

Washington Board of Selectmen's Meeting – April 8, 2013

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner and M. Case.
2. After he led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from April 1, 2013/ M. Case seconded the motion and the vote to accept was unanimous.
3. Chief Breen told the Board that he had spoken to police chiefs in Dalton and Becket about our request for accident data on the Washington Mountain Road. They told him they will check their files and give him whatever information they have. He will visit the county Sheriff and ask for accident data available from his office.
4. Michelle Beemer addressed the Board about changes in the Postal Service's handling of Tracks mailings. She has been informed that there will be no more bulk mailings out of Becket after May 1 this year. She and Lisa will put together the April Tracks early to beat this deadline. She visited the Post Office to inquire about the new system and learned that we can use our permit until it expires, then we must use a new Pittsfield number. The new mailings of Tracks will have to be sealed and be bar coded. She contacted Zip and Sort in Pittsfield and got a quote for doing the whole label, fold, seal and mail process. The cost would be \$50 to process what we have now. She would still copy it off and then bring the Tracks to them. Any other mailings in town will have to use the new Postal Service process. We can switch to the new process easily at Zip and Sort. She estimated that we will need a budget of \$2000 for Tracks. The Board made note of this. Zip and Sort could invoice the Town directly. Michelle will leave for vacation in early May.
5. Raising the subject of taxing businesses in Town, D. Spencer asked how we are to distinguish business from personal use if there is shared use on equipment. This would be dual use and would complicate taxes. If you expense or depreciate it you can take a deduction. Our proposed \$10,000 exemption will take care of small businesses. But for the larger businesses it is a confusing situation right now. We have to get it sorted.
6. J. Huebner reported that we have 2 applicants for voc ed currently. One is for McCann and one is for Taconic. McCann may not be allowed under the new district rules.
7. A young man from Pittsfield asked the Board if he can run a business out of his father's home in Washington. He only wants to use his father's mailing address. He needs a street address to open a business acct. He will stay at his father's house on a regular basis if that is required. He might want to store some equipment there later. The Board told him that using the mailing address would be allowed but storing business items

might not be. We are actively reviewing the by-laws governing business in town and they will affect what he can and cannot do. The business tax rate is the same as the property tax rate.

8. J. Huebner asked C. Briggs for her update. She received the claim for damage to Mr. Patel's son's car on Washington Mt. Road. She is investigating switching to a bi-weekly payroll. She is most concerned about its effect on the Highway department staff and will talk to Dave Fish about this. This would save the Highway budget several hundred dollars a year. She would like to do the payroll switch-over at the end of this year. She is working on enrolling the Town in Mass. unemployment.
9. J. Huebner received information about a grant for various law enforcement programs through the Executive Office of Safety and Security. This information will go to Chief Breen.
10. E. Bond informed the Board that he will schedule the auditorium west wall repair work to be done by Campora Construction under their bid of \$9,900. He talked to D. Fish about re-paving the rear Town Hall parking lot. D. Fish will have to work around the handicapped ramp. D. Fish to get estimates. D. Spencer asked where we will get money for this paving work. It could come out of Building Maintenance, but we need to try the state first. E. Bond also told the Board that the roof on the Old Town Hall needs to be replaced. This will have to be delayed until we can get funding. J. Nelson to look into available historical grants.
11. J. Huebner acknowledged that J. Hostetter had sent a letter to CSX inquiring about the status of payment for our claim regarding their damage to Upper Valley Road.
12. J. Huebner reported that he had received notice from the state that the Town will receive \$294,620 for Chapter 90 funding under the proposed transportation bill. This represents a significant increase in our funds. After some discussion residents seemed to feel that the Governor's budget may not get passed in its current state and that we are unlikely to get this much funding. J. Huebner asked D. Fish to talk to P. Clark about a Notice of Intent for the drainage work to be done on the Mountain Road. D. Fish said that he also wants to do milling and fill on Kirchner Rd. He will ask C. Stevens and Mark Moore about funding. He will also do some chip sealing.
13. J. Huebner reported that he had no response again from Roy Bryan about Westfield Wild and Scenic partially funding repairs to the Cross Place Road culvert.
14. At 7:30 pm the Board suspended the Selectmen's meeting to call to order a Board of Health Meeting.
15. At 8:00 pm the Board reconvened the Selectmen's meeting.

16. J. Huebner asked D. Spencer to review the draft budget from the top. In addition to D. Spencer, D. Weisbrod, and P. Borgnis from the Finance Committee were attending. J. Huebner asked why we are so much over budget this year. D. Spencer said that one of the reasons is that the Highway Department estimates have been too low and another reason is that costs generally have been rising. The highway crew was approved for a small raise of \$2.00 and \$1.00 per hour. We are still below most other towns. J. Huebner said we should give D. Fish another \$1/hr. D. Spencer cited a 12% increase in Road and Bridge budget. Winter Roads budget will need a 42% increase. The total of all other Town salaries is \$25,000. D. Spencer proceeded to review in detail all figures from his draft of the FY14 budget. Among the items discussed were:

- a. Small raise for Town Treasurer
- b. Great effort made by CBRSD to control costs while keeping excellent teachers
- c. Building maintenance for Garage
- d. Replace oldest highway truck now
- e. Get second quote on fuel tanks for Highway Department
- f. Realistic estimate for highway budget – Ch. 90 funds expected
- g. Town health insurance coverage cost. Will increase next year.
- h. Property tax break for Vets and elderly by working for town
- i. Accounting software cost
- j. Income from permits and fees
- k. MOU needed to confirm shared costs with Becket – Athenaeum, beach, school transport, fire department
- l. Property tax increase
- m. Transfer free cash into stabilization for later use

17. D. Spencer to update his draft and send it to J. Hostetter for typing into Annual Town Meeting Warrant draft.

18. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 pm. M. Case seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson