

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen - January 26, 2015

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 6:57. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, S. Lennon and M. Case.
2. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of January 12, 2015. M. Case seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
3. J. Huebner reported receiving notification from Covanta that they have begun using a chemical called Avitrol to kill birds at their Hubbard Ave. facility.
4. J. Huebner asked the Administrative Assistants to locate the Cultural Council paperwork signed by the Selectmen on January 5.
5. J. Huebner noted that last week the Board had accepted and signed the Pipeline Resolution letter he drafted based on the outcome of the December 15, 2014 Special Town Meeting. At that meeting Town residents voted to stand in opposition to Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion. The Resolution letter was sent to Governor Baker, our state and Federal delegation and the Mass. Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Voters' also decided that the Town should join the pipeline working group organized by Berkshire Regional Planning which has been meeting for several months and which J. Huebner has been attending. He said that the Board will sign the Inter-Regional Agreement to officially join the organization next week. M. Case voiced his objection to all working group member towns, regardless of size, paying the same fee. J. Huebner explained that this is a start-up fee and subsequent payments will reflect town demographics. The working group meets on Wednesdays and J. Huebner will attend. He also mentioned that Kinder Morgan has scheduled a new series of public Open House meetings to discuss their plans for the

pipeline. The schedule will be posted at Town Hall. The meeting closest to Washington will be at Berkshire Community College on February 10 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

6. The Board recorded receiving the following checks: \$4640.50 from the Town of Becket for school bus transportation; \$388.80 from Arpin for scrap metal processing; \$225.00 for perk test at Goucher's on Cross Place Road.
7. The Board worked with D. Fish, Highway Superintendent, and Adam Southard, Highway Crew, to understand and mediate a dispute that had arisen between them. J. Huebner said that the Board had received an email from D. Fish saying that Adam Southard was no longer working for the Town. After some discussion it became clear that Adam thought he had been fired and D. Fish thought he had quit. This misunderstanding arose from a confused morning exchange of phone calls in which Adam thought he was being criticized for not being timely to work and D. Fish thought he was just leaving a reminder to be up and on the job early in light of the snow storm.

The Board urged both parties to be calm and to listen to what the other was saying. Once the grievances were understood, D. Fish stated again that he did not fire Adam and Adam said that he did not want to quit.

Both agreed to put this dispute behind them. J. Huebner made the point that it was D. Fish's responsibility to keep his staff together. Adam said he would report to work at 6:30 am on Tuesday. Thinking Adam had quit and not wanting to be short-handed during the storm, D. Fish had hired two temporary plow drivers. The Board told him they supported this decision and we would certainly be able to use the extra help on Tuesday.

8. J. Huebner asked for a review of our bridge and highway status. D. Fish said that CSX has complained about access to tracks from Lower Valley Road as a result of our closing that bridge. J. Huebner suggested that CSX could put locked gates in place to control access and limit use to their crews only. D.

Fish said that despite his posting “Road Closed” signs, placing Jersey barriers and even tree trunks to block access, the public continues to try to use the bridge. J. Huebner asked Chief Breen if we can fine those who try to get through the barriers. He did not think we could charge such fines.

J. Huebner said that he would like to go to CSX for more fencing on Upper Valley Road and Summit Hill Road. The Summit Hill Road bridge has been posted by DOT for 6 tons. All of our plows weigh more than that. There was discussion of just how DOT weighs trucks. Chief Breen suggested that we could get our trucks weighed at Vicon. J. Huebner thought that we may need to get a waiver from DOT for each vehicle. D. Spencer pointed out that depending on how DOT weighs vehicles even the small plow truck may be over limit because all of it, both axles, will be on the bridge at the same time.

On the subject of Middlefield/Becket Road bridge, P. Clark noted that the structure has a 25 ton rating. However DOT has only given that bridge a 5 ton limit. He said we need to understand how DOT calculates weight. J. Huebner asked why the temporary bridge did not fit initially. P. Clark said that there were alignment issues with the abutments. D. Fish said that the road angle actually distorted the measurements they had in the drawings. The bridge is in place now. We need to install new decking. That material should be delivered on Feb. 2.

Regarding Cross Place Road , P. Clark told the Board that he has requested a cost estimate on the design work from Holden Engineering, but has not yet received a response. He will try again. Regarding Eden Glen, we have 60 days to begin design work or lose the FEMA funding. P. Clark said that we will have a design estimate finished in 30 days. We need to have a Special Town Meeting to decide on how to cover the Town’s portion of the Eden Glen repair cost as well as the repairs of the other bridges. The STM warrant will have to go to the Tracks on Feb. 23 with public notice published 2 weeks before that.

9. J. Huebner reported that at the meeting with DOT on January 6 the agency was very critical of the Town because we did not have certain figures and plans at hand. P. Clark was unable to attend. D. Fish did attend the meeting. The legislative delegation was in attendance. J. Huebner expressed the Town's belief that we have been singled out by the agency for prejudicial treatment. He cited the Summit Hill Bridge weight limit and the long delay in getting approval for the Middlefield temporary bridge. Peter Niles said that we had never told him about using the Bailey bridge on Cross Place. J. Huebner said that is totally untrue and we have the emails to prove it. It is a pre-engineered bridge with voluminous engineering documentation. We sent all of that information to P. Niles when it was requested. P. Clark will call DOT and provide any additional calculations they need on the Bailey bridge. J. Huebner asked D. Fish and the Administrative Assistants to search the files including minutes from 2007, 2008 and 2009 for any documentation on DOT's beginning to repair or replace the Summit Hill bridge during that time.
10. J. Huebner made a motion to approve a permit for Shaun Lennon to operate a pre-owned vehicle business. S. Lennon recused himself from this vote. No cars are parked on his premises. It is strictly a car search and find operation for individual customers carried out at auctions. M. Case seconded and the vote to issue was unanimous.
11. Chief Breen told the Board that we need to design a new Town flag. Ours does not compare favorably to those of other Berkshire Towns. It will be hung at the State House in Boston in the hall of Flags. It was suggested that we have the Washington students at the school design the new flag. We would run a contest and choose 3 finalists and then a winner. The Board expressed their support for this effort.
12. The Board briefly considered the following items:

- a. Notice received of a Westfield Wild and Scenic meeting on 1/29.
- b. Notice of a meeting on Feb. 9 hosted by the Dept. of Health Western Mass. in Northampton, at which towns can discuss Community Engagement.
- c. Receipt of the annual bill for our BRPC membership in the amount of \$388.34.
- d. D.Fish said the latest estimate on delivery of our new plow truck is mid - February.
- e. The Board will take up Board of Health issues next week.
- f. M. Case announced that there will be a Berkshire Selectmen's Association meeting in Becket next week.
- g. Received Report of the Executive Board Meeting of Berkshire County Head Start dated Jan. 21, 2015.

13. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn at 8:07. M. Case seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Nelson

