

**Winthrop Town Council
Regular Meeting
Monday, March 5, 2007 at 7 p.m.
Winthrop Town Office**

Attendance: Patrice Putman, Linda Caprara (arrived at 7:08 p.m.), Patricia Engdahl, Ken Buck, Kevin Cookson, William MacDonald, Jim Norris, Cornell Knight (Town Manager) and Julie Winberg (Secretary).

Chairman Putman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes for February 5, 2007:

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Norris to approve the minutes of February 5, 2007. The vote was unanimous (6-0) (Councilor Caprara not present), with the following additions and corrections:

Minutes of the meeting changed from Monday, February 7, 2007 to Monday February 5, 2007.

Ken Buck has been appointed to the Finance Committee

Bill MacDonald, Jim Norris, and Patti Engdahl are on the Appointments Committee.

Ordered that the Winthrop Town Council meet to consider the following items:

Item #22 Audit presentation for 2005-06 fiscal years, Greg Chabot, Runyon Kersteen and Ouellette.

The town's financial audit report was presented this evening by Greg Chabot. The town received an unqualified opinion for fiscal year 2006. The report on internal controls discloses two reportable conditions, neither of which was deemed to be a material weakness. The publication distributed both to the councilors and available to the public provided the financial results for fiscal year 2006 as well as trend information for certain areas. There were no significant problems. The information to review was very well organized and was easy to follow. The two reportable conditions were:

- a. The segregation of duties – due to the small size of the accounting staff. A recommendation is to have periodic reviews of the financial reports.

- b. The school lunch fund still shows a deficit at the end of June 2006. Although the deficit is being reduced by subsidy, this is something to follow up on an ongoing basis.

Item #23 Hold a public hearing - liquor license renewal for Pepper's Restaurant, 357A Main Street.

The public hearing opened at 7:29 p.m. There being no adverse comments from either the Police Chief, council or the public, the public hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

Item #24 Consider the Liquor license application for Pepper's Restaurant.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Buck, the liquor license for Pepper's Restaurant was approved with a unanimous vote of 7-0.

Item #25 Discuss with the Superintendent of Schools the programs jointly funded with the town.

Winthrop's Superintendent thanked the council for the opportunity to review some of their joint programs prior to the April budget review. He introduced David Satchel of Winthrop's Performing Arts Department. Also in attendance was Deb Burnett, Director of the Fun After School Program to review the opportunities made available to the middle school attendees.

The Performing Arts Department is holding many scheduled events and concert series and thus is breaking even with funding which is a very satisfactory position to be in.

They have and are presently working with the Theatre at Monmouth which is having an incredible educational impact. The theater group is there all day long, working with the students, giving them direction. This indeed gives the students a real world connection. The students are putting out professional quality work and Romeo and Juliet is one of the products of their endeavor. This is total student engagement and producing fiscal solvency.

The Fun After School Program started with fifteen students and has now grown to 125. There are only 194 students in total registered in the Middle School. 20% of the students registered in the after school program are special needs with

academic problems. What the program does is work one on one with each student. The volunteers come from the high school and that contributes to their community service hours. The students enrolled in this program have to behave. If they don't behave, they are not welcomed back. Therefore the students know what to expect from the onset.

Three times a week they have physical therapy with one hour of activities. They have a healthy snack each day with juice, water or milk available. One time each week the students cook their own snack for their next day's treat.

The total budget is \$42,450 for this program.

The town contributes \$15,000 to this program and \$22,000 to the performing arts program.

Item #26 Update on the Post Office handicapped accessibility issue

The Council in unison noted that they are making access to the post office a top priority and they are demanding postal officials do something about this long ongoing situation.

The Chairman thanked Chris Madden, who was representing the Post Office Real Estate division, Winthrop Postmaster Scott Allarie and regional postal officials Rene Albert and Randy Michaud for attending this meeting. The Chairman reiterated that "we have been waiting for twenty years and for at least 18 of those years, we have been told that a new post office is just around the corner".

Mr. Madden tried to reassure the council that his agency is "diligently working on relocating the post office", and that a decision on starting a study of various options could begin in a couple of months. The process, he said, could take six months to a year. Counselor Cookson responded to this projected time frame that a ramp was needed now, even if it was temporary.

Councilor MacDonald pointed out that plans for a ramp were first approved twenty years ago. But nothing has been done with them. Mr. Madden responded that he never saw those plans. During a short break, the town manager handed a

copy of the ramp plans to Mr. Madden and he in turn promised to take them back to his office for review.

Although the post office has already designed a new facility for a lot on main street, that project was delayed because the postal service put a moratorium on the new construction that same year and to date, there is only one post office that is being built in the region and that was due because of an eviction situation.

Mr. Madden did not make any comments about the negotiations between his agency and the Winthrop Commerce Center LLC, owner and renovator of the downtown Carleton Woolen Mill. Mr. Carrier, president of the center was also present at this meeting and had notified the council at the February town meeting that he had been consulting with the postal officials about leasing space for a post office which is a couple of doors down from the existing post office building. Mr. Carrier also owns the present postal site.

Mr. Madden assured the council that he will do his utmost to move this project along.

The councilors urged Mr. Madden to tighten up the timeframe and to expedite the town's request for a ramp or for the post office to move to a location that will be handicapped accessible.

Councilor Cookson emphatically requested that Mr. Madden and his group look to expedite this whole process and to report back in two months as to what action the postal service is going to take. The Council's next action will be to file a complaint in writing to the representatives in Congress and push to get this done.

Tables Item #16 from 2/5/07 - Consider the Town Clerks' petition certification to amend the Town Charter.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Norris to remove this item from the table. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

The town manager reviewed the letter from Mr. John Carpenter identifying the fact that the petition committee did

not have any objections to place their petition to amend the town charter on the November 2007 ballot. [This measure would reduce the number of signatures required to place a referendum vote before town voters. Presently, it takes 25 percent of voters. The change would require only 5 percent of voters. In addition, this action would prevent the town council from overturning any citizen referendum for five years after its enactment. Mr. Carpenter, a local resident, circulated this petition promoting these measures. In the past, the changes would make it easier to petition the town and more difficult for the town to override winning petitions].

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara approving this action. Vote was unanimous (7-0).

Item #27 Discuss the Public Safety Building referendum results

Councilor Buck commented that he would like to see real numbers from contractors on remodeling these three buildings.

An update from the town manager reported that to bring the buildings up to code as well as to make them functional, an engineering firm that focuses on structural issues and does assessments can do a site visit on these properties and report back to the council taking into account a 5 to 10 year growth span. An estimate for such a building review would cost the town approximately \$35,000 and \$5,000 for an industrial hygiene assessment.

Councilor Norris noted that a possible reason this project was rejected by the voters may indeed be that the council did not produce hard numbers.

Councilor Cookson commented that this type of report would be worthwhile as the town may see when this report comes back that the Building Committee's estimate was not far off the mark. The committee studied the three departments and reviewed their individual needs and what it would take to bring them up to code. The town may see that it will cost more than four million to renovate the existing public buildings.

Many residents were in attendance and voiced their opinions for and against this project.

Councilor Norris commented after the public spoke that he thought it was due diligence on the councilors part to approve the funds for these reports. Even though the Building Committee felt that they went slowly and methodically, the public's perception seems to be otherwise. With the kind of detail that will be produced can only be a benefit.

A consensus too from the public as well as from councilors was the fact that the pending reevaluations were on the public's mind and may have been in the forefront of this election.

On the table, the following choices were raised:

1. Spend \$35,-000 to \$40,000 for a structural analysis and an industrial hygiene assessment (prior to getting a committee formed).
2. Going back to drawing board
3. Regionalization

Motion by Norris and seconded by Caprara to authorize the town manager to secure a detailed engineering analysis and an industrial hygiene survey for the police, fire, and ambulance buildings followed by estimates from prospective contractors. Such analysis would provide specific engineering data regarding 1) code violations 2) structural integrity and 3) functionality problems. An industrial hygiene survey would be required. The engineering analysis must provide specific costs estimates to cure all immediate code, structural and functionality issues. The cost of the structural analysis will not exceed \$35,000. The cost of the industrial hygiene survey will not exceed \$5,000.

The vote passed with a 4-3 vote Yea: Cookson, Caprara, Norris, Buck. Nay: Putman, MacDonald and Engdahl.

Item #28 - Consider stationing an Ambulance at the Readfield Fire Station during the summer months.

John Dovinsky, EMS Director, was in attendance to discuss the stationing of an ambulance at the Readfield Fire Station during the summer months. This has been done in the past because the call volume in that area warrants it and being five miles closer provides for a quicker response time.

Motion by MacDonald and seconded by Cookson approving the stationing of one of Winthrop's ambulance at the Readfield Fire Station during the summer months. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

Item #29 Discuss the Council's Economic Development goal.

This was tabled to the April 2nd meeting.

Item #30 Review the budget process and meeting schedule

The schedule was reviewed as follows:

April 2nd – the 2007-08 budget will be presented.

Workshops on April 9 and April 11.

The school budget will be presented on May 7th.

The budget hearing and approval will be on June 4th.

Item #31 Council Appointments

The Committee met and with a motion by Norris and seconded by Cookson the following appointments were made. The vote was unanimous (7-0):

Cobboosee Watershed	Robert Pray
	Hans Heinz Walbaum - Alternate
Planning	Rick O'Brien
	Clark Phinney
Zoning	Frank Benson
	Dennis Harnish
	Daryn Deveau
Conservation	Kevin McCarthy
Recreation	Ann Theriault

Item #32 Executive Session - Title 1 Section 4-05 (A) - Town Manager's Contract renewal.

Tabled to April 2nd meeting.

Motion by Buck and seconded by MacDonald to adjourn at 10:15 p.m. Vote was unanimous (7-0).