

Town of Washington Board of Selectmen's Meeting – November 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 of November 18, 2013. M. Case seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
3. In response to a question asked at the 11/18 Selectmen's Meeting, M. Case reported that he had done some research and the Board's minutes cannot be circulated before being approved and signed by the Board. J. Huebner added that they do not constitute minutes until that time.
4. For the record, Jim Huebner stated that R. Borgnis is videotaping this meeting.
5. In response to an inquiry from K. Avalle, Consultant Assessor, J. Huebner stated the need to have a Chair of the Assessors named. By her resignation, Cheri Rodhouse vacated that position. K. Avalle had said that it was appropriate to pay M. Jarvie the Chair's salary. The Board agreed with this suggestion. D. Spencer said that we budget for 3 assessors and are only paying two now M. Jarvie took all the required course work, passed the Assessor's exam and was certified by the state. J. Huebner made a motion to appoint her Chair of the Assessor's Office effective immediately. S. Lennon seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Sean Connors suggested that the Board first consult MGL Ch. 59 which contains the details of the assessors' Chair appointment procedures and legal concerns. After discussion, the Board decided to take his advice and J. Huebner made a new motion to amend the previous motion appointing M. Jarvie Chair, to instead simply pay her the Assessor Chair's salary effective immediately. M. Case seconded and the amendment passed unanimously. M. Jarvie mentioned later that the assessors had elected her chair.
6. J. Huebner stated that our Accounting Officer, D. Parnell, assisted in the effort to complete the CIC grant application for municipal accounting software development. The application has been successfully submitted to the state for consideration.
7. J. Huebner reported receiving a note from Ruth Loomis of Haydenville, MA regarding property she owns on North Lake in Washington. Ms. Loomis owns 11 % of an acre. She states that she can't pay her property taxes and wants the parcel to revert to the Town. The amount she owes is estimated at \$26.00. D. Spencer suggests we contact The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and perhaps offer to sell them all of the North Lake land which the Town owns. Discussion followed in which a number of objections were raised regarding the rumored intention of The Nature Conservancy to deny access to that area. D. Spencer told the Board that he had recently visited North Lake to check on what (TNC) was doing with their portion of it. He reported

that TNC had posted the corners, clearly stating that no camping and no motorized vehicles are permitted. However, it is wide open for hunting. D. Spencer said that he had to hike into the area as there is still no road access. J. Huebner stated that we need to develop a proposal for a Town Meeting on what to do with the North Lake parcels. He asked the Finance Committee to consider this question. He wondered if we should perhaps put the question to the Town in a short piece in Tracks and solicit questions and suggestions from residents. M. Jarvie presented the Board with plans of the other parcels which owners want to turn over to the Town. The lots are surrounded by the Town's property on the Lake. The Board agreed that it would be desirable for the Town to have this land. J. Huebner will hold on to these charts and will write about them.

8. J. Huebner asked D. Fish for an update on the Highway Department's activities. D. Fish told the Board that he and Chief Breen are going to pick up the school bus tomorrow. There are no developments on the culvert maintenance plan as P. Clark has been busy on other projects. The Board asked him to contact M. Moore at DOT and tell him that we are working on the culvert plan. D. Fish mentioned that he did meet with a CSX representative regarding the drainage on Summit Hill Bridge. CSX will get him plans on repairs to be done. D. Fish said that he tried to put up the snow fence in the field on Washington Mountain Road as requested, but the strong winds took it down. He will try again in calmer weather and will get it installed. He will use wood and plastic mesh. He has no information from Emily Stockman on the NOI. J. Huebner asked him to get a price on the pre-cast permanent bridge for Cross Place Road.
9. J. Huebner stated that he was told by the Town's insurer, MIIA, that they will send a form on which we should record all of the costs of the remediation of the Drugmand's property. They need this to work on the claim. He had still not received a response to our complaint letter from Comer Construction concerning our problems with their chip sealing job on Town roads. He will talk to Town Counsel about this issue. There has been no word from Westfield Wild and Scenic on a plan for a permanent bridge on Cross Place Road. On December 3rd there will be an update meeting with DOT on Washington Mountain Road. He reported receiving from E. Bond a list of the tasks he had completed for the Town recently.
10. J. Huebner presented the Selectmen's Monthly Letter. He asked for any discussion. There being none, he made a motion to accept it as written. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
11. At 7:30 the Board proceeded to open the sealed bids received for the old school bus. M. Case opened the bids. The first bid was in the amount of \$302.00 and was from Mark White. Bid number two was from Dave Fish in the amount of \$300.00. The third bid was in the amount of \$350.00 from Tim and Jodi Hostetter. J. Huebner

made a motion to accept the Hostetters' bid. S. Lennon seconded and there being no discussion, the vote to accept their bid was unanimous.

12. G.Grogan reported to the Board that he had been working to confirm that the Town is properly set up with unemployment from the state. We are set up to use the reimbursable method going forward. Basically the Town pays the state nothing until there is a claim. Currently we have a part-time employee who is affected and who has filed a claim. The Town owes about \$850.00 on this claim. D. Spencer suggested that we should self insure to cover such claims. We would appropriate funds at the annual Town meeting. D. Parnell urged the Board to get it into the warrant right away as it has been pending for some time. Building maintenance would be the appropriate account to use. J. Huebner reminded G. Grogan to amend the personnel file for a boot allowance for the road crew. Glenn gave his job description to Jodi. J. Huebner requested that he have an available file of copies of the chip seal damage claims. G.Grogan said there are about 6 claims.
13. M.Case asks how we pay the Administrative Assistants. J. Huebner confirmed that they are paid hourly and share the job and under one budget set annually by Town Meeting. They submit their hours weekly to the Treasurer and must stay within budget. J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter to get an estimate from John Les on updating the Town's software. J. Les told her that it would be a couple of hours' work. We need to know his rate. The personnel files need only the Clerk's job description for completion.
14. J. Huebner reported the following correspondence received:
 - a. A progress report from Wired West to be filed.
 - b. Announcement of a meeting of the Hampshire County Board of Selectmen's Association
 - c. Executive minutes of the Berkshire County Head Start organization from 11/20.13
 - d. Notice of a Westfield Wild and Scenic meeting from last week
 - e. Notice of Direct Local Technical Assistance grants. Applications due December 10. Grants are for housing growth and regional services. None relevant to Washington.
 - f. Brochure from Access Plus regarding internet services. J. Huebner made a motion to table this until 2014. M. Case seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.
 - g. A survey from HCOG on difficulty hiring accounting personnel and on any other services needed by the Town.
15. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn at 8:18. S. Lennon seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson