

**Minutes
Winthrop Town Council
Regular Meeting
Monday, March 6, 2006 at 7:00 PM
Winthrop Town Office**

Chairman Norris called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Attendance: Chairman James Norris, Councilors William MacDonald, Patrice Putman, Jayne Despres, Ken Buck, Linda Caprara, and Kevin Cookson; Town Manager – Cornell Knight; Secretary – Julie Winberg.

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

Approve the minutes of January 4th, and February 6th, 2006

Motion by Despres, and seconded by Cookson, approving the minutes of January 4th and February 6th, 2006. Vote was 7-0.

At this time, the Chairman informed the Council that Agenda #18 would be the first item thus allowing Representative Pat Flood sufficient time to attend another scheduled town meeting.

Item #18 - Hear an update from Representative Pat Flood on the 122nd Legislative Session.

Representative Pat Flood presented these issues that were before the Legislature that would be of interest to the Town of Winthrop:

This is the second year of a two-year legislature. Recent revenue projections have been going down rather than up. Sales tax revenue is down. The Legislature is reviewing the revenues and the Appropriations Committee will make their recommendations to the full body in a few weeks.

Winthrop's school funding was reviewed and the increase seemed reasonable. Winthrop Schools will be getting \$394,000 more than last year. The state's share should continue to go up in the next few years. Representative Flood commented that he truly appreciated the professionalism of the Council and the School Board. He went on to say that he is keeping current with the Winthrop Unties Advisory Committee as well as keeping abreast of both the statewide and district's efforts in this vein.

Representative Flood explained some of the things that he does and is responsible for. He was on the Tax Reform Committee and still remains an active member of the Agriculture Conservation and Forestry Committee. He is proud of LD 1881, which is a reclassification of the animal welfare laws. In studies that have been reviewed, animal abuse is a direct link to human abuse as the way people treat animals is the way people treat humans. When this bill passes, and he expects it to, an individual arrested for a violent act against an individual will also be prevented from abusing animals and that will

be part of their sentencing. Another item is the Baxter Park expansion project (over 6,000 acres) which is quite a polarized issue within the committee as it conjures up a lot of emotion as this expansion is directly linked to Governor Baxter's vision. He foresees that the Committee will work through a lot of the posturing and proceed with what needs to be done working towards a common ground. The bottom line will be, as with any proposed legislation, you need to convince 101 legislators about your point of view and succeed with a 2/3 vote in order for it to pass.

Early in this year's session, Representative Flood contacted several School Board leaders in reference to Sports Done Right as he felt strongly about the program and felt that it should be funded. That is still out for review.

On the appropriations table for consideration is LD 1798 regarding standardized testing and feels that the SAT's will become the State's standard.

LD 1722, regarding childhood education, has several versions of this issue for legislative review.

Increase in the salary for teachers to \$30,000 has been reviewed and Representative Flood does not think that it will pass this year.

Personal property tax on businesses is being presented. And last, but not least, is the right for one to manage his or her death or the death of a family member

This year, adoption rights, minimum wage, dangerous drivers, term limits, and liquor and wine sale regulations are also on the table. This year, however, there will not be sufficient time to deal with abortion or equal rights this session.

Representative Flood encouraged everyone to contact him via phone or email (noting that email works the best) should they have any questions, comments or concerns. He prides himself to be very responsive and he takes that and his role in government very seriously.

Item #17 – Joint Session with Winthrop School Board, to hear an update from the Winthrop Unites Advisory Committee and consider a grant funding application.

Members of the School Board were in attendance hear, comment and discuss the update from Winthrop Unites Advisory Committee and consider a grant funding application request from the Committee.

Councilor Putnam, Chairwoman of the Committee, presented a brief update before turning the review of findings to the Committee Members. She informed the Board that there have been several meetings, some with Maine General, since the last update at the February Regular Board meeting. Some recommendations were finalized and they will be presented to the Board tonight in detail. There are three recommendations and the hope is that they are accomplished over the next year. The Committee is also in hopes

that the School Board as well as the Council will find these three recommendations as powerful and potentially as helpful as the Committee has.

At this point, Sue O'Halleran, Project Director at the Medical Care Development, was introduced and took the floor. She noted that although she is not a formal voting member of this Committee, she has attended all of the meetings, is an active and experienced participant. Before presenting the three recommendations, Ms. Ohalerin informed the group that these recommendations represent what the committee sees as its role...identifying prevention strategies to prevent suicide and high-risk behaviors:

The *first* is to coordinate with agencies to expand health services. In essence, to enhance what is presently being done in the schools.

Second is to identify long term prevention factors in order to decrease the stigma surrounding these issues by increasing mental health services. This recommendation fits perfectly with the report from the Focus Group as it helps with transitioning: students need help with life skills, financial management, and substance abuse, just to name a few. This type of anxiety can be helped with and increase in mental health services.

She went on to say that she has attended several conferences on the subject of teen suicide. And although suicide is not new, what is new is that suicide prevention is new. The youth suicide rate is five times what it was in the 80's. For that fact alone we need to find ways to reach the 19-24 year old and helping them cope through the stigma that surrounds this and you can do that by increasing mental health services and the access to them.

No one knows exactly how to do it. These Winthrop students that took their lives had very caring adults involved in their life. And yet, they did not ask for any help from these caring adults. The Coordinator that will be hired will do exactly that – coordinate programs, provide education services, and manage our suicide program.

Third is the Porch Light Program. This gets right to the heart of when our youth are ready to spread their wings, they know that they still have their Town's undivided support. This has the very real potential to be a national model demonstrating how a community can rise and shine through tremendous odds, through tremendous adversity.

This coordinator will be expanding the health services and the porch light program. The hope of the committee is that action be taken swiftly to show this year seniors that something is being done. All three recommendations are directly connected and fit hand in glove.

Chairman Norris extended the Council's gratitude for the time and energy that the Committee as a whole has put into this.

Councilor Cookson stated that he would like to thank everyone for attending this Joint Session and that he has attended these Committee meetings and has been abreast of the

reports and recommendations. He wanted to emphasize that he highly supports the group and its intent but feels that these recommendations are putting the cart before the horse. He noted that he would like to see a coordinator be hired to see what he/she thinks about these recommendations and how feasible they are. He has concerns about a porch light program as well as the school based health care based program as he feels that the Council cannot mandate the school board to do anything like that as they have State laws that must be followed. In reviewing the attached job description for the coordinator, this all falls under that positions.

Councilor Putman commented that it was the Committee's understanding that they write the job description and present it to the School Board and the Town Manager. After review, the School Board would be responsible for advertising and hiring. The Council as well as the Committee was limited in authority. The Committee's task was to develop the recommendations to proceed using the Focus Report as a guide.

She went on to say that the reason # 2 and # 3 of the recommendations were being brought forward was because of timing as there were grants available to fund both these recommendations but the due dates were April for final application. If applications are not received by the deadline, those monies do not become available again for one year. As chairwoman of this Committee, Councilor Putman saw the charge to be reading and studying the Focus Group's Report and coming back to the Council and the School Board with their recommendations after succeeding with a unanimous vote, which they had done: a coordinator's job description, a school based health program (prevention from the get go), and porch light program (directly dealing with transitional youth). At this point, what the Committee is asking is for the authority to proceed with recommendations #2, and #3, to formalize a cost proposal, and apply for the grants.

Councilor Cookson agreed that the development of the job description was completed and now its up to the School Board and Council to decide on who does the advertising, interviewing, and hiring.

Superintendent Despres commented that he felt very confident and comfortable in taking the lead with that, and that he will move forward with the advertising of this position right away. However, he wanted to make it clear that a 30-day turnaround for grant completion, should that be decided on tonight, is not a very realistic expectation – referring to the health based program and porch light program. He too expressed his concern about what happens to students when they leave high school and noted that the School Board sees this as very important as does the community. He also noted that an RFP, although it may be time consuming, must be done.

Councilor Putman wanted to clarify that Maine General offered to help the Committee in applying for the grants, as the Committee members were not expertise in this field.

Councilor MacDonald inquired about the makeup of the present crisis team in the school system.

Superintendent Despres informed the group that it consists of a guidance counselor, a nurse as the members develop according to the crisis. For example, if it involves a legal matter, a member of the police department attends...peer pressure, a guidance counselor attends. And the expectation is that the newly appointed coordinator will be the chair and keep things connected in this way. The Superintendent went on to say that numerous parents who feel they are at a crisis point right now have contacted him. They feel lost. One common theme runs through many conversations and that is the development of a community center, one that is supervised and controlled the way it should be providing a safe haven providing them with a place to deal with critical issues.

Councilor Cookson stated that he felt the job description was excellent and that he too supports the committee. At this point, he made a motion that the Superintendent's office proceeds with the hiring phase of the coordinator position. He went on to say that he does not have any problems with the Committee looking into the grants. But, he could not vote in favor of going ahead with the grants until the coordinator is hired. There might indeed be something else that is even better than the porch light program

Councilor Caprara seconded that motion. The vote was unanimous between the joint committee members.

