

## Washington Board of Selectmen's Meeting – March 18, 2013

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending 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 March 11, 2013. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
3. At the request of the Board P. Greene, the Building Inspector was in attendance. J. Huebner initiated a discussion of the process for issuing building permits in Town. He asked if the Board should be updated regularly on permits issued or pending. He mentioned that there has been some controversy over the issuance of a building permit for the large accessory building on the grounds of a residence at 227 Schulze Road. The Board had no information about that permit and was unable to respond to residents' concerns. J. Huebner asked P. Greene if the Conservation Commission needs to sign off on building permits. P. Greene replied that if he observes any issues with the site he will bring in the Conservation Commission. He issued the permit at 227 Schulze Road because he saw no problems. He was told by the resident that this accessory building was to be used for storage. He might sell items on Ebay, using it as a warehouse. P. Greene said that he took this at face value. It was clearly a by-right accessory building. There was no running water at the building. There were no bedrooms or bathrooms that would trigger the need for a special permit. Nor did the size of the building trigger need for a special permit. If the resident is using the building for more than he was told then he would have to look at it again.

J. Huebner asked about the alleged firing range on the Pugzee's Farm property. P. Greene said that he had inspected all of that property. The Conservation Commission had been involved. Mr. Shapira corrected the one violation they pointed out. P. Greene found no violations of our by-laws there. He said that the planning Board could review the firing range issue, but Mr. Shapira could fight it. The Planning Board could issue a special permit with restrictions like number of individuals using the property at one time. They should ask Mr. Shapira to make clear what he is doing with his property. P. Greene tries to avoid the appeal process. He tries to show people how to be in compliance.

J. Huebner asked him to describe the processing of the building permits. P. Greene said that after he signs the permit it goes to the Assessor's Office. He also issues the Certificate of Occupancy when the construction is complete. He said that Jodi could get copies of the permits to keep the Board up to date. He has permits from 2011 up to the present in one large box. J. Huebner asked Jodi to make copies of all new permits and put them in the Select Board folders. D. Fish asked if he would inspect new construction for curb cuts. P. Greene said he is happy to inspect these if the Town wants him to.

4. K. Sharp asked the Board to clarify why the Town's school assessment has gone up so sharply. J. Huebner told him that the finance committee will join the meeting in a few minutes and can respond to his question in detail at that time. J. Huebner also

suggested that he could call the school department for this information and gave him the phone number. M. Case told K. Sharp the state sets the assessment and that the complex formula used includes many more factors than just the number of students enrolled for each town. A major element of the formula is the wealth of the town. One wealthy resident can push up the assessment. In our case this is James Taylor. K. Sharp thanked M. Case for this information and said that it answered his question. He also asked the Board when Chief Breen would retire. J. Huebner replied that it would be in July of this year, which would be fiscal year 2014.

5. Resident John Love asked the Board about the old Lesey property on Route 8 which has been vacant for a couple of years. He asked about any usage restriction on the property as it has a failed septic system. He wondered if he could use it for general storage. The Board told him that he would need Planning Board approval and doubted it could be used without having the septic repaired. They suggested he speak with the Building Inspector.
6. At 7:30 J. Huebner recognized representatives from the Becket Athenaeum who were scheduled to address the Board about the Town's assessment for this year. The library serves both Becket and Washington. Representing the library were Cathy DeFoe, Purr McEwen and Marion Wallington. They distributed a report on the financial status of the library to the Board and all attendees. The report indicated clearly that the library is in great need of funds. The state has reduced their allotment and usage has increased. They have many volunteers, a small endowment at Berkshire Taconic, do fund-raising and apply for many grants to support their community programs, but still fall short. They have had to draw on the endowment to support operations for the past 2 years and cannot continue to do so. They requested an increase in the Town's support from \$5000 to \$7500.

They are an association library, not fully town owned or supported. They do fund-raising and grant-writing. Their after school program is very important to the community. There are 16 children in the program. All programs are free. The library has been designated as a model for small libraries. This past year they had many unavoidable building maintenance expenses. They are #1 in grant-writing for libraries in Berkshire County. They also offer free wifi internet. Resident Will Beemer spoke in support of the Athenaeum. He said it is the cultural hub of Town. J. Huebner voiced the Board's strong support for the library. The Board can't make the funding decision though. It will be on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting in May. The women from the Athenaeum offered to come present at our ATM. It was suggested that they put the information from their report in the next Washington Tracks. All agreed that was an excellent idea. They will do so.

7. K. Walls announced that he will be stepping down from the Planning Board. He will continue on the Conservation Commission. This leaves one opening on the Planning Board.

8. D. Parnell asked the Board for information on the Emergency Preparedness Grant procured for the Town by former Board of Health Agent Valerie Bird. He needs to know the intent of the grant and what the funds were to be used for. He has about \$3900 in that account. He believes the funds were received in April/ May of 2011. He would like to use the money for the new emergency light. D. Parnell also mentioned that he received a couple of bills at the last minute from Chief Breen. Some of this is for dog food used by the Chief in his duties as animal officer. Additionally he has a large bill from unemployment. We still pay unemployment compensation out of our budget. J. Huebner asked C. Briggs to switch the Town to participation in the standard Massachusetts Unemployment scheme.
9. D. Fish wants to re-pave a large portion of the parking lot behind Town Hall. He can't use Chapter 90 money for this project. He estimated the cost at \$15,000. J. Huebner asked to get a couple of quotes and report to the Board on this.
10. D Parnell told the Board that the Town has over \$130,000 free cash certified by the state. We can transfer funds within accounts. He can now transfer funds from Road and Bridge to cover winter roads. E. Bond asked the Board for a vote to transfer money so that he can get paid. J.Huebner made a motion to transfer \$2300 from Building Maintenance to Building Repair to reimburse Ed Bond. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously. D. Spencer made the same motion for the Finance Committee. D. Weisbrod seconded and the motion passed unanimously. D. Parnell asked the Board to approve his contacting the Town Auditor, Glen Grogan, to get started on the audit. The Board agreed to this request.
11. J. Huebner announced that Dr. Cameron of CBRSD will attend the meeting on 3/25. He will present the FY 14 school budget and respond to questions. CBRSD is putting forth a capital package of long term bonding. There will be eight capital projects listed. Becket Washington School is budgeted for \$20,000. These funds will be spent on new playground equipment. The capital projects will all go forward unless one of the towns objects. The towns can choose not to vote. The list of Capital Projects is attached to these minutes.
12. J. Huebner reported receiving an invoice from Phil Clark for his work on the CSX issues in the amount of \$460.00. D. Spencer said that it should be paid from the Highway Department's Road and Bridge budget. The Board agreed.
13. J. Huebner reviewed Open Action Items before the Board as follows: The Administrative Assistants will continue work on the job descriptions for the Personnel Handbook as well as completing the Board of Health Mini-Grant application; D. Fish does not see any merit in contracting for the BRPC road survey and will not do so; J. Huebner sent the letter to Mr. Davey at DOT making our case for needing funding for Mountain Road repairs. We need about \$2,000,000. He and Mike Case attended the Mass. DOT District 1 meeting in Lenox and spoke with Mr. Davey personally about our pressing need for the funding. He acknowledged the urgency of our situation and indicated that there were ways to make the funding happen. Rep. Pignatelli spoke out in support of our

need for funding. Copies of the letter were sent to Sen. Downing, Rep. Neal and to Dalton and Becket Selectmen as well as Frank DePaola Administrator DOT Highway Div., Clinton Bench DOT, Mark Moore DOT, Nat Karns BRPC and Rep. Pignatelli. Mass DOT continues unable to locate any records on the work it did on the Mountain Road in the late 1980's.

14. Mike Burke asked if Hinsdale still pays us to plow their roads. D. Fish replied that we still do so. The Town bills Hinsdale about \$5-6,000 per season. D. Fish said that he could pave Kirchner Road with some of this year's Chapter money if we don't get enough funding to deal with Mountain Road.
15. S. Lennon reported that he had spoken with the Sheriff's office about the increase in the Town's assessment for 911 service. That increase is about 10%. S. Lennon was told that the 911 funding from the state has been drastically cut back. The Sheriff's office is going to the state for more money to cover the 911 program.
16. C. Briggs spoke with Town Counsel about the Maplevue auction. Discussion about the minimum bid followed. The Town was considering a minimum bid of \$1000. That however will not even cover the legal fees. M. Case suggested a minimum bid of \$5000. J. Huebner emphasized that our goal is to get the property on the tax rolls. It would have to be re-assessed. We will spend more money on advertising this time with a larger ad in the Eagle. J. Huebner asked C. Briggs get an estimate of the cost for advertising.
17. C. Briggs told the Board that J. La Pier has sent in a group of checks from as far back as 2006. We owe him \$1500.00 for his electrical inspection services. D. Spencer said that we can raise the revolving account limit to cover this. J. Huebner made a motion to raise J. La Pier, Electrical Inspector, account to \$2000. M. Case seconded and the vote was unanimous.
18. J. Huebner reported that E. Bond had finished installing mail slots in the office doors.
19. J. Huebner had finished writing the Selectmen's report for the 2012 Annual Report. He made a motion to accept the Selectmen's report. S. Lennon seconded and the vote to accept was unanimous.
20. J. Huebner expects to receive an expanded proposal from E2SOL next week.
21. Karen Avalle has requested remote access to the Assessors' computer system as she does some work from her home. J. Les has said that this is not recommended.
22. J. Huebner briefly reviewed the following correspondence and issues:
  - a. Notice from the MMA for a \$2000 Management Course. The Board had no interest at that price.

- b. Notices of 2 public hearings from the Lee Planning Board for April 8<sup>th</sup>. Posted on the Town Hall bulletin Board.
- c. Westfield Wild and Scenic meeting to be held on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at the Notchview Reservation in Windsor. Posted Notice and minutes on the Town Hall Bulletin Board.
- d. Correspondence from Dominion Energy wanting to sell us electricity
- e. C. Briggs has delivered most of the personnel handbooks.
- f. J. Hostetter expects to have the Annual Reports for 2010, 2011 and 2012 ready to distribute at the Annual Town Meeting.
- g. J. Nelson to attend the Mass Buys Expo in Worcester on May 2 to learn about new services, products and contractors available to state municipalities
- h. E. Bond will not be taking out papers to continue serving as Town Moderator.
- i. J. Huebner will contact Ed Fahey to schedule a Board of Health meeting.
- j. S. Lennon and Chief Breen will attend the WMECO Emergency Planning dinner at the Crowne Plaza.
- k. V. Breen bought selectmen's gift for the drawing at the annual Selectmen's Dinner. Cost at \$55.00 was \$5.00 more than last year. Board approved the expenditure.
- l. J. Huebner reported that the Town received a certified letter from M. Newton's attorney regarding his client's auto accident with Tom Soules. He claims that T. Soules caused the accident and was a negligent operator. He wants \$1370.00 from the Town. V. Breen told the Board that he never received any accident reports from either of them.
- m. Chief Breen will retire on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014. He will submit a transition plan prior to that date. He has identified 2 excellent candidates in Town for his replacement as active chief. He would like to stay on as administrative chief. The Board will take his recommendations under advisement and will manage the process when the time comes.

23. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 pp. M. Case seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

Minutes written by J. Nelson

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