

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – February 23, 2015

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 meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from February 9, 2015. M. Case seconded and the vote to accept the minutes was unanimous.
3. J. Huebner introduced Lauren Gaherty of BRPC who discussed the availability of grant funding to assist in the Town's flood control planning for Depot Brook. The grant she had in mind would provide professional consulting assistance which would yield recommendations on our options. Applications for this grant are due on March 27, 2015. J. Huebner told her that we have already done an extensive hydrological study of Depot Brook at Frost Road and the area upstream from there. P. Clark has done this work and brought the Town a significant grant from FEMA for hazard mitigation at that section of the stream. The Town will have to pay for 25% of the work on that project. Town Meeting still has to approve that expenditure.

J. Huebner said that the Town would be interested in applying for a grant to have consulting assistance in planning its management of the extensive watershed both upstream and downstream from the Eden Glen area. We have failing and failed bridges in that area. The Town has hired Holden Engineering to do a hydrological study and site planning for the Cross Place Road bridge. That section of the stream is currently spanned by a temporary bridge which must be replaced. P. Clark added that there is much value to the Town in studying the downstream area. We have a knowledge gap there. This grant could fund a study of the entire drainage basin.

K. Lew suggested that we wait to do the downstream study until after the Eden Glen construction has been completed since we may not know the full impact of the of the Eden Glen work for some months. The Board agreed.

J. Huebner asked Ms. Gaherty for a copy of the grant application for our review. She mentioned that if we decide to go forward BRPC could write the grant application and, if we were successful, also manage the financial administration of the grant funds. She said that in order to be successful we will have to be convincing about the Town's intent to act on the findings. J. Huebner said that any subsequent construction would be subject to Town voter approval, but based on the findings we may ask for approval. Ms. Gaherty will be the point person on this project. P. Clark will be our representative to work with her. She said that they would finalize the application on March 23. J. Huebner made a motion to apply for a hydrological study of the Depot Brook watershed below Frost Road. M. Case seconded the motion and the vote to proceed was unanimous.

4. D. Fish told the Board that he will take 3 weeks in June off.

5. J. Huebner asked K. Lew for an update on planning for the Special Town Meeting which is scheduled for March 16. He gave the Board Chair a written summary of the financial decisions to be considered. The most pressing issue is the Middlefield Road Bridge. We need to decide what we are asking for regarding that bridge. Bonding does not have to be on the STM warrant. P. Clark spoke with Mark DeVylber at DOT regarding the bridge. DOT did not reject the idea of our replacing the wood decking on the bridge as it was before the collapse. However we have nothing in writing from DOT that says we can do that. The rating was within H20 or about 16 tons. The Board stressed that we have to obtain Mark's agreement to the above in writing.

M. Case asked if Middlefield would help. D. Fish said that they offered to send a crew to help with the re-building but no one ever showed up. J.

Huebner mentioned that the Middlefield Selectmen said they were anxious to help us. He will follow up on this. P. Clark said that in emails with DOT regarding Lower Sargent and Lower Valley bridges DOT told him that we will need stringers and concrete deck and approaches. They are likely to make the same requirements for Middlefield. P. Clark said that we do have the bridge in place and have the wood on hand to install the decking. We can postpone any further work for four to five years if we need to.

J. Huebner recommended we go with scenario #2, which is full cost for a new bridge. We have to put decking in place now. He will contact Middlefield to tell them that we will do the decking and that we would appreciate their help. We also have the cost of P. Clark's design work to cover. He asked P. Clark to get a written statement of DOT's requirements for that bridge from Mark at DOT. K. Lew added that once this is clarified we will consider getting a debt exclusion on this. We should have a better idea next week or so.

P. Clark told the Board that Eden Glen is a different scenario. We have a commitment from the Federal government to solve a problem. It is important not to lose that focus. He felt that this should be a separate warrant item. J. Huebner disagreed and asked the Finance Committee for a single warrant item covering the various bridge projects with the numbers for each one broken out.

6. Mark Levernoch asked the Board for an update on the situation with the Summit Hill bridge. J. Huebner responded that the Town has written strong letters to everyone in DOT, with copies to our delegation. We found a six year old letter in our files from DOT informing the Town that the bridge needed to be re-built. Nothing but some minor maintenance repairs were ever done. Now they have placed a 6 ton limit on the bridge and plan to begin work in the spring. We have protested the low posting. The Board met with DOT and they did not offer any relief or seem interested in

hearing about the hardship a possible closing of the bridge would have on our residents.

Mark said that he will have a 20 mile detour to get to work if it is closed. He is concerned about emergency services getting over to residents on the east side of the bridge now. Becket has said that they will not cross the bridge with fire equipment. J. Huebner will check with Paul Mikaniewicz to determine if he has discussed this question of emergency assistance with Hinsdale. It is a matter of public safety. M. Case said DOT was considering a temporary bridge or they may use some steel they salvaged from the Big Dig. S. Conners suggested that we get Petricca involved. His company, Uni-Stress, makes huge pre-cast concrete bridge components.

7. Steve Nelson, our delegate to WiredWest and member of the Executive Committee, updated the Board on next steps in bringing broadband to the area. Governor Baker issued a press release on February 18 stating that he and his administration support the broadband initiative in Western Mass and that he will be releasing the \$50,000,000 earmarked for this project. The WW mailing to town residents is finally at the printer and should go out shortly. The mailing will tell people how to sign up for the service. J. Huebner told him that the Town will make a decision on its participation in the network at Annual Town Meeting. S. Nelson said that WiredWest is actively training town delegates in the 32 participating towns on the details of the sign-up process and the service. They will be prepared to reach out to residents and to answer all of their questions. S. Nelson said that we want to get out and have discussions with anyone interested before the spring ATM's so that everyone can make a well informed vote.
8. J. Huebner said that there will be a legislative breakfast on March 6 in Shelburn Falls. He plans to attend.
9. J. Huebner asked the Finance Committee if we can use any Chapter 90 money on our various bridge projects. He noted that we have had a nearly

50% increase in our funding this year. K. Lew said that we have about \$400,000 potentially available. There may be another \$90,000. He will check with D. Fish and Dan Parnell about this. The Board asked P. Clark, and the Finance Committee to get together and work on the budgeting. K. Lew told the Board that we have had no news from BRPC on the long term financial planning grant we applied for.

10. M. Case and Dick Spencer were at the CBRSD budget meeting last week. The budget proposed by the state is \$26, 509, 205.

11.J. Huebner mentioned that we received a letter from Senator Ben Downing regarding the Kinder Morgan/Tennessee gas pipeline. The Senator thanked Washington for contacting him to express our concerns with the proposed pipeline. He included the text of a press release from several in the western Mass delegation opposing the pipeline. Signing the press release in addition to Sen. Downing were Reps. Cariddi, Kulic, Pignatelli, and Mark. J. Huebner said that in addition to Washington, 10 towns from the Berkshires have joined the BRPC working group studying/monitoring Kinder Morgan's plans. As a result the annual membership fee looks to be about \$6,000. Most of that will be in this fiscal year. Several New York towns may join. If that happens the fee may decrease.

12.J. Huebner reported that no one has expressed interest in the Tax Collector position vacated by Belinda Phillips. Sue McGrath, Assistant to Belinda in the Tax Collector's Office for 3 years, was appointed to do the job in the interim. He will put an item on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting requesting that this position be changed from an elected to an appointed position if no one places their name on the ballot.

13.He mentioned that there have been no developments on North Lake Estates or on Bucksteep.

- 14.J. Hostetter updated the Board on several of her projects. The Annual report for 2012 is at the printer. Dan gave her the information needed to complete the 2014 Annual Report. The Clerk is finalizing the last data needed to complete the 2013 report. J. Hostetter told the Board that she expects to have all of the reports done for the May Annual Town Meeting. Her work scanning old Select Board minutes continues. That is where she found the DOT letter revealing that they knew Summit Hill Bridge needed to be replaced 6 years ago. The Board thanked her for her research efforts. She said that she has put some Board of Health (BOH) information on our web site. J. Huebner asked her to obtain an electronic version of the BRPC Washington Roads Report and also post that on the web site. She will ask Dan to review the payment portion of the new BOH process.
- 15.J. Huebner made a motion to accept the March Selectmen's monthly Letter. M. Case seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- 16.J. Huebner announced that Jeff Sawtelle will resign from managing the COA. He thanked Jeff for his hard work and generous sharing of what little free time he had. The Board will begin a search for his replacement.
- 17.The Board discussed a complaint received from Mr. Coyle about snow removal from the end of his driveway. Chief Breen contacted the Coyles. They were upset that the plow left snow blocking their driveway each time it passed. The Highway Department saw to it that the snow was removed per Coyles' request. They also believed that the plow was driving over their property. The Board suggested that they do a survey of their property lines to settle this matter. The Board felt that the Town had made every effort to address their complaints.
- 18.J. Huebner asked for any suggestions for the upcoming TIP (Transportation Infrastructure Program) meeting at BRPC. We want to stay on the TIP list with a few highway projects. D.Fish will give it some thought.

19.J. Huebner briefly mentioned the following items:

- a. The Board received a letter from Veterans' Agent Peter Blake outlining his budget needs for the coming year.
- b. The Board received a check in the amount of \$100 from the Lennons for their used car dealer's license.
- c. They also received a check for \$25.00 for a gas fitting permit from Levernoch Plumbing.
- d. The Lenox Zoning Board of Appeals sent notice of a meeting to be held March 5th.
- e. Received a letter from Superintendent of Schools Rob Putnam requesting a meeting with the Board. J. Huebner will talk to him about a date.
- f. J. Hostetter reported that repair work to the wall between the Clerk's office and the Assessors' continues. Presently they have no heat. RJ Peltier will do the repair. He needs to replace a part in the heater. The Board approved this work.
- g. Received notice of DCR public trails workshops to be held on 2/25 and 4/4 at their headquarters at 740 South Street in Pittsfield.
- h. A poster about the Neighbor to Neighbor program managed by Berkshire Taconic(BT) will be put up at Town Hall. This program provides small grants of up to \$500 to help with overdue utilities, medical bills, short-term housing etc. BT pays the vendor directly.
- i. Received copy of the minutes of the HeadStart Annual Meeting held Feb. 18. Annual budget included.
- j. Received notice from Dalton of public hearing to be held March 6 regarding a new Brew pub.
- k. D. Fish told the Board that the new truck has finally arrived.
- l. Chief Breen told the Board that the Town Hall generator started right up during the last storm when the power went out.
- m. M. Case attended a meeting of Berkshire Regional Transportation. He was the first Washington Representative to do so in a very long time. On March 6 there will be an open house at the Berkshire Regional Transportation call center.

- n. MIIA will make some grants for snow removal from flat roofs. D. Fish mentioned Town Hall.
- o. BRPC is doing a survey on why young people are leaving the Berkshires and why young people do not move here. You can see the survey on the BRPC web site.

20. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:52. S. Lennon seconded and the motion to adjourn passed unanimously.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

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Respectfully submitted,

Jan Nelson