

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – December 16, 2013

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, S. Lennon and M. Case.
2. After leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, M. Case made a motion to accept the minutes from December 9, 2013. S. Lennon seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.
3. J. Huebner announced that the next order of business would be to interview candidates for a third position in the Assessor's office. Rose Borgnis had submitted an application for the position after reading the announcement in Tracks and was the first interviewee. The Interview committee was composed of J. Huebner, S. Lennon, M. Case, K. Avasle, D. Spencer, and M. Jarvie. The committee reviewed R. Borgnis' application with her and asked a series of questions drawn up by the Assessors. The interview concluded at 6:30. Due to a change in his availability, an interview with candidate M. Powell will be rescheduled after the New Year. A third candidate has yet to schedule with the committee.
4. K. Walls reminded the board that a public hearing on the Washington Mountain Road reconstruction project will be held at Town Hall this Thursday, December 19 at 7:00pm. The Conservation Commission will host this important meeting.
5. J. Huebner confirmed that the Town Clerk had been able to sign off on the plans submitted by Kelley, Granger and Parsons for moving a lot line which passed through a pond on Lovers Lane by developer Mike Parsons. He had submitted his plans to the Planning Board initially, but they did not have a quorum and so were unable to act on his request. J. Hostetter told the Board that after some delay the situation had been resolved. J. Huebner proposed that after the first of the year the Board discuss making some changes to the Planning Board to make it more efficient and productive. He suggested that one change might be to reorganize the Planning Board from elected to appointed positions. This would have to be approved at the next Annual Town Meeting. D. Spencer said that Don Gagnon on the Planning Board is on top of issues presented to them. J. Huebner asked former Planning Board member, Ken Walls, for his opinion on this subject. He said that there were instances when the Chair walked out of meetings rather than make a decision and other occasions when she discouraged permit applicants by making what appeared to be unnecessarily stringent demands of them. J. Huebner said that the Planning Board has to act in order to spark positive change and progress in the Town.
6. D. Fish told the Board that Carol Kennedy had made a complaint that he had hit her mailbox with his plow and that he had been driving too fast. He denied speeding and

hitting her mailbox, but did send the highway crew over with a barrel of sand into which they planted her mailbox. C. Kennedy subsequently apologized and thanked the crew for their help. D. Spencer suggested that the Board should advise people how to secure their mail boxes before winter. He noted that it is easy to see how the plow in passing can pile snow up against a mailbox close to the road and knock it crooked. D. Fish said that he had received replacement parts and that all of the Town trucks will soon be repaired and back in service. He mentioned that he would like to re-surface Blotz Road and fix the culverts there in the spring if the funds are available in his budget.

7. Chief Breen told the Board that he had the new school bus parked outside Town Hall and would show it to the Board and take them for a short ride if they would like to check out the vehicle first –hand. He reported that he has had the 7D inspection done. He requested purchase of rubber floor mats to protect the van from water as the students get in and out in wet weather. He also requested wind shields for the windows so that the van can be ventilated for the comfort of all while in service. The Board agreed to these purchases. Chief Breen estimated that cost would be about \$200 total. They instructed him to take the expenses out of the Voc Ed transport budget.
8. J. Huebner reported receipt of a letter to Shawn Armacost, Chairperson of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee (CBRSD) from Ken Walto, Dalton Town Manager, regarding the 2015 CBRSD school budget. K. Walto notified the CBRSD and the towns in the district that Dalton will not be able to accept any increase in its assessment for FY 2015. He in fact requested that the Dalton FY 2015 assessment be reduced from the actual assessment in FY 2014 by the \$157,000 over-assessed. Incoming CBRSD Chairperson, M. Case, took note of the letter.
9. J. Huebner reported receiving an emailed reply from Comer Contracting to the Board's letter of December 2 detailing our complaints about their chip sealing work on Town roads. In his letter to the Board Martin J. Comer, President of Comer Contracting, agreed to address the problems we reported by returning in the May/June time frame to do additional chip seal surfacing. They will place an additional coat of summer-grade tar and stone on Summit Hill Road from the railroad overpass to the end at Summit Hill Campground. Additionally they have contacted two of the individuals who have requested reimbursement for cleaning their vehicles. They will address and satisfy those claims. What he did not mention, and what we additionally requested, was reimbursement to the Town for the cost of labor and materials to apply sand to the roads to contain the tar damage. We asked for \$6300 for sand and \$1000 for ten hours of labor. J. Huebner had drafted a reply to Mr. Comer's letter thanking him for addressing two of our expectations and asking him to respond to the issue of reimbursement for the sanding work. All Board members signed the letter.
10. J. Huebner reported that the Board had received a letter from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development in response to our application for funding under the 2013 MassWorks Infrastructure Program. We had applied for

funding to resurface Blotz Road. However our application was not accepted. We were encouraged to try again next year.

11. M. Case told the Board that he had received a call from Judge Sacco about Bucksteep Manor. The judge wanted citizens to know that the property is up for sale. If his current deal goes through, it will be in June or July. His plan is to keep the property as a business. He cannot discuss any further details at this time.
12. M. Case also mentioned that the Massachusetts Secretary of Education from Boston had visited Becket Washington School and had been very impressed with the level of parent involvement there. He especially liked seeing the pre-K class with so many parents involved in teaching.
13. G. Grogan asked the Board to let him know when they wanted to receive their quarterly pay - either this week or next. He is trying to reach MIIA, the Town's insurer, regarding the status of our claim for remediation on the Drugmand's property. His understanding is that they are waiting for the Drugmands to complete a form. The Drugmands have withdrawn Canterbury Farm's \$4500 dollar estimate from the group of landscapers who submitted bids on the planting of new trees on their property. They believed this estimate was too low. J. Huebner said that the Town may need to negotiate with the Drugmands on the matter of providing new trees. The Board believes that the Town should not bear this expense. G. Grogan told the Board that he had received a letter from IRAC regarding public employee post - retirement earnings. The Board asked him to give the information to M. Case and K. Avalle for consideration.
14. J. Hostetter told the Board that B. Sweet, of 235 Johnson Hill Road plans to dig a new well. Eastern State Well Drilling will do the work, but the Town has not yet received engineer's plans. They have to be approved by our health agent and permitted by the Town before work can proceed. The Board instructed her to contact Mr. Sweet and request a set of plans. J. Hostetter told the Board that D. Parnell is holding off on payment to the Berkshire Public Health Alliance (BPHA) pending clarification from them on their statement. J. Huebner told her to go ahead with payment now and to inform D. Parnell of this. She reported poor communication from the health agent. She also said that we are waiting for a final recommendation on service fees from BPHA. J. Huebner told her that in the first quarter we will review Board of Health issues.

J. Hostetter submitted to the Board our Health Agent's report on Bucksteep. He found conditions of food preparation, storage and general kitchen cleanliness unacceptable. They are not actively using the kitchen presently. Bucksteep will have to address the report's complaints and our health agent will have to re-inspect before they can host any more events requiring food preparation or service. The Board decided that they will not sign the Bucksteep victualer's permit at this time, based on the health agent's report. The Board signed off on the liquor license last week. The Building Inspector did

his site visit and reports no problems at Bucksteep. The fire inspection is scheduled for Wednesday.

J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter if she had yet received any responses to the state's email on Conflict of Interest. She reported several responses already. J. Huebner asked her to look into the status of the Cultural Council's annual budget form. It seems that the contract has not yet been received. She told the Board that many Town permits are not picked up by the requesting parties. In the past she had automatically renewed some permits, but will do so no longer. The Town needs those fees paid and the permits picked up. She will remind those in violation. She told the Board that she had reviewed the Administrative Assistants' account to date for FY 14 and that the department is operating efficiently, having spent just 38% of its budget halfway through the fiscal year.

15. The Board reported receiving a check for \$100 from Sanitary Septic Service.
16. Jeff Sawtelle of the COA gave the Board an update on the Council's activities. With the help of Jane Pytko, he has been organizing and assisting at the monthly dinners at Town Hall. The events are well attended and residents seem to enjoy themselves. He sets up and runs the movies at each dinner. He mentioned that working two jobs, he is having trouble finding time to cover all of the COA responsibilities. He told the Board that the seniors who regularly attend the dinners showed little interest in a holiday party for which they would have to pay. J. Huebner suggested that he use some of his budget to have a special dinner catered in January, celebrating the New Year. The Board felt that there are seniors who would only attend a holiday dinner and who looked forward to that event. He suggested that the Administrative Assistants might be able to help organize the event. The Board signed the annual COA budget form for the state. J. Sawtelle will post it himself. J. Huebner will contact the state for clarification on accounting for the COA appliance purchases.
17. J. Huebner reported that several requests have been made for the Town Hall Usage Committee to move the excess wooden chairs from the hallway and the auditorium into the under-stage and utility closet storage spaces. S. Lennon told the Board that the Usage Committee will meet again after the New Year to take care of this and plan future efforts.
18. D. Parnell told the Board that he had spoken with Rebecca Krause, the accounting consultant, today. She told him that the accounting software developed by the Town of Hanover looks good. It is supported by the state and it has double entry capability. We may be able to use it and map Vadar files over to it. We will be a test site for the software if we get funding from the CIC grant. It may not work for us otherwise. We will try to negotiate a relationship that will enable us to use the software in any event. We have budget to pay D. Parnell for the extra work.
19. J. Huebner briefly addressed the following items:

- a. Custodian issues to be addressed after the holiday
- b. Christmas Cards received from Berkshire Graphics and Vadar Systems
- c. Notice of Berkshire County Head Start Executive Board of Directors meeting to be held December 18 at Meadow Lane.
- d. Massachusetts Municipal Association will hold trade show in Boston on Jan. 24 and 25
- e. No news on the cemetery land, the Notice of Intent, Cross Place Road permanent bridge or Blotz Road weight limits

20. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. M. Case seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson