

Town Election - Monday, May 4, 2026

8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m, Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave (all precincts)

Annual Town Meeting - Monday, May 18, 2026

7:00 p.m., Murdock High School, 3 Memorial Dr

Town Manager Presents Final FY 2027 Budget to Joint BOS and FinCom Meeting



Members of the BOS and FinCom discuss the FY 27 increase in water rates
Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

On Monday, March 30, the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee held a joint meeting on the final version of the FY 2027 town budget as presented by Town Manager Bill McKinney.

Mr. McKinney put a presentation on the screen that was similar to the presentation he gave of the draft budget in February, explaining that there were “a few changes” and updated numbers since then. The draft budget included some placeholders for exact amounts that were still coming in, such as the Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School (Monty Tech) tuition.

The final school budget amount was \$8,308 higher, for a total of \$18,667,547 (an increase from FY 2026 of \$616,477 or 3.37 percent). The Police, Fire Department and Department of Public Works budgets had each gone down from the draft budget. “I did ask [them] to trim some of their costs, which they did,” Mr. McKinney said. The biggest “trim” was the DPW’s who pared about \$50,000 off their draft budget request.

Mr. McKinney explained that he increased the budget for legal services. “A lot of things are happening in town that we do require legal help with,” he said. “And then a lot of the other costs are just salary increases and other costs that

continue to grow, unfortunately.”

Monty Tech tuition came in at \$4,000 less than Mr. McKinney’s draft estimate, for a total of \$646,000 for FY 27. The amounts for school tuition and school bus transportation did not change from the draft budget. School busing is budgeted for \$1,856,000 and school tuition is \$1,041,790. “We are working with the school department on the school bus transportation that’s, as you can see, a huge expense,” Mr. McKinney said. “So we do have them looking at different route options to see if there’s any savings that could be had going into the next year. They are still working on that. So hopefully we won’t end up spending that amount. But we don’t know that final number yet, so I had to be conservative in my estimate.” He added, “A lot of money is flowing out for school tuition. A lot of that is school choice.”

The last slide for Expenses showed some hefty amounts. Retirement is budgeted at \$2,705,000, an increase of 10.46 percent. “So the retirement, just so everyone’s aware, that is scheduled to go up 10 percent each year until the year 2035, which is when the pension should be fully funded,” Mr. McKinney said. “So unfortunately, as you can see, 10 percent on such a large number takes up a lot of the additional revenue that we would get each year, it is going

into the retirement. The Workers Compensation came in flat, which was good. Unemployment costs continue to go up. Then the Health/Life Insurance, most of that is health insurance in that line item.” The total amount for health/life insurance is \$3,415,000, an increase of 9.01 percent. “On the original budget, I had put in 15 percent, and then we got the word that it came in at eight and a half percent. So that was very helpful. And then, obviously, as salaries grow, so too do Medicare taxes.”

The final expenses amount for FY 2027 is \$40,122,397, an increase of 5.58 percent.

Mr. McKinney paused in the presentation for some questions from Board members. Board of Selectmen member Audrey LaBrie asked if there were any new positions in the FY 2027 budget, besides the two additional firefighters who would be covered by increased ambulance revenue. Mr. McKinney said there are none.

Board of Selectmen Chair Andrew Beauvais asked if Mr. McKinney had been part of the school bus discussion with the schools, since that service was on the town side of the budget.

“I have, I’ve asked them if they could look at the routes,” Mr. McKinney said. “I was involved when we had the bus contract that went out to bid. This is going to be

year two of the three, and potentially up to five years originally. They came in with a 24 percent increase in year one, and then I think it was 3333, we were able to negotiate that down, the prior superintendent to 12, and then 6666...about half of the cost is on the fixed bus routes, and then the other half is on the Special Education bus routes, and then some cost for the homeless transportation. So the potential savings could be on the fixed bus routes. So right now they have ten. They used to have nine. If they could go back to nine, that would be a savings. So I know that they’re working on that with the bus company. The other issue to consider on that is that the School Committee sets the radius for who gets transported. So by law, it’s up through sixth grade if you live outside of two miles, I believe that you have to provide transportation. Everything else would be up to the School Committee if they want to do anything more than that, which I believe they do.”

Ms. LaBrie said, “I would like to ask someone from the School Committee to present to the Board and/or joint boards, where those discussions are. I realize that they set it, but we pay for it. So this is kind of like taxation without representation. So if we can get that from the School Committee, I would like

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The Courier Needs You!

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

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Town Election Ballot Questions 1, 2 and 3 - What They Mean

At the May 4 town election, Winchendon voters will be asked to vote on three school repair projects: one for Toy Town Elementary School, one for Memorial Elementary School, and one for Murdock Middle High School. The projects have been accepted into a state program through the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Program, which is expected to pay 77.53 percent of eligible costs.

Each school building is a separate project and must be approved separately by voters. If two questions pass and one does not, only the two buildings that are approved will move forward to a vote at Annual Town Meeting.

The ballot questions ask voters to approve borrowing an amount which will increase the total tax levy more than allowed under Proposition

2-1/2. This is called a debt exclusion. A debt exclusion temporarily increases the maximum tax levy allowed under Proposition 2-1/2. After the debt is retired, the increase in the tax levy is removed. The length of the loan will be decided when the town borrows the funds.

Under the rules of the program and Proposition 2-1/2, the town is required to approve spending the full amount of the repairs even though more than three-fourths of the costs are expected to be reimbursed to the town. Each project needs to go out to bid. Only the amount actually needed will be borrowed

Each project that is approved in the ballot vote on May 4 must then be voted on separately at Annual Town Meeting on May 18. For a school's repairs to go forward, that school's

project must pass at both the ballot vote on May 4 and the Annual Town Meeting vote on May 18.

For each ballot question, a YES vote means yes, the town may go over the Proposition 2-1/2 limit for that project. The ballot questions do not have dollar amounts. The project funding will be voted on at Town Meeting.

A NO vote means the project for that school will not go forward and will not be voted on at Town Meeting.

For more information about the school repair projects and the MSBA Accelerated Repair Program, see www.winchendonk12.org/o/wps/page/msba-accelerated-repair-program on the Winchendon School District's website.

Toy Town Elementary

- Replace the roof.
- Upgrade accessibility to current code and to be ADA-compliant, including repairing the wheelchair lift.

Memorial Elementary

- Replace the roof.
- Replace windows and doors.
- Upgrade accessibility to current code and to be ADA-compliant.

Murdock Middle High School

- Replace the roof.

Winchendon Candidates Set for 2026 Town Election on Monday, May 4

Board of Selectmen (one open seat)

- Melissa Blanchard
- Barbara Zisk

School Committee (two open seats)

- Alissa Campbell
- Michael Gaynor
- Karen Kast-McBride
- Yvonne Senecal

Board of Health, 3-year term (one open seat)

- Monique Connor

Board of Health, 2-year term (one open seat)

- Barbara Zisk

Board of Health, 1 year term (one open seat)

- Paula Whitaker

Housing Authority

- Nancy Romanowski

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to see what they're doing to make that number as viable as possible, while at the same time providing the services that our students need."

Board of Selectmen member Erika Eitland said, "When I look at that school tuition number, and think about almost \$900,000 accounting for school choice, I also want to understand from the [School Committee], what are they doing to help keep students here? Because that would start getting that number lower. So it's not only about bus transportation to get kids to school, but are we getting them to school so we keep the money from the school tuition perspective as well. I think this is a huge piece of our budget that needs to be shared."

Mr. McKinney went on to the slides showing anticipated revenues for the next fiscal year. The two largest chunks of revenue for the town are the property tax levy (\$18,063,200 for FY 2027, an increase of 3.12 percent) and Chapter 70/ Local Aid from the state (\$16,632,954 for FY 2027, an increase of 0.73 percent). Those two combined account

for 87.87 percent of the anticipated revenue. Most of the smaller revenue items are level-funded from FY 2026, with no change forecast. Ambulance revenues are projected to almost double. Motor vehicle excise tax is expected to increase \$50,000 or 4.0 percent. "Other cherry sheet" revenue includes money from the state for things like veterans' benefits and money the town gets back from state-owned land. It is anticipated to more than double from FY 2026, but the total is only \$462,719.

The total budgeted revenue for FY 2027 is \$39,487,403, an increase of 4.22 percent.

In answer to questions, Mr. McKinney explained that he is conservative with estimating cannabis revenue because the industry is not really growing, and Winchendon retailers will see a decrease in traffic from New Hampshire if that state legalizes recreational marijuana. He was conservative with investment income because interest rates were dropping.

FinCom member Charles Corts brought up the ambulance revenue proposal, saying that they didn't have figures for the existing ambulance receipts, and it seems like a big leap to project such a large increase.

Continuing with the presentation, Mr. McKinney showed a slide that broke down the tax levy increase by its components: prior year baseline, 2.5

percent increase under Proposition 2-1/2, the \$1.9M override, and new growth. In FY 2026, new growth accounted for only \$106,705 or 4.48 percent of the total increase in the levy amount. Projected new growth in FY 2027 is only \$80,000. "New growth" is an amount on which there would hypothetically be no cap.

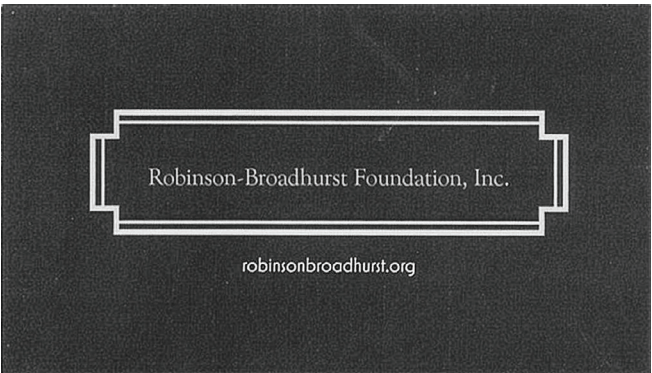
Mr. McKinney also showed again a slide displaying the change in state aid over the last few years and how much it has decreased. Some of the large increases in past years were due to COVID money, but this year's increase is less than 1 percent. "If the state were to give more to local towns, that would be a big, big impact for everybody," Mr. McKinney said. "If you've been following the news, most towns, or a lot of towns, have overrides coming up this year because of the fact that...the Mass Municipal Association, on their website, they put together a study that talks about the "perfect storm" of limited property tax increases, but huge increases on the expense side, and the fact that what the state gives to the communities is not keeping up with what it should be. So if we were getting two and a half percent increase from the state, we'd be back up over \$400,000 and that'd be another \$300,000 that would really help us to balance the budget, if they just gave us two and a half percent more."

(You can see the report on the Mass Municipal Association's website at <https://www.mma.org/resources/a-perfect-storm-cities->

and-towns-face-historic-fiscal-pres-sures/.)

Mr. McKinney moved to a slide showing Net School Spending. This is an amount set by the state each year, based on a number of factors, that each community must by law contribute to the support of their local school district (whether it's a single-town district or part of a regionalized district). Required Net School Spending is the state mandate; Actual Net School Spending is the amount the community actually puts in. In FY 2026, Winchendon's Required Net School Spending was set at \$21,245,551, and the town budgeted \$22,188,620—\$943,069 (or 4.44 percent) more than the minimum. "We have been aggressively exceeding the net school spending requirement each year," Mr. McKinney said.

Ms. LaBrie said that by her calculation, based on these numbers, Winchendon was spending about \$16,700 per student, which seemed high to her. "I would also take a look at not only what we want to be spending, but what are the results that are we getting?" she said. "How are the numbers doing? How are the kids doing, emotionally, socially, intellectually, everything across the board. I think it would be a very interesting study. Perhaps the School Committee could request a grant to do a study and actually look into the numbers. Are we getting our money's worth? Are our students getting what they need?...I think we really, really



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need to dig into these numbers.”

Ms. Eitland said that according to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) website, Winchendon’s per-student spending in 2024 was \$19,584. By comparison, the state average is about \$23,000 per student. “We’re a small district, but by no means are we spending incredible amounts on our students,” she said.

Mr. McKinney went on to say that with the adjusted numbers, the budget now had a deficit of \$634,994. Free Cash has been certified at about \$2.2 million, so Mr. McKinney proposed balancing the budget for this year from Free Cash. “At least that will get us through this year while keeping an eye on the future and also for the economic development that we’ve been working on to try to bring new growth into the town,” he said. This would use about 29 percent of the amount in Free Cash.

There was some discussion about the pros and cons of balancing the budget from Free Cash, and the need to put money into the Stabilization Fund as a buffer, and several other funds that had not gotten their annual amounts for a couple of years due to the deficit crunch. This was followed by more discussion of the school bus costs and the importance of working with the School Committee to see how those could be reduced. Mr. Beauvais said, “I think it would force some really creative thinking on bus routes, transportation in general. I agree with that. The goal here is that we’re all working together, right? It’s not us against them. We’re all in this together, but at the end of the day, we have a responsibility to our residents that we’re not continuing to either ask for tax increases or tapping into our Free Cash when I would much rather see that money invested in improving the town or perhaps even building our economic base in some way.”

To conclude his presentation, Mr. McKinney went over the four Enterprise Funds: Water, Sewer, Transfer Station and PEG Access (cable TV). The big take-away for these is that both Water and Sewer rates will be increasing by double digit amounts. Water rates will be increased by 23 percent, and sewer rates will increase 13 percent. User fees at the transfer station—fees for a transfer station sticker and pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) bags—will increase, with stickers going from \$85 to \$95 and bags going up \$0.25 each. Templeton is in its last year of the contract to use Winchendon’s transfer station and its Select Board will be deciding whether to renew the contract, which is worth about \$10,000 to Winchendon.

There was some discussion about the water meters for Winchendon homes and whether some homes had no meters or needed repairs. DPW Director Patrick Wood came forward to explain, “There’s probably roughly about 250 to 300 customers out there with the old meters that we’ve been trying to get in and replace. We haven’t had much success. We’re going to try other routes to try to get in. There’s avenues we can go down to try to get in there and to replace them. Will it solve the rate increase? I couldn’t tell you, because all the customers that have all these old meters are operating on estimated reads. Those estimated reads could be higher or lower than what their actual reads are. So in the end, it could be a wash.”

There was some lengthy discussion about the continuous increase in the water rates, and what effect the new water main was having. Board of Selectmen member Melissa Blanchard pointed out the Catch-22 in the fact that the higher the rates go, the more water users conserve and cut back on their water use, and as a result the rates have to go up again to cover costs. “It’s dramatic when you’re trying to budget your bill and everything else is going up, and it’s just that we’re being penalized for being good citizens and conserving. It’s kind of insanity in my mind,” she said.

Following the discussion, the floor was opened for public comment.

Resident Barbara Zisk came forward with some questions. Her first question was about Net School Spending. “Why are we over exceeding that budget? If we’re required by law to be the net spending, why are we over exceeding that?” she asked. Mr. Beauvais suggested that Ms. Zisk speak with Mr. McKinney about this one-to-one, since he didn’t want to violate Open Meeting Law.

Ms. Zisk then asked about the back taxes owed to the town, which she understood were going to be looked at in July due to the conversion to the Munis accounting system.

Mr. McKinney said, “So as far as the back taxes, the taxes are not in this [budget] because even when we do collect them, that’s one time revenue...we are converting from QDS into Munis. The QDS could not handle tax titles, so we have to have everything on spreadsheets for those that are in tax title. So it made sense to wait until the actual conversion before we do the new tax title takings. I will say, though, that the tax titles is a long process. I mean, a lot of people think, oh, you know, people owe the money. We just take them to court and get the payment. That’s not how it works. The property that burned over on Lincoln Avenue Extension, the town put in a tax title in 2019 and the court still has not awarded it to us for a tax taking, even though we keep asking and asking. It takes years for it to go through the land court if the owner doesn’t pay, and again, we have to take him to court. It’s in the court for year after year after year. So that’s a huge problem.”

Ms. Zisk continued, “The other thing that I just want to bring forward, because it’s been a very big concern in the community, is some of the homes up on Lake Monomanac that were camps that are now homes, there was a question of how they were being taxed, that they were still being taxed as camps. If you don’t want to address that right now, but I’m asking for it to be looked into, if you could, and get back to me on that. Because I would like to know if you wouldn’t mind.”

Mr. McKinney said he could do that. Returning to the Net School Spending topic, he said, “If we ever had to cut the budget different places, wherever, we could not drop below the

net school spending number. It doesn’t mean we can’t exceed it. Most communities, well over 300 out of 351, spend more than the required net school spending. So that is the number that the school department requested. So they weren’t saying, Oh, wait, let’s go over net school spending. It’s, what does it take to educate children?”

Ms. Zisk pushed harder at the question, asked again why the town had to exceed the required amount set by the state if that was all that the law demanded. Mr. Beauvais suggested that Ms. Zisk take her question directly to the School Committee.

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Community Info Session with Department Heads Provides Citizens with a Wealth of Information, Answers Some Questions



Department heads listen to Mr. Wood reply to a citizen's question. From left: Town Clerk Wendy Stevens, Building Commissioner Rick Gervais, Dept. of Public Works Director Patrick Wood, Senior Center Director Miranda Jennings, Beals Memorial Library Director Manuel King, Town Manager Bill McKinney, Police Chief Dan Wolski, Fire Chief Tom Smith, Parks & Recreation Coordinator Shaina Cunningham, Collector/Treasurer Katie Medina, Town Accountant Anna Noyes, Planning & Land Use Coordinator Nicole Roberts, Superintendent of Schools Charlotte King, and Health Agent Jim Abare.

Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

On Monday, April 6, the second Community Information Session with heads of the town's major departments was held in the Town Hall auditorium. The first session had convened last October, and was not recorded or broadcast. Monday's session was a little more formal, with the Department heads sitting at the tables in front of the room with microphones, while WinchendonTV live-broadcast and recorded the entire session. Around 30 citizens attended the session, which ran for nearly two hours.

After greeting the audience, Mr. McKinney explained that the questions would be "very informal". Citizens could come to a microphone up front, but they could also just raise their hand and speak from their seat, and the question would be repeated for the recording. Each Department head then gave updates on their own department.

Health Agent Jim Abare began, saying, "Real quick for me. Last year we had around 114 food permits, expected the construction of 25 septic systems, and reviewed 32 septic system plans. We expect this year to be about the same, if not more, with all our new summer festivals and all the food service. It's usually very busy in the summer and fall." He added that the Board of Health will be updating its schedule of fees, which should add about \$6,500 to town revenues. They will be updating their tobacco and vaping regulations. "Lastly, we have our annual roadside clean-up coming up," he said. "That'll be May 2 from 8:00 to 2:00. It's a Saturday. As in past years, we're gonna have a dumpster out here on Pleasant Street. The more people we get, the better. If you want to do your street, just walk up and down, or if your street's a little too busy, a little dangerous, you can always go to another street or the bike path, whatever you want. The more people we get, we really look forward to filling the dumpster. We certainly have enough on the roadsides to do that. We just need the volunteers to help us out."

Superintendent of Schools Charlotte King spoke next. The Murdock High School's Tournament of Plays last week was well attended, Supt. King said. "I thought all four grades did amazing. And this

is a long standing tradition, it was really great to see so many community members and students there supporting their fellow grade level winners or runner ups. Our spring sports are underway. We also are looking forward to our eighth graders going to Washington, DC next month. We are in the midst of MCAS season, so although the graduation requirement was taken away, we still administer MCAS testing from grades 3 to 10. So that will go on from now until the beginning of June, sporadically. Toy Town Elementary recently had an art and science show. This was well attended, and we will be bringing some of that artwork to decorate the Town Hall, which we're very excited about. The district is currently working on a strategic plan, which will be a five year plan looking to begin in the fall for the next five years. That is coming from a variety of very extensive surveys that many, many stakeholders in the community took last fall. So thank you to anyone that completed that, and we are looking to have a draft to bring to the school committee in late May or early June. We also, as many of you know, are looking to complete an MSBA project that has been approved, it will go to a vote in May, and we are looking to put new roofs on all three school buildings and also doors and windows at Memorial."

Planning and Development Coordinator Nicole Roberts picked up next, explaining that the town has an Economic Development Task Force committee meeting twice a month. It now has a Facebook page where residents can find useful information (www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61581589814425). There is also a new website that will be live soon with the domain "Why Not Winchendon?" That will be at <https://whynotwinchendon.com/>. If residents would like to put something on these pages, they can email Ms. Roberts (nroberts@winchendon-ma.gov).

Ms. Roberts went on, "We're in the process of writing the Green Communities grant, which is due the end of this week. We're working with the police department and working with the schools to update the pneumatic controls at the High School. We're also going to write a grant for Hillview business park to

put the road in." Hillview Business Park is on Rte 140 next to the Mylec company. It's been divided into four lots, of which one has been planned for a very large cannabis production (not retail) facility for quite a while, and the other three lots are owned by the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority. To proceed with these lots, an access road must be built. "So we're writing a grant through Mass Development for that," Ms. Roberts said. She also said that the town has been talking to the owner of the plaza that includes Dunks and Dollar Tree about improving the parking lot striping and handicap parking space marking to be ADA compliant.

Anna Noyes, the town accountant told the audience that all filings are complete, FY 2025 has been closed out and Free Cash has been certified. They are waiting for the annual audit to be scheduled.

Treasurer/Collector Katie Medina said that excise tax bills will be going out this week and are due in 30 days, on May 7. FY2025 Quarter 4 real estate taxes are due on May 4.

Recreation Coordinator Shaina Cunningham continued, saying, "[Parks & Recreation] impacted and drew over 13,000 attendees across 50 events in this community. We had a regional draw across North Central Massachusetts and reaching all the way up into southern New Hampshire. We had several signature events throughout the season that attracted between 1,500 and 4,500 attendees... We recently piloted a youth program, a drama club, that's taking place every Monday, and they hope to have their main stage show on the amphitheater. So we love that community collaboration with the local school system. Just an idea of our sponsorship growth: in 2025 for sponsorships, we had \$14,400. This year for sponsorships, we've reached \$21,750 so that's a 51 percent growth in sponsorships." Parks & Rec is funded through grants, town funding, event revenue, sponsorships and donations, she said.

Next, Fire Chief Tom Smith said that the Fire Department handled over 2,300 calls last year. Between 70 and 75 percent of those were ambulance related, but there has been a recent increase in fire calls. Some of them have been sizable

fires, especially a recent house fire on Mill Glen Road and the empty mill building on Lincoln Avenue Extension. Each time the initial crew responding was only three people. "Obviously, with the mill fire, there was a lot to do," he said. "The police and the firefighters worked well together on getting the residents evacuated from those homes that were behind the factory. It definitely is something that as we move forward, as far as these calls go, and the size of these calls, having the three people is something that is just very difficult for our staff. We rely heavily on incoming people from other towns, off-duty firefighters coming in, whether it's on overtime or call back, and it's something that we are working on as we move forward."

The department has gotten a \$18,900 grant for firefighter safety equipment, and \$20,000 to put towards a UTV (Utility Task Vehicle) to assist with rescues on the bike paths and other places an ambulance can't reach. It will also cover fairs and the amphitheater events. The department is also writing grants for fire safety, school safety and senior safety programs. "The guys enjoy working on the grants. I think it's a pride thing, as far as they go, that over the last 10-12 years, we've brought in over two and a half million dollars in grants for the department. And most of these are all items that the burden's not put on the taxpayers. It's additional funding." The department is following the strategic plan it put together and seeing how it's meeting those benchmarks.

"As far as the fire station project goes, the officers and the department have discussed it and we have decided we are not planning to put a article on this spring due to the town's financial situation at this point," Chief Smith said. "However, we do want the community to know that this is not a project that has disappeared, hasn't been solved. We just felt that with everything going on in the community, that a little break this year was something that we felt was the right thing to do, so that we are not putting that forward. However, we will have an informational handout for people so they can still see the information on



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MAY 9

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Wild Delight-Keene-1 years' worth of Nut & Berry 20 lb Bags
(vouchers for 1/month)

Wild Delight-Winchendon-Sizzle&Heat Prize Package (to include bird feeder)

Pets Global-\$250 free pet food at each store
(Zignature, Inception, Fussie Cat)



Badlands Ranch Gift Basket

360 Pet Nutrition Gift Basket

Semican Gift Bundles (4 bundles at each store of the following - 2 per month
at each store)

20 lb Black Oil Sunflower + 1 case of suet

50 lb Alfalfa Pellets, 50 lb Turcotte Oats & 2.5 lb Carrot Oat Snacks

Bag of Goody Mix, Bag of Goody Crickets & a Goody Block

Assorted Themed Gift Baskets

Punch Cards to Earn free gift certificates

Many more unadvertised specials in-store!

Special Events - Follow Horse & Buggy on Facebook for
Announcements!

WINCHENDON STORE
380 School Street
978-297-2518

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100046314855853#>

KEENE STORE
24 Dunbar Street
603-352-0328

<https://www.horseandbuggyfeeds.com>



MAY 30

KEENE STORE: KT's At Home Pet Care
Discounted Nail Trim Event

\$12 Nail Trims, Photo Ops, Prize Wheel & MORE!



MAY 30

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY IN
WINCHENDON!!!

Pizza Diavolo Food Truck 10:00 am to 4:30 pm

Murdock Farm Dairy Bar Ice Cream Pop-Up
11:00 am to 3:00 pm

Animal Craze Petting Farm in Winchendon
11:00 am to 3:00 pm

Jason Harris, Blue Seal Feeds Demo Day
in Winchendon

We reserve the right to limit quantities
All terms are while supplies last

With Volunteers, Grants and Vision, Beals Memorial Library Growing into the Future



Beals Library Director Manuel King and Asst. Director Alexis Chanchathack address the Board

Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, March 23, Manuel King, Director of the Beals Memorial Library, and Alexis Chanthachack, the library's Assistant Director, came before the Board to give a very polished presentation about the library, its plans for the future and its value to the town.

"As you know, last year, the library survived a Proposition 2-1/2 override vote that threatened to close the building," Mr. King began. "The staff, Trustees and Friends wish to thank the voters of Winchendon for their support of the library in passing this critical vote and recognizing its value to the community. Because of your belief in the importance of the Beals Memorial Library to Winchendon, the library remains a thriving full-service resource that is a free, welcoming and inclusive community center where all residents can gather, find reliable, fact-based information, engage in open civic conversations and participate in all the programs and services that enhance our town's quality of life."

Mr. King went on to review the services that the library offers to the public. "Most obvious is the access to the newest books, DVDs, audio books, music, CDs, magazines and video games, as well as the digital Library app Libby, which provides free access to thousands of additional digital ebooks, audio books and more. We offer free access to the internet through our public computers and Wifi connection, a resource that many turn to when they don't have a computer or internet connection at home, are looking for a new job, or simply need a space to work or study away from the distraction of a busy home. We provide free databases and other online resources like ancestry.com and word searchable digital copies of the *Winchendon Courier*. The library offers affordable printing, copying and faxing that many community members depend on." He continued the impressive list: free one-on-one technical assistance, research assistance into local genealogy and history, and a collection of Town Reports, street lists and vital statistics going back

to the 19th century. The "Library of Things" allows library card holders to borrow items such as a sewing machine, a telescope, "hotspots" for mobile internet access and much more. Card holders can borrow passes to area museums, all the Massachusetts State Parks and the USS Constitution.

The library provides materials to teachers in the Winchendon school district and homeschooling families, and provides delivery and pickup of library materials to teachers and home-bound individuals.

Mr. King went on, "The library provides free civic meeting space that many organizations and individuals depend upon. Because of grant funding from the Winchendon Cultural Council and financial support from the Friends of the Library, we've been able to bring diverse, free year-round cultural and educational programming to the community, including concerts in all musical genres, shows, activities and learning experiences for kids, teens and adults. We offer our annual summer reading club that combines reading challenges with weekly fun events and activities that hundreds of our community members participate in every year." The reading club is open to people of all ages.

"Through grant funds from the American Library Association, we have put in place our nationally recognized sensory friendly programming and inclusion efforts that support autistic, neurodivergent and special needs individuals and their families, and we are a certified autism welcoming library, the first in the state to have such designation," Mr. King said. "On top of the special programming, we also provide ongoing activities like the Lego club for kids, the D&D club for teens, preschool play group and story time for small children, and two different book clubs and a yoga class for adults. The Beals teen advisory board with 15 members, offers teens the opportunity to suggest materials for a young adult collection and help design, plan and implement teen programming."

Mr. King mentioned some of the many collaborators who have helped extend the library's

programs and reach far beyond its walls, including the Friends of the Library, the Winchendon CFCE, the school district, the Clark Memorial YMCA, the Winchendon CAC, the HEAL Collaborative, the Winchendon Parks & Rec Commission, and Cornerstone Church, "to name just a few." Some of this collaboration helped create the ongoing series of Community Conversations, "Bridging Ideas and Building Futures." This is a series of four monthly professionally facilitated discussions about the meaning of community. The second one would be held on Saturday, March 28 at the Old Murdock Senior Center at 10:00 a.m. to noon.

The town has a long investment in the library, Mr. King pointed out. "The Beals is on the national and state registers of historic places and is of architectural and historic significance," he said. "It is a jewel we are all proud of and have a duty to protect for future generations. Since 2017 the town's registered voters, the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation and the library itself, using nearly all of its trust funds, have invested over \$2 million in bringing the library into the 21st Century."

A comprehensive series of completed and planned infrastructure improvements have been divided into phases. The first phase, Mr. King explained, was the Library Accessibility Project which was completed in 2018. It added a new, sidewalk level entrance, an elevator connecting all floors, a new stairwell and two ADA-compliant accessible bathrooms on the ground floor to the original 95-year-old building. The second phase, completed in June of 2023, installed fire suppression, sprinkler and alarm control systems, replaced the original knob-and-tube wiring with new wiring that is compliant with current building codes, and repaired and repainted cracked plaster walls and ceilings.

For Phase 3, Mr. King said, the library plans to convert the current Director's office into an ADA-compliant accessible bathroom for the third floor, a smaller and more private Director's office and a dedicated local history and genealogy room. "Let me emphasize that this project will be completed with grant funding. We will not be coming to the town and asking for money. In fact, we have already received a \$10,000 grant from the American Library Association that will help fund the architectural and engineering design work for the project. Other grants from the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, the American Small and Rural Libraries Association, and the Massachusetts ADA Improvement Grant Program have been or will soon be applied for." With a third floor accessible bathroom, visitors who need an accessible accommodation won't have to take the elevator to the ground

floor. The library hopes to complete this project in FY 2027.

"Phase 4 will hopefully begin in FY 28 or 29 with the aim of converting our heating source away from oil to a more efficient electric heat pump system that not only heats in winter, but cools in summer," Mr. King said. "At present, the library spends an average of \$10,157 annually for heating oil and the maintenance of our furnace and radiators. Because the town has a contract with a solar energy company to provide electricity to our municipal buildings, the library has an electricity credit of over \$4,000, meaning that it is likely that we will incur little or no cost for running the system other than routine maintenance and repair. Conversion means leaving the burning of fossil fuels behind and heading into a much cleaner and less expensive energy future for the library."

Phase 5 of the infrastructure project will convert the current ground floor book sale area into a Children's Room. This is a long time dream for the Beals and it will be expensive. There is currently no start date, but the library hopes it may be possible to begin work by 2033, seven years from now.

"To put it all into perspective, the library currently represents less than three quarters of 1 percent of the total town budget, or \$268,955," Mr. King said. "In FY 2026 (the current fiscal year) that averaged out to an annual cost of \$38.07 to the average Winchendon homeowner, or the retail price of one new book purchased at a bookstore. Since 2022 the library has received over \$270,000 in grant funding that has enhanced our programs, services, initiatives and building infrastructure projects."

"It has been said that nobody uses the library anymore. But in 2025, the Beals had 22,709 patron visits. 2,384 people attended our programs. We circulated 31,433 items, and 30 percent of Winchendon residents held a Beals library card. Keeping our state certification through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners means that the library receives over \$36,000 annually in state aid. These funds are critical to the overall operation of the library. It also means that Winchendon residents can continue to access the collections of hundreds of other libraries statewide. All in all, the value the library holds as a resource to the taxpayers of Winchendon is enormous."

To conclude the presentation, Mr. King said, "We are launching a community survey that we hope will give us a better idea of how the library can improve our programs and services and be even more relevant to the citizens of Winchendon. The responses of community members, both library users and non-users, are crucial to the development

Winchendon News

Winchendon FD Responds to Two More Major Fires, Impacting Five Families

The Winchendon Fire Department posted a press release on April 3 about a second major structure fire within two weeks of the fire that leveled a dilapidated mill building on Lincoln Avenue in the early hours of Friday, March 20. The Department posted,

"On April 3, 2026, at approximately 9:00 a.m., the Winchendon Dispatch Center received a 911 call from a resident at 10 Mill Glen Road reporting a house fire. The occupant was able to self-extricate from a second-story window prior to the arrival of fire crews.

"Upon arrival, the Winchendon Fire Department immediately requested a second alarm, along with a tanker task force, due to the residence being located outside of the municipal hydrant district.

"Winchendon Engine 1, staffed by three on-duty personnel, was the first apparatus on scene. Crews confirmed that all occupants had safely exited the residence and initiated an aggressive fire attack. Fire conditions were initially encountered in a rear utility room, which crews knocked down from the exterior before advancing inside. Interior crews consisting of Captain Andrew Harding, Captain Marty Scott, and Firefighter Eric Boudreau, faced heavy fire and high heat conditions, particularly on the second floor.

"As additional resources arrived, including off-duty Winchendon personnel and mutual aid companies, coordinated ventilation operations were conducted on the roof, significantly improving interior conditions. During the establishment of a sustained water supply from responding tankers, crews were temporarily withdrawn from the structure as a safety precaution. Once a reliable water supply was secured, crews re-entered the building to complete fire suppression and overhaul operations.

"As of 1:00 p.m., a Winchendon engine company remained on scene assisting the District 8 Fire Investigation Unit.

"Mutual aid assistance was provided by the Gardner, Templeton, Ashburnham, Westminster, and Rindge Fire Departments. Tanker support was provided by Jaffrey, Phillipston, and Fitzwilliam Fire Departments. Ashby Fire Department provided station coverage for the Town of Winchendon during the incident.

"The Winchendon Fire Department extends its appreciation to all responding mutual aid communities as well as the Winchendon Police Department, Winchendon Dispatch Center, Winchendon Building Inspector, and the Winchendon Water Department for their assistance.

"One firefighter was transported to Heywood Hospital with minor injuries."

According to the Assessor's Database records, the gambrel-roofed home was built in



© Ricci Ruschioni



Photos by Ricci Ruschioni

1941 and had been owned by the same family since at least 1990.

Less than three weeks later, on April 22, the Winchendon Fire Department reported in another press release:

"On April 21, 2026 at 23:17 the Winchendon Dispatch Center received a 911 call from the resident at 23-25 Brown Street reporting a fire in his apartment. The caller reported that the building was evacuated but there were still several cats inside.

"The initial arriving crew of only three Winchendon Fire members immediately verified that all occupants were out of the three story, five apartment building. Once life safety was confirmed, crews attempted to gain access to the second story apartment but were met with extensive heat and smoke conditions.

"Upon arrival of Tower 1 and Chief officers, a full first alarm assignment was requested. Lines were pulled and an aggressive attack on the second floor was conducted. A second alarm assignment was then requested, bringing in additional personnel and apparatus. Due to the age and structural format of the building, crews were facing an uphill battle with fires quickly finding various voids throughout the entire structure. Crews were able to access third floor apartments to aid in extinguishment.

"As off-duty Winchendon Fire personnel began arriving, as well as the second alarm companies, they were able to ventilate the roof giving some relief to interior crews from the heat. Secondary searches were conducted with three pets being located and removed from the building and returned to the tenants. Investigators from the District 8 Fire Investigation Unit and members of the Massachusetts Fire Marshal's Office. As of this press release the fire was still under investigation with preliminary findings showing nothing suspicious in nature.

"Assisting on scene were Gardner Fire, Templeton Fire, Ashburnham Fire, Westminster Fire, Rindge Fire, Jaffrey Fire, Athol Fire and Fitzwilliam Fire. Rindge Fire also provided station coverage and responded to two separate emergency calls simultaneous to our structure fire. Woods Ambulance responded to a medical call in Winchendon during the incident.

"One firefighter was transported from the fire scene by Gardner EMS with a non-life-threatening leg injury. Templeton Fire received three patient refusals from the tenants of the second-floor fire apartment with one of the tenants transporting themselves to Heywood Hospital via private vehicle with burn injuries.

"Thank you to the Winchendon Police, Winchendon Dispatch, Winchendon Animal Control, Winchendon Emergency Management Director, Winchendon Building Inspector and the Winchendon Water Department for their assistance."

The Winchendon American Legion Auxiliary Unit #193 is reaching out for assistance for the displaced families. Monique T. Connor, President of the Winchendon Auxiliary and Chair of the Winchendon Emergency Fund, posted, "The Winchendon Emergency Fund has been established. Although we do not have enough funds to help not just one family but four, we are pushing through and have four different campaigns, one for each family. There will not be a limit at this time on how long we will have them up. So please if you can give to them you can spread out your donations instead of all at once. We also will take checks made out to the Winchendon Emergency Fund (WEF) and sent to PO Box 123, Winchendon MA, 01475 with a name or Apt # in the memo so we can get it to the correct family."

As of press time, there were Zeffy funds set up for three of the four families:

www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/lauren-coddere-brown-st-apt-3

www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/simonds-family-brown-st-apt-2

www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/caitlin-ayers-brown-st-apt4

For updates, see the Auxiliary's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61575269596435

Ms. Connor said that the family affected by the Mill Glen Road fire still needed assistance, as well. Their fundraiser is at:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/donate-10-mill-glen-rd>

and pet supplies to assist them may be relayed through Ahimsa Haven Animal Rescue.



On Monday, April 13, the Board of Selectmen presented new Eagle Scout Khalil Fadel with an official citation in recognition of his achievement of Scouting's highest honor.

from left, Board members Audrey LaBrie and Erika Eitland, Khalil Fadel, Board Chair Andrew Beauvais, Board members Melissa Blanchard and Tiffany Newton.

Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

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email editor@winchendoncourier.net
or mail to 325 Lakeview Dr., Winchendon, MA 01475

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

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

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Murdock HS Students Show Audience a Rollicking Good Time with Morton E. Converse Tournament of Plays

by Inanna Arthen

The Murdock Middle High School Auditorium was packed on Saturday evening, March 28 for the second and final night of the 2026 Morton E. Converse Tournament of Plays. The oldest continuously running one-act play festival in Massachusetts, this tournament features one-act plays produced and performed by members of each high school class—freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors—in competition for awards. The plays debut on Friday night and awards are given after the performances on Saturday.

Each year sees a wide variety of one-act plays selected, so audiences never know what to expect. They are almost always humorous or whimsical, but the amount of sets and costumes, the amount of dialogue in proportion to action, the number and balance of characters and up to a point, the length, vary quite a bit. The order in which the plays are performed on each night is randomized, so the audience doesn’t know which play will be next until the title is announced. This keeps things lively for the stage crews, as well.

This year the Class of 2029 (freshmen) staged “Who’s on Alpha?” by Mike McCafferty and Matt Thompson;

the Class of 2028 (sophomores) put on “Tough City, Prone to Rain” by Alan Haehnel;

the Class of 2027 (juniors) put on “Story Theater” by Paul Sills;

and the Class of 2026 (seniors) performed “So You Think You Can Date?” by M.G. Davidson.

The first play on the boards on Saturday was “Tough City, Prone to Rain.” This was probably the longest and certainly the most complex of the four plays. A comic take-off on classic film noir, with a particular nod to *The Maltese Falcon*, “Tough City, Prone to Rain” featured the Broadly Speaking Detective Agency with three dressed-to-the-nineteens women (don’t call them dames) detectives and their male office assistant in a dark, rainy city that remained unnamed but had a waterfront with shark-infested waters. Lost and confused (or was she really?) Donna Rockbridge (Brooke Arsenault) found the agency (it wasn’t easy) and asked the detectives to track down her twin sister (Meghan Wightman), who ran away with the family jewels (or did she?). From this point, the plot had so many twists, so much back story for the detectives, so many characters, and so many locations, it hardly qualified as a one-act play. The three detectives, played by Abigail Blake, Rebekah Boisvert and MacKenzie Simoneau, looked up old cronies as they hunted for tips, while their client waited in the office getting annoyed with their assistant. Meanwhile the stage was constantly filled with a stream of various characters, including a newsie (Morgan Nelson) who kept crossing the stage hawking headlines for things that happened two seconds ago. There was a twist ending, of course, and Justice was served...maybe I should rephrase that as the shark-infested waters were involved.

The cast really had a lot to handle, and they did an impressive job with what was one of the most complicated—and highly populated—one-acts I think I’ve ever seen. The office set had a desk, chairs, a large sign, and a phone; there was second set with table and chairs, a rolling cart, and the movable door and doorframe last seen in the musical did yeoman’s duty. Several of the actors played multiple roles. The color gels in the stage lights were used to good effect. It was a little hard to follow the action, however, because sometimes it was tough to catch all the dialogue, and if you missed a line, you lost the thread of the story.

Other cast members were Samuel Abioye, Quinn Brimhall, Tristan Fuller, Cam Kowaleski, Myles Mrieth, Paetyn Simoneau, Luke Smith, and Nathaniel Tetteh. Director: Candace Frye.

“Story Theater” could hardly have been more different a play. Featuring six cast members (DJ Huggins, Mikey Quinn, Walter Moriarty, Bryce Teixeira, Addison Mistler and Seth Robinson), the play presented adaptations of three well-known fairy tales: “Henny Penny” (the one where we get “the sky is falling” trope), “The Fisherman and His Wife,” and “The Golden Goose.” They do it...with no set at all! Nothing, bare stage! Nor did the actors use props—everything was done in pantomime. The actors did wear very cute and fairly elaborate costumes—Foxy Woxy’s tail was a funny touch. But each actor played multiple roles, relying largely on expression and movement to convey them. And they did this very well, especially their voice work and dialogue. The stories were very entertaining, although “The Golden Goose” seemed to combine two different tales and ran a little long. “The Fisherman and His Wife” is one of my all-time favorite tales, and this version did a wonderful job with the magical flounder, played by Addison Mistler, who “swam” along the front of the stage every time she was called.

Directors: Kaileen Dibble and Kristi Iannacone.

“So You Can Think You Can Date?” was a very broadly satirical take-off on reality TV contests (the title obviously invokes “So You Think You Can Dance”). Also with a large cast, this production utilized the door and doorframe, tables and chairs, and a lot of funny and elaborate costumes. The parody is slapped on with a heavy brush, so much so that

the program printed a warning, “this play contains the use of hilariously ridiculous characters.” The story began with two teens, Jessica and Brad (Kylieann Brown and Shamus Solomon), breaking up in a furious argument...the best three months and X days of their lives wasted! Right before the prom! Their best friends Debbie (Sophia Boisvert) and Phineas (Jack Varca) promised them they’d have dates, and put out a call for “auditions” for people to accompany them to the prom. Jessica and Brad then sat through a procession of over-the-top silliness, as every dating nightmare marched in to flounce, dance, cry uncontrollably (and those were the boys), sing, terrorize the room or emote. Even the school custodian showed up to try out. Debbie and Phineas had a plan with all this, of course, and their friends ended up with dates after all—each other, which they wanted all along.

This was very well done—the acting in particular was excellent, with the four principals always in character, always reacting, not afraid to get physical, and very funny. The hopeful auditioners—really, you had to see it, no description can do it justice—were played with uninhibited gusto by Colton Pearson, Holly Harris, Romeo Medeiros, Autumn Ayola, Kyle Brown, Yaleris Crespi-Martínez, Leah Maguy, Kianna Walsh, and Kevelyn Loughman-Vanwhy. Director: Jaclyn Daniels.

“Who’s on Alpha?” was a bit odd as a choice—it had a cast of only three, who were somewhat hampered by their material. The play took off on two themes: the classic Abbott and Costello comedy routine “Who’s On First?” and the classic 1960s *Star Trek*. The disadvantage here is that few people nowadays are familiar enough with the comedy routine to appreciate a take-off on it, and only a few more are familiar with the original *Star Trek* series. The humor was heavily dependent on the dialogue and that wasn’t always easy to understand. The First Officer’s deadpan literalism and refusal to say more words than absolutely necessary gave the “Who’s on First” gag a nice twist, if you knew it well enough. I wondered if anyone else in the audience caught the “red shirt” joke at the beginning when the Captain (Sydney Houle) and First Officer (Sophee-Lyn Lambert) talked about their missing crewmember in voice-over. (The door and doorframe became the transporter—I think—in this one.) The actors did a good job with what they were given to work with, and the costumes were well done.

Especially well done was the inflatable puppet “alien carrying a crewmember” animated by Sophia Gauthier. Each time the alien and struggling (or not) crewmember cross the stage behind the oblivious officers, they’re doing something different. It got to be a very funny sight gag and it was very effective. I really look forward to seeing this cast in something that does their talent better justice.

Director: Kelly Fitzpatrick.

After a long wait for the judges to finish their deliberations, all four casts were called up on stage for the presentation of the awards. Here they are:

Award Winners:

- Best Costumes - Class of 2028 (Sophomores)
- Best Set - Class of 2028 (Sophomores)
- Best Production Value - Class of 2028 (Sophomores)

Honorable Mentions:

- Best Twinkletoes - Kyle Brown
- Best Weeper - Romeo Medeiros
- Best Use of Props - Rebekah Boisvert
- Best Soundtrack - Class of 2027 (Juniors)
- Best Alien Abduction - Sophia Gauthier

Most Entertaining Performers:

- Nominees: Kyle Brown, Colton Pearson, Walter Moriarity, Tristan Fuller, Rebekah Boisvert
- Winners: Colton Pearson & Walter Moriarity

Best Performer in a Supporting Role:

- Nominees: Holly Harris, Jack Varca, Addison Mistler, Bryce Teixeira, Luke Smith, Morgan Nelson, Sophia Gauthier
- Winners: Bryce Teixeira & Jack Varca

Best Performer:

- Nominees: Kylieann Brown, Sophia Boisvert, Doris (DJ) Huggins, Michael Quinn, Brooke Arsenault, Sophee-Lyn Lambert, Sydney Houle
- Winners: Sophia Boisvert & Doris (DJ) Huggins

Best Ensemble:

- Class of 2027 (Juniors)

Best Play (and year-long bragging rights!):

- Class of 2026 (Seniors)



Community Connector

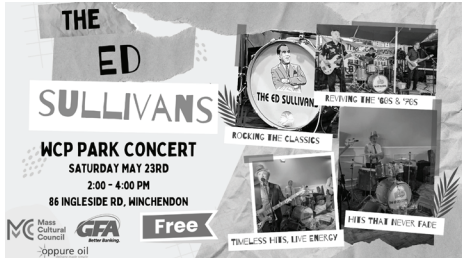


Welcome to The Community Connector! In this pull-out section of the printed *Winchendon Courier*, you'll find a complete calendar of local events, a page of events and activities by category, and where to find more details about the organizations and groups that help make Winchendon a great place to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

Winchendon Community Park

86 Ingleside Dr

Saturday May 23



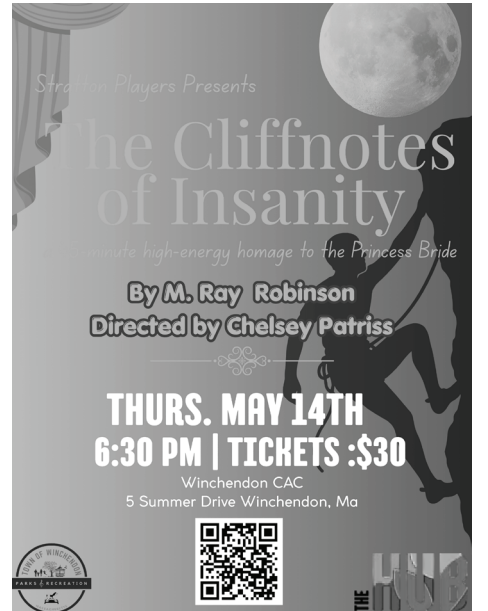
Saturday May 30



**COMING UP!
Saturday, June 13**



**The HUB
5 Summer Dr
Thursday May 14**



Wednesdays



Explore Winchendon & Its History
Wednesday's 9:30-11:30 AM

May 6: Riverside Cemetery
May 13: Winchendon Community Park
May 20: Lake Dennison Recreation Area
May 27: Old Murdock Senior Center

Led By: Lynn Murray
All ages welcome!

Join us each Wednesday for a relaxed, social walk as we explore local spots and learn more about the history of our community.



**COMING UP!
Saturday, June 6**

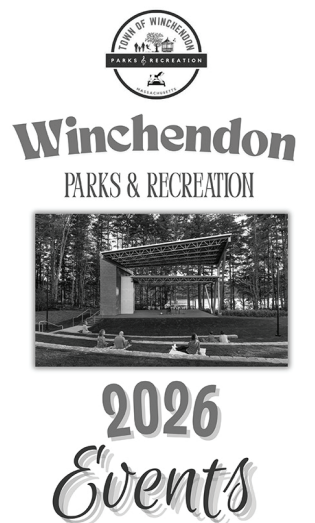


Thursday May 28



Check Out the 2026 Parks & Rec Events Brochure!

MAY	JUNE	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER
Ed Sullivan's Band May 23rd 2PM-4PM Tickets: FREE The Ed Sullivans bring the timeless hits of the '60s & '70s to life with high-energy performances.	(Continue) Food Truck Festival & Battle of the Bands June 27th 12PM-7PM Tickets: FREE Food trucks, craft drinks, games, and local bands battling for the crown.	4everfab Concert August 8th 7PM-9PM Tickets: Early Bird \$5 Regular \$10 New England's premier Beatles tribute band, performing together for over a decade.	Sunset Socials - Harvest Social September 12th 6PM-10PM Tickets: \$5 An autumn-inspired evening of live music, seasonal flavors, and cozy community vibes as the sun sets.	Winchendon Honky Tonk October 3rd 4PM-8PM Tickets: Early Bird \$15 Regular \$20 A high-energy night of country hits, dancing, and classic honky-tonk good times.
MontaPalooza May 30th 12PM-6PM Tickets: \$20 Full-day outdoor music festival bringing live music, community energy, and summer vibes.	Sunset Social Island Vibes July 11th 6PM-10PM Tickets: \$5 Enjoy a summer night of warm breezes, sunset views, and laid-back island grooves.	Italian Street Fest August 15th 12PM-6PM Tickets: \$5 Enjoy live Italian music, delicious food, and vendors celebrating Italian culture.	Cowboys and Hippies September 19th 2PM-9PM Tickets: Early Bird \$20 Regular \$25 A boots-meets-flower-power celebration blending country charm and groovy throwback fun.	Haunted Happenings October 17th 4PM-10PM Tickets: FREE A family-friendly fall festival filled with haunted trails, costumes, and Halloween magic.
Founders Day June 6th 2PM-9PM Tickets: FREE Join us for a full day live music & drone show as we celebrate the 4th anniversary of our amphitheater.	Into the Floyd July 18th 7PM-9PM Tickets: Early Bird \$20 Regular \$25 Five talented multi-instrumentalists recreating the full experience of a live Pink Floyd concert.	Open Mic Night & Picnic August 28th 4PM-8PM Tickets: FREE An all-ages community event featuring live local talent—music, comedy, storytelling, and more.	Central Mass Irish Festival September 26th 12PM-8PM Tickets: Early Bird \$20 Regular \$25 A lively celebration of Irish culture featuring traditional music, dance, food, and festive fun.	Mega Monster Mash October 24th 6PM-10PM Tickets: \$5 A thrilling Halloween bash packed with big costumes, bigger energy, and monstrously good fun.
Adam Ezra Group June 12th 7PM-9PM Tickets: Early Bird \$25 Regular \$30 A grassroots fan favorite known for selling out theaters across the Northeast.	Open Mic Night & Picnic July 24th 4PM-8PM Tickets: FREE An all-ages community event featuring live local talent—music, comedy, storytelling, and more.	Blues Brew & BBQ August 29th 3PM-9PM Tickets: \$15 One of the sweetest summer evenings—great music, delicious BBQ, and refreshing brews.	Scan to buy 2026 Season Pass Scan HERE	COMMUNITY FOUNDATION NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
Sunset Social- Salsa & Sangria June 13th 6PM-10PM Tickets: \$5 Join us for a vibrant summer evening of music, dancing, and community at Salsa & Sangria.	The Reminiscent July 25th 4PM-8PM Tickets: Early Bird \$10 Regular \$15 The Reminiscent deliver a high-energy mix of classic hits and crowd favorites spanning multiple decades.	Scan for List Of Events & Tickets SCAN HERE	Mass Cultural Council	oppure oil delivery made simple
Open Mic Night & Picnic June 26th 4PM-8PM Tickets: FREE Gather outdoors for an evening of live local talent.	Nancy & Dave Romanowski Edward Jones	RBFI Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, Inc.	Fidelity Bank	PSG POWELL STONE & GRAVEL



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Sponsorship Opportunities

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2026 Winchendon Parks & Recreation

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- ENHANCE COMMUNITY BY SPONSORING EVENTS AT THE WINCHENDON AMPHITHEATER.

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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

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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

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.

Want to Add YOUR Event to the Town Calendar?

Contact
winchendonparksandrec@gmail.com

Look for the NEW Parks & Recreation NEWSLETTER!

**Sunday, May 10
Mothers Day**

**Monday, May 25
Memorial Day**



MAY

FRIDAY MAY 1

DARTS

7:00 p.m. This is not a league but open to anyone who wants to play. \$5 to join & winning team takes home the prize money. Cash bar available. No outside drinks allowed. At The Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

SATURDAY MAY 2

Town Wide Community Clean-Up

8:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. All residents are invited to get out and help clean up our town! You can pick up litter on your own street, or come to Town Hall and join a team. There will be a dumpster at Town Hall to deposit trash. Location: town wide! Town Hall, 109 Front St.

Toy Town Bridge Artist 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.

Family Movie Matinee at the Beals

11:00 a.m. Screening today: *The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Tony's Toxic Trivia Night

6:00-9:00 p.m. Custom team based/pub style trivia games w/ hosting and interactive media/music, tailored to occasion and or interests. Bring your family and friends. Test your knowledge and win prizes! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

MONDAY MAY 4

Music with Bob Jordan

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

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTIONS

8:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

TUESDAY MAY 5

Social Art Circle with GALA

1:00-3:00 p.m. Explore a variety of art in a supportive social environmentâ€”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.

Teen Dungeons & Dragons Club

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 MAY 6

Wandering Wednesdays Walking Group

9:30-11:30 a.m. Join us Each Wednesday for a Relaxed Social walk as we explore local spots and learn more about the history of our community! This week: Riverside Cemetery. Led by Lynn Murray. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation.

Teen Gender & Sexuality Alliance 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.

Craft & Chat

6:30-8:00 p.m. Craft and Chat is a space for adults of all ages to come and spend time relaxing while crocheting and chatting. Bring your crochet supplies and whether you want to learn or work on ongoing projects, we would love for you to join us! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

THURSDAY MAY 7

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. This week the menu is Chef's Choice and dessert. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Adult Craft Night - Book Vase

6:30-8:30 p.m. Unleash your creativity by transforming a book into a decorative vase. This hands on workshop offers you a unique and creative way to add a touch of literary charm to your home decor. Limited Space, Registration Required. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library. For more information contact the library at 978-297-0300 or bealsmemoriallibrary@gmail.com. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

FRIDAY MAY 8

Sound Bites Community Jam

6:30-9:45 p.m. Open Mic! Sign up list is available at The HUB at 30 minutes before the music starts. Music starts at 6:30. For more information contact Sound Bites Events, www.soundbitesevents.com. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Lanes After Dark: Movie Night

7:00-9:00 p.m. Movie chosen by popular vote, will be announced on May 6. Vote at www.facebook.com/events/1607055117190978. Get ready for a great night of music, community, and a movie under the sky. Bring a chair, bring some friends, and let's make it a night. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

SATURDAY MAY 9

Child Loss Support Group

10:00-11:00 a.m. For parents, grandparents and siblings of a child that has died. This is a non-professional support group not affiliated with any religion. If you are in need of support or know others who would benefit from this group, please invite them to come. If you have any questions, please contact Carla Wood 978 297-2217 or Phyllis Cochran 978 297-1193. At United Parish, 39 Front St, Winchendon.

Taste of Winchendon

11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. Vendors, food, dance, live music. Celebrate all the diverse the cultures and flavors of Winchendon! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

TUESDAY MAY 12

Ukelele Group 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Come and join our Ukulele group at the Senior Center! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

From Stitches to Smiles with Quilter and Storyteller Linda Ramra

6:00-7:30 p.m. We all have moments that change the way we see the world. For Linda, it happened on a red velvet couch. Through stories and quilts, Linda invites you to reflect on your own "red velvet couch" moment and discover how everyday experiences can spark unexpected inspiration. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY MAY 13

Wandering Wednesdays Walking Group

9:30-11:30 a.m. Join us Each Wednesday for a Relaxed Social walk as we explore local spots and learn more about the history of our community! This week: Winchendon Community Park. Led by Lynn Murray. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation.

Classic Movie Matinee at the Beals

3:00 p.m. Screening today: *American Graffiti*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Murdock Arts Fest

5:30 p.m. A celebration of students' art and music at Murdock Middle High School—come see artwork on display and enjoy the choruses and bands in concert! At Murdock Middle High School, 3 Memorial Dr, Winchendon.

THURSDAY MAY 14

Winchendon Health Fair

9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Vendors and information about local services and resources for health and wellness. If you would like to be a vendor, reserve a spot at <https://forms.gle/xzr91y8ogKm8ffBE7> At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon. Denis Cormier Concert 10:45 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Denis Cormier Concert

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

Beals Book Club

3:00 p.m. Join a discussion group that allows avid readers to discuss the themes, plots, and characters of selected books. The library provides the book each month! Contact the library for this month's title. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Teen Cooking Class

4:00-6:00 p.m. These hands-on classes help teens (age 13-18) build real-life cooking skills, confidence, and independence in the kitchen—all in a fun, supportive environment. Limited to 5, register at docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfxPCfHsdF9-COK-cVQeNrBMm-ee4biel-7ajliPq4Lv0_idQ/viewform. Sponsored by United Way. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

American Legion Spaghetti Dinner

5:00-6:30 p.m. Come enjoy a delicious spaghetti dinner and support our local Auxiliary! Hosted by Winchendon American Legion Auxiliary Unit 193. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

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

Stratton Players Present: "The Cliffnotes of Insanity"

6:00-8:00 p.m. A live-action, interactive performance directed by Chelsey Patriss. Join us for a night full of adventure, romance, and unforgettable fun, with this high-energy homage to *The Princess Bride*. Tickets \$30, includes a buffet dinner. Get your tickets now at square.link/u/j6MR2xun. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. Visionary Sponsor: GFA Federal Credit Union; Unity Sponsor: Oppure Oil, LLC. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

FRIDAY MAY 15

Line Dancing Lessons with Marylee

7:00-8:30 p.m. This is open to anyone who wants to join. No need to sign up in advance. \$10 per person to join. This is an all genres music class. Club opens at 6 p.m. Bar opens at 6:30 p.m. Wear comfortable clothing and come join the fun. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

SATURDAY MAY 16

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. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Operation Winchendon Cares

9:00-10:30 a.m. Come help fill "care packages" for our actively serving military, or bring items to donate! Theme this month is "Honoring Our Best on Armed Forces Day." At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School Street (downstairs).

Bridging Ideas and Building Futures: Community Conversations

10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Topic: What are we prepared to do to become the community we want to be? The future of our community isn't built by chance, but by choice. The crucial question facing each of us today is this: What are we prepared to do to become the community we want to be? Are we ready to move beyond conversation and commit to collective action, turning our shared aspirations into tangible reality? The answer lies in the steps we take together, starting now. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

MONDAY MAY 18

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.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

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

TUESDAY MAY 19

Growing Places Farmers Market

10:30-11:30 a.m. Fresh local vegetables available for purchase using cash, debit/credit or SNAP/HIP benefits! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Teen Dungeons & Dragons Club

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.

Book Talk with Local Author Catherine Zebrowski

6:00-7:30 p.m. Join us as local author Catherine Zebrowski discusses her new memoir, *Me Fran and the Shadow Man*. Get a peek into process of writing a memoir as Catherine shares her inspiration, creative journey, and the emotions behind writing this personal story. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY MAY 20

Wandering Wednesdays Walking Group

9:30-11:30 a.m. Join us Each Wednesday for a Relaxed Social walk as we explore local spots and learn more about the history of our community! This week: Lake Dennison Recreation Area. Led by Lynn Murray. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation.

Craft & Chat

6:30-8:00 p.m. Craft and Chat is a space for adults of all ages to come and spend time relaxing while crocheting and chatting. Bring your crochet supplies and whether you want to learn or work on ongoing projects, we would love for you to join us! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

THURSDAY MAY 21

Merrily's Free Card Making Class

10_30 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. This is a free class offered by GALA. Make your own greeting card using found objects and your creativity! Merrily will guide you to make a one-of-a-kind creation. Held in the Community room. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. This week the menu is warm ham & cheese sandwiches on buns with a yummy sauce, spinach salad, chips and dessert. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Movie Night at the Beals

6:00 p.m. Screening today: *Hamnet* (2026). At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

2026



Las Vegas Night at Whispered Spirits Speakeasy
7:00-11:00 p.m. Come join us and enjoy live music by Danny Boy! Drink specials available & light refreshments served. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

SATURDAY MAY 23

The Ed Sullivans
2:00-4:00 p.m. FREE concert! The Ed Sullivans are bringing the unforgettable hits of the 60s & 70s back to life—rocking the classics with songs you know and love. Bring your lawn chairs or blankets. Get tickets and info at www.eventeny.com/events/the-ed-sullivans-2026-27895/. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation and the Mass Cultural Council. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Neil Byrne in Concert - It's an Irish Thing
7:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$35 for general admission, \$70 for concert and VIP Meet & Greet photo opportunity with Neil Byrne. Tickets available at www.neilbyrnemusic.com/tour. At Winchendon History & Cultural Center, Murdock-Whitney House, 151 Front St.

SUNDAY MAY 24

Memorial Day Service
10:00-11:30 a.m. Please come join us for worship service as we honor and remember with the members of our local Scouts and with the members of the Winchendon American Legion, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice so that we may be free. At United Parish, 39 Front St, Winchendon.

MONDAY MAY 25

Winchendon Memorial Day Ceremonies
10:00 a.m. Parade assembles at the Fire Station at 9:45 a.m. and marches down Central St at 10:00 a.m. Stops at Legion Park and VFW Park, then ends at G.A.R. Park for full ceremonies. If weather is bad, ceremonies will be held at 11:00 a.m. at the Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

WEDNESDAY MAY 27

Wandering Wednesdays Walking Group
9:30-11:30 a.m. Join us Each Wednesday for a Relaxed Social walk as we explore local spots and learn more about the history of our community! This week: Old Murdock Senior Center. Led by Lynn Murray. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation.

Thriller & Mystery Book Club
4:00 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 MAY 28

Teen Cooking Class
4:00-6:00 p.m. These hands-on classes help teens (age 13-18) build real-life cooking skills, confidence, and independence in the kitchen—all in a fun, supportive environment. Limited to 5, register at docs.google.com/forms/d/1FAIpQLSfxPCfHsdF9-C0K-cVQeNrBMm-ee4biel-7ajliPq4Lv0_idQ/viewform. Sponsored by United Way. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

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

Documentary Night at the Beals
6:00 p.m. Screening today: *Mr. Nobody Against Putin* (2026). A Russian teacher secretly documents his small town school's transformation into a war recruitment center during the Ukraine invasion, revealing the ethical dilemmas educators face amid propaganda and militarization. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Bingo at The HUB
7:00-9:00 p.m. Join the Winchendon Parks and Recreation for Bingo at the HUB! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

SATURDAY MAY 30

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. The first 15 minutes will be social time, then we will go into sharing our artwork. 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 let her know that you will be joining us at Jandu516@gmail.com. For more info about GALA see www.galagardner.org. In the Community Room of the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Montapalooza!
12:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 at the gate. An outdoor, community-focused music festival celebrating artists from the North-Central Massachusetts region, the state and all over New England. Two stages, vendor area and food trucks. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/montapalooza-27237. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

RECURRING WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAY through FRIDAY

Pickleball - Open Courts
9:00 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 information, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

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

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! Call 928-297-3155 to reserve a spot. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Game Day Tuesdays
12:00-3:00 p.m. Tables will be set up with a variety of games, including cribbage, Scrabble, checkers, chess and cards. All experience levels welcome to drop in and play. Transportation available via the Community Connector. Contact the Senior Center at 978-297-3155 or winchendoncoa@gmail.com with any questions. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., 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 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.

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.

ESL Classes
6:00-8:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

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

THURSDAYS

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

Friends' Book and Used Media Sale
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.

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.

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 Lunch and Free Bowling
10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Come in and enjoy lunch, free bowling, and fellowship! Please call 978-297-3155 at least 24 hours in advance to reserve a lunch. Bowling is free for all seniors 55+ from 10:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Suggested donation, \$5. At the The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Zumbini with MaryLee
11:15 a.m.- 12:15 a.m. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.

Teen Drop-in at The HUB
4:00-6:00 p.m. Looking for a safe, welcoming place to hang out after school? Teen Drop-In at The HUB is your space to relax, connect, and have fun—completely free. In partnership with The Sunshine Café, we're offering free bowling plus a rotating lineup of activities designed just for teens. Whether you're competitive, creative, or just want to chill with friends, there's something for you every week. 1st Friday, Gaming Night; 2nd Friday, Paint & Sip; 3rd Friday, Movie Night; 4th Friday, Surprise event. At 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.

Winchendon Farmers Market
10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. STARTS MAY 16. Crafts, fresh farm produce, baked goods. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Grove St, Winchendon. Rain or shine! In inclement weather, the Market will move into the Old Murdock Senior Center, right next to the park.

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.

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.

SUNDAYS

ESL Classes
6:00-8:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Ideas and Discussions

From Stitches to Smiles with Quilter and Storyteller Linda Ramra
May 12, 6:00-7:30 p.m. We all have moments that change the way we see the world. For Linda, it happened on a red velvet couch. Through stories and quilts, Linda invites you to reflect on your own “red velvet couch” moment and discover how everyday experiences can spark unexpected inspiration. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Bridging Ideas and Building Futures: Community Conversations
May 16, 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Topic: What are we prepared to do to become the community we want to be? The future of our community isn't built by chance, but by choice. The crucial question facing each of us today is this: What are we prepared to do to become the community we want to be? Are we ready to move beyond conversation and commit to collective action, turning our shared aspirations into tangible reality? The answer lies in the steps we take together, starting now. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Book Talk with Local Author Catherine Zebrowski
May 19, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Join us as local author Catherine Zebrowski discusses her new memoir, Me Fran and the Shadow Man. Get a peek into process of writing a memoir as Catherine shares her inspiration, creative journey, and the emotions behind writing this personal story. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Documentary Night at the Beals
May 28, 6:00 p.m. Screening today: *Mr. Nobody Against Putin* (2026). A Russian teacher secretly documents his small town school's transformation into a war recruitment center during the Ukraine invasion, revealing the ethical dilemmas educators face amid propaganda and militarization. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Food and Meals

American Legion Spaghetti Dinner
May 14, 5:00-6:30 p.m. \$12 per person, open to all! Sponsored by Winchendon American Legion Auxiliary Unit #193. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner
May 14 and 28, 5:30 p.m. at UU Church of Winchendon. Dinner will be served in the Parish Hall; take-out available after indoor diners are served. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 126 Central Street.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner
May 7 and 21, 5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. This week the menu is chicken casserole with noodles, dinner roll and dessert. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Growing Places Mobile Farmers Market
May 19, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Fresh local vegetables available for purchase using cash, debit/credit or SNAP/HIP benefits! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Taste of Home Lunch
Tuesdays, 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.

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.

Winchendon Farmers Market
Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. STARTS MAY 16. Crafts, fresh farm produce, baked goods. At G.A.R. Park, Murdock Ave and Grove St, Winchendon. Rain or shine! In inclement weather, the Market will move into the Old Murdock Senior Center, right next to the park.

For Kids

Family Movie Matinee at the Beals
May 2, 11:00 a.m. Screening today: *The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Beals Memorial Library
50 Pleasant St, Winchendon
978-297-0300
bealslibrary.org

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

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

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

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

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

G.A.R. Park
Grove St and Murdock Ave, Winchendon
Winchendon Community Park
86 Ingleside Dr, Winchendon
Winchendon Parks & Rec, 978-297-5410
facebook.com/Winchparksandrec

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

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

Town Events

Town Wide Community Clean-Up
May 2, 8:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. All residents are invited to get out and help clean up our town! You can pick up litter on your own street, or come to Town Hall and join a team. There will be a dumpster at Town Hall to deposit trash. Location: town wide! Town Hall, 109 Front St.

ANNUAL TOWN ELECTIONS
May 4, 8:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
May 18, 7:00 p.m. At Murdock Middle High School, 3 Memorial Dr, Winchendon.

Winchendon Memorial Day Ceremonies
May 25, 10:00 a.m. Parade assemblies at the Fire Station at 9:45 a.m. and marches down Central St at 10:00 a.m. Stops at Legion Park and VFW Park, then ends at G.A.R. Park for full ceremonies. If weather is bad, ceremonies will be held at 11:00 a.m. at the Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

Entertainment

Music with Bob Jordan
May 4, 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.

Lanes After Dark: Movie Night
May 8, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Movie chosen by popular vote, will be announced on May 6. Vote at www.facebook.com/events/1607055117190978. Get ready for a great night of music, community, and a movie under the sky. Bring a chair, bring some friends, and let's make it a night. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Taste of Winchendon
May 9, 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. Vendors, food, dance, live music. Celebrate all the diverse the cultures and flavors of Winchendon! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Classic Movie Matinee at the Beals
May 13, 3:00 p.m. Screening today: *American Graffiti*. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Movie Night at the Beals
May 21, 6:00 p.m. Screening today: *Hamnet* (2026). At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Montapalooza!
May 30, 12:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 at the gate. An outdoor, community-focused music festival celebrating artists from the North-Central Massachusetts region, the state and all over New England. Two stages, vendor area and food trucks. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/montapalooza-27237. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

For Teens

Teen Drop-in at The HUB
Fridays, 4:00-6:00 p.m. Looking for a safe, welcoming place to hang out after school? In partnership with The Sunshine Café, we're offering free bowling plus a rotating lineup of activities designed just for teens. Whether you're competitive, creative, or just want to chill with friends, there's something for you every week. 1st Friday, Gaming Night; 2nd Friday, Paint & Sip; 3rd Friday, Movie Night; 4th Friday, Surprise event. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Teen Cooking Class
May 14 and 28,, 4:00-6:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Teen GSA Meeting at the Beals
May 6, 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 Dungeons & Dragons
May 5 and 19, 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.

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.

Toy Town Bridge Artists Circle
May 2, 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
May 5, 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. 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.

Craft & Chat
May 6 and 20, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Craft and Chat is a space for adults of all ages to come and spend time relaxing while crocheting and chatting. Bring your crochet supplies and whether you want to learn or work on ongoing projects, we would love for you to join us! At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Adult Craft Night - Book Vase
May 7, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Unleash your creativity by transforming a book into a decorative vase. This hands on workshop offers you a unique and creative way to add a touch of literary charm to your home decor. Limited Space, Registration Required. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library. For more information contact the library at 978-297-0300 or bealsmemoriallibrary@gmail.com. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Sound Bites Community Jam
May 8, 6:30-9:30 p.m. We're coming back with our March 13th Open Mic Community Jam. No bad luck here. Just good music and people. Sign-up list will be available at the HUB at 6:00 p.m. on Friday the 13th. Music starts at 6:30. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Line Dancing Lessons with Marylee
May 15, 7:00-8:30 p.m. This is open to anyone who wants to join. No need to sign up in advance. \$10 per person to join. This is an all genres music class. Club opens at 6 p.m. Bar opens at 6:30 p.m. Wear comfortable clothing and come join the fun. At the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

Merrily's Card Making Class with GALA
May 21, 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Come on out to the Winchendon Senior Center where we are hosting our Free Card Class with Merrily! To register go to: <https://form.jotform.com/242247912496968>. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Art Critique with GALA
May 30, 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. The first 15 minutes will be social time, then we will go into sharing our artwork. 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 let her know that you will be joining us 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.

Ukulele Class
Wednesdays, 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.

Winchendon News

DEPT HEADS

continued from page 4

the project. Basically, we're doing the best with what we've got, and we look forward to continuing to serve the community as far as their emergency needs."

The baton passed to Police Chief Dan Wolski next. He began by talking about how the department is preparing for the upcoming retirements which he has mentioned in past updates. They have hired the two people at the top of the Civil Service list. One will be graduating from the police academy in August, and the other is currently employed as a full-time officer at the UMass hospital campus in Worcester.

Chief Wolski also talked about the fully grant-funded Drug Task Force made up of Winchendon police officers. "There's four people on the team, and one of those folks includes our detective...our philosophy is that you need to have a multi-faceted approach," Chief Wolski said. "On the one hand, you need to have a compassionate approach to that epidemic. And we do. We have, for instance, the post overdose support team, when folks suffer an overdose and they survive it, an officer responds to the home with a social worker and interacts with that individual and tries to connect them with resources. We think that's a critical component to the responding, particularly with folks that just have substance abuse issues. But on the other hand, we also have to be concerned with the fact that the folks that are dealing this poison on our streets, the drug dealers and all of the deleterious effects that are associated with drug dealing and drug activity." The team goes out on four-hour time blocks, doing proactive motor vehicle stops and surveillance of areas where drug trafficking is suspected. The objective is to collect evidence and information for warrants. "We're the only community that I'm aware of that's pursued such a novel idea, where an individual police department has a task force of its own, so we're proud of that," he said.

Finally, Chief Wolski talked in detail about the process involved in upgrading the HVAC systems in the police station, which was originally built in 1908 and converted into the police station (from a courthouse, at that time) in 2010. This has involved a series of stages and a lot of grants. Green Communities funded four high-efficiency propane boilers in 2019. Now the department and town are pursuing funding from the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation, Green Communities and the state 911 Grant program to update the rest of the system.

The next speaker was Beals Memorial Library Director Manuel King. He started by urging citizens to fill out the community survey that the library is doing right now. "We're looking for input from all Winchendon residents," he said.

"The basic idea is to gather feedback and ideas regarding how the library is currently serving the community and how we can improve our offerings." Residents can fill out the survey on paper in the library, or online at www.bealslibrary.org/survey. He then talked about upcoming events. There will be a number of film screenings, both movies and documentaries, all free to the public. There will be an English Tea and Celtic Music concert on Saturday, April 11 at 11:00 a.m. During April vacation week, on Thursday, April 23, there will be a "Crafternoon" for kids at 2:00 p.m. On Saturday, April 25, the third in the series of Community Conversations about what kind of community Winchendon wants to be will meet in the Senior Center.

Mr. King said that the library is seeking grant funding to upgrade the bathroom on the library's top floor to a fully accessible ADA-compliant bathroom. Much of the current Director's office will be sacrificed for this bathroom and a local history & genealogy room. He emphasized that all of this will come from grants, none from the town. "We've already received a \$10,000 grant from the American Library Association. We're seeking another grant already written from the Rural and Small Libraries Association for \$12,500 and then from the municipal ADA improvement grant, which is run by the state. We're seeking the rest of the construction funds."

Finally, Mr. King invited everyone to participate in the library's Summer Reading Club, which is for adults as well as kids. [More information about this will be in the *Courier* soon!]

Senior Center Director Miranda Jennings was next to speak. The Senior Center works in four different areas, she said. In Nutrition and Food Security, the Center serves about 600 lunches a month, and delivers over 10,000 lunches a year through the Meals on Wheels program, which also serves to stay in touch with and check on homebound seniors who live alone. The Center also delivers food from its food pantry. In Recreation and Lifelong Learning, the Center offers classes in line dancing, yoga and strength training. Art classes are run through a partnership with Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA). In Advocacy and Outreach, the Center provides social services and support to seniors and their caregivers. Seniors can get advice on Medicare benefits, help with housing applications and assistance with filing taxes. The Center is also a voice for the Commission on Disabilities. Finally, the Center has greatly expanded its transportation services. Rides have increased over 120 percent, from around 250 to 1,100 per month, in Winchendon alone. The transportation program is regionalizing with Ashburnham. About 8 percent of Winchendon households utilize

the transportation program, and the goal is to reach all of the 13 percent of households that don't have access to personal transportation.

There will be a Health Fair at the Center on Thursday, May 14, from 10:00 to 12:00. Ms. Jennings said. The Youth Commission will be putting on the annual Taste of Winchendon on Saturday May 9 at The HUB, and residents can get "passports" to have stamped at local businesses which will earn free raffle tickets at the festival. "We're also embarking on a strategic plan through the Senior Center, but also really as a town, to look at what a 'Livable Winchendon' would look like, an age friendly Winchendon that would work for people of all ages, with a care of course for residents with dementia and other specific needs, but we really want to make this a real town wide thing," Ms. Jennings said. "So keep an eye out for that, because we're going to be asking for community participation, and we're seeking some grant funding for that as well."

Department of Public Works Director Patrick Wood had a lot of news. He started by describing the spring clean-up on the roads that the DPW is doing, including filling potholes, repainting lines and marks, and street sweeping. The Mass Department of Transportation (MassDOT) will fund repairing the substructure of the Brown Street Bridge through the Accelerated Infrastructure Repair Program. The DPW is looking at the non-functional EV charging stations at Grout Park. The Beech Street Infrastructure Project should start this summer. The DPW is looking into extending the rail trail as far as the New Hampshire state line so the trail will be continuous from Gardner. On the paving docket this year are paving Independence Drive, upper Central Street, part of Baldwinville Road from Town Farm to Mill Glen Roads, and Alger Road from Rte 202 to Hitchcock. There are also some sidewalks being put in, and a small water line extension. The town received funding for a mobile speed/radar feedback sign that will be on a trailer and can be moved around to different places in town. Finally, the DPW will be adopting an online permitting system, with more information coming in the future.

Building Commissioner Rick Gervais was the next in the row. "Last year, 2025, for a little town with 11,000 plus people, we've done 956 permits, which is pretty close to a good size community bigger than ours," he said. "So we've been very, very busy as a small town with projects. We've seen a steady increase in the permits for residential improvement. And we've got a number of commercial projects in the works coming up." The multi-family inspection process has started, and the veterans housing conversion at the Poland and Streeter Schools is still underway, after some issues with the winter weather.

Last to speak was Town Clerk Wendy Stevens, who began, "We're wrapping up the [town] census. We're still getting forms trickling in, but we'll be sending the street list to print April 15." She went on, "A big push this last week has been dog licenses. We had over 600 dogs that still were not licensed by the deadline of March 31, so my assistant, Deb, has been calling everybody we've got phone numbers for and in the last week, we've registered about another 150. So we've got about 470 dogs still to be licensed. Nomination papers are circulating for the state primary and the state election. So we've been certifying those, and we're just preparing for the town election and Town Meeting."

Before opening the floor to questions, Mr. McKinney said, "I do want to mention that the town election on May 4, there will be three ballot questions, three debt exclusion override questions that has to do with the school roof projects that the superintendent mentioned. So they are three separate questions. And as per state law on a debt exclusion, there is no dollar amount listed on the ballot. The borrowing authorization, if they were to pass at the ballot, would be done at Town Meeting on May 18. So in order for the debt exclusion to pass, it requires a majority vote at the town election. It requires a two thirds vote at Town Meeting."

The first citizen question asked about the proposed veterinary clinic on Main Street near Lickity Splitz. Ms. Roberts said that the owners were doing soil tests and figuring out if they would connect to town water and sewer, or put in a private well and septic.

A citizen asked about a recent School Committee discussion about taking \$568,705 in Circuit Breaker funds from the town's Free Cash. Mr. McKinney explained that Circuit Breaker money was a refund the district gets from the state when Special Education costs exceed a certain threshold. The funds can't be carried over more than a year or they go into the town's General Fund. The schools are asking for the amount to be appropriated back to them.

A question was asked about the intersection of Ash and Water Streets (where the big billboard is, and both streets meet Spring Street). Mr. Wood said, "We recognize that this is a poor intersection, and it really got highlighted over the last couple of years when the High Street Bridge got closed. So now we're using that intersection a lot more than we ever have. So I think about three months ago, we reached out to our engineering consultants, and we asked them for a cost estimate for not just that intersection, but two other major ones. One of them would be the River Street and Front Street intersection,

Winchendon News

May is Movie Month at the Beals Library

It's Lights, Camera, Action at the Beals Memorial Library in Winchendon during the month of May. Not only with movie showings for all ages and interests on the Library's BIG screen, but also for the movies you bring home to watch on your own screen. For every for every DVD or Blu-ray video you borrow, or every film you come to the Library to watch, the Beals will be handing out golden tickets that can be redeemed for chances to win two tickets to the Gardner Cinema.



The screenings begin with a Family Movie Matinee on Saturday, May 2 at 11:00 a.m., when the Library shows *The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants*. SpongeBob and his Bikini Bottom friends set sail in their biggest, all-new, can't miss cinematic event ever.

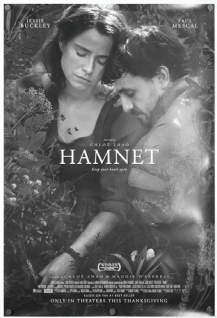
Desperate to be a big guy, SpongeBob sets out to prove his bravery to Mr. Krabs by following The Flying Dutchman—a mysterious swashbuckling ghost pirate—on a seafaring comedy-adventure that takes him to the deepest depths of the deep sea, where no Sponge has gone before. Rated PG. Runtime: 88 minutes.



On Wednesday, May 13 at 3:00 p.m., the Library will be showing the 1973 classic *American Graffiti* starring Ron Howard and Richard Dreyfuss. On the last day of summer vacation in 1962, friends Curt, Steve, Terry, and John cruise the streets of small-town California while a mysterious disc jockey (Wolfman Jack) spins classic

rock'n'roll tunes. It's the last night before their grown-up lives begin, and Steve's high-school sweetheart, a hot-to-trot blonde, a bratty adolescent and a disappearing angel in a Thunderbird provide all the excitement they can handle.

The third showing of the month on Thursday, May 21 at 6:00 p.m. is *Hamnet* starring the Academy Award winner for Best Actress, Jessie Buckley. William Shakespeare and his wife, Agnes, celebrate the birth of their son, Hamnet. However, when tragedy strikes and Hamnet dies at a young age, it inspires Shakespeare to write his timeless masterpiece "Hamlet." Rated PG-13. Runtime: 125 minutes.



The final film screening of the Month is the 2026 Academy Award winning documentary, *Mr. Nobody Against Putin*, on Thursday, May 28 at 6:00 p.m. A Russian teacher secretly documents his small town school's transformation into a war recruitment center during the Ukraine invasion, revealing the ethical dilemmas educators face amid propaganda and militarization. Rated PG-13. Runtime: 90 minutes.



The Beals Memorial Library is located at 50 Pleasant Street in Winchendon. All movies at the library are free and open to the public! For more information, contact the library at 978-297-0300 or visit their website at bealslibrary.org.

LIBRARY

continued from page 6

of our long range strategic plan. So from today until July 31 we will have surveys available both digitally and at our website, bealslibrary.org, and on paper at the library and in various locations throughout the town.

"In conjunction with the survey, we are also inviting you and other community members to participate in several focus groups that we plan to convene over the course of the next several months. In that spirit, I would like to specifically invite the Select Board to our first session on Wednesday, April 8, at 6:00 p.m. in the library's auditorium. Future focus groups, dates and locations will be announced at a later time. We encourage all community members to participate in either the focus group or filling out the survey. Your input and feedback will help us identify opportunities for growth within our

library, services, programming and more. We want the library to continue to be a valuable resource and a welcoming space for everyone in the community."

Board Chair Andrew Beauvais asked Mr. King what he saw as the greatest challenge to continuing their forward momentum—was it funding, staffing, the building or what?

"Definitely a combination," Mr. King said. "As we grow, we will need more staffing. If we have a children's room in the future, we'll have to have a children's librarian, which means that person will have to have some assistants. That means that we won't be just one level anymore. We won't just be the main floor of the library, but we'll have two floors. The top floor will remain the same, I'm assuming, but the children's room will have to have staff associated with that. But funding will be the biggest challenge,

because we tried to make this work a couple of years ago, and the cost was about \$2 million to convert that basement into a children's room. So it's not going to get any cheaper. So I think that will be the greatest challenge for us to if we really want to make that happen."

The Massachusetts Library Commission offers expansion grants, but to be eligible a library needs to be expanding at least 60 percent beyond the footprint of the current library building—basically putting in an addition to the building—which the children's library room project as planned doesn't do.

Board member Audrey LaBrie said, "we're seeing studies are showing that once schools went to technology, 2019, 2018, something along that line, they now have enough data, they're finding out that kids know less now than they did before because of the way that they're learning. And I've

seen information about young children who are addicted to their cell phones and who are addicted to their iPads, and people are starting to recognize that it's not such a good thing. And I'd like to think that the pendulum is swinging out a little bit back towards reading and books and community places where children can have a physical book and such like that. So I'd like to think in the next X number of years, not too many, we'll see that swing become stronger, and perhaps there will be more opportunities for the creation of a children's library, as the world, not just us in the United States, realizes that there's a place for both."

Mr. Beauvais asked if the library could begin a capital campaign for the future Children's Room project. Mr. King said absolutely, but the Trustees of the Library would be the group spearheading that.

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!)
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For a rate card and/or a full information packet, contact:

editor@winchendoncourier.net

Ideas & Information

Gardening

Grow More Tomatoes



Big Beef tomato has remained one of the most popular red tomatoes in North America with its 8-to-12-ounce fruit.

Photo courtesy of All-America Selections

by Melinda Myers

Enjoy the fresh-from-the-garden flavor of homegrown tomatoes. Grow one or more in a container, a dedicated vegetable garden or plant them with flowers in garden beds.

Purchase transplants from a local garden center if not starting plants from seed at home. Check the tags and select varieties suited to how they will be used. Grow bite-sized cherry, plum or cocktail tomatoes to use in salads, on relish trays, and for snacking. Include a few paste tomatoes, like Romas, with meatier fruit for making sauces and soups. Don't forget about slicers, like Big Beef, Beefsteak and Better Boy, to enjoy on sandwiches, grilled, or on their own.

Prepare plants that will be moved from under lights indoors or a sunny greenhouse to the growing conditions in the garden. Start the hardening off process one to two weeks prior to planting outdoors. Stop fertilizing the plants and move them outdoors to a shaded location. Each day, increase the amount of direct sun the plants receive. Be sure to cover or move the plants indoors whenever there is a danger of frost.

Once hardened off and the soil is prepared, it's time to plant. Carefully slide the plant out of the container. Gently loosen the roots of pot-bound transplants to encourage them to grow into the surrounding soil. Remove any flowers or small fruit, allowing the plant to focus its energy on developing a robust root system and a more productive plant.

Plant tall, leggy plants deeper to encourage roots to develop along the buried stem. Dig a trench, remove the lower leaves and set the plant on its side in the trench. Carefully bend the stem upright, then cover the portion in the trench with soil and water.

Set stakes and towers in place at the time of planting to avoid root damage. Training tomatoes keeps the fruit off the ground, reducing insect and disease problems. That means more fruit to harvest and enjoy.

Train tomato plants on to stakes for an earlier, but smaller harvest than those grown in cages. Grow plants with less effort in sturdy towers or cages. There will be more tomatoes to pick, but a bit later with this method. Plants left sprawled on the ground yield the largest harvest, but many fruits are lost to disease, insects and gardeners' feet.

Shorten the time to harvest and help manage weeds with the help of floating row cover, clear plastic or cloches. Use these to cover the properly prepared planting space a week or two before planting. Once the soil is warm, lightly cultivate the soil to kill any weeds that have sprouted. Do not dig deep, which brings more weed seeds to the surface to begin growing. Use row covers or cloches to protect plants from early season cold temperatures and frost.

Further shorten the time to harvest by planting early ripening varieties, like Early Girl, Fourth of July, and Fantastico. Check the catalog description or plant tags for the number of days between planting and harvest. Growing these or other early ripening varieties means you'll be enjoying fresh tomatoes sooner.

Always water plants thoroughly when the top few inches of soil are crumbly and moist. Avoid overhead watering which increases the risk of disease. Instead, apply water directly to the soil surface, using a watering wand, soaker hose or drip irrigation. Extend the time between watering and increase success with mulch. Spread a two-inch layer of shredded leaves,

weed-free straw, or evergreen needles over the surface around plants. This will conserve water, suppress weeds, and improve the soil as the mulch decomposes.

With proper planting and care there will be a bounty of tasty, garden-fresh tomatoes to harvest and enjoy.

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®

Emergency funds offer breathing room when it matters

Everyone needs an emergency fund. Financial experts recommend it, and we've all experienced surprise expenses: a costly car repair, a broken water heater or unexpected medical bills. Despite our best intentions, building a financial cushion can feel impossible. After rent or mortgage, groceries, utilities and everyday expenses, it seems there's nothing left to save.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Many Americans struggle to maintain emergency savings. But building those savings doesn't necessarily require massive lifestyle changes or windfalls. With a strategic approach and realistic milestones, you can create the financial safety net you need.

