

Washington Board of Selectmen's Meeting – March 4, 2013

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present for the Board were J. Huebner, S. Lennon and M. Case.
2. After leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from 2/25/13. M. Case seconded that motion and the motion passed unanimously.
3. D. Spencer addressed the Board on the issue of the winter roads budget. He asked the Board to approve an overrun for winter roads. We need \$25,000 currently. We budgeted a total of \$95,000. We are at \$120,000 for winter roads right now. He made the point that we need to approve an overrun in advance, not after the fact. D. Fish told the Board that materials and other costs have gone up more than he expected. Also, it has been a snowier winter than last year. He had a number of unexpected equipment repairs that added to costs. According to D. Spencer there may be MEMA money coming in, but that doesn't count toward winter roads. For FY 13 we have to cover the overrun. FY 14 will be higher and we need to budget for that in advance.

J. Huebner made a motion to approve funds to cover the winter roads budget overrun. M. Case seconded and the vote was unanimous. J. Huebner asked how to best estimate the increase we will need. After discussion most felt that the best yardstick was to look at past budgets and this year's actuals and base the increase on that data. D. Fish said that he wants to switch to the bridges and roads budget next week. He observed that we had FEMA money the past 2 years. D. Spencer urged again that going forward must budget higher for FY 14 for winter roads. D. Spencer has to get numbers in to the state as soon as possible. J. Huebner said with free cash we are at \$113,000 presently and expect a carryover of \$71,000 going into FY 14. So we can put back the funds from Stabilization used at the STM at the ATM and likely be able to use excess free cash to reduce the tax rate. We can schedule a Special Town Meeting for this in the Fall. The Board will continue the highway budget discussion at next week's joint Selectmen, Finance and Capital Assets meeting.

4. J. Huebner read the list of Town officials up for re-election this year and reminded any present that they must take out their papers right away. He proposed moving the 3 upcoming elections to the date set for the Senate special election. That would be more convenient for residents, would probably generate more interest and higher turnout. It would also save money for the Town. A. Mikaniewicz however, said that it is too late to make this change because of the number of days allotted to candidates for taking out papers and collecting signatures.
5. J. Huebner reported receipt of a check from Waste Management for \$524.33. This is the Town's rebate for Total Tons recycled for the period July 2012 to December 2012. The check was accompanied by our account activity report for each of the 6 months.
6. J. Huebner provided a copy of the Central Berkshire Regional School District FY 12 Annual Audit performed by Scanlon & Associates, Certified Public Accountants, for the Town's administrative record.

7. J. Huebner reported receiving an invitation to the BCBOHA Spring Dinner to be held on April 22.
8. J. Huebner asked S. Lennon if he had been able to speak with the county Sheriff about the Town's substantially increased assessment for 911 service this year. The new assessment is for \$8287.00. S. Lennon had not contacted the Sheriff yet. In the ensuing discussion it was suggested that we investigate the cost of switching to the Hinsdale/Dalton dispatcher for 911 service as an alternative. J. Huebner asked S. Lennon to look into this.
9. J. Huebner asked D. Fish if he had called the BRPC to discuss their proposed survey of the Town's roads. D. Fish had not yet done so. J. Huebner suggested that the survey would give us professional documentation of the roads' condition to use in grant applications, RFP's etc.
10. A Town resident in need of an electrical inspection asked the Board if there was an alternative inspector she could call on for this work besides J. LaPier, our appointed inspector. She said that she did not want J. LaPier in her house. The Board told her that we do not have a back-up electrical inspector. They suggested she speak with our building inspector, P. Greene to see if we can legally use an electrical inspector from another town. Becket had been suggested. She agreed to do so.
11. The Board reviewed forms which D. Fish submitted to them today requesting raises for the 2 men on the Highway crew. Adam Southard would be raised to \$16/hour and Tom Johnson to \$17/hr. J. Huebner observed that D. Fish had not done the 3 or 6 month evaluations for either man. Both were hired within the past 8 months. D. Fish should have done the interim appraisals. D. Fish said he would check his work logs to see if he had done this. J. Huebner told D. Fish that the raises would start in July. D. Fish wanted them to start now. J. Huebner made a motion to accept the raises starting in the new fiscal year. M. Case seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. He directed D. Fish to file the paperwork with C. Briggs.
12. J. Huebner raised the subject of the Town's TIP application. We are no longer on the Federal funds list for repairs to Washington Mountain Road. He protested this decision last week to DOT. He got a call back on this issue and they are reconsidering the decision. He is drafting a letter to the Secretary of Transportation, Richard Davey, detailing the road's importance to Washington, Becket and Dalton. He will copy our legislative delegation and the Dalton and Becket Selectmen on this letter. He wondered if this is a sensitive subject at DOT. Discussion followed about the state's expenditure doing a survey of the road in 1998 which never resulted in any actual road improvements. State crews worked on the survey for 3 or 4 months. The state can't yet clarify just what sort of work was done. S. Conners suggested that the Board speak with Craig Willis for background on this project. The Governor is proposing an additional \$100,000,000 for roads. We need to know just what type of work at what cost we will need to bring the road up to a good condition that will last for many years.
13. J. Huebner reported that he had heard from the Dalton Select Board that they will post the Blotz Road signs this Spring. He is still communicating with Hinsdale on this matter.
14. J. Huebner had talked with E2Sol and told them that the Board is looking at its options for a solar partner. He had looked at the Hampshire Council of Government's plan.
15. C. Briggs will speak with Town Counsel on Friday about Mapleview auction.

16. M. Case reported that he had talked with the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs about training for our new Veterans' agent. They will send someone up here to do the training. He needs a letter to the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs confirming the new agent's appointment.
17. D. Spencer confirmed for J. Huebner that the Town no longer keeps its own unemployment account. We have gone over to the standard state unemployment fund.
18. D.Fish will research the cost of using inexpensive track cell phones for the road crew as there are spots in Town where the radios do not receive a signal. He will look into the cost.
19. S. Lennon reported that the town offices have taken all the furniture they need from the items stored in the auditorium. and received from Williams College. It was decided that the surplus would be offered to the residents in the free room at the Transfer Station.
20. J. Hostetter reported to the Board that she had updated the MAHB profile online. She also mentioned that M. Jarvie is all set with her registration for Certification with the state DOR. The Personnel Handbook is being printed at Staples. Job descriptions will be added as an addendum. The Administrative Assistants are working on a possible project for the Public Health mini-grant. Town officials are requesting mail slots be cut into their doors rather than having the mail slid under the doors as is now done. E. Bond said that he would see that this was done and that it would probably cost \$150.00 - \$300.00 max. M. Case made a motion to approve this expenditure. J. Huebner seconded and the motion passed unanimously. We received a registered mail receipt confirming that CSX did receive our letter and claim form. J. Hostetter is working on the annual report and needs the Board's letters for June 2011 and June 2012.
21. J. Huebner reported receiving an invitation for the Selectmen's Dinner to be held at Waconah Country Club on April 4. State Representative Neal will be the speaker. All the Selectmen and Chief Breen will attend. Chief Breen will buy the raffle gift.
22. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 pm. M. Case seconded and the motion to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson

