




# Town of Winchester

Town Manager  
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**TO:** Winchester Select Board

**FROM:** Beth Rudolph, PE –Town Manager 

**DATE:** July 28, 2023

**RE:** Town Manager's Report – July 31<sup>st</sup> Select Board Meeting

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Please find below an update on various topics for discussion at the Board's July 31<sup>st</sup> meeting:

## ***AGENDA ITEMS:***

### **Project Updates**

Staff from the DPW and Recreation Department, as well as the Town's consultant Chris Huntress, will be in attendance on Monday night to provide an update on several on-going projects, as noted below:

- Playground Safety Review – Facilities Manager Pete Lawson will provide an update on DPW's progress and future needs regarding municipal and school playgrounds.
- Leonard Field Master Plan – Chris Huntress will provide an overview of the master plan he developed for Leonard Field.
- Ginn Field Lights – Recreation Director Nick Cacciolfi has submitted a capital request of \$260,000 for the replacement of the lights at Ginn Field. The lights are 30-years old and have on-going maintenance issues. The Field Management Committee recently approved \$50,000 from the Grass Revolving Fund to be used to assist with this replacement project. Additional donations from youth sports programs may be forthcoming to reduce the overall capital request below \$200,000.
- Ginn Field Pickleball – The Recreation Department has identified pickleball courts as a significant need in our community. The Town hired Chris Huntress to develop a concept plan to convert the existing basketball court at Ginn Field into a pickleball court. Mr. Huntress will be reviewing the concept plan with the Board.
- Four Roof Evaluation – In fall 2022, Town Meeting approved funding for an initial evaluation of the roofs at Ambrose School, McCall Middle School, Town Hall, and Library. The evaluation was completed earlier this month, and staff has submitted a recommended phasing plan to the Capital Planning Committee for consideration (copy included in packet). The needs are significant over the near and mid-term, and will require further discussion and planning regarding a funding plan for design and construction.
- Town Hall/Library Windows – Earlier this year, the Select Board approved the use of ARPA funds for an initial evaluation of windows at the Town Hall and Library. The evaluation was



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completed earlier this month, and staff has submitted a recommended phasing plan to the Capital Planning Committee for consideration (copy included in packet).

## **Eversource 345kV Project Update**

Eversource will be in attendance to provide the Board an update on progress on the 345kV project. Eversource has scheduled a neighborhood meeting for Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm to learn more about construction activities and ask questions. Town staff will also be on the call to answer any questions the residents may have about the temporary impacts to Davidson Park and Washington Street Park, and future mitigation activities. The zoom link for the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting is provided below:

### **Meeting Information**

- **DATE:** Wednesday, August 2, 2023
- **TIME:** 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- **LOCATION:** Virtual via ZOOM
- **ZOOM URL:** <https://bit.ly/EVSAugust2>
- **MEETING ID:** 868 0444 4188; Passcode: 796056
- **PHONE DIAL-IN:** +1 917-768-2821; Conference ID: 610 057 725#

## **Muraco Culvert Project – Cost Escalations**

In March 2021, Winchester voters approved a debt exclusion override for the last flood mitigation project, which includes improvements to the culvert under the railroads behind the Muraco School. Since that time, the Town’s engineering consultant has been working to complete the project design and permitting. We expect the project to be ready to bid in early 2024 and construction to begin later that summer, depending on permitting timelines.

Since the Town-wide vote, construction costs have escalated significantly. The Historical Cost Index published by RS Means increased by 26.64% between January 2021 and January 2023. The original cost estimated presented to the voters in spring 2021 estimated a project cost at \$9.11 million. The current cost estimate is \$10.2 million. The Town will need to follow a multi-step process to fund the anticipated increases in project costs, which includes approval by the Department of Revenue (DOR), as well as approval at Fall Town Meeting to increase the borrowing authorization. Staff has worked with VHB to prepare the document for submittal to DOR (included in the packet), which requires a vote by the Select Board prior to submission.

## **Fall Town Meeting Articles**

The warrant for Fall Town Meeting closes on Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Below is a list of potential warrant articles that may be considered by the Board:

- Muraco Culvert additional funding
- Waterfield Lot orphan parcel



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- Transfer Station tipping building repairs
- 955 Main Street lease
- Lynch solar PPA or direct ownership
- Health insurance stabilization fund – Appropriate additional funds based on FY23 close
- Appropriation of opioid settlement funds received since Fall 2022
- Appropriation of mitigation funds received from Eversource 345kV project.

## ***ADDITIONAL UPDATES:***

### **20 Glenwood Avenue RFP**

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the disposition of 20 Glenwood Avenue was advertised in the Central Register on Thursday, July 27<sup>th</sup>. Below is the RFP schedule:

- RFP available August 2, 2023. A copy of the RFP can be requested by contacting Meg White in the Engineering Department at [mwhite@winchester.us](mailto:mwhite@winchester.us).
- Pre-bid meeting scheduled for August 16, 2023 at 9am at the site.
- RFP questions due August 25, 2023 by 12pm.
- Response due Friday, September 1, 2023 at 10am.

### **West Nile Virus**

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) recently announced that West Nile virus (WNV) has been detected in mosquitoes in Massachusetts for the first time this year. The presence of WNV was confirmed by the Massachusetts State Public Health Laboratory in a mosquito sample collected July 6<sup>th</sup> in Brookline. No human or animal cases of WNV or Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) have been detected so far this year.

More information, including all WNV and EEE positive results, can be found on the Arbovirus Surveillance Information web page at [Mosquito-borne Diseases | Mass.gov](#), which is updated daily, or by calling the DPH Division of Epidemiology at 617-983-6800.

For prevention tips and to read the full press release, click [here](#).



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## Construction/Capital Project Updates

- On-going Construction projects:
  - *Eversource 345kV Project* – Eversource will be in attendance to provide a project update.
  - *Transfer Station Renovation* – Work is on-hold until a pre-abatement meeting can be scheduled with DEP.
  - *Parkhurst Swing Space & Lynch School* – Installation of modular classrooms is complete, and interior work is on-going. The Lynch School project is expected to be bid in October.
  - *South Reservoir Aeration* – Construction was completed last week.
  - *Muraco School Electrical* – Work is on-going.
  - *McCall Masonry Project* – Work is on-going.
- Projects currently out to bid:
  - *Washington and Cross Street bridge repairs* – The bid opening was held on June 28<sup>th</sup> and both projects came in overbid. We are working with DPW to determine if we can use Chapter 90 funding to complete one of the projects, and will look to go back to Fall Town Meeting for additional funding.
  - *Winchester High School Drainage* – The second bid opening was held on July 13<sup>th</sup> (there were no bidders the first time around), and both bidders were over the Town's budget. Staff is currently evaluating funding options.
- Upcoming Construction projects:
  - *McDonald Field Pump Station* – The project will go out for bid in August for fall construction.
  - *Winter Pond Water Quality Project* – Contract has been awarded. Work to start in July.
  - *Town Hall Fire Alarm* – The contract has been awarded and the work will start in August, pending receipt of materials.