



Town of Winchester
1 Richmond Road Winchester, NH 03470

**Minutes of the
Selectmen Meeting**
Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Board members present: Ben Kilanski, Jack Marsh, Herbert Stephens, Gloria Leustek and James Rokes Sr. Also, present Chief Kellom, LT Howard, Margaret Sharra and Rick Meleski.

First order of business: Minutes

The Chairman opens the meeting at 6:30 pm.

The board reviews the minutes of 4-21-21 for approval. Selectman Rokes makes a motion to approve the minutes. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 3-0-1.

Second order of business: New Business

Selectman Marsh makes a motion to approve 7 Veteran's Credits and deny 1, map 1 lot 63, map 6 lot 6-1, map 5 lot 54-1, map 33 lot 47, map 16 lot 14, map 22 lot 18, map 12 lot 36-36, and map 6 lot 28-4-12. Selectman Rokes seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Selectman Rokes makes a motion to approve the Oath of Office for Liz Miller-Broadband Committee. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Selectman Rokes makes a motion to approve a timber tax for map 9 lot 36 & 39-1 in the amount of \$129.79. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

The board reviews and approves the following financial documents:

N/A

Third order of business Board comment:

N/A

Fourth order of business Public comment:

Kelly Kilanski gave the board the full community safe report from Brattleboro that she spoke of at last week's meeting.

Todd Kilanski stated that the Chairman runs the meetings and during public comment we need to try to uphold the timeframe of 15 minutes. 1 question/comment at a time so the next person in line can speak.

Natalie Quevedo asked that the board not limit public comment to 15 minutes. This way voice can be heard.

Mary Ganon said she respects the previous comment on monitoring the time but at the same time this is the only public forum that we have to bring forth issues or concerns. I like the idea of creating more of an opportunity for longer public comment. At the last select board meeting Kelly Kilanski gave comments on her interpretation on what was discussed at meeting on 3/31/21. I found the comments curious, nor do I have a recollection

making those comments to the Select Board. According to the minutes of the meeting I talked about recommending to the board that it would be a good idea to have community comments on the Police Chief position or other conversations about Policing in our community. I stated that I have worked with law enforcement and communities in VT. Supporting these kinds of conversations. I want people to be clear that I am here to clear up any confusion. I was not involved or present in any of the Brattleboro community safety review meetings. You will not see my name on any reports or any documents. In fact I do not support defunding the people dept. here or anywhere. I believe law enforcement plays a role in our community. That is what I stated that evening. I would be happy to help organize a similar effort here. I do realize that Winchester is not Brattleboro Vt. The beauty of out town is that we are small, and we can bring in our community members. This way there is some input of what we want our community to be. The bigger questions that I had asked was to the board and what roll you play as Selectmen. I am a resident and pay taxes and I feel that I have a right to ask the board a question on what their roll in creating and supporting community that is welcoming, safe, and inclusive. The school, ELMACC, ACCESS and the Learning Center are all engaged in these efforts. The Governor has recently made a statement that there is no systemic racism in the State of NH. I am here to tell you as someone who does this work on racial equity across part of New England, he is wrong. His statements are dangerous and impact the economic development of this community. I will offer the Select Board and the town free training and support conversations on systemic racism. I will offer community support so as members of this community can be involved. That is all I was here to ask for last week. I was not here to support the community safety in Brattleboro. I was never a part of it, and I would appreciate that it is taken off of the record. What I want to know what the board is doing to support the needle moving forward so this community is welcoming and inclusive.

Conor Hill said he wanted to echo what Mary stated and asked the board to push the needle forward on equality and talk about how this community is impacted by structural and systemic inequalities. Conor had a copy from the census on how the wages have been falling and the poverty rate has grown. It is not necessarily that the local governments are responsible for cycles of generational poverty. It is important for our elected offices to talk about it. There is study on work programs for needy families. The work program worsens the poverty and do not work. Conor would like to talk to the board on this and how we effectively govern locally.

Jenny Rhoades- State Rep was in Concord from 9am-7pm for 3days going over hundreds of house bills. The house presented the budget to the Senate. If the budget passes it will take 90 million dollars were cut out of the school funding. 62 million was used as a 1-time purpose and given to the school. Jenny believes that these funds that were received to do the projects at the school. Additional 38 million that was allocated 2020-2021 school year that was the prior legislatives decision and that will not be effective going forward. 36 million was put back for free and reduced lunch. There are several educational bills. Jenny met with the school principal and then had a meeting with the Governor. One of the things I addressed was the fact that what works in Bedford does not work for Winchester. Jenny went over several bills: HB 566, HB 183, HB 243, HB 374.

Lindseigh Picard said the school board did discuss that the \$800,000 was going to be a 1 time offering from the State of NH we decided to use that for infrastructure. We knew it would not be back again. That entire amount of money is money that the State has been throwing at the budget over the course of 2-3 years and probably back to the Claremont decision when the State of NH was advised there adequate funding for education and the calculation per student is wrong. The Winchester School Board is part of the lawsuit that is currently active. Started with 4 school and since 3 more school have joined. This money comes in and out of the budget frequently and this is a big part of the problem with the tax rate going up and down. The school budget could be

the exact same year to year. If the State removes 90 million from the education budget, this is what impact the local taxpayers.

Todd Kilanski commented based off information that is going around and presented to the board. If there are things supposedly going on around town with racism and then accusations of staving kids walking on Parker St. Todd said we need to think about what we are going to do with this kind of information. If brought to the board, there should be facts and a paper trail.

Natalie Quevedo stated that she is a gay member of this town and have experienced homophobia, I have experienced racism and for another member of this community to say that I am invalid and what I feel and how I feel to be a member of this community is wrong. Or in some way politicizing racism. It is frustrating to live in this town and be berated is tiring and for the board not to take a stance on protect a community member who is trying to better this town is ridiculous.

Mary Ganon stated that for all of us there is some education and conversation that can happen and be very useful. As someone who does a lot of teaching and training these are issues and I want to be out front of it in this town, not behind it. I do not want what is happening in other parts of the country to happen here. As a community we need to get into the 21st century. If it is hard or uncomfortable to talk about, I would be happy to talk it through. I do not want members of this community coming up here and speaking on my behalf or using what I said in their defense. Its not ok. This country and State are in deep trouble around these issues. If you chose not to believe that is your business but those of us that care will keep bringing this conversation forward. So get ready for it. The conversation will not end, and we will keep bring it forward.

Margaret Sharra gave an update on the Ashuelot Rail Trail Committees progress. They have applied for a USDA grant for \$30,000 and will know the outcome in June. This will repair 3 sections of the trail and create a parking lot on the Tannery property. The Committee would like to apply for a RTP Grant in the amount of \$24,000 and will require a 20% match, due mid-June. The match can be monetary or volunteer time. These funds will repair 850 feet of trail on Old Westport & Old Spofford Rd. If awarded the grant this project will be done next year. A letter went out to the abutters of the Rail Trail explaining the projects. Last fall the north bridge was repaired and new railings will be installed this year. The State will be brush hogging from Elm St to the Paper Mill and they will replace the decking on the South bridge. Selectman Kilanski asked if the town will be applying for the grant and being that the State owns the rail trail are they giving the town permission to do the work. Margaret said yes, the town applies for the grant. Yes, the State is aware and will give us permission. The State is involved and will require qualified people to do the work and will inspect the work once complete. Selectman Stephens asked if the parking at Tannery will be paved and will interfere with any solar projects. Also, is the town liable if someone gets hurt. Margaret stated no, a gravel parking lot and it will not impact any solar project. During the snowmobile season the State is liable when on the trails. Not sure about the liability on the parking lot. Selectman Rokes makes a motion to allow Karey to be the administrator of the grant. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Selectman Marsh thanked Rick for reclaiming the lawns on Richmond Rd and asked Rick to look at the sidewalk on the East Side of Union St. There is water run off going into the cellar. Rick will look into it.

Selectman Marsh stated the board has talked about sleeping quarters for the Ambulance Dept. and asked Chief Kellom to look at putting together a layout of the upstairs of the EMS Building. There were some concerns with the restrooms on the PD side being blocked off and not having access to them. Selectman Marsh asked LT Fisher if the restrooms can be shared with Fire, Ambulance & Police. LT Fisher said yes.

Nonpublic under RSA 91-A:3II (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)

Selectman Marsh makes a motion to enter nonpublic session under “a, b, c, d & e”. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0. A roll call vote was taken, and members vote “yes” individually, and the board convenes in non-public at 7:26pm.

Adjournment:

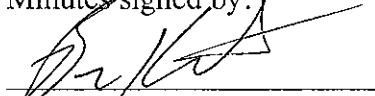
The board reconvenes in public session at 9:10pm.

The board promoted LT Felicia Howard to the Ambulance Captain.

Selectman Kilanski makes a motion to seal the minutes under d & e. Selectman Leustek seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Selectman Leustek makes a motion to adjourn at 9:13pm. Selectman Stephens seconds the motion. The motion carries 5-0.

Minutes respectfully submitted:
Karey Miner, Town Administrator
Minutes signed by:



Ben Kilanski, Chairman

Karey Miner