

## Washington Board of Selectmen's Meeting – March 25, 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 approve the minutes from March 18, 2013. M. Case seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
3. J. Huebner asked C. Briggs to enroll Washington in the state unemployment system and she agreed to do this. C. Briggs told the Board that she had sent former Health Agent, Valerie Bird, the information requested on the OBRA retirement fund. J. Huebner asked her if she had been able to get any information on the cost of advertising the auction of Maplevue. C. Briggs had not been able to do this yet. She had received many forms to review and complete for the auction from Town Counsel and will work on these. She raised the subject of converting to a bi-weekly payroll schedule. This would save the Town a substantial amount of money. The Board agreed and asked her to look into doing this.
4. Several attendees spoke to the Board about the number of dangerous “dips” developing in roads all over Town. These “dips” develop over culvert pipes which sink over the winter. It was asked that the Highway Department get on this right away and fill these with sand or gravel and place colored cones to mark them. The “dip” on Lower Valley Road was cited by several people as being especially hazardous. D. Fish was unable to attend the meeting and H J. Huebner said he would inform him of these complaints.
5. J. Hostetter told the Board that she had had a telephone message from a man who complained that a dip in a Town road had punctured his son's oil pan. He has filed an insurance claim. The caller, Mr. Patel, said that the damage occurred on Washington Mountain Road. His son was driving past Bucksteep and hit the dip as he crossed over a culvert.
6. J. Hostetter confirmed to the Board that no job descriptions have been written yet for the Handbook appendix. She and J. Nelson have been working on the Public Health Mini-Grant Application which was submitted this afternoon. J. Huebner told her that the Board of Health meeting may be on April 8. He is waiting for a fee schedule from BRHA . He asked about the missing emergency preparedness grant information. She was able to locate it in the Treasurer's files and has passed the information along to Accounting Officer D. Parnell. She also gave a copy to the Town Clerk to give to P. Mikaniewicz.
7. Chief Breen reminded the Board about the WMECO emergency responders meeting on Wednesday evening at the Crown Plaza. In addition to Chief Breen only Selectman S. Lennon would be attending for the Town.

8. E. Bond and C. Wilis asked the Board how we will conduct the Mapleview auction. J. Huebner told him that C. Briggs will be handling that process advised by Town Counsel. It will be a live auction with a minimum bid run by a professional auctioneer.
9. Paul Desautels of Schulze road complained to the Board about flooding at the end of his driveway. He wondered if the responsibility for repairs was his or the Town's. J. Huebner told him that it is his responsibility, but the town will try to be sure roadway flooding wasn't contributing to the problem.
10. F. Kennedy advised the Board against opening the computer network in Town Hall for remote access. Karen Avalle of the Assessor's Office had requested this so that she could access her office computer from home. She does a good deal of work at home. This would pose a security threat for the Town's network unless Karen had a very secure computer at her home. Jon Les also advised against this. F. Kennedy said that she could possibly achieve secure access from home using Virtual Private Network software (VPN). This would connect her directly to her office computer without using the network at Town Hall. Only Frank has the password for Town Hall. J. Huebner informed K. Avalle of this discussion.
11. J. Huebner recognized Dr. Cameron, Superintendent of the Central Berkshire Regional School District (CBRSD). Dr. Cameron thanked the Board for the opportunity to address them on the subject of the FY14 school budget. He mentioned that he is not accompanied by the financial officer but would do his best to answer the Board's questions. He distributed copies of the budget charts to attendees before his remarks. . Attending from the Town Finance Committee were D. Spencer. M. Burke and D. Weisbrod. In summary the Total Capital Budget for Becket/ Washington School, Nessacus and Wahconah will be \$ 61,602.00. The total assessment including Capital assessment, Transportation Assessment and Operating Assessment for CBRSD will be \$636,070. Assessment to the seven district towns overall will be less than a 1% increase. CBRSD is reducing the number of number positions by 6.5 individuals in FY14. The District has benefitted from electrical usage savings and also savings on fuel charges. They get discounts on monthly fuel transport and a volume discount on gas. He explained that there is a complex formula used for computing each town's assessment. Revenue anticipated from the state is \$25,814,865. The School Committee has recommended a list of eight proposed capital projects. \$22,693 is Washington's total bill for all 8 projects.

