

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – November 3, 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. M. Case made a motion to accept the minutes from October 27, 2014. S. Lennon seconded the motion. The motion passed on Case and Lennon's votes. J. Huebner abstained as he was unable to attend the 10/27 meeting.
3. J. Huebner mentioned that a couple of items from the minutes of 10/20/14 needed to be corrected: Mrs. Dacey's home is on Johnson Hill Road, not Lower Valley Road as described and that he was to be absent for just one Monday, not two, as was incorrectly indicated.
4. At the Board's request, Ken Elstein of Hampshire Council of Governments (HCOG) attended the meeting to inform the Town about their electricity bulk purchase program. He said that over forty towns and cities across the state including ten from the Berkshires had joined the cooperative effort to negotiate discounted pricing for electric generation. The discounted rates are available on an optional basis to all residents of member towns. Residents can choose to opt out and stay with their present supplier. Based on information from National Grid and WMECO electrical rates are expected to increase about 37% this winter. The increase to member towns of the HCOG aggregation program is estimated to be closer to 24%. Electrical rates have more than doubled from 2 years ago.

HCOG has been involved in successfully aggregating electric contracts since 2007. Washington will not be eligible to take advantage of these savings this winter. However in 2015 we will be able to join and enjoy discounted electric rates for the winter of 2016. Ken Elstein told the Board that we should start the process now for next year. Approval at a Town Meeting is required. He offered to attend our Town Meeting and answer all questions

about the program. There is no cost to the Town for this program. HCOG gets qualified by the state each year to run the aggregation program.

5. J. Huebner mentioned that he had asked BRPC for notes on their recent meeting on the Kinder Morgan natural gas pipeline. He reported that the Town had received much information lately on energy issues. He received a letter recently from a grass roots environmental advocacy group called Environment Massachusetts asking the Town to sign their letter to the Governor- elect in support of solar energy. He made a motion that the Selectmen sign the letter as a Board. M. Case seconded and the vote to sign was unanimous.
6. D. fish told the Board that he has only one load of road salt so far. It is costly and in short supply. He has ordered much more and is waiting for delivery. He reported that we have received the expected state funds for storm repairs and the winter rapid recovery roads programs totalling about \$45,000. The Board asked him about the status of the recently collapsed bridge on Middlefield Road. P. Clark told the Board that it is an emergency situation because fire and rescue vehicles will have to make a long detour of an additional half hour from Becket to reach Middlefield residents without that bridge. It is much more than an inconvenience.

J.Huebner said that he had received a letter today from Peter Niles at MassDOT on this issue. DOT sees repair of the bridge as urgent. They advised that we treat the repairs as “preservation of the bridge”. This means that we would be keeping the existing headwall. This approach will facilitate a speedier and less costly repair. P. Clark has already begun working on an estimate and plan for deck and stringers. His fee for this work is not to exceed \$9500. J. Huebner made a motion to approve P. Clark’s fee. M. Case seconded and the vote was unanimous. P. Clark estimated that it will take 2 weeks to complete the plan and then some more time to get permits. The Board asked D. Fish to order the steel

needed right away. Middlefield has offered the full cooperation of their road crew.

7. On Nov. 24th Doug Plachinski of BRPC will be here to report on the PASER study of our roads' condition. J. Huebner observed that much work is being done on drainage along Kirchner Road by the Town of Hinsdale. D. Fish said that Hinsdale received several hundred thousand dollars from DOT for this work. They may pave the road too.
8. P. Clark told the Board that he met last week on Eden Glen with MEMA. The National Park Service has endorsed our project. We can expect a grant award by the end of the year. MEMA will not participate. The Town will have to set up the necessary bonding in advance of the award as we will be required to cover about 25% of the cost.
9. J. Huebner said that he and M. Case plan to attend the WiredWest regional meeting in Becket on November 18.
10. Ed Bond thanked all for a wonderful Pumpkin Walk. He said that Volunteers get all the credit for pulling it off again. The Park Commission received about \$3500 in donations to put it on. This included donations from the Transfer Station jar. D. Fish provided the bonfire wood and set up the stumps for the walk. Ed estimated that we had between 300 – 500 attendees. Jodi will post many pictures of the event on our web site. Craig Willis donated the candy and drove the always popular White Wolf hayride. Val Bird did the health inspection and Ernie Lampron supplied and served up 200 hot dogs from the gazebo with help from many friends. The donated multitude of carved and lighted pumpkins made it a magical night for all who attended.
11. On the subject of town events, S. Lennon said that since it began, the Hilltown Hoot has raised about \$35,000 in total for our schools. The

Guthries told him that the next Hoot will be in August. They need a strong volunteer effort to pull it off. This may be the last Hoot.

12. J. Hostetter presented her weekly report to the Board. She has completed both 2010 and 2011 Annual Reports and sent them to the printer. Reports for 2012 and 2013 are under way and she expects to complete drafts of both in the next two weeks. She has begun generating letters for the FY 2014 Annual Report and expects to complete them by 11/10. She gave the Board a sympathy card for Heidi Nugent on the passing of her husband. The Board signed the card. Regarding Bucksteep's upcoming meeting in December with the Planning Board, J. Huebner told her that she did not need to do anything more than see that the notice was posted on the Town Hall bulletin board outside the front door. We do not need to post in the Eagle. She told the Board that M. Wiley is asking what the Board wants from this meeting. J. Huebner replied that Bucksteep has to go to her and petition the Planning Board to continue the non-conforming use of the property. He has to get his act together and make a clear case for the Planning Board to rule on.

13. J. Huebner said that there will be a South Berkshire Waste Management meeting on Dec. 2 in Otis. The Board would like Michelle Lampro to attend.

14. The Board confirmed that there will be a Special Town Meeting next week on Monday, Nov. 10 at 7:15. Peter Holden of Holden Engineering will attend to discuss his company's approach to developing design/engineering plans for our 3 failing culverts. His firm was conditionally awarded the contract subject to the decision of the Town to fund the project. A vote will be taken at this STM.

15. The Board received a copy of a letter to Bucksteep from the Mass DEP. The DEP is asking Bucksteep to sign two Administrative Consent Orders addressing multiple violations of the Total Coliform Rule within the public water system serving Bucksteep Manor. Violations were cited on October

2013 and July 2014. The Board observed that there has not been a Title 5 inspection at Bucksteep. As the buyer of the property agreeing to take full responsibility for any septic repairs, Bucksteep LLC has 5 months from the purchase date to have an inspection.

16. The Board received two letters from Veterans' Agent Peter Blake updating them on his recent training and sharing his thoughts and questions on creating an expanded veterans' memorial in Washington. The Board decided to take up this discussion at a later meeting.

17.J. Huebner briefly commented on and reviewed the following:

- a. Letter received from CSX regarding Right of Way (ROW) management, asking Town to provide list of properties with private wells within the railroad's ROW. J. Huebner observed that this is a big project.
- b. Letter received from BRPC informing us of District Local technical Assistance for 2015. J. Nelson to follow up on this.
- c. Receipt of Notice of Decision from Dalton regarding a property at 203 North Street.
- d. Receipt of a Notice of Public Hearing from Lee regarding Lee Fitness, LLC applying for a zoning variance.
- e. Receipt of three Notices of Special Permit Hearings from Pittsfield for properties at 64-74 North St (Onota Building); 23 Fern Street and 28 Cromwell Ave.
- f. Discussion of the Berkshire County Selectmen's Association Dinner at Skyline Country Club in Lanesborough scheduled for this Thursday, Nov. 6th. The Huebners will attend as will Chief Breen.
- g. Receipt of End-of-year Financial Report for 2013 – 2014, including the 2014-2015 School Budget. For the Town Accountant.
- h. Receipt of the quarterly report from Berkshire Public Health Alliance. Incidence of LYME still #1 disease reported. Also information on local

and state process for dealing with Ebola cases. There are none reported in the county.

- i. A resident of Upper Sargent Road asked the Board to have the Highway Department again place rocks to block access to the road in winter when it is very hazardous. D. Fish agreed that it can't be plowed safely. J. Huebner asked to continue the discussion at a later meeting.

18.J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45pm. M. Case seconded the motion and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Minutes written by J. Nelson