

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – February 24, 2014

1. Jim Huebner called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. 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 accept the Selectmen's minutes from February 10, 2014. M. Case seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
3. Rose Borgnis was videoing the meeting.
4. The first order of business was a discussion of the recently awarded CIC grant. The grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides funding to the Community Software Consortium (CSC) for development of low-cost municipal accounting software. D. Parnell took part in the successful writing of the grant application and will use his accounting skills and experience working with a number of municipal programs to participate in the development of the software. Rebecca Krause-Hardie, CEO and Executive Director of the CSC, was present and gave J. Huebner two copies of the state grant contract for signatures and notarizing. A Schedule of Deliverables was attached to the contracts. She also gave J. Huebner, for signature, 3 Agreement Letters: one for Washington and the CSC, one for D. Parnell and Washington and one for herself and Washington. Washington will administer the grant. We will be the beta site for development. The software will be made available to all towns in the Commonwealth.

Rebecca Krause-Hardie told the Board that she will manage the software development project. Additionally she will create a user manual for the software and system users. D. Parnell's role will be testing and quality control. He will be doing much system conversion. He told the Board that we will have the Hanover, Mass. system (upon which the CSC program will be based) ready to use on July 1 and so will not have to renew our contract with Vadar, saving the Town about \$3,500. D. Parnell's work on this project will be covered by a combination of grant money and \$2,000 in Town funds set aside for this purpose last year. He said that we could also earmark the Vadar set-aside if needed. J. Huebner pointed out that the Town will directly benefit from the project by having access to effective, affordable accounting software, thereby avoiding purchase of an accounting package that would cost approximately \$18,000.

The total CIC grant is \$128,000. R. Krause-Hardie said that approximately \$50,000 will be used for a separate but related remote IT program. An estimated \$20,000 will be spent developing the Hanover system. \$5,000 - \$10,000 will go to Cloud storage costs. There will be additional costs for specialized consulting assistance. The budget is still being worked on and R. Krause-Hardie acknowledged that it is difficult to know at the outset what obstacles they may encounter in developing the program and what the

resulting costs will be. J. Huebner made a motion that we accept all provisions of the program as described. The vote in support was unanimous.

5. David Davies, Information and Technology Director of the Division of Public Services for the Commonwealth, accompanied R. Krause-Hardie to the meeting and explained that he is going to be managing the remote IT program mentioned above and also funded by the CIC grant. He said that the state expects that there will be a great demand for this new accounting software among all the Towns of the Commonwealth. Many of these towns do not have IT staff available on a regular basis. To support these towns in their installation and use of the accounting software the state is planning to provide daily system backup and other data protection services. A service center will be established and financed by the state to provide these services remotely over the internet using the high-speed connections now installed in town halls by the Mass Broadband Initiative.

He explained that they will need a contact in each town hall to be responsible for checking system status and reporting in. They will have formal agreements with each town and explicit service level agreements. Annual cost to the towns is expected to be on the order of \$500. One of the big challenges will be deciding what services to provide. He asked the Board if we would be interested in helping to establish this program. J. Huebner told Mr. Davies that we would be interested in getting involved. It was agreed that we need to start work to identify an internet service provider for the Town in order to be able to use the broadband connection installed by MBI . J. Huebner asked that S. Nelson, our WiredWest delegate, be consulted on this. J. Huebner thanked R. Kraus-Hardie and D. Davis for attending the meeting and bringing us up to date on plans for using the CIC grant.

6. J. Huebner signed a letter to Greg Viner informing him of his selection as the new member of the Assessor's office. He also signed letters to the three other applicants informing them that they had not been chosen for the position and thanking them for their interest.
7. J. Huebner made a motion to accept the monthly Selectmen's Letter for publication in the Tracks. The motion was approved unanimously.
8. J. Huebner reported that he learned from P. Clark that there is no action on writing a plan for the Cross Place permanent bridge yet. The culvert NOI has not yet been completed. P. Clark is working with D. Fish to establish a process for regular culvert maintenance.
9. Regarding Mr. Comer's visit to last week's Selectmen's meeting, J. Huebner said that he still does not believe that the Town should be responsible for the post chip seal sanding. That issue is still to be resolved. Discussion among Board members followed. J. Huebner asked if we should demand payment again for the \$7300 we spent on sanding labor and materials. This was an unexpected expense. The consensus of the Board was to

continue to ask for payment. M. Case thought we should negotiate and offer to split the difference with Comer. The Board agreed and J. Huebner will write another letter offering a settlement at \$3,650.

10. M. Case reported receiving complaints about snow plowing from two parties. One of his Schultz Road neighbors reported that the trucks were plowing too close to their property. Lisa Peltier complained that Kirchner road had not been plowed on Thursday night during the storm. He also received a complaint from Frank and Carol Kennedy that there was water running down their driveway from the road after the thaw.
11. J. Huebner reported that he and M. Case would attend the Legislative Breakfast in Tyringham on Friday. He reminded everyone of the important meeting on the school budget at Nessacus at 7:00pm on Feb. 25.
12. Addressing the current deteriorated condition of Washington Mountain Road (WMR), M. Case asked if we can post a sign on the road to warn people to reduce speed. J. Huebner said that we can post hazard signs at both ends of WMR. He made a motion to do this. The vote in favor was unanimous. J. Huebner will call D. Fish on this matter tomorrow.
13. J. Huebner reported that next Monday is the deadline for changes to the state transportation plan. The Town will not raise any issues at this time. He also reported no developments on the cemetery land request. S. Lennon had no update on further improvements at Town Hall.
14. Dan Parnell told the Board that again this year we have more money in the bank than we can account for on the books. As a result free cash is still unresolved. This year the money in question amounts to \$50,000. He has not been able to determine if this is caused by a fault in our seriously flawed Vadar software or if it may be the result of deposits that did not get recorded in past years. It could also be a problem on the disbursement side. He has discussed these questions at length with our contact at DOR. The likely source of the trouble seems to be Vadar. Currently we have a balance of about \$150,000 in free cash. D. Parnell is not sure what the state will do with our balance. They could take the \$50,000 off. DOR will decide what the free cash figure will be. There is a total of over \$200,000 in the Town's accounts now. He will file the Schedule 8 this week with the state.
15. G. Grogan told the Board that Veterans' Agent Peter Blake reported to him that the Town has been overpaying one veteran's Medicare. G. Grogan will forward this message to the Board. He needs to know how we should make an adjustment. He had no update on the Drugmands' damage claim. The MIIA has not returned his calls and the Drugmands have not contacted him.

16. J. Huebner asked M. Lampro if she had received the Mass DEP survey form yet. She replied that she had not. He asked her to be in touch with D. Fish about this.

17. The Board discussed setting a date for CBRSD Superintendant Cameron to come in to meet with the Town. March 17 was tentatively chosen. M. Case will call to confirm this with Dr. Cameron.

18. J. Hostetter gave the Board a septic hauler's permit to sign for JSSjr Enterprises. She also gave the Board a \$100 check for a perc test fee at Pugzees Farm. She reported that she has been working on the Town web site and has posted the wind turbine information provided by Peru Concerned Citizens. She also posted an Op Ed piece from the Berkshire Eagle concerning the status of WiredWest's work bringing broadband to homes and businesses. She asked the Board how much leeway she has in making decisions about the web site content. J. Huebner told her to use her judgment and consult the Board if she has any questions or concerns. She told the Board that Jeff Sawtelle is going to advise her on options for a better Town copier.

19. J. Huebner reported receiving the following correspondence: Berkshire County Head Start Board of Directors will meet on 3/6. Westfield Wild and Scenic will meet Thursday at 7:00 at Notchview Reservation in Windsor. Also received was notice that on Thursday night there is the seven town public meeting at Nessacus to discuss the school budget and other issues. M. Case, our school committee Chair, said that there has been much controversy about the new Common Core standards. Many parents feel that they actually will lower the standards required of public schools in the Commonwealth today. These standards have earned Massachusetts the rank of top performing school system nationwide.

20. J. Huebner noted that the Planning Board had joined the meeting along with the Finance Committee. Brian Domino of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) was also in attendance.

21. J. Huebner concluded the Selectmen's Meeting at 7:50 pm and called the Joint Capital Assets Meeting with the Finance Committee and the Planning Board to order at 7:51pm. The attached Capital Assets minutes represent a continuation of this Select Board meeting.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson

