

## Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – March 2, 2015

1. M. Case called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Attending for the Board were M. Case, S. Lennon and J. Huebner.
2. After M. Case led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of February 23, 2015. M. Case seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.
3. J. Huebner reported receiving approved plans from DOT for the reconstruction of one of our 3 bridges. P. Clark said that he too received information from DOT and that the plans approved were for the temporary Middlefield Road Bridge. J. Huebner observed that it has taken DOT 2 months to give the bridge their approval. P. Clark told the Board that he had sent a letter to Mark DeVylder of DOT, District Bridge Engineer, on 2/24/15 confirming the design scope for the restoration of the Middlefield Road Bridge. He provided a copy of the letter to the Board.
4. Peter Blake, Town Veterans' Agent, gave the Board an update on the potential new war memorial honoring Town veterans. The Board had asked him to establish a committee of residents to work on this project and to set up some guidelines for committee members. The initial committee member is Chief Breen. P. Blake told the Board that complications arise in placing veteran's names on the memorial as the only ones legally eligible are soldiers who actually enlisted from Washington. He knows of many veterans in town who have lived here for many years but would not be eligible because they were not residents at the time of their enlistment. M. Case expressed his opinion that funding for such a memorial should come from private citizens and not from town funds. P. Blake gave the Board his written guidelines for the establishment of the memorial. The location and type of war memorial will be discussed by the committee and presented to the Selectmen at a future date.

He also updated the Board on developments at the state level which will affect the Town's handling of veterans' affairs. By October 2016 all Veterans' Service agents will have to be trained. He may need additional training to comply. Towns will be able to make a decision on how to manage their veterans' programs. They can choose to continue managing on their own or join with a larger district to share the administration and other responsibilities. Washington has about 30 benefit-eligible veterans now and that number is likely to increase. Washington only gets reimbursed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the benefit amounts. J. Huebner asked P. Blake for his recommendation on which of these two options would best serve the Town. He replied that in the next 2-4 years we would be better off joining a district to handle the work. The closest district is Northampton. M. Case added that he believes the financial burden on towns will just become more acute in the next few years. The towns have to pay the veterans in advance and get reimbursement from the state. Reimbursement lags by 12 to 15 months currently.

5. M. Case told the Board that he had received a note from Mike Moro offering to help the Town in hosting live music concerts at the Town Park during the summer season. J. Huebner tabled discussion of this item until next week's meeting.
6. M. Case reported that D. Fish had given him a tour of the new truck.
7. J. Huebner made a motion that the Board sign the warrant for the Special Town Meeting scheduled for March 16. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Board signed the warrant. Chief Breen added his signature as Constable and departed to post the warrant at the three usual and customary places in Town.

8. J. Huebner asked K. Lew, Chair of the Finance Committee and Glenn Grogan, Town Treasurer, to meet with Phil Clark for a discussion of cash flow required to fund our bridge projects.
9. At the request of the Town Clerk the Select Board members signed a certified copy of the minutes from December 22, 2014. This document is required for our participation in the bulk electricity purchase plan managed by HCOG. The Town voted to participate in this program at the December STM.
10. J. Huebner reported that there will be a meeting of the Executive Council of BRPC on Thursday this week at 4:00pm.
- 11.G. Grogan accepted paperwork from the Board on the MIIA awards program. MIIA is the Town's insurance agent. D. Fish mentioned that under this program we may be eligible for an insurance rebate due to the Highway Department's recent work clearing the flat Town Hall Roof of many feet of snow. He documented that work with a series of pictures which could be submitted to MIIA in support of our application. D. fish also mentioned that he and the highway crew had taken accident training and that MIIA should be notified in case some rebate in insurance cost might be available. G. Grogan will contact MIIA for more information.
12. J. Huebner told the Board that he had drafted another letter to DOT explaining again what the Town's pressing needs are regarding our current bridge projects. He asked DOT to meet with our engineers, Horizon and Holden, on the Chapter 85 requirements for Cross Place Road hydrological study and design. He asked DOT to clarify its position on how we should reconstruct the Middlefield Road Bridge. This information is critical for our budget planning. Finally he asked DOT to provide a firm and short timetable for reconstruction of the Summit Hill Road bridge. He made a motion that the Board send the letter to Peter Niles of DOT. M. Case

seconded and the vote to send the letter was unanimous. All Board members signed the letter.

13. The Board received notification from WMECO that the taxable value of its property in Town is \$900,000. ??

14.J. Huebner reported that he had been informed by CSX that they had installed additional guard rail on Upper Valley Road. D. Fish will verify that.

15.Jodi Lampro expressed his frustration to the Board that we will have to construct new bridges at Middlefield Road and at Cross Place at great expense and will not be able to continue to use the sturdy temporary bridges we have in place now. J. Huebner explained that we do not own these temporary bridges. We must return them to DEP at some point in the not too distant future. That is why we have to plan now for the expense of reconstruction. He mentioned that Ben Downing and Smitty Pignatelli want to build up a stockpile of temporary bridges because many are failing throughout the county. Jodi also said that he believed that the state is over-salting the roads and as a result rusting away everyone's vehicles. He emphasized that we need to find the most economical way to get the bridges built. The Board agreed.

16.J. Huebner briefly reported the following items:

- a. Notice received of a Dalton Planning Board hearing on 3/18.
- b. Letter received from Sybille Baier, formerly of Heartwood Road, expressing her opinion that we should remove the dam from Depot Brook at Frost Road.
- c. Request from the MMA that we fill out their snow and ice spending survey so that they can provide that data to the state to help persuade the Governor to increase the roads budget. D. Fish to complete the form.
- d. Superintendent Putnam will be at the Selectmen's Meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

- e. J. Hostetter told the Board that after consideration she had decided that she could not take on the added responsibility of chairing the COA .She added that Rose Borgnis had expressed interest in that position now that Jeff Sawtelle has resigned.
- f. G. Grogan gave the Board information on a temporary shortfall in cash. He needed 2 signatures for International Truck parts. The Board signed.
- g. Barbara Keyes has volunteered to join the Board of Health.
- h. Alternate Delegate J. Nelson told the Board that the WiredWest broad band sign-up mailing will go out on Friday this week. Information on how to sign up will also appear in the Tracks.

17. Regarding changes to the Board of Health, J. Huebner mentioned that he will schedule a meeting next week at 6:00pm. The Board will be reorganized. He will talk to D. Parnell about the collection of fees and changes to the accounting end of the process.

18.J. Huebner reported that he had reviewed the budget figures from Town Departments which Dick Spencer had sent to him. He thought it likely that he would call a budget meeting about a week after the STM to review this data. We have no actuals yet, only estimates to work with. He assumes funding for departments will be flat. He asked K. Lew to look at the actuals. He asked all on the Finance Committee to review the Roads Report done by BRPC. D. Fish said that he has his plan for road maintenance ready. J. Huebner told him that we will discuss that at the next meeting.

19. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15. S. Lennon seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted, Jan Nelson