

ZBA Approves Special Permit for 10 Cummings Rd Two-family Conversion



Eric Grady discusses permit logistics with the ZBA
Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

by Inanna Arthen

At their meeting on Wednesday, August 19, the Zoning Board of Appeals continued the hearing on the request by owner Robert Grady to convert a home at 10 Cummings Road into a two-family house. This hearing began on April 15 and was continued to July 1, and then to August 19, due to concerns raised by abutters and neighborhood residents who questioned Mr. Grady's intentions for the property.

[For previous Courier coverage, see

"Cummings Road Residents Pack ZBA Meeting with Concerns about Proposed Two-Family Conversion" in the April 16 to April 23, 2026 edition of the *Winchendon Courier* (scroll down to article), and

"Calmer Words and Various Points of View as ZBA Continues Hearing on 10 Cummings Road Conversion to Two-Family Housing" in the July 2 to July 9, 2026

edition of the *Winchendon Courier*.]

Eric Grady, who is the owner's son and plans to occupy one of the units with his family, was present to answer questions. Board Chair Cynthia Carvill began with a quick recap of the application. The Board did a site visit to the property on July 21, she recounted. "We had a nice tour of the property. We looked at the exits and the egress, and we looked at what's been done so far and what needs to be done. We looked at the view [from the back deck]." They also considered the parking for the two units, since the house is very close to the road, on a tight curve, and the road itself is very narrow at that point. Planning and Land Use Coordinator Nicole Roberts said that the owners will need a driveway permit from the DPW to put in a driveway.

Ms. Carvill mentioned a tree that seems very close to the house, and while it helps add some privacy for

the house and neighbors, it might be an issue for insurers.

A ZBA member said that he would prefer the driveway entrance to be on "the long side" of the portion of the road around the house for safety and visibility reasons.

Mr. Grady said, "I understand looking at it from your point of view as is your right, but there's a lot across the street that was zoned for I don't know how many properties. So if there's going to be something directly across the street like a driveway, what is the difference from it being on my side of the road directly across the street?...I can show you the plan for it. It's a big development. She said it was Mr. Fisk, I believe, out of Keene. He passed away, but she knew the development we were talking about, but the driveway, the cut-in, and the realty sign was literally right across the street from where I'm proposing the driveway was going to be. So if they found that that was an okay entrance and exit to a huge development, I can't see that a driveway for a car or two is going to cause that much disruption."

(The "development" in question appears on the Assessor's Map, with 23 individual house lots and two private roads arranged on a 55-acre parcel. None of those features actually exist. Winchendon has a number of such phantom subdivisions that show up on the Assessor's Map but were never built and have long since expired.)

The ZBA member said, "I would say this to you: just putting the eye test to it, right? That coming into a corner that was on the other side, I'm going to see that. But coming on that side of the road behind a building, because part of it is blocked, because the house is very close to

to the road. It wouldn't be built that close to the road today. I just would see it as a hindrance. That's my opinion."

Mr. Grady continued to argue for the placement of the driveway close to the entrance of the upstairs unit, saying that people should not be going around that curve at high speed, anyway. If his fiancée is dealing with difficult health problems that limit mobility, and she is already negotiating the stairs, "why is she going to have to walk a million miles around the house to get to our car? Let's just have the DPW say if I can have a parking spot."

The decision was punted to the DPW, who will need to issue the parking permits.

A member of the audience had the property owner, Mr. Robert Grady, on a cell phone call, saying Mr. Robert Grady wanted to give some updates. In past meetings there had been questions as to whether Mr. Robert Grady could speak remotely without being sworn in, as is required for speakers at ZBA meetings. In this case, he was sworn in over the phone, and Ms. Carvill put the phone next to her microphone so all could hear.

Mr. Robert Grady said, "I did want to tell the board an update on the asbestos remediation. We had contracted with a remediation company out of Westminster. The plan has been drafted. It's called a non-traditional remediation plan. It is being submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Labor standards on Monday. Once the plan is signed off by them, the remediation company will be in there. They said it's a three to four

Turn to CUMMINGS ROAD page 2

Three Ways to Support the Winchendon Courier!

Advertise!

Support Local Journalism for as Little as
\$25 a month!

Advertising space in the *Winchendon Courier* begins at \$25 per insertion for a business-card size ad, up to only \$450 for a full page ad.

Design Services FREE!

Don't have an ad? We'll design one for you, free of charge! Change it as often as you want!

Two Platforms for the Price of One!

Run a business card or double-card size ad every week in the online *Winchendon Courier* and you'll get a discount AND the same ad placed in the print edition, for no extra charge!

Contact us for full details:
editor@winchendoncourier.net

Sponsor!

Become a Winchendon Courier Sponsor!

Make a donation to help pay for the *Courier's* expenses, including:

- web hosting
- professional design and layout software
- printing the monthly print edition
- licensing assets and photos
- and our biggest goal, paying journalists and photographers for their work!

By Light Unseen Media LLC is a for-profit business, but we publish the *Courier* as a service to the town of Winchendon—because every town needs a local newspaper.

Every donation, of any size, is greatly appreciated and put to good use!

Use the Square and PayPal buttons on the front page of every online edition of the *Courier*, or mail a check to By Light Unseen Media, LLC.

Subscribe!

Are you a former resident of Winchendon now living out of town?

Are you a "snowbird" who goes away for part of the year?

Would you just like to have the print edition in your mailbox and not have to remember to pick up a copy?

Do you know someone who would love to get "news from home"?

Get a SUBSCRIPTION to the print edition of the *Winchendon Courier* for only

\$75 per year

Each monthly issue can be mailed first class to anywhere in the United States.

Contact us for more information:
editor@winchendoncourier.net

50 Old Centre Slated to Stay Veterans’ Housing As Local Non-Profit Makes Winning Bid in Auction



The house at 50 Old Centre
Photo from Google Street View

by Inanna Arthen

It was a lively scene at the public auction of the five-acre parcel and 19-room boarding house at 50 Old Centre at noon, on Tuesday, July 28. There were two bidders, and only one and a half rounds of bids. One bidder dropped out without raising their opening bid. The auction was won by a local non-profit corporation called Casberg Opportunities, Inc. Persons associated with the company told the *Courier* that they intend to keep the house as veterans’ housing, with some updating and remodeling.

The auction had drawn considerable interest, with numerous spectators attending. These included neighbors and residents of the close-knit Old Centre neighborhood, Chair of the Planning Committee Guy Corbosiero, Town Manager Bill McKinney, Chair of the Winchendon Historical Commission Mary Harrington, and both the current residents of the house. Two Winchendon Police cruisers and at least two officers were also present for the proceedings.

Known for years as Camelot Farm, the building had provided housing for veterans, as many as 17 at one point. The number of occupants had dwindled to two by the time the property suffered a fire this past December that destroyed a barn and sadly killed many farm animals and poultry belonging to resident Timothy Pace (his GoFundMe appeal is at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-timothy-rebuild-after-devastating-fire-b4z68>). Ten or twelve years ago, Camelot Farms had a van and volunteer drivers, and attended every Our Neighbor’s Kitchen supper at the

UU Church of Winchendon. The suppers in those days wouldn’t start “until the veterans are here.” This continued until the facility lost access to a van for transportation.

After the auction, Mr. Pace showed some of the visitors around the first floor of the house.

In recent years, according to discussions in numerous Board of Selectmen’s meetings when questions arose about permits for the facility, Camelot Farm ran into difficulties keeping up with property taxes, and had to make improvements to pass Board of Health inspections. The house, which dates back to the 18th century, has a complete, fairly new commercial kitchen.

Casberg Opportunities Inc. is a local entity. According to the Secretary of the Commonwealth Corporations Division records, its Directors are Shawn Case, Thomas Berger and Estelle E. Bumbarger, of Winchendon and Templeton. Mr. Case and Mr. Berger are the co-owners of Lickity Splitz restaurant on Main Street in Winchendon. The corporation was organized on June 11, 2026. Its Articles of Incorporation state:

The purpose of the corporation is to engage in the following business activities:

TO PROVIDE HOUSING AND OTHER VITAL SERVICES TO VETERANS NEEDING HOUSING ACCOMMODATIONS, AND AS AVAILABLE, SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE COMMUNITY.

CASBERG OPPORTUNITIES, INC. WILL WORK WITH OTHER ESTABLISHED GROUPS TO PROVIDE TRAINING AND EDUCATION SKILLS TO ENABLE A FULFILLING LIFE FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

VETERANS SHALL BE DEFINED AS THOSE WHO SERVED HONORABLY IN ANY BRANCH OF THE MILITARY IN SERVICE FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. THE MINIMUM AGE REQUIREMENT WILL BE TWENTY-FIVE (25) YEARS OLD UNLESS OTHERWISE DETERMINED BY THE BOARD. SHOULD THERE BE ADDITIONAL VACANCIES, PERSON OVER SIXTY-FIVE (65) YEARS OF AGE MAY BE CONSIDERED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE BOARD.

THE FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS OF CASBERG OPPORTUNITIES, INC. ARE NOT DESIGNED FOR PERSONS WITH FELONY CONVICTIONS, OR SERIOUS ISSUES REQUIRING ON-GOING TREATMENT.

The *Courier* will be talking with the folks from Casberg Opportunities to learn more about their hopes and plans for the property. Watch these pages for updates!

CUMMINGS ROAD
continued from page 1

day process, and the Department of Environmental Protection will have somebody there on site to monitor the air quality throughout the duration of the remediation process.” This was the Massachusetts EPA, he clarified.

He went on, “Okay, so they’re the ones that handle that, and they have somebody that will be on station that will do the air quality testing as the process is taking place. They expect it to be a four to five day process, and upon completion, they will do a federal examination, and they will then sign off and remove the cease and desist order. We are under the understanding, I have a contractor that is ready to pull the permit to finish the first floor, and we anticipate being in there, I’m hoping within a week or so that we should be able to complete the first floor project and get the home occupied inside of the month of September. That’s my goal, early October at the latest, and I would love to be able to start any work that’s going to be done on the second floor before the winter months roll around. That’s really all I had to offer. And again, I want to thank the Board for allowing me to participate and for the diligence that they put in. I know that this has been a

long and painful process.”

Ms. Carvill asked how many bedrooms would be on the first floor. (The house’s septic system is rated for four bedrooms, as was brought up in the July meeting.) Mr. Robert Grady said, “We’re only going to go with two. We planned on going with three. The family that I had moving in there had two autistic grandchildren that she had adopted. Unfortunately, she has not finished. She couldn’t wait any longer. This was four months ago. So we’re going to go with two bedrooms on the first floor, living room, kitchen, bath and a half, and the deck and a dining room. The first floor has a dining room as well, and the second floor will have two bedrooms as well. So the house completed will have a total of four.”

He went on, “The last Title V done by Corey Wilson is on record as a four-bedroom plan, and we have a gentleman out of Ashburnham, Kevin, who has come out to look at it. He said the septic is in great condition as is the leaching field. Everything is fine, and he said we’ll have no problems with the four-bedroom plan. And that also factored into reducing the bedrooms on the first floor, and I’m going to look for a couple, maybe with a child.”

Ms. Carvill said that the Board had a plan before them showing

three bedrooms on the first floor. Mr. Robert Grady explained that the plans were a little confusing because of the design of the front entry, and they were going to remove a wall between two smaller rooms and make a larger master bedroom. The second bedroom will be toward the back of the house. Ms. Carvill said that they will need a plan showing those modifications to approve the special permit, even if it’s just hand-drawn. Changes needed to be documented.

Mr. Robert Grady said, “No, that’s fine. Like I said, the first floor is kind of separate from what we’re asking anyway. The Board, I’m asking them for permission to turn it into a two-family, so the special permit is for that. But the first floor building permit will have to be re-issued. It was cease and desisted when the asbestos detection was made. So it will be in order prior to any work being done up there.”

Ms. Carvill said, “If it’s four bedrooms, it makes me feel a little bit better, actually. So let’s just keep that documented that it has been modified down, and I think that will appease some of the neighborhood too, because you know they don’t want thousands of people living in that building.” With four bedrooms, the total maximum number of occupants would be eight.

Mr. Robert Grady said, “We

only need to have two bedrooms downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs. That’s all we really need on that property. Like I said, the woman that was going to live there—you guys all know her. She’s lived in Winchendon her whole life. Her daughter overdosed and died. Her son-in-law was shot in the head, and he died. She ended up adopting her two grandkids, so they were going to need separate rooms with teenage autistic boys, and that is not going to be the case now. She had to move on. She’s seeking residence elsewhere, so we were able to modify it.”

There were several more minutes of discussion among the Board, Ms. Roberts and Mr. Eric Grady about the logistics of re-submitting updated plans, and the placement of the driveway with respect to the sharp curve in the road.

Having reviewed all the concerns, the Board voted to approve the special permit to allow 10 Cummings Road to be converted into a four-bedroom, two-family home, with a condition that no driveway be installed “on the corner nearest the house” and considering that all state and local regulations are fulfilled. The permit is subject to a 20-day appeal and then can be recorded.

Winchendon News

MVOC Director Updates COA on Progress in Poland/Streeter School Housing Conversion



The veterans housing project seen from a different angle.

Photo by Inanna Arthen

by Inanna Arthen

Stephanie Marchetti, Director of Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center (MVOC) in Gardner, was the featured guest speaker at the Winchendon Council On Aging's meeting on Tuesday, August 18 to give updates and answer questions about the veterans' housing project on Murdock Avenue next to G.A.R. Park. The former Poland and Streeter Elementary Schools are being combined and remodeled into housing units, with the work proceeding rapidly.

Ms. Marchetti said that they are about eight months into the construction at this point. Windows will be going in next month, the tub and shower surrounds have been delivered, and the apartments are being framed out. There will be 44 one-bedroom apartments for single individuals.

There will be a lottery, probably in January or February, to accept residents in a completely random and unbiased process, as required by the state funding protocols. They hope to move in the first batch of residents in late spring, Ms. Marchetti said. "Hopefully we'll just have two or three big moving days and fill the building quickly."

Each unit will be a complete one-bedroom apartment, Ms. Marchetti

said, but they anticipate older single individuals, so the cooking appliances will be streamlined. Kitchens will have two-burner cooktops and convection/microwave ovens. Most of the veterans use meal delivery programs like Meals on Wheels, she said.

Each of the three floors will have a coin-operated laundry room. There will be an open day room/community room space for all the residents to use, as well as office space for staff. They hope to host a pop-up food pantry, Ms. Marchetti said. An unexpected donation from an individual benefactor is a \$100,000 outdoor grill and cooking set, complete with an outdoor gas oven, rotisserie chicken station and prep sink. Ms. Marchetti said they expect to have a lot of barbecues.

Staffing at the facility will include a part-time facilities assistant to maintain landscaping and common spaces, and a part-time building manager to help people connect with local services, support systems and agencies such as the Winchendon CAC. MVOC will have some of its counselors, peer support people and so on visiting the buildings on a rotating basis. Residents will be required to clean their own apartments. Facilities will come in for repairs and basic maintenance if needed.

Along with the big common room, there will

be "pods" outside each laundry room that will accommodate 5 to 6 people who might want to get together and socialize, play games, do puzzles, or whatever. The facility is designed to encourage residents to get out of their units and "hang out" together.

"It's also all designed for aging in place," Ms. Marchetti said. "So everything has widened doorways. Everything has lever handles. Everything like the burners are as close to the edge of a counter as we can. There are a few ADA units that are designed to assist people with hearing impairment or physical impairment. Every single shower and tub has grab bars, whether it's an ADA unit or not. So, just trying to make it comfortable."

Thinking in terms of residents with memory issues, the hallways will have themed decoration—a flag hallway, a medal hallway, a uniform hallway. Residents will remember that they live, say, in the flag hallway, and the hallways won't all look alike. It's also an opportunity to utilize memorabilia that residents have collected and don't know what to do with.

Several COA members mentioned services at the Senior Center which of course would be available to the veterans, and only a very short walk away, including the congregate lunch and activities.

Ms. Marchetti said, "One of the things that I want to be mindful of and really let people be cognizant of is a lot of MVOC focuses on our veterans who have been previously homeless, who have really struggled with their mental health, who have really struggled with substance use disorders. They are going to be very nervous of crowds, and sometimes even getting them to cross the street could take me a couple months. We're moving at the pace that they're comfortable with. So I might even try to coordinate: Can we start with a lunch on site and invite a few of you to it, so there's a familiar face, and then somebody can say, 'Hey, what if I come tomorrow and knock on your door and we go over together?' Something like that to ease people in would be helpful. No veteran is asking for help. No veteran is telling us what they need. No veteran is walking into a space they've never been in before. They're very proud. They're very solitary. So we'll work on it."

The property will have two basin water runoff areas around it, and not a lot of paved sidewalks to begin with. Ms. Marchetti said that she would like to see what paths the residents find for themselves and then pave where those paths are. "There will be an undeveloped acre that we're just going to keep as low green space until we decide what we want to do with it," she said.

Eligibility is not determined by age, but by income, Ms. Marchetti explained. There are different financial requirements for different units. Some units have housing vouchers attached to them; for others, a veteran can bring their own voucher. There are a handful of units for veterans who are "over income" because a veteran who is service-connected with 100 percent disability is slightly over the income limit.

MVOC will be connecting the veterans with a wide range of services, including transportation—all the VA hospitals are at least an hour away from Winchendon. MVOC accesses several different ride services, including through GAMMHA in Gardner. MVOC will also help with case management, peer support and other needs.

Ms. Marchetti said that calls for various donated items may go out after the lottery when MVOC has an idea who will be moving into the apartments, and can have the residents fill out a survey with what they need: toasters, bath towels, furniture items, and so on. If the first

HORSE & BUGGY FEEDS



Proudly Serving Local Communities Since 1976

FOR 50 YEARS...

**THE SUPPLIES YOU NEED
THE NAMES YOU TRUST**



BLUE SEAL



SEMICAN



POULIN GRAIN
Leading Animal Nutrition



fromm Family PET FOOD



REDBARN
PET PRODUCTS



WELLNESS 360
PET NUTRITION

**Pet Owners, Breeders, Gardeners,
Homesteaders, Farmers**

Bulk Feeds, Pet Nutrition, Seeds and Plants, Health Maintenance, Equipment, Pest Management, Fertilizers, and more

**380 School Street
Winchendon, MA
978-297-2518**

**24 Dunbar Street
Keene, NH
603-352-0328**



As the first days of autumn bring golden harvests and cool nights, come to a place where the blooms of summer linger just a bit longer

TO EACH HIS OWN DESIGN

FLOWERS & GIFTS

Customized floral arrangements, gourmet chocolates, food baskets, gift items, decor, and more!

Flowers and Gifts for All Occasions

Order online at
toeachhisowndesigns.com
978-297-3959

172 Central Street Winchendon, MA

BOS Continue Discussion About Future of Communications Committee

by Inanna Arthen

At their meeting on Monday, August 10, the Board of Selectmen continued a discussion initiated at their July 13 meeting about the future of the town Communications Committee. Current Committee members Inanna Arthen and Shaina Cunningham were present and came forward to share their comments. Board Chair Andrew Beauvais asked for their feedback, saying, “what’s been going well? What hasn’t been working? How can we support you?”

Ms. Arthen began by saying that the Committee had run into problems getting a quorum of four people for meetings, and “a certain amount of logistical snags with meeting on the first Monday of the month. We kept running into Monday holidays, and there was one month that we ended up meeting over in the Beals conference room because we got bumped out of the Town Hall entirely. I got in touch with the library, and they were very, very accommodating, and so we met over there.”

Ms. Arthen added, “I think that one thing we had difficulty with was figuring out what our mission was, because when we started up we had some folks that were from the Committee in the days when it was all about Comcast, and they were sort of left over from that, and they weren’t quite sure that the Committee had any purpose beyond that, and we were trying to find out what kind of work the Committee could and should be doing, and I think we ended up churning about that a lot and not really finding a resolution. And I think one reason for that is because we were discussing it in isolation, which is ironic for a Communications Committee.”

Ms. Cunningham said, “I think one thing that everybody in this room can agree on is how essential and necessary communication is, and that there is so much room for growth...our numbers had dissipated initially in joining the Committee. There was that group whose primary focus was the Comcast initiative, and then it had kind of disbanded. And then when Inanna became Chair, everybody came to the table again, and Inanna had done a wonderful job in recruiting a couple individuals, one of them being myself, to the table. When we initially began meeting again, our primary focus at that moment in time



At table, from left, Communications Committee members Inanna Arthen and Shaina Cunningham
Photo copyright Town of Winchendon

was the website, and really kind of making sure that all of the departments and committees and boards and commissions were as actively engaged and involved in that, looking at that being a way to unify communication throughout the town, and then internally there was some discussion amongst us as to what our role should be.

“So I think you touching on the mission statement is essential. Because a lot of our members were feeling like our primary focus would be to support or find a tool such as they had Comcast and the website to be able to support effective communication across the town, and then other members were feeling like, okay, is there some more of an active role that we could play, so I think internally we could use the promotion of the Board of Selectmen and this platform to rebuild our numbers, and then as a town determine how we could most effectively add value to this community.” She added that it seemed the Committee rose and fell with various goals.

Board member Erika Eitland said that according to the town’s current description, the Communications Committee was a seven-member appointed committee, and “the charge of the committee is to assist in expanding local

access programming and communications with the residents of the community. And that’s it.” That limited definition might be constraining the Committee in finding a sense of direction, she suggested.

Mr. Beauvais agreed, saying he thought it was time to reevaluate the mission statement together and come up with something broader. “You mentioned the website as well,” he said. “I’ll just speak for myself when I say navigation of the town website isn’t what it used to be. The user experience needs a little bit of work, to say the least. That’s just my perspective, and I wonder if that’s something that the communications committee would be interested in exploring and try to figure out a way to make that more user-friendly...I’d be curious what your thoughts are and if you’ve given any thought to what your new mission or your purpose might sound like.”

Ms. Cunningham said, “I think Inanna and I could really go on forever and have a really long, engaging conversation about communication in town. Especially where there is that townwide calendar initiative where we’re both a part of it as well. And in addition to that, Inanna every week

Turn to COMMUNICATIONS page 5





MORIN REAL ESTATE
BUILT BY GENERATIONS OF TRUST
Licensed in MA & NH
Bringing People Home for Over 40 Years



> edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

A season to enjoy, a future to consider.

Summer has a way of reminding us to slow down and focus on what matters most. Whether you're planning for retirement, thinking about your legacy, or preparing for life's next chapter, we're here to help you explore your options.

Let's start the conversation.



Jordyn Lynds
Financial Advisor

115 Central Street
Winchendon, MA, 01475
978-297-7452



206 Central Street
Winchendon MA

978-895-9496

YOUR DAILY
DOSE OF
HAPPINESS
IN EVERY CUP!



HOURS

Monday
CLOSED

Tuesday
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Wednesday
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Thursday
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Friday
7:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Saturday
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Sunday
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

THE WINCHENDON COURIER
A Publication of By Light Unseen Media, LLC
325 Lakeview Drive
Winchendon, MA 01475

Publisher and Managing Editor: Inanna Arthen
Production, Design and Pre-Press: Inanna Arthen

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

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

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

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

Winchendon News

COMMUNICATIONS

continued from page 4

is plugging away at the next *Courier* edition. What I would like to see is some focus groups held with the community, and really start engaging residents that way and collect some of their feedback before we individually defined a new mission statement."

Ms. Arthen said, "When I think about communications, and of course we're thinking about it constantly because almost every time there's a Board of Selectmen meeting, or in many other committees, communications comes up as either an issue, a concern, or an important need. So looking at the Communications Committee, you're thinking, should it be like the Master Plan Implementation Committee, where they're going around and interacting with all the other committees to see how they can be best working in cohesion and harmony with the Master Plan. I know that the Master Plan Implementation Committee did do that. My sister was on it. She went and did presentations to three or four different groups that I actually was at, seeing her do these presentations, and they worked really hard on it."

Ms. Arthen mentioned the recent report from the organizers of the Community Conversations series, in which participants agreed that it takes personalized one-on-one outreach to really connect with residents of the town, and not just various mass messages. "I thought, wow, it's great to hear them say that because I have been saying that for years, been going to like the HEAL meetings, for example, and saying, look, it is like hand to hand...It's face to face. It's personalized. People need to feel that you really care about their input because communications doesn't start with what you want to say. It starts with what you're listening to, and people feeling that they're listened to."

"And so the idea of having focus groups, I'm having to stop myself from buttonholing people in stores, and just saying, 'Can I ask you three questions? What's the first news you get in the day that's from outside of your house? Where do

you get your news, and what platform is it on?' You know, is it television? Is it a podcast? Is it the headlines on your phone when you pick your phone up for the first time, is it someone's text? Is it personal? Because we really don't know. I don't really know where people are getting their news these days."

"You get up in the morning. What's the first piece of information that comes to you from outside your house? And I'm willing to bet a lot of the times it's national news. It's the little headlines on their Facebook, on their computer or on their phone feed, these headlines, and so that's the first thing that they see. Well, Winchendon doesn't get on there. You hardly ever see Winchendon news in those kinds of news. But most people, that's where they're getting all their news. So they're not getting their local news. And how do we make them really care about that?"

Ms. Arthen said that people may see constant messages from the town and feel like they're just being asked to volunteer, or come to events or do something. "No. We want you to feel like you belong here, and that matters to us. And that's where you open the door for communications. And so Shaina is right, you have to start by talking to people, and somehow not the people that you talk to most of the time. You've got to find out how to talk to the people you've never talked to before."

WinchendonTV is a wonderful resource, Ms. Arthen said, but many people don't realize they can watch it on the town website and don't need Comcast cable service to see it. Mr. Beauvais pointed out that there is a phone app for WinchendonTV, as well.

Ms. Eitland said that as with several other committees, it might be valuable for other key committees have seats on the Communications Committee—for example, a representative from the Youth Commission. One need that she saw was breaking down long meetings and discussions (like this one) into easily digestible shorter chunks. She gets her main news on Instagram, and it is all national news, she agreed.

"I also want to propose from this Board, is this actually the Communications and Community Engagement Committee?" she went on. "Because the truth of the matter is, is it a two-way resource for this town? Is it something where they go out and they tell us, 'this is the news on the street. People don't know when the town election is.' That would be helpful to know in advance. So in my mind, that is the Communication Committee getting to do some of this community engagement work, where you also have a pulse on the street and come and say to the BOS or whoever, 'Listen. This is what we're hearing. You need to be paying attention to this, and vice versa. Are we able to say here's our big initiative with economic development, with the firehouse, with the School Committee, whatever? Help us get the word out. Who on the street needs to know this?'...I do think that there's a need to revisit this mission, I think we need to revisit the name. I think we need to revisit who is required to be on that board. Is there a student vacancy on that board?"

There was some discussion about the current membership of the Committee. Ms. Arthen, who was the last elected Chair, will reach out to the members individually and see if a meeting can be scheduled. There are at least two open seats according to the Town Manager's records.

The question arose as to whether the Communications Committee should simply be dissolved and started up as something completely new. Ms. Arthen said the main concern would be whether, if it was dissolved, a new committee would actually get started. The Communications Committee has a long history, having been originally created in the 1970s. Mr. Beauvais said there seemed to be value in keeping the Committee as is, and the next steps were to confirm the current membership and fill the vacant seats. Ms. Cunningham and Ms. Arthen agreed and said they can notify Mr. Beauvais when they're ready to come before the Board again.

DPW Assessing Fines on Residences With Old/Non-Functional Water and Sewer Meters

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen's meeting on Monday, July 13, Department of Public Works Director Patrick Wood explained that the Water and Sewer departments will be assessing penalty fees on users who have not allowed access to replace outdated meters in their homes despite repeated attempts.

"So this is our endeavor to swap out the old T2s, as they're commonly known, in some of these residences," Mr. Wood said. "I think we have about 300 still kicking around town. At this point, the ones that are still in the residence houses are not functioning. We're not able to read them. So for years, at this point, we're taking estimated reads. We've had multiple attempts over the last few years to try to get in and swap them out as best we could. Sent out a few letters, but the remaining 280 or so probably just really need to come out sooner than later. So the idea is trying to avoid any kind of water shutoffs. So we're thinking that a softer approach is probably to assess a fee for water and sewer users until we can swap out and get them a functioning water meter."

Water bills would be going out the following week, Mr. Wood said, so he wanted the fees to go into effect immediately. There would be no advance notice to the affected users, because the department has been trying to reach them for some time now.

Customers will have until the billing due date to schedule an appointment for the replacement, and the meter swap would have to be completed no later than 20 days after the billing due date, to avoid the penalty. Once the penalty is assessed, there will be no refunds.

The fees, assessed per quarter, will be \$75 for water, and another \$75 for sewer, \$150 for users who have both utilities.

Mr. Wood said, "There was no way to come up with a good calculation for what should the fee be. It does take a lot of time in the office. It takes our guys, they go knock on the door, see if they can get an answer, and if they do, then they have to go in to manually read them. If we don't get any of that in the office, we have to do a lot of math and estimations, and it does take up a good chunk of our time. And of course, on top of that, we don't have accurate water usage, that's the bottom line."

There is no cost to the homeowner for meter replacement—users do not have to pay for their meters. They simply have to cooperate with the town in allowing access to their property. Mr. Wood explained, "We come in, takes about a half an hour, and we take your old meter out, give you the new meter. Scheduling, we can usually get you in within a week, unless we have a lot of people calling in. Maybe we're one week out, but for the most part, it's a pretty simple process, and we just need to get access to your basement. So that's all we need."

Once the new meter is providing accurate readings, the department may find that they have been over-charging or under-charging that user. If the charge has been underestimated, the next bill will include a correction. If usage has been overestimated, the user will be credited for their overpayment. The Board voted to approve the new fees, effective July 14, 2026.

Letters were sent to water and sewer users in mid-August notifying them of the pending fees.,

Montachusett Agricultural Alliance

for Farmers, Homesteaders, Growers, Breeders, Gardeners, Producers
and anyone passionate about supporting local agriculture and producing healthy food and natural products in North Central Mass

Workshops ~ Group Purchasing ~ Marketing Support ~ Advocacy ~
Networking ~ Knowledge sharing
Monthly Meetings - Join us!

montachusettagriculturalalliance.org
facebook.com/MontachusettAgriculturalAlliance



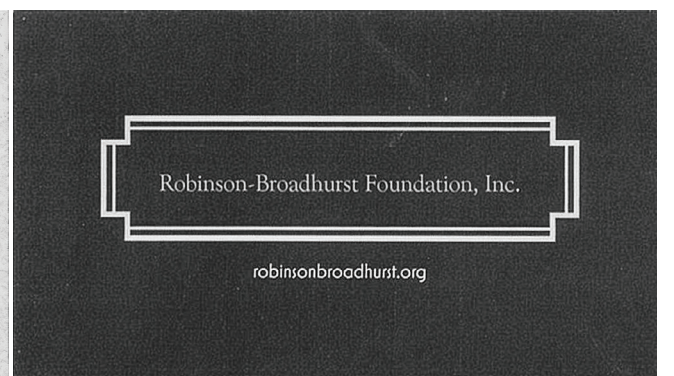
Wildlife services

PAC Agent 045027

253 front st
Winchendon ma 01475

Patrick McNeil
Owner / Operator

978-868-0104
mcneilpatrick06@gmail.com



Robinson-Broadhurst Foundation, Inc.

robinsonbroadhurst.org

Winchendon News

Readers and Book Lovers - Meet Local Authors and Publishers at the first Beals Indie Author Book Fair on Sept 19!

The Beals Memorial Library in Winchendon is hosting its first Indie Author Book Fair on Saturday, September 19, 2026 from 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and seeks literature lovers of all ages to attend the Fair. The event is a celebration of the diversity of stories being told by self-published, independent authors. The Fair features the work of 17 writers offering a variety of genres from Mystery and Science Fiction to Historical Fiction, Poetry and much more.

Authors include Donald Ballou Smyth, Catherine Zebrowski, Barbara Friedman, Deborah Fukuda, Jorge Sanchez, Kris Bowser, Mary Anne Kalonas Slack, Michelle Elliott, Robin Roberts, Ann Goltz, Jack McClintock, Jacqueline Gamache, Michael Glenzel, Melanie Meadors, Ruth Madison, Douglas Dumont, and Kimberly Hallinan.

The Fair also includes the independent publisher of genre fiction and poetry, Tree-Lion Press; and the publisher of the Literary Magazine, *Lore & Rime*, which focuses on short fiction & poetry for adults. Tracy Cutter of

Language Lover Editing Services will also be there offering her services, which include copy editing, line editing, and proofreading.

Throughout the day authors will take to the outdoor stage to talk about their work or do a reading. Roundtables will also take place in the Library auditorium covering the subjects of *Intro to Publishing: How to Get Started*; *Scams to Avoid*; and *Working with Third Party Contractors: Artists, Editors, etc.* There will also be two workshops covering topics like *E-pubs Unzipped*, and *From Book to Audiobook*.

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

The Beals Indie Author Book Fair is a collaboration with By Light Unseen Media LLC, and is funded in part by the Winchendon Cultural Council, and the Friends of the Beals Memorial Library.

Learn the unique history of the Palm Hat Industry at the Beals Memorial Library, Sept 21



Kathy Morris, local weaver and Royalston Library Director, posing with a palm hat made for the Phinehas Newton's hat business.
Photo courtesy of Beals Memorial Library

A little-known fact is that Worcester County was the center of the production of palm leaf hats in the 19th century. While much is written about the textile industry in Massachusetts, the manufacture of palm leaf and straw hats employed more people, primarily women and girls, than the textile industry in Massachusetts in the 19th century. Worcester County was the center of the production of palm leaf hats with women braiding and making the hats as 'outwork.' Royalston had an extensive palm leaf hat industry which funded the building of the Phinehas S. Newton Library.

On Monday, September 21, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. in the Beals Memorial Library's auditorium, Kathy Morris, a Royalston resident and Director of the Library will present how this industry functioned, added to the economy of local families, and was a part of the role women played in the industrial revolution.

Kathy Morris has been weaving straw for over twenty years and is a member and former board member of the National Association of Wheat Weavers. She has been investigating the history of the straw and palm leaf hat industries for many years, driven by the knowledge that the Phinehas S. Newton Library, of which she is the Library Director, was built with funds derived from the palm leaf hat business that Newton oversaw in town.

This program is sponsored by the Friends of the Beals Memorial Library. For more information, please call the library at 978-297-0300 or visit bealslibrary.org. The library is located at 50 Pleasant Street in Winchendon.

Learn about Eco Landscaping at the Beals Memorial Library on Sept 23

The Friends of the Beals Memorial Library, in partnership with Monomonac Lake Property Owners Association, the Winchendon Garden Club, and the Winchendon Springs Lake Association, invite the community to Beals Memorial Library on Wednesday, September 23, at 6:00 p.m. to learn about Eco Landscaping.

Come hear about a home landscaping approach that layers native plants for optimal aesthetic and ecological benefits, uses fewer fertilizers to protect our lakes & ponds, and uses fall leaves as a nutritional mulch while prioritizing our community's ecological health and three-season aesthetic beauty. We'll explore the many native groundcovers, perennials, shrubs, intermediate ornamental trees and shade trees that offer more color, texture and visual interest throughout the entire growing season.

This presentation will be given by the owner of Healthy Home Habitats, Michele Chalice. Michele Chalice is an environmental landscape educator, designer and owner of Healthy Home Habitats (HHH), in Keene, NH. She is a former licensed Landscape Architect from the Midwest who has also taught Horticulture and Elementary Permaculture Gardening. She has a BA in Landscape Architecture from the University of IL and an MS in Resource Management from Antioch New England University.

This event is sponsored by the Friends of the Library, Monomonac Lake Property Owners Association, the Winchendon Garden Club, and the Winchendon Springs Lake Association. For more information, please call the library at 978-297-0300 or visit bealslibrary.org. The library is located at 50 Pleasant Street in Winchendon.



Come listen to Michele Chalice, owner of Healthy Home Habitats, will be presenting an informative about Eco Landscaping at the library..
Photo courtesy of Beals Memorial Library

The Beals Memorial Library Goes Fine Free for September

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

As we celebrate not only Library Card Sign-Up Month but also the library's 113th birthday from September 1st through September 30th, library patrons can return any overdue materials to the Winchendon library, and the library will waive any fines as a thank-you. This applies to materials that may be overdue by a week, two months, or even two years. Two decades? That's okay too! Just bring them back! This includes most items checked out from the library: books, audiobooks, music CDs, magazines, DVDs, large

print books, video game rentals, and more. There are some exceptions; the library will not waive fees for lost items, museum passes, or items from their Library of Things collection.

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

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



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.

At The HUB ***5 Summer Dr***

Senior Strikers Bowling

Fridays

10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

\$5 suggested donation, pastry & coffee, lunch available through Senior Center—call 978-297-3155 by Thursday to order a lunch, suggested donation \$3.

Brunch & Bowl

Saturdays

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

\$10 suggested donation, bowling, coffee, pastries, breakfast sandwich, cartoons and free bowling for kids.

Tony's Toxic Trivia

Friday, September 4

6:30-9:30 p.m.

Custom team based/pub style trivia games w/hosting and interactive media/music. Custom games tailored to occasion and or interests. Bring your family and friends. Test your knowledge and win prizes!!!

Sound Bites Community Jam

Friday, September 11

6:30-9:45 p.m.

The HUB's very own Open Mic. Sign up list is available at the HUB at 6:00. Music starts at 6:30. For more information contact Sound Bites Events, <https://www.soundbitesevents.com/>.

Bingo at The HUB!

Thursday, September 24

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Join Winchendon Parks & Recreation for Bingo at The HUB!

Friday Night Frequencies

Friday, September 25

6:00-9:00 p.m.

Food, beverages, live music, band TBA.

Need a Ride?

Book a ride with the Community Connector app, or call 978-297-8089. All rides are FREE! Please book your ride at least one week in advance.

Tuesday, September 1
State Election Day

Monday, September 7
Labor Day Holiday

Monday, September 21
International Day of Peace

Beals Memorial Library ***50 Pleasant St***

Indie Author Book Fair

Saturday, September 19

bealslibrary.org/bookfair

Calling all book lovers, readers, and anyone who's wondering about publishing a book! Meet local authors and publishers, browse books for sale, hear the authors give readings and presentations, attend panels and workshops about publishing. 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. inside and outside the library (rain date: Sept 26).

Eco Landscaping Talk

Wednesday, September 23

Come hear Michele Chalice, owner of Healthy Home Habitats, talk about healthy, natural eco landscaping techniques. 6:00 p.m.

The Local Palm Hat Industry

Monday, September 21

Kathy Morris, Royalston Library Director, will share the fascinating and little-known history of palm leaf hat making in Worcester County in the 19th century. 6:30 p.m.

Beals Prize for Poetry Award Night

Monday, September 24

Join us for an evening of poetry as we celebrate the finalists for this year's Beals Prize for Poetry. 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Movies at the Beals - FREE!

Beals Movie Night

Thursday, Sept 10, 6:00 p.m. : *Sheep Detectives*

Beals Family Movie Matinee

Saturday, Sept 12, 11:00 a.m.: *Minions and Monsters*

Beals Classic Movie Matinee

Wednesday, Sept 16, 3:00 p.m.: *Taxi Driver*

Library Open on Saturdays Beginning September 12!

Winchendon Community Park

86 Ingleside Dr

Harvest Social

Saturday, September 12

\$5 per person. Farm to Table Harvest menu featuring food from local farms, local beer, wine and sangria, local farms and makers, apple cider doughnuts and pumpkin cheesecake, live music from East West Duo. 6:00-10:00 p.m.

Cowboys & Hippies

Saturday, September 19

Featuring Bearly Dead! With Whiskey-6, Waylon & Co. and The Whole Loaf. Tickets \$25 per person, at [https:// www.eventeny.com/events/cowboys-hippies-concert-27916](https://www.eventeny.com/events/cowboys-hippies-concert-27916). 2:00-9:00 p.m.

Central Mass Irish Festival 2026

Saturday, September 26

Tickets \$20 in advance from <https://www.eventeny.com/events/central-mass-irish-festival-2026-28127>, \$25 at the gate. Three of New England's premiere Irish bands, dancers, harps, pipes and drums, Irish food and drink, Irish vendors, and an open traditional seisún come together for an all day celebration of all things Irish in the heart of New England.. 12:00-9:00 p.m.

THE HUB
WINCHENDON, MA
PARTY
BOOKINGS

Bowling Area + Back Patio Available!



Every Wednesday - Saturday



10 AM - 3 PM



June 1 - October 1



**Host your event
on the bowling area
or on the back patio!**



*Perfect for birthdays,
reunions, celebrations &
private events*



Book today:

the-hub.org/booking-calendar/outdoor-patio-rental-request



SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 1

State Primary Election

7:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m. Voting will be at Old Murdock Senior Center, second floor, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon (all precincts).

Social Art Circle with GALA

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

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 SEPTEMBER 2

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.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3

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 barbeque chicken, potato salad, corn on the cob and dessert. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Open House “Porch Night” at the WHCC

6:00-8:30 p.m. Last Porch Night for the summer! Come join us for our summer favorite - Thursdays on the porch! Bring some wine, cheese, or snack and beverage of your choice and enjoy the beautiful mansion! Tour our buildings at your leisure and go back in time at these beautiful properties! There is NO CHARGE for this event! Live music provided by Franco O'Malley. At Winchendon History and Cultural Center, 151 Front St.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4

Toxic Trivia with Tony

6:30-9:30 p.m. Custom team based/pub style trivia games w/hosting and interactive media/music. Custom games tailored to occasion and or interests. Bring your family and friends. Test your knowledge and win prizes!!! At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr., Winchendon.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5

Toy Town Bridge Artists Circle

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

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8

Music With Bob Jordan

10:30-11:30 a.m. Come to the center and join us for a home cooked meal and some music featuring Bob Jordan! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9

Craft and 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! If you have any questions, contact Amanda: 978-894-4597. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10

Dennis Cormier Concert - Songs of Yesteryear

10:30-11:30 a.m. Enjoy timeless tunes, familiar melodies, and a touch of nostalgia as Denis performs favorites from years past At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Beals Book Club

3:00 p.m. Avid readers are invited to join in on a lively discussion and good reads! Beals Book Club is a discussion group that allows avid readers to discuss the themes, plots, and characters of selected books. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Our Neighbor’s Kitchen Dinner

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

Beals Movie Night

6:00-8:00 p.m. Showing tonight: *Sheep Detectives*. Free to all. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Back to School Family Bingo Night

7:00-9:00 p.m. Support the Murdock Boosters! Doors open at 6:30. Bingo will start promptly at 7:00. Ages 18+ upstairs for cash bingo. \$1.00 per card per round. We will play 12 rounds. Ages 17 years and younger downstairs for candy bar bingo. Bring a full size candy bar and \$1.00 to play 10 rounds of candy bar bingo. There will also be additional raffles! At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11

Sound Bites Community Jam

6:30-9:45 p.m. The HUB’s very own Open Mic. Sign up list is available at the HUB at 6:00. Music starts at 6:30. For more information contact Sound Bites Events, <https://www.soundbitesevents.com/>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12

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.

Beals Family Movie Matinee

11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Showing today: *Minions & Monsters*. Free to all. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Sunset Social: Harvest Social

6:00-10:00 p.m. Tickets \$5. Kids under 12 free. This community-focused event is all about enjoying the best parts of autumn: crisp air, harvest vibes, and time together in a beautiful outdoor setting. Whether you’re coming to socialize, relax, or simply soak in the fall atmosphere, the Farm Harvest Social offers a warm and welcoming way to celebrate the season. Expect an evening filled with seasonal ambiance, community spirit, and fall-inspired fun at the park. Bring friends, meet neighbors, and enjoy a relaxed night designed to celebrate harvest time in Winchendon. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/sunset-socials-harvest-social-27903. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15

Growing Places Farmers Market

10:30-11:30 a.m. Join us at Growing Places for a once a month Farmer’s Market that comes to the Senior Center. Fresh vegetables available for purchase using cash, debit/credit or SNAP! At 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 SEPTEMBER 16

Beals Classic Movie Matinee

3:00-5:00 p.m. Showing today: *Taxi Driver*. Free to all. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17

Greeting Card Class with Merrily Verone

10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Free to all. Come join us in creating cards, and other paper projects. Work on making it your own. All materials are included and many materials to choose from. Each month is always a different design. Anyone of all ages is welcomed. No experience needed. You’ll be pleasantly surprised to see what you can come up with! Sponsored by Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA) and the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation. 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 beef stew, biscuits and dessert. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19

Beals Indie Author Book Fair

10:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Speakers and panels, author readings, resources, vendors, and books to buy. For more information, see bealslibrary.org/bookfair. In and around the Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon. (rain date: Sept 26)

Cowboys & Hippies Concert

7:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$25. From early afternoon through sunset and into the evening, the stage will be alive with powerhouse performances from regional favorites and crowd-loving jam bands. Expect soaring guitar solos, tight grooves, soulful vocals, and plenty of moments that make you want to dance, sway, and sing along. Featuring Whiskey6, The Whole Loaf and Bearly Dead. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/cowboys-hippies-concert-27916. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 21

History of the Palm Leaf Hat Industry in Worcester County

6:30-7:30 p.m. Worcester County was the center of the production of palm leaf hats in the 19th Century. Royalston had an extensive palm leaf hat business, and the Phinehas S. Newton Library was built with money derived from this industry. Learn how this industry functioned, added to the economy of local families, and was a part of the role women played in the industrial revolution. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 23

Create Your Own Clay Pinch Pot

3:30-5:30 p.m. For teens and tweens grades 5-12. Join us for a fun clay hand building class with Launchspace! Learn the basics of hand-building with clay while creating your own unique pinch pot. Participants will shape the clay by hand, then add texture, patterns, and simple decorative details to personalize their pieces. Finished pots will be glazed and fired at LaunchSpace and returned approximately three weeks after. Space limited, registration required: call 978-297-0300 to register. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Eco Landscaping Presentation

6:00-7:00 p.m. Come hear about a home landscaping approach that layers native plants for optimal aesthetic and ecological benefits, uses fewer fertilizers to protect our lakes & ponds, and uses fall leaves as a nutritional mulch while prioritizing our community’s ecological health and three-season aesthetic beauty. We’ll explore the many native ground covers, perennials, shrubs, intermediate ornamental trees and shade trees that offer more color, texture and visual interest throughout the entire growing season. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Craft and 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! If you have any questions, contact Amanda: 978-894-4597. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24

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

BER 2026



Community Game Night at the Beals

5:30-7:30 p.m. Play one of our games or bring your favorite to share! This event is open to everyone in the community. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Beals Prize for Poetry Award Night

6:00-7:00 p.m. Join us for an evening of poetry as we celebrate the finalists for this year's Beals Prize for Poetry. This is funded in part by the Winchendon Cultural Council and the Friends of the Beals Memorial Library. 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.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 25

Friday Night Frequencies at The HUB

6:00-9:00 p.m. Live music, food and beverages. Band TBA. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Celebrating Homecoming with the American Legion

6:00 p.m. \$35 per person. BBQ dinner and entertainment. Come together, honor, celebrate. Contact Monique Connor, 978-729-6773, walaunit193@gmail.com. At Winchendon American Legion Post #193, 295 School St.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26

Central Mass Irish Festival 2026

12:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 at the gate (12 and under free). Three of New England's premiere Irish bands, dancers, harps, pipes and drums, Irish food and drink, Irish vendors, and an open traditional seisún come together for an all day celebration of all things Irish in the heart of New England. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/central-mass-irish-festival-2026-28127. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27

Emberly's Embrace Annual Charity Benefit

12:00-4:00 p.m. Free and open to the public. Live music, Touch-a-Truck, local vendors, food trucks, raffles, a silent auction, and activities for families. Proceeds will help Emberly's Embrace purchase a Caring Cradle for Heywood Hospital's LaChance Maternity Department and a Caring Cradle for Cheshire Medical Center's Women and Children's Health Unit. At The Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Rd, Winchendon.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 28

Cookbook Book Club

6:00-7:00 p.m. Each month, participants will cook a recipe from the selected cookbook, bring a dish to share, and discuss how it turned out, what worked well, what they would change and what they enjoyed. For this month's cookbook, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 29

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.

Non-Fiction Book Club

6:30-7:30 p.m. Come explore the world of non-fiction with us! We will be reading a variety of books from different genres. History, memoirs, biographies, science, and beyond. This is an adult (18+) only book club. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 30

Thriller & Mystery Book Club

4:00-5:00 p.m. Join us if you love the thrills and chills of a thriller, or mysterious whodunnit? Participants can share their favorites and enjoy some new ones with other fans of the genre! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

RECURRING WEEKLY EVENTS

MONDAY through FRIDAY

Pickleball - Open Courts

9:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Drop in and play pickleball! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave., Winchendon. 978-297-3155.
NOTE: There will be NO PICKLEBALL on Tuesday, September 1 because of the State Primary Election taking place in the Senior Center auditorium.

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. Browse a wide selection of used books, DVDs, puzzles, music and more. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

Lego Club for Kids at the Beals

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

Yoga 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

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.

Family Focus at Cornerstone Church

6:30-8:30 p.m. Join us for Family dinner and learning about your place in Your family, Church, and the world. For any questions, please contact Pastor Amanda at pastoramanda@cornerstoneag.net. To Register go to: <https://cornerstonechurchag.com/royal-rangers/>. At Cornerstone Church, 122 Gardner Rd, Winchendon. (begins Sept. 15)

WEDNESDAYS

Ukelele Class with Julie

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

Open Bowling & Sunshine Cafe

10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Kids Bowl Free!

10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Gentle Yoga with Paula

10:00-11:00 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.

RUMMIKUB

10:15-11:15 a.m. Learn to play Rummikub. 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.

THURSDAYS

Open Bowling & Sunshine Cafe

10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Kids Bowl Free!

10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

CFCE Preschool Playgroup at the Beals

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

Friends' Book and Used Media Sale

5:00-7::00 p.m. 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.

Kids Bowl Free!

10:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Senior Lunch and Senior Strikers 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.

Friends' Book and Used Media Sale

12:00-2:00 p.m. Browse a wide selection of used books, DVDs, puzzles, music and more. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon.

SATURDAYS

Brunch & Bowl at The HUB - Kids Bowl FREE!

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.

Story Time at the Beals

10:00 a.m. Join us for a fun half hour of stories with Ms. Aly and Ms. Miranda. 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.

Winchendon Farmers Market

10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Crafts, fresh farm produce, preserves, baked goods. New location as of August 1: at Pleasant Street & Front Street, Winchendon, next to Town Hall.

Open House at the WHCC

10:00 a..m.- 1:00 p.m. NEW! Visit the beautiful Murdock-Whitney house and learn about Winchendon's history! At Winchendon History and Cultural Center, 151 Front St.

Friends' Book and Used Media Sale

12:00-2:00 p.m. Browse a wide selection of used books, DVDs, puzzles, music and more. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St., Winchendon. Saturdays start Sept 12.

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.

Special Events

Beals Indie Author Book Fair

September 19, 10:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Speakers and panels, author readings, resources, vendors, and books to buy. For more information, see bealslibrary.org/bookfair. In and around the Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon. (rain date: Sept 26)

Beals Prize for Poetry Award Night

September 24, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Join us for an evening of poetry as we celebrate the finalists for this year's Beals Prize for Poetry. This is funded in part by the Winchendon Cultural Council and the Friends of the Beals Memorial Library. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Thoughts and Ideas

Beals Book Club

September 10, 3:00 p.m. Avid readers are invited to join in on a lively discussion and good reads! Beals Book Club is a discussion group that allows avid readers to discuss the themes, plots, and characters of selected books. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

History of the Palm Leaf Hat Industry in Worcester County

September 21, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Worcester County was the center of the production of palm leaf hats in the 19th Century. Royalston had an extensive palm leaf hat business, and the Phinehas S. Newton Library was built with money derived from this industry. Learn how this industry functioned, added to the economy of local families, and was a part of the role women played in the industrial revolution. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Eco Landscaping Presentation

September 23, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Come hear about a home landscaping approach that layers native plants for optimal aesthetic and ecological benefits, uses fewer fertilizers to protect our lakes & ponds, and uses fall leaves as a nutritional mulch while prioritizing our community's ecological health and three-season aesthetic beauty. We'll explore the many native ground covers, perennials, shrubs, intermediate ornamental trees and shade trees that offer more color, texture and visual interest throughout the entire growing season. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Cookbook Book Club

September 28, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Each month, participants will cook a recipe from the selected cookbook, bring a dish to share, and discuss how it turned out, what worked well, what they would change and what they enjoyed. For this month's cookbook, contact the library at 978-297-0300. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Non-Fiction Book Club

September 29, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Come explore the world of non-fiction with us! We will be reading a variety of books from different genres. History, memoirs, biographies, science, and beyond. This is an adult (18+) only book club. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Thriller & Mystery Book Club

September 30, 4:00-5:00 p.m. Join us if you love the thrills and chills of a thriller, or mysterious whodunnit? Participants can share their favorites and enjoy some new ones with other fans of the genre! At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Art, Music and Dance

Social Art Circle with GALA

September 1, 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.

Toy Town Bridge Artists Circle

September 5, 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.

Craft and Chat

September 9 and 23, 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! If you have any questions, contact Amanda: 978-894-4597. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Sound Bites Community Jam

September 11, 6:30-9:45 p.m. The HUB's very own Open Mic. Sign up list is available at the HUB at 6:00. Music starts at 6:30. For more information contact Sound Bites Events, <https://www.soundbitesevents.com/>. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Greeting Card Class with Merrily Verone

September 17, 10:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. Free to all. Come join us in creating cards, and other paper projects. Work on making it your own. All materials are included and many materials to choose from. Each month is always a different design. Anyone of all ages is welcomed. No experience needed. You'll be pleasantly surprised to see what you can come up with! Sponsored by Gardner Area League of Artists (GALA) and the Robinson Broadhurst Foundation. At Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Food and Meals

Brunch & Bowl at The HUB - Kids Bowl FREE!

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.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

September 3 and 17, 5:15 p.m. at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. Served in the Parish Hall. Free-will donation \$2 per person, \$5 per family; no one turned away. 52 Spruce Street, Winchendon.

Our Neighbor's Kitchen Dinner

September 10 and 24, 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.

Growing Places Mobile Farmers Market

September 15, 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.

Winchendon Farmers Market

Saturdays, 10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Crafts, fresh farm produce, preserves, baked goods. New location as of August 1: at Pleasant Street & Front Street, Winchendon, next to Town Hall.

Entertainment

Music With Bob Jordan

Septembet 8, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Come to the center and join us for a home cooked meal and some music featuring Bob Jordan! At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Denis Cormier - Songs of Yesteryear

September 10, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Enjoy timeless tunes, familiar melodies, and a touch of nostalgia as Denis performs favorites from years past. At the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Ave, Winchendon.

Beals Movie Night

September 10, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Showing tonight: *Sheep Detectives*. Free to all. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Beals Family Movie Matinee

September 12, 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Showing today: *Minions & Monsters*. Free to all. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Sunset Social: Harvest Social

September 12, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Tickets \$5. Kids under 12 free. This community-focused event is all about enjoying the best parts of autumn: crisp air, harvest vibes, and time together in a beautiful outdoor setting. Whether you're coming to socialize, relax, or simply soak in the fall atmosphere, the Farm Harvest Social offers a warm and welcoming way to celebrate the season. Expect an evening filled with seasonal ambiance, community spirit, and fall-inspired fun at the park. Bring friends, meet neighbors, and enjoy a relaxed night designed to celebrate harvest time in Winchendon. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/sunset-socials-harvest-social-27903. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Beals Classic Movie Matinee

September 16, 3:00-5:00 p.m. Showing today: *Taxi Driver*. Free to all. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

Cowboys & Hippies Concert

September 19, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$25. From early afternoon through sunset and into the evening, the stage will be alive with powerhouse performances from regional favorites and crowd-loving jam bands. Expect soaring guitar solos, tight grooves, soulful vocals, and plenty of moments that make you want to dance, sway, and sing along. Featuring Whiskey6, The Whole Loaf and Bearly Dead. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/cowboys-hippies-concert-27916. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

Friday Night Frequencies at The HUB

September 25, 6:00-9:00 p.m. Live music, food and beverages. Band TBA. At The HUB, 5 Summer Dr, Winchendon.

Central Mass Irish Festival 2026

September 26, 12:00-9:00 p.m. Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 at the gate (12 and under free). Three of New England's premiere Irish bands, dancers, harps, pipes and drums, Irish food and drink, Irish vendors, and an open traditional seisún come together for an all day celebration of all things Irish in the heart of New England. Get tickets at www.eventeny.com/events/central-mass-irish-festival-2026-28127. Sponsored by Winchendon Parks & Recreation. At Winchendon Community Park, 86 Ingleside Dr.

For Teens

Teen Gender & Sexuality Alliance at the Beals

September 2, 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

September 1, 15, and 29, 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.

Create Your Own Clay Pinch Pot

September 23, 3:30-5:30 p.m. For teens and tweens grades 5-12. Join us for a fun clay hand building class with Launchspace! Learn the basics of hand-building with clay while creating your own unique pinch pot. Participants will shape the clay by hand, then add texture, patterns, and simple decorative details to personalize their pieces. Finished pots will be glazed and fired at LaunchSpace and returned approximately three weeks after. Space limited, registration required: call 978-297-0300 to register. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

For Kids

Lego Club for Kids at the Beals

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

Family Friendly Story Hour at the Chapel

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

CFCE Preschool Playgroup at the Beals

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

Story Time at the Beals

Fridays and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. Join us for a fun half hour of stories with Ms. Kristin, Ms. Melissa, Ms. Aly and Ms. Miranda. 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.

Community Game Night at the Beals

September 24, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Play one of our games or bring your favorite to share! This event is open to everyone in the community. At Beals Memorial Library, 50 Pleasant St, Winchendon.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Winchendon Community Park
86 Ingleside Dr, Winchendon
Winchendon Parks & Rec
facebook.com/Winchparksandrec

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

Winchendon News

Central Mass Irish Festival Keeps Its Promise and Returns to Winchendon Community Park on September 26



Highlights from the 2025 Irish Festival
Photos by Inanna Arthen

by Inanna Arthen

During last year's Central Mass Irish Festival, the lead singer of The Pourmen, a band from New Bedford, MA, asked the crowd if they wanted to see a second Central Mass Irish Festival in Winchendon next year. The roar of "YES!" was audible on the other side of Whitney Pond. Surely enough, they're back! One of the most successful 2025 Amphitheatre events, the Central Mass Irish Festival, returns to Toy Town on Saturday, September 26, bringing a full day of Irish music, dancing, food and culture to Winchendon Community Park.

Entertainment will begin at 12:00 p.m. and continue until 9:00 p.m., with three separate stages. Music will be at the heart of the festival, with scheduled performers of contemporary and traditional Irish music including DEVRI, The Pourmen, Sheridan Ruitan, Watchfire (formerly Slainte) and Colm O'Brien. Music will run the gamut from traditional tunes and ballads to high-energy Irish/rock sounds that have become a New England favorite.

The music won't be limited to the main performances. An open traditional Irish music seisiún will give musicians an opportunity to gather and play together in the time-honored informal tradition of Irish music-making. Bring an instrument, or just pull up a seat and listen.

Irish culture is about more than music. Pipes and drums, and Irish dancers will be part of the day's entertainment, as will attractions including the Flying Irish School of Dance, Pipe Dream and New England Stonelifting. There will be kids' activities, Irish food and drink, and a variety of Irish vendors offering soda bread, clothing, jewelry, crafts and more.

You don't have to be Irish to join in. The Festival is a celebration of Irish

Emberly's Embrace to Hold Second Annual Charity Benefit

WINCHENDON, MA – Emberly's Embrace will hold its second annual charity benefit on Sunday, September 27, from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Snowbound Club, 130 Baldwinville Road in Winchendon.

The event is free and open to the public. Families and community members are invited to come out for an afternoon of music, food, local vendors, raffles, a silent auction and activities for all ages.

This year's event will also feature a Touch-a-Truck, giving children the opportunity to see and explore a variety of vehicles up close. Live music will be provided by Over and Out.

The main goal of this year's fundraiser is to raise enough money to purchase a Caring Cradle for two local hospitals. Proceeds will go toward a Caring Cradle for Heywood Hospital's LaChance Maternity Department in Gardner, Massachusetts, and Cheshire Medical Center's Women and Children's Health Unit in Keene, New Hampshire.

A Caring Cradle is designed to help families who experience the loss of a baby. The cooling system allows parents additional time with their baby following a loss, giving them the opportunity to hold their baby, say goodbye and create memories during an incredibly difficult time.

"We want to support the tiniest members of our community, as well as the families who are left behind. Being able to provide a Caring Cradle to both Heywood Hospital and Cheshire Medical Center would mean so much to us and, more importantly, to the families who may need one," said Emberly's Embrace. "Every contribution brings us one step closer to making this possible."

Although admission is free, there will be several ways for attendees to support the fundraiser throughout the afternoon, including raffles, the silent auction and other opportunities to donate.

culture for the whole community, whether your family hails from the Auld Sod, you have a lifelong love of Celtic music, or you just enjoy good food, live entertainment and an autumn day outdoors in New England. Find something green to wear, gather up your family and friends, and plan for a day in Winchendon filled with fiddles, dancing, drums, food and Irish hospitality.

Food and beverage vendors will include The Black Harp, The HUB, Storm Along, The Farm Stand, CC's Chips & More, Potato Potato, The Corned Beef Guy, Delicias Fresas & Sweets, Lickity Splitz, Taco Queen, and Caribbean Press.

The Winchendon Community Park is located at 86 Ingleside Dr. On-site parking in the lot and field is available on a first-come first-served basis. Should overflow parking be required, shuttles will run every 10 minutes to Murdock High School, less than 5 minutes from the festival grounds.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the gate, with kids 12 and under free. For more information, to buy tickets, or apply to help out as a volunteer, go to <https://www.eventeny.com/events/central-mass-irish-festival-2026-28127/>.

Winchendon PD Welcomes Officer Crespo to the Force



from left to right: Ofc. Dylan Mei, Ofc. Angel Crespo, Lt. Kevin Wolski, Det. Caleb Similia

Photo copyright Winchendon Police Department

(August 1, 2026) - The Police Department welcomes and congratulates Officer Angel Crespo. Angel successfully completed the 24 week long Basic Recruit Academy and was honored among his classmates at the graduation ceremony for the Holyoke 6th ROC Friday, July 31, 2026. Angel is joining the force as Winchendon's newest member. Angel grew up in nearby Fitchburg and has become a part of the Winchendon community. We welcome Angel to the Department and wish him well as he embarks on his journey in public service.

Winchendon News

Sen. Comerford responds to Boston Public Radio’s segment on agritourism in the Commonwealth

(Boston, MA) - On July 22, Boston Public Radio hosts Margery Eagan and Jim Braude spoke about an amendment filed by Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) to the Senate’s economic development proposal in support of expanding agritourism in the Commonwealth. You can view the episode, which begins at 12:40, at <https://www.youtube.com/live/5m8NAUVHugI?t=735s>.
Comerford responded to the segment of the show through an open letter and invitation to the Boston Public Radio hosts and their team. A video is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ch_Q6Uux8O8&feature=youtu.be.

The letter follows:

Hi Margery and Jim - and the team at Boston Public Radio.
It’s Jo Comerford.

I watched your episode on the Senate’s “fun agenda,” which aims to elevate and stoke the economic benefits of making Massachusetts a more fun place to live and visit. I’m grateful to Senator Julian Cyr for wrangling a bunch of our colleagues to collaborate on this effort. I am proud to represent hundreds of farms across 25 mostly rural communities in western and north central Massachusetts.

On your show, you had a little chuckle about corn mazes which missed and belittled my underlying interest in increasing investment in agritourism. West/east misunderstandings aren’t new out where I live, so I thought I’d nip this one in the bud with this open letter to you.

For many farms statewide, agritourism isn’t a novelty. It’s how they stay in business. Those family businesses grow the food you eat, while also stewarding the land that purifies your drinking water, maintaining the open space that stores carbon, creating wildlife habitats, and donating millions of pounds of produce to food banks statewide.

If you’re thinking “this sounds too good to be true,” you’d be correct. Between 2017 and 2024, Massachusetts lost 27,000 acres of farmland

because it has become too difficult to farm here. The average Massachusetts farmer loses four or five cents on every dollar they spend.
That loss sure isn’t “fun” or laughable—and it’s a statewide problem, made much worse because of Trump administration cuts to climate readiness, local food purchasing, and the USDA—not to mention Trump’s wars and tariffs.

When farms diversify by teaching families how to make jam with the berries they grow or hosting barn weddings, or, yes, carving out corn mazes, they aren’t running amusement parks. They are doing what every small business must do in a volatile economy: Innovate to survive.

Agritourism is entrepreneurship. It is economic development. It takes more hours on top of their already brutally long days. And it keeps farms open that would otherwise be forced to sell off their land and close.

I want to extend a warm invitation to both of you to spend a day on farms in the Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District. You’ll see firsthand the power of “fun” agritourism west of Route 128.

A statewide show like yours which now airs in my district needs an expansive statewide perspective not a constricting Boston-centered echo chamber.

Rural communities and farms carry heavy responsibilities for the Commonwealth’s entire food system, natural resources, and climate future. They deserve to be understood and supported, not caricatured.

So come visit. Meet the people whose work fills your plates and protects your water.

I look forward to scheduling.
It’ll be fun.
Jo Comerford

Department of Fish & Game and Mount Grace Partner to Protect 43 Acres in Winchendon Conservation will Expand Nineteenth Hill Wildlife Management Area

WINCHENDON (August 5, 2026) - Forty-three acres of forest in Winchendon have been permanently protected, expanding MassWildlife’s Nineteenth Hill Wildlife Management Area east of Route 140 and connecting to a large, contiguous block of conserved land stretching south from downtown Winchendon.
The undeveloped property sits within the Millers River and Otter River watersheds and holds high-quality forest and wildlife habitat. Because it directly abuts Nineteenth Hill Wildlife Management Area, MassWildlife was a natural fit to serve as the property’s long-term steward. Its protection comes as development pressure continues to build from the east and along Route 140—pressure the Boucher and Mroz families, whose land borders the property, have watched and worked against for generations.
“We are thrilled that our land is being conserved for future generations and will not be developed,” said Cindy Boucher. “We’ve owned the land since 1978 and love walking it—taking in the beauty of the landscape and wildlife. Now that it’s protected, it means a great deal to know that the beauty of this place will be shared and enjoyed by others for years to come.”
“Winchendon has been our family’s connection to the natural world for over 100 years,” said Elaine Mroz. “For much of that time, the Bouchers have been our partners in defending the area against sprawl and urbanization. Our donation is in support of the Bouchers, of the people of Winchendon,

and of the Commonwealth’s goals to ensure future generations will benefit from our natural spaces.”
The sale was made possible by property owners Roger and Cindy Boucher, with a financial contribution from neighbors the Mroz family that helped cover some of the costs associated with protecting the land. Mount Grace Land Trust facilitated the sale from start to finish, connecting the Bouchers with MassWildlife and coordinating the partnership between both families and the state.
“Protecting nature is an investment in our wildlife and our way of life,” said Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Commissioner Tom O’Shea. “Projects like this don’t happen overnight—they take tremendous partnership, collaboration, and leadership from conservation-minded landowners like the Boucher and Mroz families who have the vision to preserve special places like this for future generations. Thank you to our partners at Mount Grace Land Trust, the families, and the community for protecting our state’s rich biodiversity and ensuring all have access to outdoor recreation.”
“It is incredible to see the community come together to protect their backyards for wildlife, for outdoor access, and for clean water,” said Emma Ellsworth, Executive Director of Mount Grace. “The best way we can protect our farms and forests is by working hand in hand.”



Brooks Automotive separating the car from the utility pole
Photo by Inanna Arthen

Car vs. Utility Pole is a Lose-Lose Situation for Winchendon Driver

by Inanna Arthen
On Monday, August 11, a red sedan struck a utility pole on Pleasant Street directly behind the UU Church of Winchendon. Winchendon police told the *Courier* that no one was injured—including the fox which the driver stated ran directly in front of the vehicle, and which the driver stated they swerved to avoid hitting. The car was traveling north on Pleasant Street. The vehicle’s airbags deployed during the collision.
The front end of the vehicle sustained significant damage. The pole was cracked but did not fall, and no utility lines came down.
Winchendon PD received the initial call at 10:46 a.m. A cruiser arrived to get more information at about 11:55am. The vehicle’s driver was not present at that time. Brooks Automotive was extricating the vehicle while National Grid trucks stood by to replace the utility pole, which had been done by about 1:30 p.m.
Foxes have been seen trotting across the UU church lawns in the recent past.

Ideas & Information

Gardening

Enjoy the Flavor of Homegrown Herbs Year-Round



Sage is a versatile herb, enhancing flavors in both savory and sweet recipes.
Photo courtesy of MelindaMyers.com

by Melinda Myers

Add homegrown flavor to any meal with garden fresh herbs that will elevate any dish. Continue enjoying them well past the end of the season by preserving favorites to use in winter meals.

Snip a few leaves or leaf-covered stems as needed for cooking or garnishing a favorite dish throughout the growing season. Adjust the quantity of herbs used to allow for variations in flavor intensity and preference. In general, two to three times more fresh herbs are needed than dried, except for Rosemary which has an equally strong flavor, fresh or dried. For example, if the recipe calls for one teaspoon of dried thyme use one Tablespoon (3 teaspoons) of fresh thyme leaves.

Harvest before plants begin flowering to encourage more tender growth. The concentration of flavor will be greatest when the plant has formed buds, but before they open. Don't discard the flowers if you wait too long. Enjoy the beauty and added flavor of basil, lavender, lovage, monarda, oregano, Rosemary, sage, sweet marjoram and thyme blossoms.

Use a pair of garden scissors, snips or bypass pruners for harvesting. Make the cuts above a set of healthy leaves. The wound will close faster, and the remaining plant will look better. Rinse off the clippings and remove tough stems and bad leaves.

Store extra unwashed leafy herbs in a vase of water and loosely cover with a plastic bag. Keep basil on the kitchen counter and cold-tolerant herbs, like parsley and cilantro, in the refrigerator. Wrap thicker-leaved herbs, like sage and thyme, in a paper towel set inside a plastic bag and place in a warmer section of the fridge.

Keep harvesting throughout the growing season to encourage new growth for future harvests. Just leave enough foliage to maintain plant growth. Harvest as much as 50 to 75% from established annual herbs and one third of perennial herbs at a time.

Freeze sprigs, whole leaves or chopped clean herbs on a cookie sheet. Or pack clean diced herbs in ice cube trays and fill the empty spaces with water. These are great for use in soups and stews. Store the frozen herbs and ice cubes in an airtight container or baggie in the freezer.

Or dry herbs by bundling several stems together, secure them with a rubber band and use a spring-type clothespin to hang them in a warm, dry place to dry out. A drying rack can be made from an old embroidery hoop, string, and S hooks.

Get creative and use some herbs to make a fragrant edible wreath. Use fresh herbs that are flexible and easier to shape into a wreath. They will dry in place and can be harvested as needed.

Speed up the drying process in the microwave. Place herbs on a paper plate and cover it with a paper towel. Start with one to two minutes on high. Repeat for 30 seconds as needed until the herbs are brittle. Store dried herbs in an airtight plastic or glass jar.

Share extra fresh and dried herbs with family and friends. They make great hostess and holiday gifts.

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®

Build confidence in your 401(k) decisions

In its simplest form, saving can mean putting money into a jar, adding to it and letting it grow slowly. A 401(k), or other workplace retirement plan, is a step beyond that. It's more like a garden than a jar. Once you understand the basics of your 401(k), it becomes easier to feel confident in your decisions.

In a jar, your money only grows when you add more. In a garden, what you plant can begin to grow on its own. Your investments can earn returns, and those returns may in turn earn additional returns. That's called compounding, and it can have a meaningful impact over time. Like a garden, however, growth is not guaranteed. Markets can rise and fall, and investments can lose value.

Most workplace retirement plan contributions are made with pre-tax dollars, which lowers today's taxable income; you'll pay taxes when you withdraw it in retirement. Some plans also offer a Roth option: you contribute after-tax dollars and withdrawals in retirement can be tax free. Your plan administrator can provide more information.

Many 401(k) plans include an employer match, either up to a set dollar amount, perhaps \$500, or a percentage of your salary, typically 3%-5%. Contributions you make, as well as those from your employer, can grow over time. Try to contribute at least enough to capture the full match; anything less means you're leaving money on the table.

Now the question is how to invest your contributions inside your 401(k). The menu of investment options may seem complicated, but most fall into a few common categories.

- Stock or equity funds focus on stocks, which represent ownership in companies. Because they're tied to company performance, they have the potential for higher growth over time, but their value can go up and down in the short term. When you're decades from retirement, that short-term volatility matters less; you have time to ride out the swings.
- Bond funds invest in loans made to governments or corporations. These tend to be more stable than stock funds but typically grow more slowly. They can help balance the ups and downs.
- Balanced or blended funds hold a mix of stocks and bonds in a single investment.
- Target-date funds combine different types of investments in one fund. As you move toward a specified retirement year, the fund gradually adjusts to focus more on stability and less on growth.

The earlier you start planting, the more time your money has to grow. Even small contributions early in your career can end up as large amounts later, simply because they had more time to compound.

If you change jobs, keep in mind that your employer's contributions may not be fully yours immediately. It depends on your plan's vesting schedule, so it's worth checking before you go.

The most important steps in a retirement plan are getting started, contributing consistently and taking advantage of what your plan offers. With a little knowledge, you can feel more confident moving forward. The garden is yours. Start planting.



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

Edward Jones is a licensed insurance producer in all states and Washington, D.C., through Edward D. Jones & Co., L.P. and in California, New Mexico and Massachusetts through Edward Jones Insurance Agency of California, L.L.C., Edward Jones Insurance Agency of New Mexico, L.L.C., and Edward Jones Insurance Agency of Massachusetts, L.L.C.



Read the Winchendon Courier Online Every Week!

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

Read it on your
phone!

Uploaded every
Thursday night



Information Kiosk by Town Hall and Monument Park Getting A Major Update

The kiosk next to Town Hall—corner of Front and Pleasant Streets, with Monument Park behind it—is getting a complete update and refurbishing thanks to the Economic Development Task Force’s “Explore Winchendon” initiative, aimed at encouraging tourism and visitors in Toy Town. Work has been proceeding apace, and while it’s not completely finished, the change is already striking.

At the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on Monday, July 13, Board Chair Andrew Beauvais explained, “materials have been purchased. We have a volunteer from DPW, I believe, who is going to help replace some rotten trim boards, repaint, clean it up, do some new landscaping around it. Hopefully, put some lighting in, if I get my way...to get some lighting in so it’s illuminated at night, and just something to really showcase Winchendon. Of course, updating the maps is also part of that.”

He added, “The Town Manager and I met with the North Central Chamber of Commerce a few months back, and we proposed that exact idea of doing a Visitor Center larger than the kiosk, because we are a gateway in or out of New Hampshire.”

(Photos by Inanna Arthen)

Livable Winchendon Initiative Begins Community Conversations

Pastor Joseph Lillie writes,

Please join us as we launch Livable Winchendon, a community-building process that is seeking the input, ideas, and experiences of people from across our community on what it means for Winchendon to be a good place to live.

The input that we gather over the next few months will be used to establish priorities and goals for our town. And, most importantly, will identify how we can work together to make progress on building a community that works for everyone.

Winchendon is a town with many people, groups, organizations, committees, boards, and departments who are working to make this a good place to live. Many things are happening that can be amplified and there are likely important gaps to fill.

Three discussion groups have been scheduled. These will take place on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Old Murdock Senior Center, 52 Murdock Avenue. Each session will focus on three of the “domains of livability”—areas that significantly impact the quality of life in a community.

- **August 29:** Outdoor Spaces & Buildings; Transportation & Mobility; Housing
- **October 3:** Education; Economic Development & Employment; Health Service & Community Support
- **November 7:** Social Participation/Community Connection & Inclusion; Communication & Information; Social Activities & Events

Please join us in these conversations and please share this invitation and opportunity with others.

VETERANS
continued from page 3

residents move in on schedule, around next April, MVOC will probably host a big barbeque around 4th of July so the community can come meet the new folks. Ms. Marchetti said that she will have much more information about the kinds of donations that will be needed when the residents have been accepted to move in.

Right now, MVOC is accepting sponsorships for landscaping—shrubs and trees to be planted around the buildings—and memorial bricks which will be engraved and installed in a walkway. For full details about the Housing Expansion Project Initiative and sponsorship opportunities, see www.veterans-outreach.org/housing-expansion-project.

Asked if the residents will be allowed to have pets, Ms. Marchetti said, “No-ish. So an actual registered service dog would be fine, not an emotional support animal. That will not be permitted. That being said, on a case-by-case basis, I do sometimes allow them to have a cat or a bird if their mental health would benefit from something like that, that won’t make noise, won’t smell up the place, won’t be a nuisance to others. I don’t do it a lot, but you know what? Sometimes somebody gets a little cranky, and I say, ‘Please go get a cat and cheer up!’ But no, no dogs unless they’re service needs.”

Winchendon FD Handles Possible HazMat Situation at Local Residence

(July 22, 2026) WINCHENDON, MA - At approximately 9:00 a.m. on July 21, the Winchendon Fire Department responded to 25 Northern Heights Drive at the request of the homeowner to investigate a propane cylinder that had been discovered while cleaning the property. The homeowners advised firefighters they had recently purchased the residence and located the cylinder on the property. During the initial assessment, firefighters observed damage to the valve area of the cylinder and consulted with Eastern Propane regarding its safe disposal. Eastern Propane accepted custody of the cylinder for safe evaluation and disposal at the request of the Winchendon Fire Department.

At approximately 10:51 a.m., the Winchendon Fire Department was contacted by Eastern Propane after technicians discovered the cylinder did not contain propane. Captain Marty Scott responded to Eastern Propane to speak with their technician. Upon hearing their concerns, Captain Marty Scott immediately requested the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Hazardous Materials Team to activate a Tier 1 response to investigate the unknown contents. Initial field testing by the Hazmat Team indicated the possible presence of a hazardous substance, prompting the incident to be escalated to a Tier 2 response bringing additional specialized resources to the scene at 600 School Street.

As the investigation progressed, information obtained during the response led investigators to respond back to 25 Northern Heights to inspect other items discovered during the property’s cleanup. The coordinated response ultimately involved the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services Hazardous Materials Team, Winchendon Police Department, Massachusetts State Police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Homeland Security and the National Guard CST Team.

Following extensive laboratory analysis and investigation, officials determined the contents of the cylinder were not sulfur mustard gas or any other chemical warfare agent. All locations were determined to be safe, and the incident concluded without injuries to residents or emergency responders at 20:29. “This incident demonstrates the importance of treating any unknown substance with extreme caution,” said Fire Chief Thomas Smith. “Our firefighters, together with our local, state, and federal partners, followed established hazardous materials protocols from the outset. While the investigation required significant resources, every action was taken to protect the public until the material could be positively identified.”

The Winchendon Fire Department reminds residents that if they discover unknown containers, chemicals, or suspicious materials on their property, they should not attempt to move or dispose of them. Instead, contact the fire department so trained personnel can safely evaluate the situation. Winchendon Fire Department would like to extend a special thank you to Eastern Propane for all of their assistance and generosity during the event.

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) 297-8089 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.

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 Market sets up every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the corner of Front and Pleasant Streets, next to Town Hall. The application form to sign up is at <https://www.winchendonfarmersmarket.org>.

Town Committee Vacancies as of July 29, 2026

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

- Agricultural Commission - 2 member vacancies, 4 alternate vacancies
- Audit Committee - 1 vacancy
- Communication Committee - 2 vacancies
- Cultural Council - 11 vacancies
- Fence Viewer and Field Driver - 2 vacancies
- Historical District Commission - 1 vacancy
- Parks & Recreation Commission - 1 student vacancy
- Planning Board - 1 vacancy
- Zoning Board of Appeals - 1 vacancy

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

For a description of each board or committee, see: <https://www.townofwinchendon.com/DocumentCenter/View/440/Selectmen-Appointed-Boards-and-Committees-July-2024-PDF> (PDF).

No Soliciting, This is Winchendon!

Please be advised that the Board of Selectmen has issued a moratorium on solicitation permits. Therefore, no solicitation permits are being issued so anyone who tries to solicit is in violation of Town bylaws. Please call the police non-emergency number at 978-297-1212 to report.

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

Toy Town FYIs

Transfer Station Hours

Wednesday 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. (June 1 to September 30)
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: \$95 (\$25 for additional stickers)
Pay-As-You-Throw bags required
33-gallon, \$5.25 per bag, 16-gallon, \$3.25 per bag as of July 1, 2026
2026-2027 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.

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

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/



Buy Local! Support the Courier's
advertisers – and tell them where
you saw their ad!

Winchendon News

Winchendon Town Carnival Returning October 1-4

by Inanna Arthen

The Winchendon Town Carnival will return to town from Thursday, October 1 through Sunday, October 4, at the big field behind the Clark Memorial YMCA, 155 Central Street. Times will vary day to day and will be announced as more details are finalized. The Carnival will be run by Fanelli Amusements.

John Fanelli appeared before the Board of Selectmen at their meeting on Monday, August 10 to obtain the entertainment permit for the Carnival. While the Carnival plans to include fireworks on Saturday night, that permit must be issued by the Fire Department and was not part of the entertainment permit application, Mr. Fanelli explained.

Board Chair Andrew Beauvais invited Mr. Fanelli to “market” his event by describing what it’s all about. Mr. Fanelli said, “This is the third year of the Carnival. We proposed it to the YMCA a couple years ago. I know there was a lot of interest about bringing the Carnival back to the community. We used to do the Carnival here back in the 80s. There was a big brouhaha, and nothing happened for a long time...I felt that

things changed. Way back when my grandfather was operating the company, he always said Winchendon was a ‘carnival town.’

“After myself and my brother took over the company earlier in the 2020s, it was sort of a passion project of mine to bring the Carnival back to Winchendon, and it’s been successful ever since. The first couple of years, both years, unfortunately, we got rained out the first day, but the rest of the weekend has been pretty good, and we’re hoping for a full weekend this year, Thursday through Sunday. The event’s going to be a little bit later than it has been in the past couple years, just because of the way the calendar fell. So it’s going to be the first weekend of October this year. And same thing: carnival rides, games, food, and excitement, and fireworks on Saturday night. We’ll be contacting a fireworks provider soon. We’re working with the YMCA and Mike Quinn. I talked to him a while back...about hopefully getting some community involvement and sponsorship funds for the fireworks. Not sure where we’re at with that, but regardless, we’re still going to have a display on Saturday night.”

After quickly reviewing the requirements for

police details on each day of the Carnival, Mr. Beauvais asked Mr. Fanelli what was meant by, “Winchendon is a carnival town.”

“Just sort of like the community comes out for it,” Mr. Fanelli said. “We’ll go to some communities and maybe they aren’t as responsive. Whereas, I don’t know if it’s just this area of North Central Mass, but we normally start our year in Athol for a River Rat Race weekend, and I remember years ago hearing stories from my grandfather and my dad and uncles about having carnivals in Gardner as well, and we used to do the St. Brian’s Carnival in Fitchburg. We actually just had one at Monty Tech High School a few weeks ago. so you know this area has always been pretty responsive to carnivals. Like I said, it was sort of a passion project for me to bring it back to Winchendon after there was a long drought.”

Mr. Beauvais said that Fanelli might consider doing something in Winchendon for the 4th of July, which used to have a much bigger community celebration many years ago.

The Board approved the entertainment permit for the Carnival.

BOS Approve Resolution to Accept Matching Grant Money for a Fitness Court in Winchendon



One of NFC’s fitness courts
Photo copyright National Fitness Campaign

by Inanna Arthen

At the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on Monday, August 10, the Board voted on a resolution to accept a \$50,000 matching grant from the National Fitness Campaign to install a fitness court in Winchendon. The grant was awarded to the town thanks to the hard work of Parks & Recreation Coordinator Shaina Cunningham.

Board Chair Andrew Beauvais explained, “This is a nationwide endeavor for health and wellness, and what’s before us this evening is an exciting opportunity. One, because it provides us the opportunity to install something that would be free of charge to all residents and non-residents, anyone visiting the town. It’s an outdoor fitness court, and if Winchendon was to join the list, we would be one of about 750 to 1000, I don’t remember the exact number, but somewhere around there nationwide that are participating or would be participating in this. Our neighbors over in Gardner have one established at their high school. Fitchburg has one in [Coolidge Park]. It’s essentially an outdoor community space for exercise, and the town has been awarded a \$50,000 grant, and they shared with us it’s the highest award that any municipality in the state of Massachusetts has received. \$60,000 is the highest, and we received \$50K. There are some matching funds.

“So the goal here for the additional funds that you see in the resolution would be raised through outreach to community supporters, businesses, etc. to try to close the funding gap, so that it’s not really on the town necessarily to raise those funds, but \$50,000 there, and then there was some settlement funds in the opioid account from the opioid settlement fund, which they said is an allowable use of those funds. It’s very restrictive what they

can be spent on. So, the initial funds we have is about \$93,000 that had gone to GAMMHA as per an agreement, but we’ve continued to collect funds and they’ve just been sitting in the account.”

Mr. Beauvais went on to say that there are three approved sites in town where the fitness court might go. All are connected to the bike path or rail trail. The top preferred spot would be Grout Park, due to its accessibility and visibility. The second option is the Winchendon Community Park, and the third would be G.A.R. Park.

The resolution before the Board is non-binding, Mr. Beauvais said – if the town can’t raise the matching funds it can just walk away from the deal.

He added, “I will also state, Ms. Cunningham did a phenomenal job submitting the grant application, and it was because of her efforts...based on the feedback they provided us, the grant committee, that she did one of the best jobs they’ve ever seen.”

The resolution reads,

Whereas the town of Winchendon has submitted a grant application to National Fitness Campaign (NFC) for participation in the 2026 initiative to install and activate outdoor fitness courts in over 1,000 municipalities and schools across the country, and

Whereas the town of Winchendon will accept a \$50,000 national grant from the NFC Grant Committee and statewide partners, and endeavors to provide a local funding confirmation in the amount of \$154,050, in compliance with the attached grant program requirements to promote and implement a free to the public outdoor fitness court, and

Whereas the town of Winchendon understands the scope of this project includes the installation of a concrete pad, as well as the assembly of the fitness court, both to be completed by separate vendors external to the National Fitness Campaign. Additional funding requirements for the concrete installation and fitness court assembly can be found on the attached grant program requirement documentation document provided by the National Fitness Campaign and

Whereas the Winchendon Board of Selectmen believes joining the National Fitness Campaign is an important step in building a healthier community, commits to fundraising to participate in NFC’s 2026 campaign, and will earn local and regional recognition as a leader in providing accessible health and wellness infrastructure and programs.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Winchendon Board of Selectmen will collaborate with NFC to join the National Fitness Campaign, implement the Outdoor Fitness Corps program, and make fitness free for community residents and visitors.

The Board voted to approve the Resolution. For information about the NFC fitness courts, see <https://www.nationalfitnesscampaign.com/fitness-court>.

The October print edition of The Winchendon Courier will go to press on Tuesday, September 29 at noon.
Content for that edition must be received by the publisher by Sunday, September 27.