Start small and build momentum. Traditional advice suggests saving three to six months of total expenses. It's excellent goal but can feel overwhelming when you're starting from zero.

Instead, begin with a more achievable target, such as \$500 or a full month's worth of expenses. The key is to get started and contribute consistently.

Even a few hundred dollars can provide meaningful protection and help you avoid relying on credit cards or high-interest loans. This initial milestone can cover many medium-sized emergencies. Once you reach the first milestone, work toward one and a half to two months of expenses, then the full three to six months.

Find money you didn't know you had. Building your emergency fund doesn't always require cutting expenses. If you're employed, set up automatic transfers from your paycheck into a separate savings account. Cancel subscriptions you rarely use, shop around for better insurance rates and take advantage of sales whenever you can.

Consider saving windfalls like tax refunds, work bonuses or birthday money. If your budgeted expenses come in lower than expected—perhaps your health care costs or home maintenance needs were less than anticipated this month—save the difference in your emergency fund.

Have a dedicated account for your fund. Keep your emergency savings in a separate account from your regular checking, so you're less tempted to use the money for non-emergencies. Choose an account that's easily accessible and without penalties and, while you shouldn't invest emergency money in stocks or bonds, look for an account that earns interest.

Balance competing priorities. Building an emergency fund is important, but it shouldn't come at the expense of other crucial financial goals. If you're carrying high-interest debt or missing out on your employer's retirement contribution matches, address those priorities first, while still building your emergency savings.

Ultimately, you'll want to balance your emergency fund with other goals. To determine an emergency savings target, consider your personal risk for unexpected expenses, your job security and family circumstances. You may need three to six months' worth of savings, or possibly some other amount. If this step feels overwhelming, ask a financial advisor to help you come up with a suitable plan.

The path to financial security requires progress rather than perfection. Begin where you are, use what you have and take one small step at a time. That first \$500 might feel modest, but it represents the freedom to handle whatever life throws your way.



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

Cummings Road Residents Pack ZBA Meeting with Concerns about Proposed Two-Family Conversion



10 Cummings Road as it appeared in August, 2025
Google Street View

by Inanna Arthen

The Zoning Board of Appeals meeting on Wednesday, April 15 was attended by around 20 citizens who wanted to express concern about an application for a Special Permit to modify a home located at 10 Cummings Road into a two-apartment duplex. The property is zoned R80-Rural Residential. Although the public hearing legal notice was incorporated into the agenda for that night's ZBA meeting, it was not posted separately on the town website. The meeting agenda was posted two days earlier, on April 13. Direct abutters received a notification of the hearing but other nearby neighbors did not, a resident told the *Courier*.

At 7:05 p.m., the ZBA opened the hearing "to discuss the application for a Special Permit submitted by applicant, Robert Grady, for 10 Cummings Road, also known as Assessors Map 8, parcel 53, Winchendon, MA, 01475. Special Permit request to allow for conversion of a single family dwelling to a two family dwelling per section 300-5.2.A of the Winchendon Zoning Bylaws."

Resident James Roth came forward to speak for Mr. Grady, who was on speakerphone on Mr. Roth's cell phone. The Board stated that Mr. Grady could not speak directly because citizens must be sworn in to speak at a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. Mr. Roth stated that Mr. Grady wants to "turn it into a two family. It's a one family farmhouse. Currently, he's looking to make a first and second floor. The first floor is already under construction, and then turn the second floor also into another unit." One unit would be occupied by Mr. Grady's son and the other rented to another tenant family. The units would each have separate entrances.

Planning Coordinator Nicole Roberts confirmed that there are no other two-family homes in the neighborhood.

Ms. Roberts then read into the record a letter received by the town on April 13. "Dear Nicole, I am writing to formally express my concerns regarding the proposal to convert 10 Cummings Road from a single family residence into a two family dwelling. As a long time resident of Cummings Road, I deeply value the safety, stability and character of our neighborhood. Families, including my own, have chosen to live here because it is a quiet, close-knit community where children can safely play outdoors and neighbors feel comfortable walking and engaging with one another.

"I understand that property owner Robert Grady has previously operated housing in Winchendon that has been made available to individuals transitioning from incarceration, including those with histories of substance abuse and registered sex offenders. While I recognize the importance of providing housing opportunities for individuals in recovery or re-entry, I have

serious concerns about the potential risks that this could pose within a residential neighborhood like ours, especially given the presence of multiple school bus stops located at both ends of Cummings Road and along the street. Although it has been stated that this property would be occupied by families, once zoning approval is granted for a two family dwelling, there may be limited ability to ensure or enforce how the property is ultimately used. This uncertainty raises valid safety concerns for residents, particularly those with young children.

"Our neighborhood has remained a predominantly single family area for many years, contributing to a strong sense of safety and community. Changing the use of this property not only increases density, but also introduces uncertainty regarding future occupancy, which could impact the overall well being and peace of mind of residents. I respectfully ask that the Board carefully consider these concerns when reviewing this proposal and to prioritize the safety and character of the existing neighborhood. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, concerned Cummings Road Resident."

Mr. Roth said, "I think Nicole can speak to this. Bobby has spoken to her. He has told her, he has no intentions of putting anybody up there with a criminal history. He's doing this for two just normal families looking for a nice neighborhood to live in. There'd be no criminals going up there at all."

There was some discussion about the distinction between a multi-unit apartment building and a rooming or boarding house. Mr. Roth said there are two bedrooms on the upper floor and three on the first floor. Each unit would have its own kitchen, bathrooms and entrances. A boarding house has at least six bedrooms. The house itself is large, with 3,092 square feet on slightly more than 2 acres. The house was originally built in 1790, according to town records.

Mr. Roth said, "We have other rental properties here in town. The only people that are being considered criminal is on Walnut Street. These other apartments we have around town are just regular families, and that's what this is going to be." He said that Mr. Grady plans to convert the Goodspeed building, which he owns, into low income apartments.

Several citizens came forward to address the board. One citizen said, "I also read [Robert Grady's] statement from 2014 when he put one of his houses on Walnut Street, where he proposed that he wasn't going to put too many men in one area. There are over 20 pedophiles in that area right now, sorry, sex offenders, if that's what you want to call them. If we allow him to come into our neighborhood, there is three rooms. There's no guarantee. Not only that, half the time they don't register. So you could have non-registered sex offenders and you don't even know. And then what happens when they do, we get notified, and then we can't sell our property without disclosing it. I will guarantee more than half of this road will probably get up and move. It's very unfortunate. My kids love their home. We've been here for a long time, and it's very unfortunate. We cannot let garbage in."

A citizen who lives adjacent to the property said, "Right now they have sex offenders working over there. I don't know if the neighborhood is aware of it. I recognize two of them off the sheet from the Police Department, so they're there now." He said that the property should be left a single-family, and if Mr. Grady wants to rent it to his family, that's fine.

A citizen whose special needs son accompanied her to the hearing came forward to say that

there was no way to control who rented the units once the Special Permit was granted.

A resident of Old Centre, John Harrington, questioned whether the town could trust Mr. Grady to properly screen his tenants.

A citizen who identified himself as a retired police officer came forward to point out that the recidivism rate for sex offenders is very high. "You have to realize that when you put it into a residential area spread out the way it is, there's a lot of to and from paths that you can go through woods to houses. I have four grandchildren across the street. I don't want to see anybody hurt by anything. And if you allow housing like this to go into that type of neighborhood you're asking for problems. You have to be aware of everybody that's spoken prior to me. I know I got here a few minutes late, but with small children in that neighborhood next to that house, there's a big chance of problems happening. I've been on the job for 32 years. I did my time. I'm retired. I live around the corner, and I don't want to see this in that neighborhood. I fear for my grandkids, and I hope you guys vote the right way."

With no further citizens wishing to speak, the Board closed the formal hearing. Board Chair Cindy Carvill asked for a 5-minute recess to check out some information and regulations before they proceeded. When the meeting reconvened, Ms. Carvill said that the Board needed to get some legal advice. Ms. Roberts told the Board that the property is not recorded as owned by Mr. Grady, but rather by an entity named My Three Sons Investments LLC which is registered in Lafayette, Colorado. Mr. Grady's exact relationship with them is unclear.

Ms. Carvill said, "I have a bunch of questions that we need to consult with the town, other town boards, the Board of Health, the Conservation Commission, the building inspector, and get some information directly from the owner of record."

Mr. Roth said, "The only thing I do want to say and just to show it's on the record. First of all, Mr. Grady is a large taxpayer, and he's spoken before this board before, so this isn't something new. The other thing is that we can, if we don't get the permit to put two families in, we still will have five bedrooms, and you know, we're not trying to go that way, but we've got to generate some revenue from this property. So we're telling you that we will put two families. We will put two families that are non-criminal in this home."

The Board voted to continue the hearing on 10 Cummings Road to the next ZBA meeting, which will be Wednesday, June 17.

According to public records, the previous owners of 10 Cummings Road, Robert and Cecilia Haigh, deeded the property to My Three Sons Investments LLC, "a Foreign Limited Liability Company with a principal place of business at 2770 Arapahoe Rd., #132-222, Lafayette, Boulder County, Colorado, 80026" for \$244,900, on November 1, 2024.

My Three Sons Investments LLC also held at one time, or still holds, the deeds to 228-230 Front Street, 33 Walnut Street, 26 Walnut Street and 21 Walnut Street in Winchendon. 26 Walnut Street and 33 Walnut Street are listed as owned by Robert L. Grady, Trustee of ERG Revocable Trust, according to the Town of Winchendon Assessor's database.

My Three Sons Investments, LLC, was formed in 2013 in Colorado. Its public corporate records only mention a single individual, Paul Martin, as Registered Agent, or in other filings, as Member/Manager.

Community Notice Board

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.

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

Winchendon Business People - Fill Out the Survey About Your Experiences and Challenges!

The Town of Winchendon Economic Development Task Force is working to strengthen Winchendon’s local economy—and your input matters! If you’re a business owner, we want to hear your thoughts on what’s working, what’s missing, and where we should focus moving forward. Take the survey at the link below today!

<https://forms.gle/bfZfWqfPEdmbFgCR9>

Farmers, Homesteaders, Crafters: Vending Spots Still Open for the 2026 Winchendon Farmers Market!

If you are a farmer, producer, homesteader or crafter and would like to have a table at the Winchendon Farmers Market, there’s still space available! The 2026 season will begin on May 16, and the Market sets up every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at G.A.R. Park next to the Old Murdock Senior Center (52 Murdock Ave). The Market is rain or shine—in inclement weather it moves inside the Senior Center. The application form to sign up is at <https://www.winchendonfarmersmarket.org>.

Fill out the Beals Memorial Library’s Community Survey!

Online survey or printable PDF at www.bealslibrary.org/survey

Also available at the library and various places around town.

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”

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 Commission on Disabilities is Listening to Residents and Taking Action

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, April 13, members of the Winchendon Commission on Disabilities appeared before the Board to give a presentation on their findings and how the town can improve life for those living with disabilities.

Commission members Pam Smith, Katrina Fleming and Miranda Jennings came forward for the presentation. After they introduced themselves, Ms. Jennings explained that the Commission has done a survey and wanted to share some of the initial feedback they've gotten from town residents.

"A little bit about who we are," Ms. Jennings went on. "We are the Commission on Disabilities. Our role is to advise Winchendon on the needs of our local disability community so that we can ensure accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities, which really entails ensuring inclusion for everybody in our programs, services and facilities. Our Commission must have five or more members appointed by all of you, including at least one person with a disability and one person who is an immediate family member of a person with a disability, as well as a town representative, who would be myself." The other two members are Renee Eldredge and Nicole Fleming.

Ms. Jennings continued, "We want to ensure that our municipal services are accessible, but not just municipal services, also our businesses and local agencies and organizations. We're here to advocate for people and to raise awareness. So we've already had the library, for example, approach us to request a letter of support to redo the little, teeny, tiny bathroom upstairs to make that ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] accessible. So they came and talked with us to get our advice and a letter of support." They'd also worked with Planning Coordinator Nicole Roberts on getting handicap parking spaces in the Dunkin' parking lot re-lined. Ms. Fleming added that the Commission is applying for grants that can help local businesses improve their accessibility.

Moving to the survey results, Ms. Jennings began with the question, "Have you ever been unable to participate in programs or activities because they were not accessible due to a physical, vision, hearing or cognitive impairment?" 47.1 percent of respondents said Yes. 35.3 percent said No and 17.6 percent said "not applicable." Ms. Jennings said, "So that was a substantial amount of people we're looking at where those barriers are. Town events was one of the main ones, and local businesses was another one."

Asked where they had encountered barriers to access, survey respondents checked Town Events (35.3 percent), "Other" (35.3 percent), Local Businesses (23.5 percent), The YMCA (23.5 percent), the Library (23.5 percent), Town Hall (17.6 percent), Schools (17.6 percent), the Senior Center (17.6 percent), Housing (17.6 percent) and Parks (11.8 percent).

Some specific comments that respondents made included:

- Difficulty hearing speakers at public meetings, even when microphones are used
- Inconsistent functionality of crosswalk signals on Central Street
- Inability to attend evening Town Meetings due to vision loss and/or inability to drive after dark
- Lack of transportation options
- Sidewalk and visibility challenges
- Locations too far to walk safely
- Memorial School stairs not suitable for young Pre-K students accessing second floor services
- YMCA and school playgrounds not fully



From left, Pam Smith, Katrina Fleming and Miranda Jennings of the Winchendon Commission on Disabilities address the BOS

Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

inclusive (wood chips limiting wheelchair and mobility device access)

- Public meetings occasionally held in non-ADA compliant locations
- Children with disabilities experiencing anxiety or behavioral challenges in crowded or noisy environments (e.g. swimming programs, retail spaces)

"We asked people what was working and if they were aware of any Winchendon facilities, programs or services that were designed for people with disabilities," Ms. Jennings went on. "The majority of people said yes, they were. A lot of people were unsure. And these are some examples of what we're already doing, which is great. And I think there's more and more every day, so that's wonderful for everybody who's doing this. You know, we have a lot. We're doing a lot of ADA improvements to all of our very old buildings, which is great. The schools are working on that as well."

Asked "Do you know who to contact in Winchendon to request an accommodation or discuss accessibility concerns?", 58.8 percent of respondents said No. Only 17.6 percent said Yes and the rest were unsure. "So we're glad we're around," Ms. Jennings said, "and Nicole Roberts is our ADA appointed person for the town. So I think we need to get the word out there more. We did start a Facebook page, and we're on the [town] website, so hopefully we'll be known as a friendly face that people can come to if they have concerns or want to request accommodations."

The key takeaways from the survey, Ms. Jennings said, are "47 percent reported experiencing accessibility barriers. 59 percent don't know who to contact. Public right-of-ways, sidewalks, crosswalks, curb cuts were a main priority, including at businesses. We don't have a grocery store in town, but it's very hard to access the one that is on Central Street [Not Just Produced]. You can't get in there if you're in a wheelchair. [Owner Beth Hunt] does do a great job offering a side entrance, but you can't get in the front door, same with a lot of the businesses there. So that's something we're looking at. We know that's not town property, so that's not on the town to do, but how can we support businesses to do those improvements?"

