

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – January 6, 2014

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, S. Lennon and M. Case. R. Borgnis was videoing the meeting.
2. After leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to approve the minutes of December 16, 2013. M. Case seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.
3. D. Spencer asked the Board if it would object to him publishing an apology to Town residents in the next Tracks. He would apologize for selling all of his Crane Hill Tree Farm Christmas trees early this year, leaving some residents and long-time customers disappointed. He would promise never to turn away any resident again. The Board had no objection as this would be a personal statement.
4. D. Spencer also asked the Board if it would approve of his forming a new Town committee. This would be an Agricultural Committee. Members would be residents actively engaged in the business of farming and/or seriously interested in sustaining and promoting the preservation of agriculture in Washington. He suggested that the first business of this committee would be to investigate writing a “right to farm” by-law like those in place in many Berkshire towns. The Board said that they would approve the formation of such a committee, but that any by-law would have to be approved at the Annual Town Meeting.. D. Spencer told them that he will write up a proposal with further details for their consideration. J. Huebner asked him also to investigate any relevant provisions in MSL governing “right to farm” or such committees. He agreed to do so and added that he plans to attend some Agricultural Committee meetings in other Berkshire towns.
5. J. Sawtelle presented paperwork to the Board from the state regarding the COA budget and grant. J. Huebner amended the budget figures to reflect a \$266.94 difference and signed two copies of the new contract for submission to the state. J. Sawtelle told the Board that legs supporting both of the large conference tables in the auditorium were loose and were a safety threat to anyone trying to move them. D. Fish agreed to weld the loose steel legs. J. Hostetter reported that J. Les had finished updating software and virus protection on the COA computer. She was working to update the COA mailing list and the senior birthday list. She told the Board that the Administrative Assistants will help J. Sawtelle organize a special COA Valentine’s Day dinner in February.
6. D. Spencer told the Board that he had submitted the annual Vocational Education expense/budget report to the state DOE. Since the Town only expended about \$70 last year and had no Voc Ed students, our reimbursement amount on the next cherry sheet (for FY 15, probably received in May or June) would be \$0.00.

7. G. Grogan told the Board that he had received no further communication from the Drugmands regarding their damage claim for the culvert work. They were asked to provide further information on their claim for tree replacement for the Town's insurer, but do not appear to have done so. G. Grogan confirmed that the Town's complete claim for reimbursement on this project has been submitted to the insurer. He also mentioned that he passed the retirement information along to K. Avalle and M. Case. He was able to confirm that the recent check for \$2521.00 from Becket was for their share of the Voc Ed transportation.
8. E. Bond informed the Board that he has installed the requested lock on the custodian's door and has given her the key. He will write a job description for the custodian's position and submit her performance review.
9. On the subject of the chip sealing remediation, J. Huebner reported that he had received no reply yet from Comer Contracting to his letter of December 16 requesting reimbursement for the Town's labor and materials expense in laying down the sand on Town roads. The Board will contact them again on this issue if no response is forthcoming.
10. Regarding the work on Washington Mountain Road (WMR), M. Case told the Board that he had recently spoken with Chief Engineer M. Moore of DOT. The job has not been put out to bid yet and there are no new developments. He observed that over the holidays the state's activities typically slow considerably. He also learned from John Burtells of Dalton that they are waiting for Hinsdale to act before they will make a decision on placing a weight limit on Blotz Road traffic.
11. D. Fish told the Board that another of the Town's trucks has been repaired and is back on the road. Snow fencing has been put up on WMR as requested, though its effectiveness is not great. J. Huebner asked him if he had received a copy of the National Bridge Inspection Standards paperwork from Mass DOT. D. Fish replied in the affirmative. Mass DOT attached generally positive reports on their inspections of the Cross Place Road Depot Brook culvert bridge and the Lower Valley Road Depot Brook culvert bridge. Some loose bolts on the Lower Valley Bridge were noted and marked with orange tape. D. Fish said that he is aware of this. He also said that he had not gotten a quote on a pre-cast concrete bridge to replace the temporary Bailey's Bridge on Cross Place because he doesn't have a spec yet.

He mentioned that the worst bridge in Town at present is the bridge on Lower Sergeant Road. DOT did not inspect that one. The railroad ties that support it are insufficient and deteriorating. He believes the state would close it now if they were involved. He would like the Board to approve his obtaining another Bailey's Bridge for that site. Chief Breen said that we would also have to widen the road at that point in order to install any new bridge. D. Fish agreed. Chief Breen also mentioned that Paul Keiper has collected much

information on that bridge. The Board asked D. Fish to request DOT do an inspection of the Lower Sergeant Road Bridge. He agreed to do so. J. Huebner reminded D. Fish to ask G. Grogan to amend the personnel file to reflect the annual budget of \$150 for new boots for each member of the highway crew.

12. J. Huebner asked Chief Breen to post a sign on the front door of Town Hall instructing users on how to lock up the building when they leave. Chief Breen reported that the front door is now hard to open as one of the rods has to be manually lifted to get it open.
13. J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter to review the number of job descriptions collected and report on that next Monday. He also requested that she get an estimate from John Les on the cost of updating all of the Town Hall computers. To clarify the status of Board of Health activity, he asked J. Hostetter to prepare weekly updates on permits issued, fees billed and collected and hourly charges from the health agent. J. Hostetter said that she continues to provide administrative support to M. Wiley and the Town Clerk on collecting and transcribing the existing by-laws. She also continues working on scanning legacy Town records and storing them on her computer. She has currently suspended this task in favor of finishing up the annual reports. The Town Clerk just gave her two years of annual report data to work with. J. Huebner told her that he wants a separate annual report for each year and that the work needs to be completed before Annual Town Meeting. He acknowledged that D. Parnell is still working to close out FY 2013. J. Hostetter confirmed that she had received plans from B. Sweet and had issued a permit for his well on Heartwood Road.
14. Chief Breen told the Board that he ordered the floor mats and window shields they had approved for the new school bus. He reminded them that he is our Town representative to the Berkshire Regional Transportation Alliance (BRTA). He had received an inquiry from BRTA about whether or not we want to have bus service from Washington. Discussion followed on the need for such service among residents, especially seniors. Chief Breen said that he will give a ride to Pittsfield to any senior in need at no charge. He mentioned that the bus to Hinsdale from Pittsfield and vice versa is often empty. J. Huebner asked him to speak with J. Sawtelle about the level of interest among COA members in transportation to Pittsfield. He also mentioned that any van driver must be specially licensed and insured to provide that service. R. Borgnis told the Board that she had spoken with Becket COA about setting up a shared service for transporting seniors. The service would run on a regular schedule and route with a licensed driver who would be paid by the towns jointly. His or her salary would come from grants, not from town budgets. She thought there would be a better chance for an effective service to be established if the two towns cooperated.
15. J. Nelson, alternate Town representative to Wired West, reported that MBI (Mass Broadband Institute) has finished the construction of a "middle mile" network to provide Broadband to town facilities. These installations will be tested by MBI's

contractor, Axia, over the next 2 or 3 months before being activated. State funds will help to build a “last mile” network to serve individual homes and businesses.

16. D. Parnell told the board that he plans to close the books on FY2013 before the end of January and will have the report filed with the state by February 1. He had tried to export our Vadar file to Hanover so that they could share their accounting program, but they were unable to open our file. To overcome this problem, he will try to create a new Access file for them. He mentioned that the woman we have been working with on the low cost accounting software issue has been named Director of the CIC program. We can use the software developed by Hanover if we can devise a way to import it. D. Parnell advised that this could take some time. Regarding Berkshire Public Health Alliance, he reported that he has revenue to pay our bill with the balance left as a revolving account. He told the Board that G. Grogan will cover for him during his vacation in February.

17. J. Huebner reported receiving the following correspondence and commented on these items:

- a. The Board received the quarterly report from BPHA
- b. Notices from the town of Lee of two public hearings on zoning issues to take place in January. Posted on bulletin board outside Assessor’s Office.
- c. Announcement that the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission will hold a dinner on January 24 at the ITAM Lodge. The event will include a discussion of the Community Preservation Act.
- d. Receipt of the following monies: \$50 cash from Sybil Baier of 237 Johnson Hill Road for a well permit; \$100 from John M. Love for a Planning Board Special Permit; \$100 from engineers Kelly, Grainger, Parsons for Planning Board Special Permit for Franklin Woods.
- e. J. Huebner to contact Mayor Bianci’s office again regarding the 5 acre parcel for Washington cemetery use.

18. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:07. M. Case seconded and the motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson