Wednesday 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.
653 River Street
978-297-0395
Sticker price: \$85 (\$25 for additional stickers)
Pay-As-You-Throw bags required
33-gallon, \$5.00 per bag, 16-gallon, \$3.00 per bag as of July 1, 2025
2025-2026 Transfer Station sticker now on sale in Town Hall and at the Transfer Station.

Is Your House Number Clearly Visible from the Street?

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

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

We are excited to announce that the DPW, Treasurer/Collector’s Office and the Transfer Station can all now accept in-person credit and debit card payments. This means next time you need to purchase or pay for:

- Trash bags
- Transfer station stickers
- Excise bills
- Tax bills
- Water & Sewer bills
- And more

You can pay with a credit or debit card! (subject to a convenience fee).

Winchendon News

Looking Back at 2025...and Thinking Ahead to 2026

by Inanna Arthen

2025 has been quite a year for Winchendon. If there has been one overriding (so to speak) theme for Toy Town this year, it has been MONEY. But there are a few contenders for sub-themes: local events, new people, new businesses, new websites, new town committees, lots of changes.

Winchendon voters were asked to decide on three Proposition 2-1/2 overrides this year, each one preceded with several months of intensive public information sessions for residents, public hearings, and fierce debates on social media. (And lots of coverage by the *Courier*, including numerous researched articles about Prop 2-1/2 and how both Winchendon and other towns have tackled financial problems).

In March, Town Manager Bill McKinney presented the town's financial outlook to the Board of Selectmen and the public, explaining that Winchendon's revenues were running so far behind expenses, the town would have to close its library, senior center and recreation department if it did not pass a Prop 2-1/2 override.

In May, Winchendon voters went to the polls for the ballot vote on two different proposed override amounts: \$2.9 million, which would allow some extra "wiggle room", and \$1.9 million, which covered the basics and allowed the three departments to stay open. Only the lower amount passed, by 12 votes – the tallies were 896 in favor, 884 opposed.

At a very well attended and suspenseful Annual Town Meeting on May 19, voters approved the \$1.9 million override town budget with 61 percent in favor, 39 percent opposed.

In September, Fire Chief Tom Smith asked the Board of Selectmen to bring the proposed Fire Station Addition and Renovation Project before voters, since the shovel-ready plans for the project had been done. The Board scheduled a Special Town Meeting on December 1 for voters to consider a third Prop 2-1/2 override, this one a debt exclusion to borrow funding for the fire station. After several months of presentations, hearings, and public information sessions both at the fire station and on Zoom, voters convened and returned a tied vote of 50-50 percent on the fire station funding. Since approval of borrowing requires a two-thirds majority vote, the fire station project was not funded.

The school department got support from the state for major improvements to the windows and roofs of several school buildings. The Winchendon CAC successfully landed several large grants, including funding from T-Mobile, for renovations inside and outside of The HUB at 5 Summer Drive, as well as youth programs.

In October, Winchendon's Auditor explained to several of the town Boards why Winchendon has lost track of about \$4 million it should have, or does have and hasn't recorded properly in its ledgers – one of the most surprising presentations

ever heard at a Winchendon Board meeting.

During the summer, a new committee, the Economic Development Task Force, acquired seven members and began meeting in the fall.

Thanks to a large grant from the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Winchendon launched a free local transit system, the Community Connector, created a new and updated town website, and supported the launching of a monthly print version of *The Winchendon Courier*.

The gigantic \$9 million water main from Ashburnham to Winchendon was completed, under budget and ahead of deadline—but now the town will need to start making the payments on the loan.

A new, although ad hoc, task force devoted to addressing the problem of persons and families experiencing homelessness in Winchendon evolved out of the bi-monthly HEAL Community Partnership breakfasts. They have been collaborating with other agencies, organizations and programs in Winchendon and in the region. The Winchendon Commission on Disabilities, which was greenlighted by voters at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting, has settled a full quorum of members and officially launched.

After years of fundraising and planning by the Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center, the project to convert the Poland and Streeter school buildings into veterans' housing is finally underway.

Winchendon residents were surprised when Winchendon Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Marc Gosselin abruptly departed in July. Assistant Superintendent Charlotte King was appointed Interim Superintendent for the 2025-26 school year. The departure of Department of Public Works Director Brian Croteau also surprised many Winchendonians. Town Engineer Pat Wood stepped into the position.

The Murdock High School Varsity Cheer Team won the National Championship at the Great Smoky Open Nationals Competition in May in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

Winchendon welcomed several new businesses to town. Mustard Seed clothing store moved here from Westminster, and Sleepy Hauler Antique Center hauled in from Barre. Thumbs Up Barbershop and VIP Barbershop both opened on Central Street, bringing the barbershop population of Central Street to four. No one in Winchendon has any excuse not to have great-looking hair! Farming Is Life opened a retail store, The Farm Stand Winchendon, on School Street. More crafters, makers and entrepreneurs are getting started or revving up, some of them with the Local Makers Hub. A new house of worship, TWR House of Prayer, is meeting seven days a week on Pond Street.

Winchendonians were disappointed when new restaurant El Toro closed to recoup from

some break-ins, but rumor has it they may re-open in 2026. Meanwhile, all eyes are on the anticipated Koi Asian Cuisine restaurant which is remodeling the building on Spring Street most recently occupied by the former River Walk Cafe.

Events and more events! Winchendon Parks & Recreation sponsored or ran a very full season, of which the highlights included the Central Mass Irish Festival, the Haunted Trails and Trunk-or-Treat, Founders Day, Classics Day, Food Truck Festival and Battle of the Bands, and Breakfast with Santa. They also held "Crafternoons," Bingo, music events and band concerts, and many more.

And they weren't the only ones offering recreation, activities and entertainment. The Clark Memorial YMCA sponsored Solstice Fair and the Winchendon Carnival. The town held Fall Festival. The Beals Memorial Library sponsored a full slate of movie nights, holiday events, sensory-friendly events, weekly and monthly activities, the Candidates' Forum before the Town Election and a Legislative Breakfast. The Youth Changemakers organized the annual Taste of Winchendon. The Kiwanis sponsored the annual Chili Cook-off. Winchendon Winds Concert Band ran its 2025 series of concerts in June and broke its previous attendance records. The Winchendon Music Festival brought elegant classical music to the library and Winchendon History and Cultural Center. The Winchendon Public Schools produced the musical *Six*, the annual Morton E. Converse Tournament of Plays competition, the first annual Murdock Arts Fest and student concerts.

Then there were the events at the American Legion, the activities at the Senior Center, all the events at The HUB...if you were bored in Winchendon at any time in 2025, you obviously weren't reading the *Courier*, because if we knew about it, it was in here!

As Winchendon marches ahead into 2026, there are some unresolved questions and looming issues that need to be addressed. Will the town need to pass another Proposition 2-1/2 override this year? Mr. McKinney indicated this last March, but voters need to know about this soon, if it will be on the table. Citizens have come before the Board of Selectmen several times to raise ongoing concerns about the Mabardy Landfill capping being done on River Street by W.L. French. Testing reports have not been posted to the town website, and there have not been updates on when work will be finalized. There are unused properties in town that continue to deteriorate—how can the town take positive steps toward resolving these situations?

Many of the town Boards and Committees have vacancies. If you'd like to become part of the solutions, step up and volunteer. Meanwhile, to stay informed, keep reading the *Courier*—because keeping Winchendon informed is why we're here.



Town Manager Bill McKinney answers questions from voters at Annual Town Meeting
Photo by Inanna Arthen



Fire Belly Chili at the Chili Cook-Off
Photo by Inanna Arthen



Something Elliot Ness might have driven—a 1932 Ford sedan at Classic Cruise Night
Photo by Inanna Arthen

The March print edition of The Winchendon Courier will go to press on Tuesday, February 24 at noon. Content for that edition must be received by the publisher by Sunday, February 22.