Councilor Putman made a motion to support the Superintendent and the School Board's effort to move forward with the school based health program and pursue the grants associated with this. Councilor MacDonald seconded that motion.

Councilor Cookson stated that he still would note no on that motion as he felt a school-based health care project was jurisdictional.

Councilor Putman commented that this is a worthy risk and the motion keeps that concern in balance with the schools ability to move forward.

Councilor Despres commented that she has concerns about the Town Council voting on what the School Board should do.

Chairman Norris noted that based on the advice from the Superintendent, the maker of the motion needs to either reconsider or withdraw it.

Motion and second withdrawn.

Councilor Putman made a motion to recommend that the Town Council encourage the School Board to explore vigorously the possibilities of a school based health care program. Councilor MacDonald seconded this motion.

There being no discussion, the vote was unanimous.

Councilor Putnam made a motion that the Winthrop Unites Advisory Committee vigorously explore the possibilities of the Porch Light Program with Maine General and come back with recommendations. Councilor MacDonald seconded that motion.

Councilor Cookson expressed that he did not have any problems with exploring this but to replace “Maine General” with the word ‘others’ to broaden the procurement possibilities and to adhere with the legal ramifications involved in an RFO.

Councilor Despres agreed but added that she would yet like to see a coordinator be involved in this process from the beginning.

Chairman Norris stated that he felt that the inherent organizational structure of this Committee was to move expeditiously due to the subject matter. He said he was convinced that the Committee seriously considered that prior to making their very convincing arguments and he was in hopes that the joint group would endorse their concept.

Councilor Cookson stated that he would vote against this motion and went on to say that you walk a very thin line when you do or don’t do an RFP and noted that when you have two members of the Committee that are also on Maine General’s payroll, the line gets even thinner.

Councilor Putman commented that Maine General has given the Committee many hours of valuable time and that she could not ask them to continue this, and to additionally assist them in writing the two grants, and not offer them some kind of assurance of working with the School Board and Town for several years down the road with this project.

Councilor Despres commented that there are many agencies like Maine General out there and a coordinator can find that out.

Councilor MacDonald commented that he felt this joint group was receiving information from a very strong professional team who were very excited about what they were presenting tonight. He sees no risk to these three recommendations and the services are in conjunction with what our youth are having struggles with and a clear direction has been presented as to how to get them what they need, the first being the hiring of a part time coordinator with term funds through September of this year. He urged the group to continue exploring all the possibilities and to note that no funds were being expended as to do so would have to come back to this forum anyway for ultimate approval.

Councilor Cookson again reiterated that he is fully appreciative of the motion to explore but he would not be able to vote for it noting that he has nothing against Maine General and is in full agreement as to the urgency of this matter, but also feels that the coordinator would research, writes and apply for grants. He noted that circumventing the process because of time restriction is taking a big risk. He felt that in what was being presented

tonight in reference to Maine General is an underlying promise to them that would undermine the process.

Chairman Norris at this time asked for a brief recess.

The meeting resumed at 9:10 p.m.

Councilor Putnam withdrew her motion and Councilor MacDonald's second.

Councilor Putman now moved that the Winthrop Unites Advisory Committee be authorized to pursue the Porch Light Program based on an Employee Assistance Program model seeking ways to fund it through grant application. Councilor MacDonald seconded this new motion.

There being no further discussion. The vote was taken and it was unanimous among the joint group.

Item #19 – Hold a public hearing on the liquor license renewal application for Peppers Garden & Grill, 357 A Main Street.

Public Hearing was opened at 9:13 pm

The Town Manager noted that there were no concerns from the police chief.

There being no further comments, the public hearing closed at 9:14 pm

Item #20 - Consider the liquor license renewal application for Peppers Garden and Grill Motion by Buck and seconded by Cookson to approve the application. Vote 7-0.

Item #158 - Tabled from the December 5, 2005: Consider a request from Candide Lemay to excavate Charles Street for access to the sewer and water lines.

Motion by Cookson seconded by Despres taking this item off the table.

Motion by Cookson and seconded by Caprara approving the request from Candide Lemay to excavate Charles Street for access to the sewer and water lines (with Councilor Cookson noting that being a member of the Road Committee, in this case, this lady would not have gotten the Town's notice even if it was sent out today and felt that approving this request was the right thing to do as long as the road was then repaired back to its original state. Question was moved.

Vote was 5-0-2, Putman and MacDonald abstaining

(Councilor MacDonald added that the minutes should reflected this was an absolute exception to the Town's Road Ordinance policy and will not be done a regular business as usual basis.

Item #155 - Tabled from December 5, 2005: Hear an update on the e-911 addressing audit presented by Nicole Prescott of the Winthrop Ambulance Service.

Cookson moved with Caprara second to take off table this item off the table. Vote 7-0.

Ms. Prescott informed the audience that 3,534 buildings have numbers with 407 still non-compliant (which breaks down to approximately 11% of the buildings audited were still non-compliant). Out of that, 302 building were without numbers. In the spring, she plans on going out again and checking on those. It is after that point, that those that remain non-compliant will be sent out penalty letters, that would include a fine (\$10.00).

Item #21 - Consider amending the Town Council minutes of June 13, 2005 to reflect a vote on the contract with Vision Appraisal.

The Town Manager explained that at this 2005 June meeting, the Council approved the contract with Vision Appraisal, but the minutes did not reflect who made the motion, or who seconded it, approving the contract. .

Motion by Buck Seconded by Despres to approve the Vision Appraisal Contract. Vote 7-0

Item #22 - Consider the cost of the property revaluation to be paid for from appropriations and the undesignated fund balance.

The Town Manager informed the group that it was initially discussed that the payment of the revaluation (\$287,600) was to come from the budget, the bond issue and surplus. The bond issue went to roadwork and the Masonic hall. He further went on to say that he would like the Council to vote on paying the portion of the contract not covered in the budget, to come from surplus. The surplus balance is about \$1,600,000 before the summer teacher salaries adjustment is made.

Motion by MacDonald and seconded by Caprara to take the monies from surplus on whatever is not paid from appropriations. Vote 7-0.

Item #23 - Consider scheduling a public hearing for Vision Appraisal personnel to explain the upcoming town-wide property reevaluation process.

Before Vision Appraisal starts on their listing work, they will hold a public information session. The Town Manager is requesting to proceed with scheduling that meeting for Monday, March 27, at 7:00 p.m. At that meeting, Vision Appraisals will describe what reevaluation is, the process that they will be using, and an explanation on the right and procedures of an appeal. The new values will take effect in 2007.

Motion by Despres and seconded by Cookson to schedule the public hearing for Monday, March 27th at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Office. Vote 7-0.

Item #24 - Consider the Winthrop Chamber of Commerce's request for a Councilor to become a member of their Board of Directors.

Chairman Norris informed the Board that the Winthrop Chamber of Commerce asked him to serve on their Board of Directors. He felt that this should be placed on the agenda and present this request to the whole. The meetings are held once a month at the credit union.

MacDonald moved and Caprara seconded in favor of Chairman Norris serving on this Committee. Vote 3-4 (Yea Norris, Putman, MacDonald; Nay Cookson, Caprara, Despres, Buck. This motion did not pass.

Cookson motioned and Caprara seconded to nominate Jane Despres to be the Council's representative. Vote 7-0.

Item #25 - Consider a Driveway Ordinance.

One of the Council's goals from the 2004 list was to establish a road access management plan. The Town Manager enclosed a draft of the driveway ordinance. KVCOG has

reviewed and commented on this proposal. If it were acceptable, a public hearing and two readings would be scheduled. No objections to proceeding.

Last item, not on the agenda, was a letter from Ellen O'Brien requesting the Town Council to consider getting involved in the selection process for the performing arts center hiring. Motion made Buck and seconded by Despres to have Councilor Caprara and Cookson represent the Council for this purpose.

Councilor MacDonald commented how disappointed he was in the school administration in reference to this. The town spends \$22,000 a year for this and it is not managed very well. The town is not getting much out of this. Councilor Cookson agreed.

Manager's Report

A information sheet from the Maine Townsman was distributed to show the affects of TABOR, (Taxpayers Bill of Rights), possibly on the November ballot.

The town manager has been meeting with Readfield and Cobbossee Watershed on the Maranacook Lake dam transfer.

Superintendent Despres and Town Manager are speaking before the Winthrop Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, March 9th, reviewing current town and school affairs.

Councilor Buck, Dave Smith and Town Manager attended a meeting with the towns of Fayette, Manchester, Readfield and Wayne to discuss a regional public works department. The towns of Manchester, Readfield and Wayne agreed to propose to their Board the hiring of an engineering firm to assist with a study. Funding for the study would come from leftover funds from a Regional Challenge Grant. Recently the town of Readfield voted not to participate. Wayne and Manchester are still going ahead.

Interest payment of \$24,877. on the road construction bond is due and was not in the budget and will be taken from surplus.

Motion by Caprara and seconded by Despres, the meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m. Vote 7-0.