

## Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen - August 7, 2013

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, Shaun Lennon and Mike Case.
2. After leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of July 29, 2013. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
3. The Board recognized representatives of the Mass. Broadband Institute (MBI) who were in attendance to update the Town on their progress building the broadband network which will connect all western Mass. towns to high speed internet. Attending for MBI was Donna Baron, Program Director. Accompanying her were Frederick Feit of Axia Networks, the contractor responsible for operating the network and technical consultant George Brodeur of BNC Consulting Services.

D. Baron provided a quick overview of MBI status. MBI is now completing construction of 1,200 miles of new fiber optic network. This is a state and federally funded project. All 120 towns are being connected to the network at their designated Community Anchor Institutions (CAI's). Typical CAI's are schools, libraries, police and fire stations, hospitals and government buildings. We have only one CAI in Washington and that is our Town Hall. MBI provided a map showing the footprint of the project throughout western Mass., with detail on Washington. This will be posted on the bulletin board at Town Hall.

Currently our only connection to the network is at Town Hall and serves only Town Hall. It will be "live" in December. Connection of the "last mile" to our homes and businesses is still a couple of years away. D. Baron explained that MBI expects to receive \$40 million that the Governor has appropriated toward building the last mile once it passes successfully through the approvals process in Boston. They may not have this money until next summer. Funds in addition to the \$40 million will have to be raised to complete the project. Some of these funds are likely to come in the form of a federal loan. D. Baron mentioned that MBI is working closely with WiredWest, which represents 42 member towns, to complete the last mile of the project. Steve Nelson, Washington's delegate to WiredWest, emphasized how important the Governor's support has been for this vital project. He will be keeping residents informed about progress toward completion of the last mile and any public meetings about it through the Tracks.

Fred Feit of Axia explained that their job will include taking of care of system outages caused by storms. They maintain the switches throughout the network. They can configure the service to our requirements. Mr. Feit encouraged the Town to use our network connection at Town Hall for phone service in addition to internet. This will probably result in a cost saving for the town. The Board will ask the accounting officer to look into our current costs. The Emergency Office of Public Service and Security ( EOPS )will use our connection even if we do not. The line will be brought to the police office. It will provide a much faster connection for police business. The Voter Registration System will also use our connection.

Several residents asked the Board if the Town might make the Town Hall broadband connection available to the public on any basis. The Board will review the pros and cons of this request and will research the economics of switching service provider for telephone and internet in Town

Hall. The Board thanked MBI for their presentation and asked to be kept informed on the details of building out the last mile.

4. Dick Grillon asked the Board about the term of his appointment as sexton. They confirmed that he has a one year appointment. He was appointed and approved during Annual Town Meeting. S. Lennon is the attendant. He told the Board that he needs to do repairs to wash-outs in the cemetery. The Board told him D. Fish can take care of the wash-outs. Any repairs to the columbarian wall will be very costly. The neighbors object to the wall. He reported that there is a lot of space in the cemetery for burials. There is additional space on West Branch Road that could be used for burials. Pittsfield had agreed to give the Town 5 acres within their watershed for additional cemetery space, but later reneged. Mike Case to follow up on this with the current Pittsfield Mayor. J. Huebner said that we should have a plan for the future use of the town cemeteries. D. Grillon also asked the Board for the use of 12 metal chairs for the Sons and Daughters. The Board approved his request. D. Spencer said that the cemetery fund has a total of \$8500 available.
5. J. Huebner reported that he had received a letter from Peter Niles of DOT concerning Washington Mountain Road. Berkshire Regional Planning is doing a traffic count on the road. He will contact P. Niles when the count is completed in September. M. Case mentioned that he had spoken with Ben Downing recently and that Sen. Downing had said that we are still on the list to get additional funding for the road. The Board doubted that anything will come of this legislation.
6. J. Hostetter told the Board that she has received most of the Town employee job descriptions. Dan Parnell and the Treasurer are working on theirs, as is Allison. He asked her to follow up with the state ethics board. Regarding the annual reports, she said that 2011 is finished. She is still waiting for 2012 information from several managers. She has briefed John Les on the web situation and given him all the paperwork from F. Kennedy. F. Kennedy offered to train her to manage the web site in order to keep that work in town. She would be very interested in doing this. J. Huebner asked her to work with J. Les and F. Kennedy to gain the skills to be a backup on the town web site. J. Les is sending the Board a proposal. She spoke with Heidi Nugent and learned that the yoga class is happy with the way the auditorium has been arranged for their use. The exercise class is happy also that their chairs are easily available and the space is more than adequate. They believe that the space is being fairly shared.
7. The Board received a note from P. Clark about the drainage work on Washington Mountain Road. He had checked records and reported that the Highway Department has intruded on the Drugmond's property and on state land. He met with the power company about moving poles. The culvert under the driveway has been replaced. P. Clark gave the Board a quote on the survey work.
8. J. Huebner reported that our transfer station has received approval from the state. He will ask P. Clark for a copy of the application package for our files.
9. He also reported that the Board had received a resignation letter from Cathy Briggs. The resignation was accepted with regret. She will leave her post as Town Treasurer at the end of September. Her current part-time job with the Chamber of Commerce will become full time then. J. Huebner asked her to place an ad in the Eagle. We must initiate a search for her

replacement. He asked her to contact some of the candidates who interviewed along with her for the job. One of them was also a strong candidate. We will try to schedule interviews for 9/26. D. Parnell, D. Spencer, C. Briggs and the board will be the hiring committee.

10. J. Huebner commented on the following communications recently received:

- a. Note from Lillian Fox mentioning there is some confusion about reporting re-appointments. She asked that we publish the entire slate of Town appointees with their terms made clear. The Administrative Assistants are working on this. Thank you note to be sent to L. Fox. Besides thanking her for the correspondence, the note is to ask her if she would serve on the COA.
- b. Jeff Sawtelle of the COA supplied sliders to fit under the legs of the heavy purple conference room tables and make them easy to move.
- c. J. Huebner reminded all that the date of the Hoot will be September 14 from noon to 7:00pm.
- d. He reported that the Town received \$ 292.75 for our recyclables from the state.
- e. Becket Federated Church thanked us for our support and asked if we want to be on their calendar again for \$46.00. The Board agreed to do so.
- f. We received a letter from the state which confirms that we will receive an adjusted \$169,747 for Ch. 90 funding. This is a reduction from last year's funding.
- g. The Select Board will attend Board of Health Training on 9/24 in North Adams.

11. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm. M. Case seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

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

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

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

Minutes written by J. Nelson