

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – May 5, 2014

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. 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 from April 28, 2014. M. Case seconded the motion and the vote to approve was unanimous.
3. J. Huebner recognized Laura Kitross from the Berkshire Public Health Alliance (BPHA) and the Berkshire County Board of Health Associations (BCBOHA). At the Board's invitation she attended the meeting to give the Town an update on her organizations' activities over the past year and to discuss ideas for future programs which would be of interest to Washington. She mentioned that our cost for the public health nurses will rise by a total of \$15.00 this year. We receive quarterly reports from the BPHA. Laura reminded the Board that as a member of BPHA, the Town benefitted from a very informative program on tick-borne diseases presented by BPHA's public health nurses last spring at a Town Hall event organized by Administrative Assistants J. Hostetter and J. Nelson. All expenses were covered by a state grant for which they successfully applied.

Laura mentioned that the public health nurses are developing a chronic disease self help program. The purpose of this is to help people stay out of hospitals by teaching them to manage their own conditions. Another new program in development is called "Matter of Balance" and is aimed at helping older adults avoid falls. A program for pre-diabetics will also be available. Laura asked that we give her any ideas for public health programs suggested by Town groups.

She reported that BPHA has expanded communicable disease surveillance to 22 Berkshire towns and the 2 cities through the state sponsored Maven software program. She reviewed the current Maven statistics with the Board and noted that major increases had been reported in 2013 in the incidence of Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases as well as Hepatitis C. BPHA is working with Berkshire Health Systems under a grant for opioid

abuse control and prevention. She also mentioned work on vaccination-preventable diseases, asthma prevention, and West Nile disease testing. They are also involved in a smoke-free housing initiative. Sean Connors, local health professional, told Laura that he would like to see a clearinghouse of needy and available caregivers paid to help seniors “age in place” in their own homes.

4. Ed Bond expressed his frustration to the Board on not being told about use of the Town Park for a La Cross tournament last Saturday. As Chair of the Park Commission he should have been given fair notice to prepare for the event with adequate porta-potties and parking control. As it was, he found out about the event by accident after it was well underway and people were asking where the bathrooms were. He estimated there were about 150 attendees at the games. Their cars were parked in such a way as to hinder residents’ access to the Transfer station on a busy Saturday.

The Board responded that they knew nothing of the planned tournament. Ernie Lampron had appeared before the Board two weeks ago to request use of the field for practice for his son’s La Cross team. The possibility of a tournament was not raised. E. Lampron agreed to keep the field mowed and rolled if necessary. He would use his own equipment for this maintenance. He told the Board that he had arranged with White Wolf for a porta-pottie on site. The Board was happy to approve Ernie’s request and glad to see residents making good use of the Park.

E. Bond agreed that he too was glad to see the park being used, but emphasized that he should have been informed and the proper procedures followed. E. Lampron should have been told that he had to apply for and receive a blanket permit from the Town for use of the facility for his son’s practices. Any tournaments would require separate permits. Liability issues are involved. Only he or Dave Drugmand are authorized to sign the permits. He said that he would review the permitting practice with the Administrative Assistants. The Board will ask J. Hostetter to write up a brief summary of the procedure for the Tracks. E. Bond will have parking signs made up for future events at the park. White Wolf delivered the porta-potties on Sunday.

On another subject entirely, E. Bond asked if the Board could perform the awarding of the Certificates of Appreciation at the start of the Annual Town Meeting to be held on May 10 so that he could then get on with his duties as moderator. The Board agreed to this arrangement as it seems appropriate to address our honorees at the very beginning of the evening.

5. Ken Walls told the Board that he had inspected the beaver deceiver on CSX's property on Upper Valley Road and found that it was clogged with debris and not draining well. The Board agreed to contact CSX informing them that the device needs to be cleaned. That was part of our agreement with them. J. Huebner said that CSX had contracted with the USDA to manage and maintain the deceiver. If that arrangement is no longer in place we need to know and CSX will have to make another arrangement.

6. Peter Blake told the Board that he had received 5 additional soldiers' names as a result of his request in the Tracks for more Town Civil War veterans' names. P. Blake then opened discussion of the Board's strategy for increasing Town revenues and holding down the tax rate. J. Huebner replied that like all municipalities our chief revenue sources are a combination of property taxes and state funding. The Board had investigated P. Blake's earlier suggestion of harvesting trees on the Town's right of way throughout Town. That proved problematic due to varying property lines, possible involvement of utilities due to overhead wires and the costly need to hire a professional forester in some cases. The Board told him that they would welcome any additional suggestions he might have. One of their revenue goals had been to get the nursing home back on the tax rolls. That has been accomplished. P. Blake asked if we owned any land with mature trees. Becket just made a lot of money from harvesting its timber. The Board said that much of the town's forested land is controlled by the Nature Conservancy or other private 501-C owners. They pay no taxes on this land, nor can we get stumpage. J. Huebner said that he had looked into getting a solar company interested in setting up a power generating "farm" in Town, but due to our small size we would need to put up money. We could partner with another town on this , but he has not been able to interest any of our neighbors in the project. P. Blake pointed out that the roads need work. He hoped that there would be no more tar and chip sealing. J. Huebner said that the contractor had agreed to

come back and repair those areas that were improperly surfaced this spring. D.Spencer said that we will see a very small rise in the tax rate this year. It should be about .5%. J. Huebner said that we need to get more money out of the state.

7. Paul Mikaniewicz, our fire chief, told the Board that there is a temporary Chief in Becket now. Last week the fire department had a problem getting a truck up the road on Cross Place to respond to a report of a brush fire there. One of the two trucks dispatched could not cross over the bridge.
8. Bill Stathis, Director of Sales for Crocker Communications, appeared before the Board to answer any questions or concerns they might have about the proposal he had sent them on April 25 to provide telephone and internet service to the Town offices. He had visited Town Hall twice to measure wiring runs, inspect on-site equipment and discuss the Town's current communication costs and requirements for the future. Using the high speed broadband connection already installed at Town Hall by MBI, Crocker proposes to provide internet service to Town Offices. Crocker will also install the wiring and equipment for voice over internet phone service to all Town offices in the building. They will use the existing wiring wherever possible. Based on our current costs for both phone and internet service, Bill Stathis said that Crocker will save the Town approximately \$270 per month.

He told the Board that his company is a state contract service provider and has been in the communications business for 20 years. They service many companies and municipalities throughout western Mass and are based in Springfield. They recently were awarded a contract by CBRSD to upgrade their internet system and have received much positive feedback on the work. M. Case, Chair of the CBRSD school committee, confirmed that he had heard good reports about Crocker from his colleagues at CBRSD. Bill Stathis said that if the Board agrees to go forward with the proposed service, our installation will take place quickly once MBI processes the order. That typically takes three to four weeks. J. Huebner made a motion to accept Crocker Communications' proposal to provide broadband internet and phone service to Washington's Town Hall offices. S. Lennon seconded and the motion passed.

9. Cynthia Grippaldi asked the Board if they had any information about the natural gas line which is projected to cross the northwest corner of Washington, go through Pittsfield watershed and then run straight across Franklin County. J. Huebner replied that he had been trying to get more details, but had not learned much more than has been mentioned in the Eagle. He said that BRPC will be investigating the pipeline company's plans. Many towns are organizing to stop it. J. Huebner urged C. Grippaldi to check with the Town Clerk to see about expressing an opinion on this subject at the Annual Town Meeting.

- 10.J. Huebner asked P.Clark about the logging operation on Rt. 8 at Depot Brook. Phil replied that he is following up on this with Mark Stinson at DEP and with the DCR. It appears that a raised road has been built in the wetland. The logging has been conducted in the wetland. No cutting plan was submitted. The land owners are involved in the inquiry and claim four building lots. The Town will not take action until we have more information. The Conservation Commission will also investigate. Regarding Eden Glen, P. Clark reported that FEMA will give us \$750,000 for the mitigation work. We will have to borrow to provide additional funding. The Town may have to bond for the entire amount. P. Clark also mentioned that Pittsfield has been cited for a non-compliant dam in the state forest. The dam's condition is poor and will require 3 to 6 million dollars in improvements. P. Clark reported that we now have a plan in place for road maintenance. The culvert maintenance plan is a separate project. We have to involve DEP in all culvert work. Most of the Town's culverts are under the jurisdiction of the Wild and Scenic Rivers system. The Army Corps of Engineers and National Park Service are both involved.

- 11.J. Huebner said that the Board had made a mistake in scheduling the Annual Town Meeting for Saturday evening. They had voted at last year's meeting to change the date to a Wednesday evening in hopes of attracting a better turn out. He discussed this oversight with Town Counsel and was told that it would not be a legal problem.

- 12.D. Fish reported no developments with the culvert on Matteau Road. He has made calls for quotes on paving the transfer station driveway. P.Clark

said the situation is still developing, but we may have to put a steel plate over the transfer station culvert. Inside the transfer station we will have to use gravel. He will bring this up with the Conservation Commission. He has researched permanent pre-built bridge options for Cross Place and the other small spans in Town and has pictures of some attractive options in wood. We could pave the decks of these. They have a 30 to 50 year life expectancy. We would have to put in new foundations. We might also be able to use this type of bridge on Eden Glen.

13. M. Case reported receipt of a check for \$3776.08 from Becket for student transportation. Also received were two checks for \$100.00 each from White Wolf for septic hauling and from Bill Allen for a perc test.
14. J. Hostetter reported to the Board that she had entered all of the business census information received so far on a spread sheet. About 150 replies have been submitted to the Town. J. Huebner told her that we will have to follow up with phone calls to residents who have not replied yet.
15. J. Huebner mentioned that we need to appoint someone to be our remote IT director for the CIC program. We need a job description for this work. He asked the Administrative Assistants to investigate this.
16. E. Bond will compose his remarks commending the two recipients of the Certificates of Appreciation to be awarded at the Annual Town meeting. J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter to call Frank Kennedy and Maureen Borgnis and inform them of the awards.
17. D. Fish reported that Adam Southard is still trying to establish the issuance date on his hydraulics license. He has the license and Mass DOT confirms that, but cannot get him the issuance date. As a result, the Town has not yet paid Adam the back wages due to him. He is still working on this. The Board asked D. Fish to advise him to see the financial counselor they had recommended for help with budgeting.
18. There will be a meeting of the Emma Bailey scholarship committee next Tuesday.

19. J. Huebner reported that he attended the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting last week. The TAC Director reported that there was strong support to place the Washington Mountain Road (WMR) reconstruction budget on the Transportation Infrastructure Plan (TIP) list for 2018. May 15 is the next MPO meeting. We have been offered a skim coat now to prevent further deterioration of WMR. The work has to be completed before July 30. The board felt that the ¾" overlay should be extended over the Dalton and Becket ends of the road too.

20. J. Huebner spoke with Mr. Collingswood in Pittsfield about the cemetery land. The process is apparently moving along, though very slowly.

21. J. Huebner received a letter from the state requesting we submit a compliance plan for the transfer station by July 1. He gave this to P. Clark and asked him to work with M. Lampro to complete the form. He also received a letter from Mr. DePaola reiterating Mass DOT's reasons for not proceeding with the reconstruction of Washington Mountain Road. Mr. DePaola expressed the hope that DOT will find alternative funding.

22. M. Case made a motion to adjourn at 8:51pm. J. Huebner seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

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Minutes written by J. Nelson