On April 11<sup>th</sup> the final vote on capital projects will be taken by the School Committee. If any town chooses not to vote on any of the proposed projects, it does not count as a vote against. Dalton has voted in support of all 8 projects. J. Huebner voiced support for CBRSD'S planning for infrastructure. He cited sidewalk problems, old chairs and fire hazards. D. Spencer asked about the status of the Excess and Deficiency funding. Dr. Cameron said they have been anticipating that contingency funding needs to be

increased. J. Huebner asked how much is left in Excess and Deficiency. Dr. Cameron explained that all D&E finds have been expended for FY13. This drops reserves to zero until new funding comes in from the state. The District does have access to emergency funds in case they are needed. After June 30 E&D will be approximately \$750,000. D. Spencer asked about the \$20,000 item for playground equipment at Becket Washington School. Dr. Cameron said that the current equipment is unsafe, creating liability issues. D. Spencer said that he expects push back from the Town on this. He asked if the playground equipment left at Town Hall from Headstart could be used. Dr. Cameron will look into this.

J. Huebner made a motion for the Board to support all 8 of the Capital Projects. D. Spencer made an objection to this. He said that the Town had never before approved the Capital Projects before Town Meeting and there was no reason to change that now. Not voting for the projects is not a vote against them and is a more comfortable position for the Town. It is a mistake to do anything that looks like an endorsement. J. Huebner, in consideration of this counsel, withdrew the motion. D. Cameron said that he appreciates the Town's support. He will provide the budget booklet soon to distribute. Changes in enrollment in Voc Ed are a major factor in our increase in assessment. There will no longer be choice of Voc Ed schools. Washington students will have to go to Pittsfield or Taconic. Smith and McCann will no longer be options for our students. Dr. Cameron said that he will attend our Annual Town Meeting.

12. The Board signed M. Beemer's application for a permit to hold a Village Coop pot luck dinner on April 7<sup>th</sup>. Fee will be waived.
13. M. Burke asked about the agreement with Becket on transporting students in our van. J. Huebner told him that this is a good deal for the Town. Becket pays rent and insurance for the vehicle. They do all the maintenance and repairs. We make money on this arrangement.
14. J. Huebner asked K. Avalle about the business tax bills she sent out recently. Karen said that she only sent out 18 of these. Using the only list of businesses she could find, she sent the bills out to the businesses listed on the back of the Tracks. She said that we can set up exemptions to be approved at town meeting. J. Huebner told her that we are working with the Planning Board to create a roster of all businesses in town. We are not ready yet to be sending out tax bills to them. K. Avalle said that DOR is looking for this money now. She deals with a Mr. Reynolds at DOR. This levy taxes personal property like equipment, computers. J. Huebner said that he will contact DOR for further information and that we need to make this a ballot issue. J. Huebner asked Karen to write an explanation of the details of this business tax for Tracks. K. Avalle said that we should have been paying this tax all along.
15. J. Huebner asked S. Lennon about the 911 communication services. Sheriff's office told him that the state might fund the 911 service.

16. J. Huebner made a motion to accept the monthly Selectmen’s letter. M. Case seconded and the vote to accept was unanimous. He asked J. Nelson to forward the letter as amended by her to Lisa for publication in Tracks.

17. J. Huebner briefly reviewed the following correspondence:

- a. A letter received from ISO thanking Paul Greene for his cooperation during their Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule Survey. Give to P. Greene
- b. A brochure on the Annual Northeast Re-Cycling Conference and Expo, June 4 and 5 in Manchester , NH. Give to M. Lampro.
- c. J. Nelson to add all Board names to signature line in email to Smitty Pignatelli regarding Mass. Taxes and to send Smitty that email copying the Finance Committee

18. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45pm. S. Lennon seconded and the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

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

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

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

Minutes written by J. Nelson