




Town of Winchester

Town Manager
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TO: Winchester Select Board

FROM: Beth Rudolph, PE – Acting Town Manager 

DATE: March 24, 2022

RE: Town Manager's Report – March 28th Select Board Meeting

Please find below an update on various topics for discussion at the Board's March 28th meeting:

AGENDA ITEMS:

BAN Issuance

Shelia, Tracy, Town Treasurer will be in for the Board to approve the issuance of the Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) for the acquisition of the Washington and Swanton Street parcel (\$5.27 million), the Transfer Station project (\$5.5 million) and the South Reservoir Dam feasibility study (\$72,000 – will be part of a larger borrowing in the future that will include engineering and construction costs).

MBTA – Winchester Center Station Construction

Representatives from the MBTA will be in attendance at the Select Board meeting on March 28th to provide an update on project schedule and upcoming milestones for the Winchester Center Station Renovation project. The contractor is expected to mobilize to the site on April 4th and will begin by fencing off Laraway Road and the parking spaces in the Waterfield and Aberjona Lots. Work is expected to last through spring 2024.

The MBTA has a project website at <https://www.mbta.com/projects/winchester-center-station-accessibility-improvements>. Questions and comments on the project can be sent to the MBTA WinchesterStation@mbta.com. For construction-related questions or concerns, they have established a project hotline at 781-218-9717.

Water & Sewer Rates

Matt Abrahams from the Abrahams Group will be in attendance at the meeting Monday night to review the results of their analysis regarding the Town's water and sewer budget. They have evaluated projected revenues and expenditures for FY23 through FY27, and provided three rate options for the Board's consideration. Each option has projected retained earnings trending towards the Town's targeted balance of 8 to 10%. Staff recommends that the Board move forward with Option 3, which recommends a 3% rate increase in FY23. This option is consistent with the plan laid out last year at



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Spring Town Meeting (a copy of the motion and background is included in the packet). Staff has added an article on the Spring Town Meeting warrant sponsored by the Select Board to adjust the rates.

Arbor – Wendell Street ARPA Funding

Last month, the Select Board approved \$230,000 in ARPA funds to be used for the installation of individual booster pumps in the impacted homes on Arbor Lane and Wendell Street that were disconnected from the City of Woburn drinking water system due to PFAS concerns. Subsequent to that approve the neighbors expressed their concerns regarding this proposed solution. The Town and our engineers from Weston & Sampson have been working over the past few weeks to evaluate alternate short and long-term solutions to increase water pressure to these homes. Representatives from Weston & Sampson will be in attendance Monday night to discuss the options, and to request that the Board will reallocated the approved ARPA funds to implement the temporary solution, and to pay for the design of the permanent solution, with the intention of requesting final construction funds at Fall 2022 Town Meeting.

Lynch School – Carriage House Update

The EFPBC has voted to place two articles on the Spring Town Meeting warrant. The first (Article 1) is to appropriate funding for the design, construction and renovation of the Carriage House, as well as for design, construction and alteration of the Parkhurst School for use as swing space. The second article (Article 2), which would move forward only if the first article failed, appropriates design and engineering funds for alterations to Parkhurst for use as swing space. It is my understanding that under the second article, WPS Central Office would remain at the Parkhurst School while it is in use as swing space for the duration of the Lynch School construction. The expected costs for both articles is noted below:

- Article 1 – \$5,980,000 for the remaining Carriage House design and construction; and \$169,750 to fund swing space at Parkhurst (\$6,149,750 total).
- Article 2 – \$169,750 to fund swing space at Parkhurst.

Senior management has requested information from Hilltop Securities to evaluate various borrowing scenarios for these two requests and will have additional information to present to the Select Board on April 4th.

ADDITIONAL UPDATES:

Spring Town Meeting

The first night of Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 25th. The Town Manager's hearing is scheduled for Thursday, April 14th, time TBD.

Affordable Housing – 40 Elmwood Avenue



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A condominium at 40 Elmwood Avenue is available for purchase by a qualified first time home buyer for the below market price of \$275,000. This two bedroom, two bathroom unit is located in downtown Winchester and is walking distance to a grocery store, library, schools and the MBTA commuter rail. The affordable unit is 1,084 square feet, is on the third floor (elevator) of the building, and includes one indoor parking space for an additional \$10/month. Interior finished include kitchen appliances and washer/dryer hookups. The initial condo fee is \$160 per month. Income and asset limits apply.

An open house is scheduled for April 2nd from 12:15pm to 2:00pm. Please contact Jenn Cafarella in the Town Manager's Office if you have any questions.

Construction/Capital Project Updates

- **Upcoming bids:**
 - *Transfer Station Improvements* – Bids were opened on Tuesday, March 22nd and the low bidder came in within the project budget, including a limited contingency. Weston & Sampson is reviewing the low bidder's references prior to final award.
 - *Muraco School Immediate Repairs* – Bids for the roof repairs are scheduled to be open April 14th and work is expected to start in late June. Electrical repairs are being delayed until 2023 as a result of extended lead times for materials and the need to turn power off to the building while the work is being completed.
- **Church Street at Waterfield Road** – Construction is expected to start at the intersection on Church Street and Waterfield Road around May 1st, and will last 6 to 8 weeks.
- **Winchester Center Station (MBTA)** – The MBTA and their contractor expect to be on-site starting Monday, April 4th to install fencing and establish their work zones on Laraway Road, and in the Aberjona and Waterfield lots.
- **Eversource 345kV Project** – We expect Eversource to be starting the jack and bore operation at the Washington Street bridge near Sunset Road sometime later this month or in early April. The work will restrict the width of the travel lane and will likely require one-way traffic during work hours, but will be opened back to two-way traffic on nights and weekends with narrower travel lanes.
- **Eversource 115kV Project** – Eversource is continuing vacuum testing on Wildwood/Fletcher and on Woodside Road near Winter Pond. Work at the corner of Bacon and Church Street is complete. Eversource will continue work at Wedgemere Station to complete the jack and bore under the railroad tracks and pipe installation in the parking lot. They expect to start work on the directional drill under the Aberjona River and out into Bacon Street in April.
- **MWRA 48-inch Water Main Replacement Project (Phase I)** – The MWRA will be starting construction in May on Forest Street between Bellevue Avenue and Eugene Drive to replace an existing 48-inch water main. Work on Phase I of the project is expected to last until November 2022. The MWRA expects the work to be completed in three phases. Phase II will begin in April 2023 and will include work in the easement between Forest Street and the Woburn line. Phase III is expected to start in April 2024, and will include work on Eugene Drive.



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- **National Grid** – National Grid will be on Bacon Street from Lagrange Street to Mystic Valley Parkway; Lagrange Street from Bacon Street to Norwood Street; Norwood Street from Church Street to Central Street; Cottage Avenue from Bacon Street to Norwood Street; Central Street from Bacon Street to Rangeley Road; Harrington Road from Bacon Street to the dead end; and Everett Avenue from Bacon Street to Stratford Road to replace and/or relocate the gas mains. Work is expected to last two to three months.

COVID-Related Updates

Due to the declining number of COVID cases, the Health Department has discontinued the weekly COVID testing clinics at Town Hall. We will continue to assess the need for future testing clinics.

Community Events/Notes

- **En Ka Pantry** – The En Ka Pantry is open to Winchester residents, and provides non-perishable food and personal care items to individuals and families who require extra assistance in meeting these basic needs. Use of the Pantry is limited to one time per month and does not prohibit individuals or families also visiting the Woburn pantry.

Pantry hours by appointment only Sundays & Mondays (text, email, or call 781-369-5844 enkapantry@gmail.com). Transportation is available.

En Ka Pantry is located at 1037 Main Street, Winchester, MA 01890 (in the same location as the En Ka Exchange).