

**Winthrop Town Council  
Regular Meeting  
Monday, November 5, 2007  
Winthrop Town Office**

*Attendance: Patrice Putman, Linda Caprara, William MacDonald, Patricia Engdahl, Ken Buck, Kevin Cookson, Lee Bragg, Cornell Knight (Town Manager) and Julie Winberg (Secretary). Absent: Jim Norris*

**Approval of Minutes**

*Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara, the minutes for October 1, 2007 were approved. Vote was unanimous.*

*Chair informed the Board, and there being no objections, that the Agenda for this evening would be reordered to begin as follows:*

**Item #105** *Hear an update on the Reorganization Planning Committee's work on school consolidation.*

*Kevin Cookson, along with Dale Glidden and Rae Giampetro, are members of the consolidation committee for Winthrop along with members from Fayette, Mt. Vernon, Readfield, Wayne. He is chair of the finance group and Dale Glidden is chair for the governance group. Both spoke this evening on the committee's progress. A summary follows:*

*A partial plan will be drawn up and must be sent to the state by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The reorganization planning committee of Fayette, Manchester, Mt. Vernon, Readfield, Wayne and Winthrop will be held at 6:30 p.m. at Maranacook High School Performing Arts Center, and on November 29<sup>th</sup> at the same time at the Winthrop Town Office All Purpose room. The purpose is to go over the partial plan. A letter from the Department of Education confirmed that the committee is allowed to have three voting members if it so chooses. The Board is leaving that up to each group to determine if this presents a hindrance or not. Winthrop has the highest student population as well as the highest property evaluations. Thus, Winthrop will pay more than other towns. It is projected that the town will pay approximately 36% of the total costs. However, it was also stressed that the towns must vote on this individually.*

*Mr. Cookson also informed the group that a meeting was held in Augusta with superintendents and school board members and a petition is circulating to repeal*

*the law entirely which is raising serious questions as to whether this consolidation merger will go through at all. No matter what happens however, the school budget is projected to go up by \$379,000 .*

*Dale Glidden informed the group that the two sub committees are working completely independently from each other. Right now the governance committee is working on how long the terms of the officers should be with suggestions ranging from one year to two years with 1/3 of the board up for reelection every year. If the merger goes through, one concern remains on how to maintain local input. The governance committee has agreed in principle that the advisory board should consist of three members - one from each town. Each one of the six towns would have their own advisory board for elementary schools and one for the high schools. Some discussion was had if a town decides that they do not want to participate. That is going to be addressed at the next meeting. Time is of the essence as this plan, although partial, must be turned in to the state by December 1<sup>st</sup>. On the 14<sup>th</sup> and on the 29<sup>th</sup>, a quorum of all school boards must be in hand for the partial plan to go forward. Without that, it may not pass a town referendum. The legislature meets in January.*

*Comments were made concerning the reevaluations and questions centering on which towns have not been reevaluated were left unanswered. The state is aware of some of these inequities and these issues must be addressed if this consolidation moves forward.*

**Item #102**     *Hold a public hearing on the Special Entertainment License application for Pond Town Tavern, 7 Union Street. Lisa Seavey, owner of this bar and grill located at 7 Union Street requests this permit to allow music/dancing/karaoke.*

*Public hearing opened at 7:24 p.m.*

*Chief Joe Young reported that he had no issues with this request.*

*Public hearing closed at 7:25 p.m.*

**Item #103**     *Consider the special Entertainment License renewal for Pond Town Tavern. Motion by MacDonald, seconded by Cookson, that the special Entertainment License for Pond Town Tavern be approved. Vote was unanimous.*

**Item #104**     *Hold a public hearing on the US Postal Services letter that requests comments on these two sites under consideration for a new post office.*

*This public hearing was to hear comments from citizens of Winthrop to determine the location of a post office on Main Street. Postal officials have narrowed the site to two locations - a new building to be constructed at 112 Main Street on property that is owned by the postal service or in existing space at 149 Main Street - Commerce Business Center (CBC).*

*A letter from Chris Madden, USPS representative, was reviewed by the council. It referenced two potential sites under consideration to date. A summary of possible pros and cons was reviewed for the two sites. To comply with postal regulations, any member of the community or the town officers had the opportunity to offer written comments on any of the properties. Mr. Madden informed the town that many comments were received. In communication with the town manager, Mr. Madden stressed that he would not be there at this public hearing nor would pictures/site plans be presented because the purpose of this meeting was to determine the 'location' of the new post office. The rest would follow that decision. Public hearing opened at 7:25 p.m. Comments are summarized as follows:*

- 1. The representative from the postal service should have been at this public hearing to answer questions. Not having a postal representative in attendance was very disturbing to many.*
- 2. A site plan with a picture of the post office that will be built if the location is at 112 Main Street should have been presented.*
- 3. Although there were few in attendance to verify this, claims were made that a local builder had a site plan and picture of a building that was projected to be 2,000 square feet with 24 parking spaces, several of which would be handicap accessible. No one in attendance could describe what the exterior would look like or confirm that those figures of square footage and parking spaces were accurate.*
- 4. Lou Carrier, CBC, presented handouts of pictures which showed what the center looked like, what it looks like now, and what it may look like when the building is fully occupied. These were photos of the exterior. He has proposed to house the post office on one side of the first floor of the building. He described three doors that would offer access to handicapped individuals and the location of parking spaces for the handicapped.*
- 5. The area inside the CBC where the post office would be located was not identified and no sketches of it were among the handouts.*
- 6. Of extreme concern was the accessibility for the handicap in locating the post office in the 149 location. Although Mr. Carrier and his representatives stressed that they would comply with all ADA requirements, the public did not want to hear 'minimum'. Nor were they in agreement that the spot(s) proposed as handicap accessible was realistic.*
- 7. The whole idea of easy access for the handicap was the reason the majority of town residents attended this meeting.*
- 8. Easy access was not a term used by the majority in attendance in describing the CBC. It was described by more than a few that as a congested area that is difficult at best. Parking and pedestrian safety issues were a great concern in this location.*
- 9. A plus for the CBC was what some in attendance thought would be a 'quick turnaround'. But this does 'assume' that the federal government acts quickly and will sign off on the myriad of contractual agreements that would have to be processed should they accept the*

site at 149 Main Street. Many in attendance were skeptical and did not look favorably on the federal government as their 'track' record has not proven to be reliable to date.

10. Building a post office from the ground up on the green space would mean a much more lengthy process.

11. Continuing the mills redevelopment efforts was thought of as being a worthwhile venture. The center's representatives were commended on the work done to date and received many accolades during this public hearing. "It was nice to see the lights on again as you drive by".

12. Several comments were made with passion that Winthrop deserves to have its own post office, just like other towns, and ideas of how nice the Manchester P.O. is as well as the one by Reid State Park, and what that kind of building would do for downtown Winthrop was discussed. Having a post office building at the 112 site was described as the focal point for the town and a building that has the potential to reinvigorate downtown bringing it back to life.

13. Some interest in preserving the green space was made mention. However, in the same vein, using that area to build a row of businesses on the ground floor with apartments on the second floor, mirroring the other side of the street was also a strong recommendation.

14. The idea that several buildings were torn down for the explicit purpose of building a post office was spoken to at length. And with that, a strong recommendation to build it 'where it was supposed to be'.

15. Sharing the 'pie' was also inferred with the distinct implication that enough had already gone to the CBC and it was time to spread the work around to others as well.

16. Also noted that there was an unconfirmed inference that if the council would recommend that the post office should be put in the commerce center, Lou Carrier 'may offer to purchase the green space'.

17. Very unclear was what the post office would do with this green space if they do not use it for the intended purpose. Would it be given to the town? Would it remain as green space? Would it be sold? These were among many of the questions.

Public hearing closed at 8:48 p.m.

The council was left to determine their next step to either take a position this evening or to hear more from the community at another hearing. Although the postal authorities wanted to hear these comments, the community also wanted to see a proposed site plan. Councilor Engdahl commented that the town expects the council to take a position thus stating their preference after taking these public comments into consideration. Councilor Caprara stressed that the town has waited a long time for this and that a place in the CBC is available now. The green space should remain green. Councilor Putman commented that if the decision is to build it on the green space, the town would have to 'wait' again for a much longer time. She also commented that the town has not seen a site plan from either the postal service or the 'local builder'. Councilor Buck reiterated the importance of making this building handicap

accessible and stressed that this is why this is on the table. He was among the few that 'saw' the proposed site plan from a local builder, describing the building as very nice, and extremely handicap accessible with ample space to park and negotiate entering and exiting. The Chair noted that the council represents the community. Her recommendation would be that the councilors should summarize positions as there is no consensus to take a stand. The summary should go to the postal authorities and that this is tabled to another meeting with postal authorities present. Should people in attendance want to send more information and further comments they should address email to [christopher.j.madden@usps.gov](mailto:christopher.j.madden@usps.gov). Once the comments period ends, the post office is to issue a decision and then allow another comment period. Councilor Cookson commented that the town did not have plans to see what the facility would look like on the green space. But neither did it have any drawings on what the facility would look like if it was put in the CBC. The government is going to determine where it is going to be. When you have two businesses (the Commerce Center and a local builder) vying for the same project, for the council to recommend either is unethical.

Polling the council again:

Engdahl - summary/recommend Commerce Center

Cookson - summary/green space

Buck - summary/green space

Caprara - summary - Commerce Center

MacDonald - summary/ask the postal authorities to come to the next meeting

Putman - summarize the concerns addressed, get a reasonable time frame for both the commerce center and the green space/ have site plan and pictures for both locations.

Norris - although not present at this meeting - sent his comments through MacDonald that being that the CBC, through its owner Lou Carrier, promised to acquire the green space.

In response to that, Mr. Carrier commented that he was 'considering' that and a promise was not made. The town manager was asked to summarize comments both from the public as well as from the council and to contact Mr. Madden with these results.

The council took a seven minute break and returned at 9:03 p.m.

**Item #106** Hold a public hearing on the proposed Emergency Management Ordinance. Public hearing opens at 9:03 p.m. Chief Young spoke to the council on the need for this ordinance. This ordinance is to establish an emergency management agency which would be in compliance and in conformity with the provisions of Title 37-B, MRSA, Section 781 which will ensure the complete and efficient utilization of the Town's facilities and resources to combat disaster as defined in the body of the Ordinance. In summary, the employees, equipment and facilities of all town departments, boards, institutions and commissions, including all volunteer persons, of which equipment and facilities contributed by or obtained from volunteer persons or agencies would make up the emergency management agency force. A disaster is defined as an occurrence or imminent

*threat of widespread or severe damage, injury or loss of life or property resulting from any natural or man-made cause including, but not limited to fire, flood, earthquake, wind, storm, wave action, oil spill, or other water contamination requiring emergency action to avert danger or damage, epidemic, air contamination, critical material shortage, infestation, explosion or riot. Note: health and medical services on page 2 of the ordinance will be put back in the NIMS. The Ordinance is available at the town office and on the town's website.*

*Public hearing closes at 9:08 pm*

**Item #107** *Consider the first reading of the Emergency Management Ordinance. Motion by Cookson, seconded by Caprara with a unanimous vote on the first reading of the Emergency Management Ordinance. Motion by Cookson, seconded by Caprara to waive the second reading passed with a unanimous vote.*

**Item #108** *Hold a public hearing on the National Incident Management System Implementation Plan.*

*Public hearing opened at 9:10 p.m.*

*This plan is a federal requirement for towns to participate in the Federal Incident Command training program. It involves all police, fire, ems and administrative personnel with a mandate that they all participate in this training. It was noted that without this training, federal funding would not be available. Training for all personnel must be completed by January 1, 2008.*

*Public hearing closed at 9:15 p.m.*

**Item #109** *Consider the first reading of the NIMS Implementation Plan. Motion by Cookson, seconded by Caprara with a unanimous vote to approve the NIMS Implementation Plan.*

*Motion by Cookson, seconded by Caprara to waive the second reading passed with a unanimous vote.*

**Item #110** *Appointments Committee Report. No recommendations were made at this meeting. All applications should be sent to Councilor MacDonald. It was noted that Andrew Flint had recently resigned his position on the Planning Board.*

**Item #111** *Spirit of America Awards update Spirit of America, our local chapter, in operation since 1993, is disbanding. The town manager gathered the information that the council requested at their last meeting. This agency honors local individuals for exemplary and altruistic service as well as organizations and or projects. The Spirit of*

*America awards sponsors volunteerism. A notice will be placed in the Advertiser and all nominations should be forwarded to the town manager. A brief description of the person or program needs to be received by November 26<sup>th</sup> either by email to [winmang@fairpoint.net](mailto:winmang@fairpoint.net) or to the Town Manager, 17 Highland Avenue, Winthrop, ME 04364. A subcommittee consisting of Putman, Engdahl and the town manager will review the applications. Award(s) will be at the December Town Council meeting. Last year's recipient was the Roger Guerette Community Trail.*

***Item #112*** Discussion and review of Council goals Motion by Caprara and seconded by Cookson, this agenda item was tabled with a unanimous vote.

**Other Business**

*Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara with a unanimous vote to accept the donation of a skateboard ramp.*

*Motion by Caprara and seconded by Cookson with a unanimous vote to accept the donation of \$76.45 for the ambulance services.*

*On Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be a public hearing on affordable housing. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm in the town office. The public and several town boards are invited to participate in this discussion. The goal of the meeting is to review the issues, discuss possible solutions, and see if the community wants to proceed with taking action on this issue and possibly form a working committee.*

*Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara with a unanimous vote to advertise the surplus equipment at the Transfer Station accepting the highest bid offered.*

***Motion by Caprara and seconded by Cookson with a unanimous vote the Council went into executive session for a personnel matter - Title 1 Section 405A at 9:35 p.m.***

*Return to regular session.*

*Motion by Norris Seconded by Cookson to pay tax interest, estimated to be \$1,600, penalties and accountant fees for errors on the payroll tax deductions of the town manager. Vote 6-0.*

*Motion by Caprara Seconded by Buck to adjourn at 9:45 pm Vote 6-0*