

## Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – May 19, 2014

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, S. Lennon, and M. Case.
2. After leading the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of the May 12, 2014 meeting. M. Case seconded and the vote to accept the minutes was unanimous.
3. J. Huebner called for the election of Officers of the Board. M. Case nominated J. Huebner for Board Chair. S. Lennon seconded and the vote to elect was unanimous. J. Huebner nominated S. Lennon for Board Clerk. M. Case seconded the nomination and the vote to elect was unanimous.
4. J. Huebner made a motion to accept the Selectmen's Monthly Letter. M. Case seconded and the vote to accept the Letter was unanimous.
5. M. Case made a proposal to place two small signs, one at each end of Washington Mountain Road. The signs would be identical and would designate the road as the "Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans' Scenic Byway". The Board was generally supportive. M. Case will submit the exact wording for the signs. The Board will continue the discussion at the next meeting.
6. The highway crew and their families were in attendance to discuss the Town's decision to switch to bi-weekly payroll which they believe is a hardship. The Board sees the change in payroll scheduling as a way to save the Town some money. J. Huebner told them he had learned that the board's initial plan to pay a lump sum advance to the employees in order to ease the transition from weekly to bi-weekly paychecks is illegal for municipalities. Other solutions were discussed. A suggestion was made to call the advance vacation pay and pay it upfront. That was rejected as just another form of advance. Treasurer Glenn Grogan said that the total savings which the Town will realize from the switch to Bi-weekly payroll for all employees will be about \$1100.00 per year. D. Spencer said that General Dynamics sometimes offered employees small personal loans interest free that were paid back by payroll deductions over a lengthy period of time. J.

Huebner doubted that a town could do this legally. He asked Glenn Grogan to research this option. The Treasurer showed the Board the notice which he will send out in paychecks to remind employees of the change-over to bi-weekly pay. The Board decided to make a decision on these issues and on the date of notification at the June 2 meeting. Glenn Grogan observed that some OBRA deductions are at the rate of 7% and some are at 7.5%. He told the Board that open enrollment on the Town insurance occurs this week. The Board confirmed that all of the Highway crew and their families were covered.

7. D. Spencer told the Board that the Finance Committee will do transfers per the Annual Town Meeting on June 16. He reported that he had learned by reviewing Mass. General Laws that the amount transferred in the aggregate may not exceed \$5,000 or 3% of the annual budget of the department. The Board can do the other planned transfers on June 16 and set the warrant on June 9. D. Spencer noted that our Cherry Sheet has increased by \$20,000 or \$ 30,000 over the past few years. M. Case said that CGRSD might return some transportation money to the Town. We will hold the Special Town Meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June. We need to post this on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June. D. Spencer said that Dan Parnell had been elected auditor. J. Huebner said that Dan can serve as auditor, but we still need an outside audit.
8. D. Fish confirmed the rumor J. Huebner had heard that Ray Huntoon had resigned as the Superintendent of the Hinsdale Highway Department.
9. Sean Connors raised the subject of wind turbines. He asked if the state can come in and override local ordinances. Discussion followed without a clear conclusion. Sean Connors said that we might be able to control state development of wind power in October State Forest. He suggested we visit the [Global exchange.org](http://Global.exchange.org) web site for more information on resources to safeguard the community. D.Spencer said that many towns have voted to not allow the Tennessee pipeline to pass through their territory. J. Huebner added that the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission is researching this issue and will have information for member towns soon. He is following up with them on this.

- 10.D. Fish told the Board that he had inspected the current condition of the chipped sealed surface on Town roads. His conclusion is that the roads seem solid and that there will be no need to call on Comer Contractors to return and do patching or repairs. He is working on quotes for the Transfer Station driveway paving. He is getting ready to do the Lower Valley Road culvert. The Summit Hill culvert is still passable. Mr. Gumlaw wants his road graded. J. Huebner asked him if there is a new road maintenance plan. D. Fish replied that to his knowledge there is not. J. Huebner stressed that we need a new schedule of how, when and where to do road maintenance. D. Fish will ask P.Clark what the status of the new maintenance schedule is. The Board instructed D. Fish to obtain written quotes on the old truck including the plow. We may have to sell the old truck if it is worth a substantial amount of money. The Board reminded him to place hazard signs where Schulze and Frost Roads join Washington Mountain Road.
11. The Board observed that the logging road at Depot Brook and Route 8 has been built up about 4 feet in the wetland. This can't be done legally. There is no cutting plan on file for this logging work. Westfield Wild and Scenic is looking into the situation. The owner is claiming that he is clearing 4 house lots. The Conservation Commission has not acted yet.
12. J. Huebner said that he had contacted Mr. Halsey about the high water level reported at the CSX property in Town. Mr. Halsey told him that he would have someone look at it. J. Huebner will follow up. Ken Walls told the Board that the Conservation Commission had received a letter from Aaronson Associates law firm about the Town having an opportunity to acquire some land on Middlefield Road. J. Huebner told him that the Board had received and discussed that same letter last week and had opted not to purchase the property. The Board signed off on it and waived the right to buy.
13. Peru Concerned Citizens has reported that the developer, Lightship Energy, has withdrawn, without prejudice, their plan to build a commercial wind turbine farm on Garnet Hill. Having withdrawn without prejudice, they can propose the project again to the Town at a later date.

14. Chief Breen told the Board that he will schedule the training for use of the defibrillator. Fifteen people have asked to be trained. Training that many people will be costly. The Board asked Chief Breen to limit the training to people who have offices at Town Hall and to organize the event.
15. The Board was expecting the new owner of Bucksteep to appear tonight to apply for their liquor license. He did not appear.
16. J. Huebner mentioned that he had received a Memorandum of Understanding from DOR describing the duties of the Town to support remote IT services during the development of municipal accounting software under the CIC grant. The Board will review this and discuss it with D. Parnell when he returns from his vacation. We will have to pay the fee for Vadar this year while the new software is being developed.
17. J. Huebner reported that Washington Mountain Road is being paved with 3/4 " of asphalt by Mass. DOT. Filling of potholes is already underway. We have been told that the full reconstruction of Washington Mountain Road is on the TIP list for 2018. He will confirm this when he attends the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting tomorrow. He will also see Mr. Collingwood on the 5 acres of land for Town cemetery use tomorrow.
18. J. Huebner reported that the Town has received checks for plumbing permits from Pioneer Plumbing in the amounts of \$25 and \$30. Also received was a check in the amount of \$150 from Bill Allen Enterprises for an application for Disposal System Construction Permit.
19. The Board received a Memorandum from the Mass. Department of Public Health clarifying that residents may not lease out their premises through online home rental services for transient occupancy, such as Airbnb ([www.airbnb.com](http://www.airbnb.com)), unless their premises are permitted as a lodging house or bed and breakfast.
20. J. Huebner and Fire Chief P. Mikaniewicz will attend a presentation on "Planning for the Impacts of Climate Change" on May 29 at the Cork and Hearth Restaurant. The program is part of a series organized by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Berkshire Public Health Alliance

Delegates Jim and Jan Huebner will attend the BCBOHA Spring Dinner Meeting on June 4 at the Berkshire Hills Country Club. The BOH presentation will be on the subject of Lyme disease in Western Massachusetts.

21. There will be no Select Board Meeting next Monday, 5/26, as that is Memorial Day.

22. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:20. S. Lennon seconded the motion and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Written by J. Nelson