Ms. Fleming said, "We applied to Robinson Broadhurst. We're waiting to find out about getting a grant so that we could actually assist some of the businesses in our town that have asked for help, maybe getting a ramp. They would apply to us, and then we would help with that. Another thing is that we're setting up an informational time where you're going to be able to learn about service dogs and therapy dogs and the differences between them, and we're offering that also to local businesses so they understand the questions that they can actually ask. Because a lot of people don't know what questions they can ask of a service dog versus a therapy dog, and what their rights are. As a business owner, our Vice President actually has a service dog, and so she would be the one conducting that, and explaining all that, and also explaining the

difference between the [Police Department] K-9 in town and a service dog and a therapy dog, because people get a little confused as to what the rights are. We're also working with the library to look at some of the programs that they have. [Assistant Library Director] Alexis Chanthachack has been doing a lot of wonderful things that we want to be part of."

Ms. Smith said, "We're also trying to organize a social group for people with and without disabilities on Saturday morning at the bowling alley, to bowl, get together, do things, puzzles and whatever else, whatever they want to do. So hopefully that'll be starting up soon too."

The Commission also had a speaker from Seven Hills come to an open two-hour meeting at Sippin' Serendipity for people with questions about younger persons, age 14 to 22, who were transitioning out of the school-based programs, and what resources were available to them.

Board member Audrey LaBrie asked if there were specific town events that were mentioned as problematical. Ms. Jennings said most comments were about Town Meeting, both transportation to get there, and hearing the speakers.

"We do have closed captions when we have the Town Meetings, but we have to make sure people know that that's where you need to go sit, that there's an area for that," Ms. Fleming said. "I don't think everybody knows that. I know I was at an event at the high school, and there was someone that could not walk the distance down to the auditorium, and we really didn't have anything there to offer them. There was no wheelchair or anything. Somebody put her in a wheelie chair and tried to do that, so it's being aware of those things. We do have an older population here in town, and we need to make sure that those things are able to be accessible."

Ms. LaBrie also asked if the Commission was coordinating with the school Special Education teachers. Ms. Fleming said absolutely, they were. Ms. Jennings said that Superintendent Charlotte King attended the Community Partnership Breakfast and heard the Commission's presentation there, but she agreed, "That's a great idea. We should continue connecting with them."

Board member Erika Eitland asked if the town could look into the cost of having a second screen so the captioning at Town Meeting would be visible to more of the room. She also asked if there was any way to have an "absentee ballot" type of thing for Town Meeting. Mr. McKinney said that this was not possible because Town Meeting attendees need to be able to participate in debate and vote on amendments. "Anything could happen at a Town Meeting," he said.

Ms. Eitland continued, "July is Disability Pride Month. And I'm curious, what can we do as the BOS and working together with maybe the School Committee or others to bring attention to it. Because I think the goal is to move beyond just accessibility, but being able to ensure that people feel included and supported. This doesn't have to cost more money. It's just about us bringing attention to your point, which was, people don't

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DEPT HEADS

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and then the Glenallen [and Spring Street] intersection as well. We called it the Route 12 Corridor Intersection Redesign. So we've got a proposal from them to do a preliminary study on redesigning those intersections. If we pull the trigger on that, the idea would be to have them do some conceptual designs for us on those three major intersections. We'll let the community and the public know what the designs look like, get your feedback on it, and then try to systematically improve them with funds that we get available through Chapter 90."

A resident of Hitchcock Road said that the recent construction of Doyle Estates left piles of dirt on the rail trail and blocks the access of emergency vehicles. Mr. Wood said that he hadn't been aware of that and it would be checked out immediately.

There were a number of questions about litter and trash around town, and how it could be dealt with. One citizen asked why the police don't cite people more aggressively for littering, and Chief Wolski said that people usually don't throw trash when there's a police car behind them. A citizen who sits on the Charter and Bylaw Review Committee rose to say that the committee will recommend increasing the fines for littering. Other questions involved the replacement of old (and possibly defective) water meters from homes (Mr. Wood said they're doing that as quickly as they can get access to the homes, which sometimes is not easy) and billing for overdue or unpaid ambulance fees, which Chief Smith has talked about in numerous previous meetings. A suggestion was

made that the Senior Center or CAC might start a fund to help people pay the ambulance bills, and residents could contribute to those funds with donations.

A citizen came forward to ask that absolute numbers of votes be displayed and recorded at Town Meetings, instead of or in addition to the percentage amounts only. The percentages alone don't give any clue as to how many votes were actually cast, so there's no way to tell if for some reason, some people's clicker votes didn't transmit and register.

A citizen commented that holiday decorations such as lights and tree ornaments were still up, and lighted, even though it was April, and they need to be put away. Another citizen commented that the weather has been unusually bad this winter and until recently it was probably difficult and/or unsafe for crews to be attempting to take down ornaments and lights. Mr. Wood said they'll get to it as soon as possible.

A citizen asked why the town is paying for electrical service to its buildings when the town is supposed to be getting electric credits from the solar fields. Mr. McKinney explained, "We do get credits on the various town buildings, but with National Grid, you have to let them know how you want your credit applied. So say, if the library has \$1,000 credit but they're not using that electricity, then it's got to be disbursed somewhere else, whether it be to Town Hall or DPW. So we're working with a representative from National Grid to look at our schedule, to see how we divvied it up, because at one point things might have changed, or the library was open more, the library is open less or so on. We're looking at

consumptions, and we're looking at how to disburse on who can utilize the credits, rather than just having the credits sit on one bill, because you can't take credits from one bill and apply them to another bill. Once they're there, they're there. So you just have to tell National Grid how you want them spent. So we're working on that."

There were several questions about various dilapidated buildings in town and what can and can't be done legally to put the buildings into tax title, take them over or compel the owners to take care of them. It can take years for a tax taking through Land Court. The owner of the RHI Building on Central Street claims he is still looking for grant money to fix it up.

There were several questions about the effects of salt used on the roads that has gotten into people's wells. There are not many resources for owners of private wells whose wells are contaminated.

A citizen asked about the W.L. French landfill capping project on River Street, of which very little has been heard recently. Mr. Wood said, "As far as I know, during winter time, they had stopped transporting any material to the landfill. Don't quote me on this, but I feel like they're very, very close to the elevations that they need to be at. They might have to look at the numbers and see if they're going to be bringing in enough material to meet their final elevations. But from the last conversations that we had with them, it sounded like they were going to start entertaining capping that landfill this year. So I don't have any kind of specific schedule from them or how much more traffic they expect to bring to the landfill."

The citizen emphasized that

the project needed to be finished, we need a schedule, and the public needs to know what's happening with it. Mr. McKinney said, "We'll reach out to them and find out what the next steps are, and let everybody know. It might not be at the next Board of Selectmen meeting, but the one at the end of the month." Ms. Roberts added, "It depends on available material too, and job site projects as well. As far as the availability of dirt."

A citizen asked about things they had seen on Facebook about an override. Mr. McKinney explained what an override is, saying that a Proposition 2-1/2 override is a ballot question, not a Town Meeting vote, and can only be put on the ballot by the Board of Selectmen unless a town's charter has a mechanism to put it on by citizen petition.

The final citizen question involved parliamentary procedure at Town Meeting, asking whether a rule could be made that a certain amount of time would be allowed for debate on a motion before motions to immediately make a drastic amendment or move the question were entertained. The reply boiled down to a question of Robert's Rules of Order and how the Moderator handles them. A motion would have to be made and voted on saying that other motions could not be made before a fair debate on the original motion (that is, the article itself).

The session adjourned after almost two hours. The video of the session can be viewed on WinchendonTV at <https://winchendon.cablecast.tv/internetchannel/show/367?site=1>.

Koi Asian Cuisine Puts the Grand into Grand Opening at Official Ribbon Cutting

by Inanna Arthen

Although it began welcoming customers several weeks earlier in what was called a "soft opening," Koi Asian Cuisine held its official ribbon cutting and celebration on Saturday morning, April 11. Rebecca Marois of the Greater Gardner Chamber of Commerce invited local officials and members of the press to the event, which was mostly held outside, and the actual ribbon cutting was the least of it.

Restaurant staff and family members prepared for hours for the ceremonies, which included an array of Asian banquet foods such as a whole suckling pig, whole roasted fowl, whole fish, dumplings, rice and other delicacies worthy

of an Emperor's table. The food was surrounded with burning joss sticks of incense, and prayers were quietly spoken. The ribbon cutting was followed by a 30-minute performance by the elaborately costumed and highly skilled Lion Dancers, who had traveled from the Wah Lum Kung Fu & Tai Chi Academy in Malden. The dancers wove around the entire crowd outside, giving attendees fruit from the lions' mouths, before processing inside to circle the restaurant interior, all to the constant rhythm of drums, bells and percussion instruments.

You could feel the good luck and positive energy filling the air, not to mention rattling the windows as everything moved into the

gleaming, newly refurbished dining rooms. Koi Asian Cuisine was already getting great reviews from local residents. After one of the best Grand Openings Winchendon has ever seen, prosperity and good fortune should shine on them like the sun!

Follow Koi Asian Cuisine on Facebook at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61574477336255, and see their website at www.koiwinchendon.com/. They are located at 302 Spring Street, and their phone number is 978-616-2015.

(Photos by Inanna Arthen)



Winchendon News

Springtime English Tea at the Beals a Delicious Hit

by Jill Nicholson Sackett

Hats were donned and pinkies extended as over 30 people attended the Beals Library Springtime English Tea at the Beals Memorial Library last Saturday, April 11. The tea was organized by the Friends of the Library to raise money for the numerous programs and projects that the library sponsors.

Many of the attendees dressed for the occasion in skirts and fascinators or hats for the ladies and suits for the gentlemen. The Tuckers arrived “in style” in their 1932 Dodge Brothers Coupe, which attracted a lot of admiration while parked at the front curb. The Friends did a marvelous job of decorating the tables with fresh flowers, printed menus, matching serving pieces and center serving tiers. No one left hungry: in addition to unlimited tea, the lineup featured a trio of chicken salad, egg salad and cucumber and cream cheese finger sandwiches, mini-scones with jam and real clotted cream, and an assortment of home made cookies.

Live Celtic music provided by an excellent quartet created a festive atmosphere. The quartet played fiddles, wooden flutes, and Irish (Uilleann) bagpipes. Unlike the more familiar



Kit and Karen Tucker (left and right) and Beth Bernstein (center) Arrived in their 1932 Dodge Brothers Coupe
Photo by Jill Sackett

Scottish bagpipes, Irish bagpipes are blown by bellows pumped under the arm. They produce a quieter sound and are designed for indoor, seated playing.

Friends President Sheila Sbrogna had help from several other members, overseeing all of the preparations and greeting arriving guests. Fundraisers like this are an important part of the Beals Library revenue stream. Including the many programs the Friends support, the library



Sisters Linda (left) and Sandy (right) Dellasanta Dressed for Teatime
Photo by Jill Sackett

has two major projects in their sights: replacement/enlargement of the 100-year-old toilet-size bathroom on the auditorium level, and build-out of a children’s room in the library basement which is currently unfinished and houses their ongoing used book sale.

For more information about the library’s busy spring-summer schedule, or the Friends of the Library volunteer organization, visit www.bealslibrary.org.

DISABILITIES

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even know where somebody can make an accommodation for them.”

Board member Tiffany Newton said, “In my work, we have been working with a woman, she’s a consultant who works on inclusion and people with disabilities. Just recently, she presented at something that I was at and she mentioned how she’ll come and do a community presentation to help communities become more aware about how to not only be inclusive, but creating belonging, not just inclusion.”

Ms. Jennings said it would be great for all of the town staff to have a training on that, as well as having one for the community.

Ms. Eitland said, “My next point is, a lot of these improvements that you’re talking about, improving accessibility, sidewalks, right of

way. In past conversations with Representative Zlotnik, he had made a comment that those are great projects for earmarks. And so I think it’s one of these things, where is that something where we can get ahead of it and find a very specific project? Is it Town Meeting? What part of it can we do to make sure that things are at least ADA accessible?”

Finally, Ms. Eitland said, what could they do to improve the knowledge gap, by which 60 percent of residents have no idea where to go if they have an accessibility need?

Various suggestions were made, including getting attention to the Commission’s web page and Facebook page, distributing flyers with QR codes to those, putting something on WinchendonTV and having brochures and flyers available at Town Meeting.

There was also some discussion about

providing transportation to Town Meeting via the Community Connector, and having child care available for people who needed it in order to attend. Ms. LaBrie suggested that they might speak to Stephanie Rondeau to see if some of the MMHS students would be available to staff child care.

Winchendon Commission on Disabilities web page:

<https://www.townofwinchendon.com/408/Commission-on-Disabilities>

Winchendon Commission on Disabilities Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61586958982464>

Winchendon’s ADA official, Nicole Roberts, is the Planning and Land Use Coordinator and works in the Building Department office in Town Hall.

Examples of Accessibility Improvements in Winchendon

Accessible Public Buildings and Facilities

- Elevator installed at Town Hall
- Senior Center (Old Murdock)
- CAC/The HUB
- Beals Library
- YMCA
- Bowling Alley
- Police Department
- Schools
- Community Park
- Bike path
- Comfort Room (accessible bathroom)

School-Based Improvements

- Schools accommodating individual student needs
- Memorial School adding outlined curbing, stairs and transitions for vision-impaired individuals

Community and Meeting Accessibility

- Live captions provided during Town Meetings
- Board of Selectmen reminding speakers to use microphones
- Public meetings held in accessible locations (Library with elevator)

Outdoor and Mobility Improvements

- Walking trails at parks
- Curb cuts/ramps on Central Street improving wheelchair mobility

Programming and Community Spaces

- Movies at Winchendon Community Park
- Restaurants that provide accessible, less crowded environments

Areas Still Needing Attention

- More accessible programming for children
- Ensuring all public meeting locations are ADA compliant

Community Recommendations for Improving Accessibility in Winchendon

Transportation Access

- Expand local transportation options with frequent, reliable routes through town.
- Provide evening service (until at least 11:00 pm) and seven-day coverage.
- Address barriers for older adults who cannot drive after dark, particularly for participation in Town Meetings and voting.

Sidewalks, Roads and Physical Infrastructure

- Repair sidewalks connecting neighborhoods (Broadview, Ipswich Drive) to Maple Street and the town center.
- Improve road conditions.
- Ensure all town buildings are ADA compliant.
- Increase accessible and properly designed handicapped parking spaces, especially those accommodating side-loading wheelchair vehicles.

Inclusive Facilities and Planning

- Build a new fire station that provides appropriate accommodations for female staff.
- Improve accessibility in public lots and facilities.
- Consider mobility supports such as scooters.

Hearing and Invisible Disabilities

- Provide amplification devices at public speaking engagements and make them available for loan at the library.
- Recognise that not all disabilities are visible or physical when designing programs and services.

Youth and Caregiver Support

- Expand adaptive programming for youth with disabilities.
- Create safe, supporting environments for caregivers whose accessibility needs are also increasing.

Community Engagement

- Actively listen to residents’ recommendations and implement improvements wherever possible.

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