



**Winthrop Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday January 9, 2023**

**7PM**

**17 Highland Avenue  
And Via Zoom**

<https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/82963991337>

Meeting ID: 829 6399 1337

**Executive Session at 6:00 PM**

**Open Session resumes at the conclusion of Executive Session – Approximately 7:00 PM**

**Call To Order – Roll Call**

Chair Sarah Fuller, X Vice-Chair Andy Wess, X  
Councilor Bruce Burns, X Councilor Linda Caprara, X  
Councilor Shannon McDonnell, X Councilor Elizabeth Peters, X  
Councilor James Steele X (via Zoom)

**Item 1** Consideration of entering Executive Session

**Suggested Motion:** Move to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6) (C) Real Property.

**Motion:** Burns      **Second:** Peters      **Vote:** 7/0

**Time Entered:** 6:02 PM

**Item 2** Consideration of leaving Executive Session

**Motion:** Caprara      **Second:** Peters      **Vote:** 7/0

**Time Exit:** 6:19 PM

**Action:**

**Motion:** Move to accept the quick claim deed with covenant for Ted Wiederhorn granting him a 6-foot easement to Cobbossee Lake.

**Motion:** Peters      **Second:** Peters      **Vote:** 7/0

**Item 3** Consideration of entering Executive Session

**Suggested Motion:** Move to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6) (A) Personnel.

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** Caprara            **Vote:** 7/0

**Time Entered:** 6:21 PM

**Item 4** Consideration of leaving Executive Session

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** Caprara            **Vote:** 7/0

**Time Exit:** 6:37 PM

**Action:**

**Motion:** Move to extend Jeffrey Kobrock's, contract to July 5, 2023.

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** Burns            **Vote:** 7/0

**Motion:** Move to accept Maine Municipal Association Executive Search Proposal as presented.

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** Burns            **Vote:** 7/0

**Item 5** Consideration of Council Chairperson for 2023.

Councilor Wess nominated Sarah Fuller, Councilor Peters seconds.

Vote 7/0, Fuller elected Chair.

**Item 6** Consideration of Council Vice-Chairperson for 2023.

Councilor Peters nominates Councilor Wess, Councilor Burns seconds.

Councilor Steele nominates Councilor Caprara, Councilor McDonnell seconds.

Vote 4-3 Wess

Vote 3-4 Caprara

Councilor Wess elected Vice Chair.

**Item 7** Consideration of approving minutes of meetings held [December 5, 2022](#) and sign disbursement warrants – with corrections.

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** Caprara            **Vote:** 7/0

**Item 8** Finance Reports from Previous Month

[Revenues](#) [Expenses](#) [GL Balances](#) [Other Funds](#)

Councilor Steele asked about an ARPA Fund expenditure. Vernice Boyce advised the expense was for a generator installation. Vernice will email Councilor Steele the details of that expense.

**Item 9** Consideration of Council Committee Appointments – Ratification of the Chairperson’s appointments to the Finance and Appointment Committees.

Appointments: Councilors Burns (Chair), Wess and McDonnell

Finance: Councilor Caprara (Chair), Steele and Peters

**Motion:** Wess            **Second:** Caprara            **Vote:** 7/0

**Item 10** Consideration of [Order 2023-01](#) Council Appointments including Assessor, Town Attorney and Auditor.

**Suggested Motion:** Move to approve Order 2023-01 Council Appointments including Assessor, Town Attorney and Auditor and membership on certain Town Boards and Committees.

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** Caprara            **Vote:** 7/0

**Item 11** Consideration of [Order 2023-02](#) - Appointment of Election Workers and Sarah Quimby as Registrar of Voters.

**Suggested Motion:** Move to approve Order 2023-2 - Appointment of Election Workers and Sarah Quimby as Registrar of Voters.

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** McDonnell            **Vote:** 5/1/1 Caprara abstained/Steele opposed.

Chairperson Fuller announced that earlier this evening the Council had an executive session to discuss a personnel matter. The outcome of that meeting is Town Manager Kobrock’s contract was extended to July 5, 2023 at which point he will be leaving.

Town Manager Kobrock read a statement about his six-month notice to the group, which is attached.

**Item 12** Consideration of [Order 2023-03](#) – Granting the Historical Society permission to house, categorize and make accessible certain Town historical documents.

Linda Huff of the Winthrop Historical Society gave an overview of what the Historical Society was hoping to accomplish.

**Motion:** Move to approve Order 2023-3 - Granting the Historical Society permission to house, categorize and make accessible certain town historical documents with a budget amount of \$1000.

**Motion:** Peters            **Second:** Wess            **Vote:** 7/0

**Item 13** Discussion of Motorist Speeding and Possible Responses.

Police Chief Frost spoke about motorist speeding in various areas of town. He spoke how the Police Department has used a speed-measuring device and the results. There was conversation of possible responses or deterrences. Audience members also spoke about their concerns regarding speeding vehicles, especially regarding safety.

**Item 14** Discussion of FY24 Budget Parameters.

Chairperson Fuller advised this is a way for the Council to get our priorities to the managers/department heads as they begin to pull their budgets together for next year.

Due to the uncertainty with the economy, Councilor Caprara would like to see a flat budget.

Councilor Peters would like to see each department come up with at least a 5% reduction.

Councilor Wess feels this is difficult as he supports personnel and the population expects certain services but there is a need to slow down on expenditures especially new expenditures.

Councilor Burns mentioned that the inflation rate is over 8.5% making it difficult to maintain a flat budget. He is in favor of flat spending but increases are sometime inevitable, especially with the costs of services and goods.

Councilor McDonnell feels it is going to be important to understand exactly what our priorities are. She understands it would be good to have a decrease, but at the same time, it is an inflationary period.

**Other Business:**

An audience member spoke about the condition of the sidewalks of Main Street.

**Manager's Report:**

**[Cruiser Purchase](#)**

**Motion:** Move to approve the purchase of the cruiser and also make a provision that the vehicle that is being replaced is put out to bid for purchase of over \$1,000.

**Motion:** Burns      **Second:** Caprara      **Vote:** 7/0

**[School Turf Field](#)**

There is a group that is looking to build an artificial turf field at the Grade School. There will be a Public Forum scheduled on Tuesday, January 10 at 6:00 p.m. in the PAC at the High School.

There will be a more substantial update at an upcoming meeting.

**Suggested Motion:** Move to adjourn meeting at 8:19 pm

**Motion:** Peters      **Second:** Burns      **Vote:** 7/0

### **Statement from Town Manager Jeffrey Kobrock**

I have given my notice to the Town Council this evening. It is a 6 month notice and I hope that period of time is sufficient to find a qualified successor and allow for an effective transition between me and that person. I am also very aware that the next 6 months is one the busiest and important periods of time in the municipal calendar as we develop a budget proposal, transmit it to the Council, conduct an extensive review of the budget, leading to adoption of a budget and finally conduct a referendum for ratification of the School portion of the municipal budget. I am hopeful that the 6 month notice I am providing will position Winthrop to continue the operation of municipal government without a hitch, regardless of this transition in leadership.

I am not pleased to give my notice. It is personally difficult and disruptive to leave my job. I have found the work in Winthrop to be rewarding and challenging. The team at the staff level is truly extraordinary – this community is blessed to have some of the most committed and creative public servants I have ever had the pleasure to work with. My work with the community's leadership – primarily the Town Council, but other leaders in town as well – has been positive, productive and rewarding.

Unfortunately, a small group of residents have adopted a personal mission to attack municipal staff, municipal leadership and municipal government in general. These attacks are personal, hurtful, degrading and deeply disturbing. Municipal staff and leadership are constantly subject to intimidation, harassment, bullying and threats. Some of us have become concerned for our personal safety. As just one example, we are sure to leave these Council meetings as a group, not individually, as the scene in parking lot is sometimes threatening and scary to us.

Over the months of these attacks, bullying and harassment, I have tried to understand the motivations. I have been a public servant my entire working career. I feel very strongly about my obligation to the community I serve. My profession has a strict code of ethics, which I have been proud to not only embrace, but to over-achieve at upholding. I understand that communities are diverse and every point of view has legitimacy and credibility, if we are all seeking to improve our community, to make it better by our actions and efforts. I am sorry to say that those responsible for these ongoing acts of bullying, intimidation and harassment are self-serving – there is no interest in serving our community, only in fostering self-interest.

The work environment I have described is untenable. I have lived through many a crisis, and have sorted through much unpleasantness; it is part of my job and I understand and accept that. But these months of unprecedented harassment and intimidation are unlike anything I have experienced. It has had a profound effect upon my wellbeing – my physical and mental health. I am not a complainer and I am not complaining, I am stating the facts of the current state of affairs in Winthrop. I cannot continue to work under these conditions and I have given a 6-month notice to allow the Council to continue the good of work of leading the community to a much better future than the present state of affairs we find ourselves in. I appreciate the good will and positivity that I have found is the basis of this community and wish sincerely that the community can overcome the extraordinary ill will and self-interest that is driving a very small group of people determined to destroy much of what is good about Winthrop.