

Washington Board of Selectmen's Meeting – November 19, 2012

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. J. Huebner, S. Lennon and M. Case attending for the Board.
2. J. Huebner lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. He made a motion to accept the minutes of 11/ 5/12. M. Case seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
3. J. Huebner welcomed Dr. Cameron, Superintendant of Schools for the Central Berkshire Regional School District (CBRSD) and Mrs. Foster , Business Administrator. Dr. Cameron asked the Board to voice any concerns or questions they might have regarding the schools. J. Huebner mentioned the Collins Report which he had received and asked Dr. Cameron if it was being discussed at the school. Mrs. Foster told the Board that they had received the report and were considering some of the trainings which it recommends. No decisions have been made yet.

Dr. Cameron mentioned that Becket/Washington School has scored in the top quartile for the MCAS statewide. Along with Wahconah it is one of the Districts's two level 1 schools. Becket/Washington is also an Innovation School, working with Columbia University's Teachers College for even greater achievement. Dr. Cameron said that we have good reason to be proud of the schools. The Board agreed and thanked him and his team for their efforts. Dr. Cameron is also working on teacher evaluation and on long term issues with the teachers' union. They are making progress in their discussions and he expects to have a better evaluation model at the end of the process.

J. Huebner asked how we are doing on the capital funding proposal. Dr. Cameron mentioned that he is planning to tap funds soon for urgently needed repairs to the seating in the Whaconah auditorium. This will happen in next 2 months. Some additional projects will be completed this year, others will have to wait. Mrs. Foster said that green repairs will be on the FY 15 budget. The schools have a tight financial situation this year. There will have to be tradeoffs to stay within budget. J. Huebner assured Dr. Cameron that Washington will be supportive of the schools as they are the foundation of the community.

J. Huebner asked about the Voc Ed situation. Dr. Cameron said that asking the towns to each choose their preferred Voc Ed partner school has worked out well and could save the towns some money on transportation. He mentioned that Washington had selected Taconic. Cummington and Peru chose Smith Voc. Hinsdale will send its students to the Pittsfield program. Instructors are excellent at all of the schools. Students are sometimes poorly prepared or ill-suited to the tasks.

Dr. Cameron said that he will return with the draft budget numbers before town meeting. All 7 CBRSD towns meet in February to exchange ideas. This is an important meeting. J. Huebner thanked Dr. Cameron and Mrs. Foster for attending the meeting and they departed.

4. J. Huebner called on E. Bond for an update on any storm repairs and on the installation of the new doors and windows. E. Bond reported that he replaced the storm windows on old town hall. He also replaced the shingles there. He said that the window and door installers are doing a great job. Making good progress. Ed spent time with them to get a streamlined process

in place to install all windows with tight fit. The job is pre-organized so all works well. He also reported that the boiler has been repaired. Flow to the auditorium has been fixed. In addition, he repaired the handicapped ramp.

5. D. Spencer addressed the Board to say he had done some research and believes now that the Town was misleading regarding the Green Communities grant program. It was not made clear to anyone that the stretch building code only applies to new construction in excess of 3000 sq. ft. He believes that this would be acceptable to most people in Town should we decide to put it on the Town Meeting warrant. The Board found this news of great interest and said it would consider placing Green Communities on the warrant a second time.
6. The Board signed the July 30, 2012 Capital Asset Meeting minutes approved last week at the 11/5/12 meeting.
7. Phil Clark gave the Board an update on his work on the Eden Glen hydrologic project. He estimated that overall project cost will be just over a million dollars, but still needed to set project cost details. He will have the application ready for the Board to sign next week. J.Huebner said that he had reviewed draft and it seemed complete. We will only have to take a small amount of private land. The new culvert will be twice the size of current one. It will mitigate issues with plow and road safety that we have now. S. Lennon asked what will happen with the existing dam. P. Clark said that the project does not touch the dam. The new road will be higher and wider and straighter. Some discussion followed on the Parks Commission creating a small park there for swimming. P. Clark reminded the Board that in this grant program the Town has to appropriate the full amt for the project and assume a 25% share. D. Fish said that we make some money from our machinery earnings - use of our equipment on the project. P. Clark said that it is probably best to give total responsibility to the contractor.
8. D. Fish reported that he has the new culvert for Upper Valley Road ready in the garage now. He has help lined up to install it. He has filled Mountain Road potholes today. He received a letter informing him that we were not awarded a MassWorks grant. The Board wondered if the \$750,000 which Senator Ben Downing requested may still be alive. M. Case said that he will check with Downing's office.
9. J. Huebner asked Chief Breen to investigate a report from assessor K.Avalle that someone is burning trash on the Sweet property in the swamp on Cross Place Road. There was discussion among the Board of the assessors' decision to visit all town properties.
10. J. Huebner read into the record the following: A check for \$170.00 for stained glass in the Chapel. Receipt of \$4.00 cash from COA activities.
11. J. Huebner read into the record J.Nelson's summation for publication in the Mass. Central Register of the history of the Town's attempts to sell the Mapleview property. M.G.L. Chapter 30B, Section 16 requires that the Town publish this information to legally dispose of Town property without a new solicitation of proposals. The Planning Board is currently reviewing an offer made by the Viner Brothers. A copy of the complete text is attached to these minutes.
12. The Board will attend a Board of Health training session on 1/8/13 at BRPC in Pittsfield.

13. J. Huebner asked C. Briggs for an update on her work with D. Parnell to close out 2012 accounting. She said that the Town is over by about \$21,000. We have this amount in the bank but can't account for where it came from. So we can't earmark it for the Painting or new doors and windows yet. Discussion followed and the Board wondered if these could be FEMA funds from Hurricane Irene or even from stumpage fees. D. Parnell and C. Briggs are working to clarify the origin of the funds. The Board wants to borrow money so we can cover the recent painting and doors and windows renovation. D. Parnell said that the Town actually has \$45,000 more in the bank than is on the books. After a year that goes to free cash. D. Parnell told the Board that he is waiting for the CIC Innovation grant application to sign. The application must be submitted next Tuesday, 11/27. We are the primary signatory to this grant to develop municipal accounting software. The application will request \$500,000. 40 towns have signed on as participants in the process. This level of support gives credibility to the project. D. Parnell told the Board that he has put aside \$4000 to use toward the project for any costs the Town might incur.
14. J. Huebner mentioned that he is waiting for a proposal from E2 Sol for a solar farm installation in Town.
15. J. Huebner asked C. Briggs to continue to try to get MIIA out to re-appraise the insured value of Town Hall's contents.
16. J. Huebner, in discussion with the Board, completed a Wellness Vision Survey for the Berkshire Public Health Alliance. He indicated that the Town would be interested in: flu clinics, blood pressure screenings, Cholesterol screening and vision screening. If this were to happen we would get the word out through the Tracks, COA and postings on Town bulletin boards. The Board also indicated that we would like to have a community wellness calendar.
17. J. Huebner asked for an update on moving the furniture from Williams College to the Town Hall. S. Lennon said that he plans to do the move next Tuesday, 11/27. He asked D. Fish to rent the largest size U-Haul box truck for the move. He is to drop off the old Town Hall wooden chairs at the Sheriff's Department to be re-finished. The move will take just one day. D. Fish is to bring a crew member to help with the move. J. Hostetter is to accompany them to select the furniture needed at Town Hall.
18. J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter about the food report form. J. Hostetter replied that she had received it. The report is for last year and Valerie Bird will have to complete it. She has agreed to do so. J. Hostetter said that she has to send out the annual permit forms to septic installers and haulers. Some of them have not picked up 2012 permits yet. The Board signed a permit for a 12/16 holiday tree lighting at the Town Park. The event will be family-oriented and feature hot chocolate and cookies for attendees.
19. J. Huebner reported that he had received an estimate from Rose Borgnis, Chapel Committee Chair, in the amount of \$ 2896.00 for repairs to the chapel floor. The Board was not sure if the Chapel Committee has funds to cover this.
20. J. Huebner made a motion to approve the Personnel Handbook. M. Case seconded and the motion carried unanimously. J. Huebner asked C. Briggs to copy the policy description section

of the Handbook and to give a copy to all Town employees, requiring each one to sign a form acknowledging that they had received a copy of the handbook. C. Briggs told him that she had received a request for Tom Soule's records from the Employment Law Center of Western Mass. She also received a request from the Berkshire County Retirement Board for the Town's collective bargaining records. J. Huebner said that we have had no collective bargaining in Town.

21. J. Huebner and Board members discussed the following items briefly:

- a. Berkshire Taconic's annual newsletter.
- b. BRPC list of Committee Volunteers.
- c. 11/29/12 Building Inspector P. Green to inspect Bucksteep.
- d. We have received a Notice of Filing and Public Hearing of WMECO's energy efficiency plan.
- e. J. Nelson to complete Survey on how WMECO handled service recovery after Hurricane Sandy.
- f. D. Fish to review figures on chip seal work in response to statement from MassDOT.
- g. DLTA (District Local Technical Assistance) Grant Program may have funds to disburse for housing needs, 911 improvements, public safety, highway equipment sharing with other towns.
- h. D. Spencer asked how we came to give 5% raises to transfer station, custodian, and accountant. J. Huebner said that it was because we had not done anything for several years. We will have to make up for these raises as they were inadvertently left off the warrant at Town Meeting.
- i. Regarding Maplevue, buyers will have to put up bid bond before renovations. M. Case will have to speak to our agent about this.
- j. The Board discussed giving veterans and elderly a chance to work off part of their property taxes. There is a law in place already on these situations. Finance Committee voted to pursue such a program with Selectmen. At most, residents can work off \$1000 in taxes annually. We would have to set guidelines around this program. J. Huebner agreed to speak about this with the new veterans' agent.
- k. The Town still owes Verizon about 7,000 in pole charges. We will need to schedule a Special Town Meeting to address this and other monetary issues.
- l. J. Huebner signed the Local Support Documentation Form for the CIC grant program for public health nursing through the Berkshire Public Health Alliance.
- m. The Board will meet on 12/4. J. Huebner won't be here the following Monday, 12/10.

22. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn at 9:05. S. Lennon seconded and the motion to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson

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