

Town of Washington Board of Selectmen's Meeting – February 10, 2014

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 6:47 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, and S. Lennon.
2. After reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the first order of business was to review the results of reference checks on the two final candidates for the Assessor's job. The Board was joined in this task by the selection committee: D. Spencer of the Finance Committee and Karen Avale and Mary Jarvie from the Assessor's office. After discussion, J. Huebner made a motion to offer the position to one of the applicants conditional on their completion of the application and the results of CORI checks conducted by Chief Breen. S. Lennon seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.
3. J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from February 3, 2014. S. Lennon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
4. R. Borgnis was videoing the Board's meeting.
5. E. Bond told the Board that he had purchased and installed window shades in the Tax Collector's office. He also said that he will organize the Zoning Board of Appeals/Planning Board meeting as requested. He will not be able to attend, but will contact Will Beemer and Jan Huebner. S. Lennon asked him if he will be available to supervise another detail from the Sheriff's office to do more work at Town Hall. E. Bond said that he will try to make it work with his schedule. The Board asked him to schedule an electrician to update the stage outlets to three-pronged outlets. Chief Breen added that the Town Hall doors are not working correctly. E. Bond responded that he is going to install grab bars on both ends of the building.
6. J. Huebner recognized Mr. Martin Comer of Comer Contracting who was in attendance to discuss the Town's complaints about the chip sealing work done by his company in Washington last fall and the following spring. Several workers from Comer met with D. Fish on Friday 2/7/14 to do another inspection of the roads. Comer has concluded that they did a pretty good job for the Town. Mr. Comer believes that they put in extra effort and expense. They used cut-back asphalt, a material recommended for cold climates as it resists plow damage and flexes with frost. They had seen no plow damage on their inspection. He told the Board that the cut-back asphalt does soften up in hot weather.

Regarding the Town's complaint about having to put down sand in the warm weather to stabilize the asphalt, Mr. Comer told the Board that is standard practice after chip sealing. J. Huebner responded that the Town had not been instructed to do so and repeated our request that Comer cover the cost of time and material to do the sanding. This is an extra expense to the Town that we had not been told to expect. Mr. Comer

responded that he had never had to come before a town Board until tonight. He apologized for the delay in responding to the Town's requests for a discussion of the quality of his work. He said that two residents had contacted him requesting reimbursement for tar damage to their vehicles. He had sent a check to one and forwarded the other bill to his insurance company for payment.

J. Huebner summarized the status of negotiations with Comer Contracting, stating that they had agreed to come out in the spring to re-surface any sections of Town roads that need it. M. Comer nodded his agreement. He added that it is not his responsibility to put down sand. The sand is helpful because it helps to lock in the chips over the winter. It controls any sticky spots in warmer weather. It is the Town's responsibility. J. Huebner told Mr. Comer that we had consulted Mass. DOT on this matter, but were not advised to put down sand. Mr. Comer responded that DOT is not familiar with the chip sealing process because they do not do it. J. Huebner made it clear that the Board has not relented on our expectation of reimbursement for the sanding.

J. Huebner thanked Mr. Comer for coming in to meet with the Board and told him that we look forward to seeing his crew in the spring to do the resurfacing work.

7. D. Fish told the Board that he is exceeding his budget for winter roads presently. The little storms which we have had so far require repeated plowings and are more work and expense than the big snowfalls. He does not yet have a quote on a new bridge for Cross place Road as he has had no specs yet from P. Clark. J. Huebner said that he will get in touch with P. Clark. S. Nelson of Cross Place Road told D. Fish and the Board that he and most residents he has spoken with agree that the Bailey Bridge is working very well and that he is grateful to the DPW crew for putting it in place. D. Fish told the Board that he has gotten the steel and will fabricate the new door requested for the transfer station. He will weld the conference table legs if they still need it. He wants to mill and fill on Blotz road in the spring and will discuss with DOT. He has received the weight limit sign from Hinsdale and will plant it on Route 8 at Pittsfield Road. M. Case reported receiving complaints about the conditions on Washington Mountain Road. D. Fish responded that the pot holes are filled with ice now. He will fill them as soon as it is possible.
8. S. Nelson told the Board that Wired West will be scheduling a series of meetings with area Select Boards and Finance Committees to discuss building the last mile of broadband connectivity out to homes and businesses. The discussions will focus on exploring how the 42 coop member towns can participate financially in finishing the network. He requested using the Town Hall auditorium for this purpose on March 12 in the evening. Invitations to the meetings will be sent to Town Boards over the next few weeks. These will be informational and not deliberative, but Boards must post them as open meetings. J. Huebner agreed to have the proposed meeting in Town Hall.

9. Jeff Sawtelle of the COA reported to the Board that he had received a memo from the state Board of Health reminding COA's that pot luck dinners are problematic. Home kitchens are not certified and can be a source of bacteria. The dishes may sit out too long at the dinners. J. Huebner told him we understood that because our dinners are not open to the public, these rules did not apply. J. Sawtelle said that the memo from the state seemed to contradict that. J. Huebner suggested that perhaps we should just cater all of the COA dinners. J. Sawtelle told the Board that there is not enough money in the COA grant to do that. J. Sawtelle told the Board that he has scheduled a Spring Party on March 26th at Ozzie's for the COA. He will put a notice in the Tracks and invitations will be sent out.
10. J. Huebner reported that the application to the state for the CIC grant has been successful. D. Parnell wrote our application. The award is for \$128,000 for a number of IT-related developments. J. Huebner spoke with Rebecca Krause-Hardie, the driving force behind the application and she said that she will find money in the budget for the accounting software project. We will be the pilot test site. Dan will work on developing the program. Washington will be disbursing the funds. D. Parnell told the Board that our free cash status still presents some challenges. There is about \$95,000 more in the bank than on our books. Trying to identify where this cash came from is difficult because of the weaknesses of the Vadar software. The General Ledger is finished and he should have a figure for free cash next week.
11. G. Grogan told the Board that we have about \$60,000 in checking and in money market funds. J. Huebner told him that we are authorized to do short-term borrowing. He mentioned that the Town can donate funds to the COA to get the kitchen certified through the Board of Health. We will not do a major renovation, just do any upgrades required. G. Grogan mentioned that all issues have been settled with the Department of Unemployment Assurance over their billing error.
12. The Board reviewed a Statement of Work from John Les regarding software upgrades for Town computers. They approved purchase of Windows 7 software for \$542.12 and labor charges of \$1040.00 for a total of \$1,582.12. The Board decided not to go ahead with purchase of Office 2010 software for \$368.40 at this time.
13. J. Hostetter reported to the Board that she has finished the work currently available to her on the Town By-laws. She is awaiting further instructions from the Town Clerk and Planning Board Chair. They are planning to make a book of the complete by-laws which will eventually go online. She also said that she has received additional Board of Health receivables. She is working on re-formatting all of the Board of Health data as reports which she will provide to the Board. As requested, Jodi spoke to Ms. Jewell, the property manager at Bucksteep, and told her that second inspections will be needed from the Health Agent and the Fire Chief before she can issue the Common Victualers' permits. She asked the Board's opinion regarding a bill from Berkshire Graphics for \$825.00 for a service contract on the copier. The Board advised she investigate other

copier options. J. Sawtelle suggested she get a quote from McFarland as he believes they are less costly. She brought a letter from Western Mass. Connect to the Board's attention. The letter requested that Washington residents help them identify the homes served by DSL in Town. The Board expressed their opinion that this was information to be requested from Verizon, not townspeople. The Town will not participate.

14. J. Huebner reported receiving the following correspondence:

- a. A letter from the Department of Environmental Protection which included our waste recycling report and a check in the amount of \$481.29 for the past six months of our trash recycling.
- b. A public notice from the Dalton Planning Board on a meeting regarding solar installation siting.
- c. A notice of the MMA's spring legislative briefing breakfasts. Closest to us is a meeting in Tyringham on 2/28.
- d. Notice of an updated non-discrimination statement from the USDA.
- e. Notice of a Mass. DOT initiative on handicapped parking. To be given to Chief Breen.
- f. A report from our electricity provider, Constellation Energy, on their power sources.

15. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17pm. S. Lennon seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson