

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – October 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.
2. After leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of 9/29/14. M. Case seconded and the vote to accept was unanimous.
3. J. Huebner reported receiving a thank you letter from Mr. and Mrs. Matson of Lover's Lane. They thanked the Board and the DPW for the prompt clean-up of storm debris partially blocking their driveway. The Board expressed its appreciation to Dave Fish for his effective response to the Matsons' complaint.
4. Rebecca Krause- Hardie of the Community Software Consortium (CSC) provided the Board with an update on the CSC's work to develop municipal accounting software. D. Parnell, Town Accountant, has been assisting Rebecca and will begin beta-testing the software soon. This work is largely underwritten by a CIC grant which the CSC has received. She reported that the system backup is covered by Carbonite. The anti- virus software had to be updated. J. Les is overseeing our local system security, updates and operation. We have been able to do system backups for the most part. Work has also been done on the assessors' and accounting modules.

Rebecca reported that we received little money from the grant this year. The CSC did receive some donations from other towns anxious to speed the development of the affordable software. System access has been moved to the cloud as planned. D. Parnell will have a beta version to work on next week. The CSC has had a good response to the remote IT program. Ten towns signed up for the auto-backup service. The towns of Dalton and Oakham are helping with a public access system for assessing property

values. Hawley and Florida joined the CSC under an expansion grant. One of the projects under consideration is the creation of an executive dashboard which would simplify access and report writing.

Rebecca asked for a letter of support from Washington and presented the Board with a form letter to sign. J. Huebner made a motion that we support the CIC challenge grant as discussed. M. Case seconded and the vote to sign was unanimous. J. Huebner signed the letter for the Board. D. Parnell expressed his support for the contract extension. We don't really know just what we have to work with yet, but at least we have a platform from which to bid the new grant. He said that the Town will continue using Vadar until we know whether or not the CSC software will fill our needs. He expects to close our 2014 books by winter. We are ahead of last year in the process. Glenn Grogan is working on the cash statement. D. Parnell will start working on the CSC system next week in parallel with Vadar. The CIC grant pays for a portion of his time, in addition to \$5000 carried over from town funding last year. Rebecca left a draft report for us to look over.

5. Steve Nelson, Town delegate to WiredWest and member of the Executive Committee, updated the Selectmen on recent progress toward their goal of building the "last mile" fiber optic network to bring broadband to homes and businesses in their 43 member towns in western Mass. Following passage of the state's IT Bond Bill providing \$50,000,000 to the Mass. Broadband Institute (MBI), Senate Majority Leader Stanley Rosenberg held a meeting in September with the region's legislative delegation, WiredWest, MBI and other organizations working with MBI. The legislators issued a public statement in which all parties agreed to work together and which in effect officially blessed WiredWest as the entity to bring broadband to its member towns.

S. Nelson is part of a WiredWest group meeting weekly with MBI and financial /legal experts to finalize a financial model for the network and a plan for the towns to participate financially in its deployment through their

borrowing authority. There will be a series of regional meetings with Select Boards and Finance Committees in November to present the plan and seek town support. He believes that real progress is being made at last and will meet with the Washington Finance Committee on October 20 for further discussions with them.

6. J. Huebner reviewed spreadsheets he had developed to compare bids received for the Culvert RFP. Eight bids were submitted. Pricing varied so widely that he questioned whether there had been some misunderstanding of the scope of work. The highest bidder has been disqualified. Another Bidder, Horizon Consulting Services, LLC has withdrawn its bid. J. Huebner asked P. Clark of Horizon if he had the existing hydrologic data from Westfield Wild & Scenic on Cross Place Road. P. Clark replied that he does have that data. It is one year old, but would still be very helpful to a consultant as a starting point. He will make it available to the Town. J. Huebner asked that it be sent out to all the bidders who make the final cut.

In its RFP response, one of the bidders, Holden Transportation Engineering, mentioned that the two minor culverts might qualify as bridges. They thought the spans might be long enough. If that is the case, we could possibly get DOT funding for some percentage of the work. J. Huebner said that we should get more input from the bidders. It is not clear if some of the quotes are preliminary, final or if they include construction estimates or not. He asked P. Clark if he would be willing to act as project engineer for the Town. P. Clark replied that he would do so if a reasonable fee could be agreed upon. J. Huebner made a motion to engage P. Clark as project engineer. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously. He told the Board that we should get clarification on just what the bid numbers include.

Based on his reading of the proposals and reference checks, J. Huebner said that he believed Holden Transportation Engineering was a very strong contender. He wants to ask them to appear before the Board to review

their proposal. Foresight Land Services and Hudson Design Group were two others with strong proposals. D. Spencer suggested that we have them come before the Board also. The Board agreed to do so. The date of Thursday, October 16 was chosen. The session will focus on Q & A rather than formal proposals. J. Huebner will post it as a Select Board Meeting. The bidders will be asked to appear at Town Hall at 6:00pm. Each will be allotted a 30 minute slot. D. Spencer asked when the construction would happen. P. Clark responded that would happen in the Spring. D. Spencer wondered what would happen to the pricing if we narrowed the scope of work by dropping Lower Sargent from the project. He said that we'd be looking at a 3-5 year loan anyway for the project.

7. Belinda Phillips appeared before the Board to inform them that she was resigning her position as Collector as of November 30. J. Huebner accepted her resignation with regret. She will submit a formal letter of resignation. He made a motion to accept her resignation. M. Case seconded and the vote was unanimous. J. Huebner appointed Sue McGrath as Interim Collector starting Nov. 30. She accepted the appointment.

8. Members of the Finance Committee briefly discussed some carry-over questions. The new chart of accounts was discussed. Regarding tax taking expenses, discussion should include Belinda Phillips. Dan Parnell will carry-over to FY 15 \$5000 appropriated for his work developing the municipal accounting software with CSC . He also told the Committee that the Town must continue with Vadar until the end of calendar 2014 as insurance in case the CSC software will not meet our needs or expectations. Funds for records preservation will have to be discussed with Allison Mikaniewicz. Town building repairs funds will carry-over. We will catch up with publishing all annual reports. Regarding Eden Glen, D. Fish has funds available for installing the new gate. We have a \$1500 donation from Dick Grillon for the Columbarian wall to carry over. There will be carry-over for headstone refurbishment of about \$ 7,000. Veterans' benefits of \$90 also carry-over.

9. J. Huebner Briefly discussed the following correspondence and items:
- a. There will be a power outage here tonight from about 3:00-4:30am.
 - b. J. Nelson to investigate opportunity for Washington to join the group of towns banding together to purchase electricity at a discount this winter. Hampshire County Organization of Governments (HCOG) is leading this effort.
 - c. Ms. Loomis has informed the Tax Collector that she can no longer pay taxes on her North Lake land and offers it to the Town to take.
 - d. On 10/31 there will be a Labor Relations seminar in Boxboro. No one is available to attend.
 - e. J. Sawtelle to arrange for delivery of "Berkshire Senior" magazine for the COA.
 - f. An excellent article on our Pumpkin Walk appears in this month's edition of Berkshire Magazine.
 - g. BRPC will hold its executive meeting Thursday at 4:00.
 - h. J. Huebner received a letter from the Hinsdale Selectmen demanding an apology in response to his letter to them in which he complained about their road crew deliberately dropping trash in his driveway. He will not apologize.
 - i. The Board received an invoice for \$250 from the Fire Department which it passed along to D. Parnell.
 - j. The Town received a contract amendment notice from MassDOT regarding a funding increase of \$34,926 to cover excessive storm damages from the extraordinary amount of severe weather in Washington. Added to funds received for the Winter Rapid Roads Recovery Program, the Town was awarded a total of \$60,377.
 - k. Thank you card received from Pam Nonken to the Highway crew for putting up and taking down the tents at the Sons and Daughters gathering this year.
 - l. The PASER road condition study is nearly completed. It seems that BRPC has concluded that our roads are in decent shape. They are working on a budget and maintenance plan and will come in to present that.

- m. Received notice from Dalton of a Planning Board decision on earth removal off 41 High Street.
- n. The solar company SkyBourne may be interested in siting an array in Town. We need further details.
- o. Jeremia Pollard has agreed to represent Bucksteep. He will no longer represent the Town in this matter. He referred us to another attorney. J. Huebner has followed up with him.
- p. The Bucksteep abutters' list has been sent to Mr. Vinette who is handling their liquor license application.
- q. The Town received information of a Clean Energy Initiative from DOER. J. Nelson to research.
- r. Rep. Pignatelli will get the Board information on small business insurance assistance.
- s. J. Huebner attended the Economic Development seminar in Chicopee last week. What he learned may help us with planning for Virginia Lake estates. Mass Development may come out for a site visit.
- t. The Borgnis family wants to give their former landfill property to the Town. No taxes have been paid on it in over 10 years. As it may be considered a "brownfields" polluted site, BRPC may assist the town.
- u. D. Fish has set up a "pooper Scooper" station near the gazebo in the Town Park. All dog walkers are required to clean up after their pets.
- v. J. Huebner attended a public health advisory meeting last week. He thinks that we may want to be equipped to provide a cooling shelter for residents in Town Hall in the event of a heat wave as excessive heat is the deadliest of all natural disasters.
- w. The Town received a \$200 donation for the Pumpkin Walk.
- x. J. Huebner will attend the legislative breakfast in Sandisfield this week.
- y. The Board received \$50 in payment for a well-drilling permit and signed the permit.
- z. Jodi Hostetter submitted to the Board her draft of the 2011 Annual Report. She will make all requested changes and re-submit a final

copy. She will add a letter with a list of those who took training that year. The Board was pleased with the progress she had made.

aa. Chief Breen reported two incidents: a utility trailer had been found in the woods, seemingly abandoned. They are unable to trace the owner so far; He investigated a report of a mentally challenged individual camped near the tracks by Muddy Brook who was suspected of being armed. He called in the state police. The individual's car was towed out of the mud in Hinsdale and the incident ended peacefully.

10.J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm. M. Case seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson