

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

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 6:58 pm. 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 March 16, 2015. M. Case seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
3. J. Huebner introduced Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Putnam, who in turn introduced Melissa Falkowski who then passed out the two handouts including FY2016 CBRSD Proposed Final Budget dated March 12, 2015 and a Comparison of Tentative Budget and Final Budget. Both documents can be found on the CBRSD website.

Dr. Putnam explained the four reorganizations that took place to achieve this year's objective to hold the increase to no more than 2.5% over FY2015. Re-organization of the Elementary Schools included the closure of the Berkshire Trail Elementary School; all students were integrated into existing classes in Craneville Elementary School with the largest class size in the K-4 grades consisting of 23 students. This re-organization addressed the decline in enrollment as well with a re-organization of Becket Washington School (BWS) and Kittredge staff and teachers to achieve similar staffing of both locations with each headed by a teaching principal and sharing a school adjustment counselor. There will be a reduction in one K-5 teacher and one Physical Education teacher with the art and music positions reallocated to the high school providing the same service with fewer instructors. The secondary re-organization consisted of eliminating the Nessacus department heads, creating 7-12 grade content coordinators that will work across the schools to prepare lower grades for graduation into the high school programs. The elimination of the health teacher re-directed the administering of health education through physical education, science and guidance. Revamping of the grade 6-8 computer curriculums and integrating computer skills into content courses at the high school. Wahconah High School lost teachers due to course requirement changes designed to opening up an opportunity for culture. Computer Literacy course requirement will be suspended but will be offered along with music, art and modern language as an elective to

the high school curriculum. There was a re-organization of the grade six to better prepare for 7-12 courses. The BWS Principal will work with k-6 to align science, technology, engineering, mathematics, humanity, social studies and language arts. The special education was reorganized re-allocation the team leader to a teaching position, a reduction in clerical positions and contracted services. The district portion of the budget reduced transportation by asking the bus company to review how to reduce the number of buses. Additions to the budget included guidance at Nessacus, new text books and course materials and language teacher. Mrs. Falkowski, using the second handout went over the numbers noting that most of the line items on the operating budget summary are lower than last year, with increases in text books due the MIMSY Program and new text books. The insurance increase is due to unemployment costs resulting from staff reduction from the school closing and restructuring. Active employee medical benefits increased. The budget was balanced through revenue sources. The handout also included a five year enrollment history which showed from 2010 to current that Washington contributed an average of 5.94% of the district's enrollment. Washington's assessed budget contribution increased over last year by \$31,949.00 for Operating expenses and \$1,125.00 for Capital expenses for a total assessment increase of \$33,074.00. The total budget contribution assessment for the Town of Washington for FY2016 is \$676,462.00. J. Huebner asked for clarification of the Wahconah Regional High School renovations number. Mrs. Falkowski explained that one number included the district wide security renovations. J. Huebner stated that it is the goal to have well educated students that can get good paying jobs and stay in the county and that although the Berkshire Trail closing is regrettable; he added that the single biggest concern is that the closing is a first in a series. Superintendent Putnam explained that one of the issues that came about during the budget process is the inequities that Craneville has a large number of students as compared to smaller schools. It is very difficult to apportion the students in a way where class sizes are similar. It is in the policy to re-assign students to other schools. The difficulty lies in the decreasing population and birth rates. The class sizes could have a much greater variation in Kitterage and BWS. It may be that the only way to rationalize class size would be to consolidate students in some form. The Nesdec study described two options for moving forward. One option was to close one elementary school and second to close two elementary schools with the argument being the usage of the buildings. BWS has 117 with a capacity of 260 students, which is the number of

students in Kitterage. If the projections are correct and we do decline another 200 students in the next six or seven years, something will need to be done. There are currently two adhoc committees discussing how to proceed in the future. One committee is an external committee looking to see what can be done with other districts. The second committee is internal, analyzing how to configure our district. The committees will be reporting in October. There was discussion on the Wahconah building project. Jan Huebner suggested considering moving the 6 grade to the elementary schools and researching the cost of renovations necessary to Nessacus to house grades 7 through 12. Jan Huebner added that moving the fifth grade to the high school is a bad idea. Superintendent Putnam stated that that option is being considered. M. Case informed Jan Huebner that he is the coordinating chair between both of the adhoc committees and the full school committee. He is at all the meetings and she can contact him for meeting information. Superintendent stated that this the first year of difficult budgets to come, that there are fifteen fewer teachers. That the only way to balance the budget is through staff reduction. M. Case added that it is not just CBRSD it is all districts. He gave the example that Pittsfield has a two million short fall in their budget. Dr. Putnam thanked to Board for an audience. The Board thanked both Dr. Putnam and Mrs. Falkowski for attending.

4. J. Huebner announced to the attendees and for the record that the session is being video tapped by R. Borgnis.
5. J. Huebner motioned to approve the April Selectboard Letter as written. M. Case seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.
6. J. Huebner stated that there is nothing new to report on the pipeline and he will be attending a meeting on the subject next week.
7. The Board of Selectmen signed the Springfield Recycling Facility Municipal Agreement issued offered by the Department of Environmental Protection covering delivery to the MRF through June 30, 2020.
8. J. Huebner reported on the good news he received while attending the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting on behalf of M. Case. Washington Mountain Road had disappeared for the 2018 list, because it is already out for bid. Peter Niles stated that we

should expect work to begin in August. There was discussion on funding with J. Huebner stating that it was reported that not all states use all of their federal highway funds and that other states can petition for those funds, that is what happens and what is funding the project. Peter Fieri of the DOT added during that TAC meeting that DOT was going to reclaim the paving put down last year. M. Case added that the project will include only the section of road between the Dalton Town Line and the Becket Town Line. D. Fish thanked the Board stating that it is because of the current Selectboard that the project is going to be completed.

9. J. Huebner read a letter dated March 19th from Stephanie Pollock, Secretary and CEO of the MassDOT informing the Town of a one-time contract allowing the Town to be reimbursed for up to \$25,451 of roadway repairs resulting from this year's harsh winter weather. This weather recovery program funds patching of potholes, cracking and other surface defects, including paving projects. The fund will also cover repair and or replacement of signage, guardrail, storm grates and striping or painting. There was discussion on potential uses in Town. J. Huebner signed the contract and named D. Fish as the signatory authority. D. Fish to have the Clerk notarize the documentation, create a copy and mail to DOT.
10. J. Huebner reported on his conversation with Town Counsel regarding appointment to the Board of Health. J. Huebner stated that Town Counsel is of the opinion that since the Selectmen have been appointing each other to the Board of Health for years that they have the authority to appoint new Board of Health members. J. Huebner motion to appoint Barbara Keyes and Vera Cormier to the Board of Health effective March 30, 2015. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Barbara Keyes reported that they will be attending training April 11th in North Hampton.
11. J. Hostetter reported that J. Nelson is continuing to work on the issue with the Police Chief's phone and restoring phone service in a public area within the Town Hall.
12. J. Hostetter reported that Health Agent S. Krzanik has returned from vacation and that he review septic and well plans yesterday at the Town Hall. He will follow up with field work in the coming days.
13. The Board reviewed the new mail for the BOH tabling action until the Health Agent's review of the documents.

- 14.J. Huebner entered into the record receipt of the Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee Meeting notice for the 26 of March. J. Hostetter to post the notice. J. Huebner added that the Town should have all the paperwork in by next week for the Depot Brook Water Shed assessment.
- 15.J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter reported that the Age Friendly Berkshire Survey was posted to the website and asked where the hard copies should be displayed at the Town Hall. J. Huebner replied that copies should be available at the town hall.
- 16.J. Huebner read a letter from the town of Tolland regarding concerns about the Wired West bonding request. Tolland is absolutely in favor to getting broad band to its residents but is not sure that the bonding is sufficient, that it is a high risk that would create a dependency on Wired West, a nonprofit volunteer organization. That it will take a very big financial risk by their residents assuming a risk of a multi-year funding. Looking to petition the Commonwealth and the Federal government to fund it rather than the towns. Will continue to support the project but not sure if they will be voting for the funding during their town meeting. M. Case added that the town of Peru has the same concerns. The Board discussed what if any action they should take with M. case suggesting that the Board bring it up with the legislators at the Selectmen's Meeting on April 16. The discussion was tabled until the April 20th Selectmen Meeting.
- 17.Chief Breen congratulated the Selectmen on their success regarding Washington Mountain Road. Chief Breen submitted the certificate from the completion of the State Ethics on-line seminar. J. Huebner stated that everyone who is part-time, paid or unpaid has to take this seminar.
- 18.J. Huebner entered into the record receipt of the Gowrie Group letter dated February 17th offering services for filing claims regarding injuries to on duty firefighters and police officers. The Board will forward document to the Treasurer.
- 19.The Board asked J. Hostetter to sign six people up for the Berkshire County Selectmen Association Dinner. J. Hostetter reported the date, time and location of the dinner.
- 20.D. Fish reported that the Highway Department will attend a road construction repair with new materials seminar tomorrow.

- 21.J. Huebner entered into the record receipt of the Town of Dalton Notice of Hearing from the Board of Appeals for a special permit renewal application filed by Ray Robert to continue his manufacturing use at 190 Hubbard Avenue.
- 22.J. Huebner entered into the record receipt of the Town of Dalton Notice of Decision on a petition for a special permit to have a restaurant in the Stationery Factory.
23. J. Huebner reported that he emailed Peter Niles confirming the Washington Mountain Road project and inquiring into the Summit Hill Road bridge replacement. Peter Niles has not responded yet so a letter was drafted to his boss expressing the Town's need for a new bridge. J. Huebner motioned to accept the letter as written. M. Case seconded and motion passed unanimously.
- 24.P. Clark submitted a Highway Department maintenance plan explaining that the report contains all town roads. It identifies annual occurrences such as grading of gravel roads and it includes specific projects with a designation of either planning, design or to be undertaken this year. Projects undertaken this year are indicated with a 2016 in the far column and will require a cost to be added and a discussion with the Finance Committee. The cost will be in addition to the salary cost paid by the town, basic budget plus capital cost for projects. A planning designation for a project means that the project requires more discussion and funding. Dave Fish has to add numbers to the grading if material is needed as it is not currently factored into the plan. M. Case asked for clarification of the large amount for work in the state forest. D. Fish replied that the Town is getting \$40,000 from the DCR as part of the logging contract. The Town will not receive money but material. He may have say on the size of the material. P. Clark added that although the roads are seasonal, they will need to be cleaned up after the snow melts. M. Case said that the State wants to open up October Mountain Road to fishing, boating and hiking. J. Huebner thanked D. Fish and P. Clark for creating the plan adding that it will be useful.
- 25.J. Huebner entered into the record receipt of a petition put together by residents, certified by the Town Clerk for inclusion on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The petition states that residents cherish and value the assets of the town and are willing to finance and perform such repair and maintenance necessary to maintain their value. Whereas the assets of the Town include the Bucksteep Stone Chapel, Old School House,

Old Town Hall, Town Park. Whereas the dam and the pond at Eden Glen has served as a recreational facility for the residents for the town for extended period of time and has a significant historical value including its use for swimming, fishing, fishing derbies, family picnics, a cool respite in the hot months summer, a haven for birds and for aquatic and amphibious lifeforms contributing to the biodiversity of the area. In view of the value of the Eden Glen pond recreation area we the undersigned instructed the Selectmen of the Town of Washington to place an article on the Town warrant to fund the necessary repairs and maintenance to restore the dam and surrounding area to a usable and functional area including a pond and a draw down gate, a small beach and swimming area, a grassy area for picnicking, provision for cleaning brush and debris on a regular basis and acknowledgement of the historical value the area to the town. The Board will forward the document to the Finance Committee and to J. Hostetter for ATM warrant article. There was discussion on testing for leaching and the old Borgnis Landfill and cleanup cost.

- 26.J. Huebner informed the Finance Committee that there is a meeting at the Town Hall tomorrow at 10:30 AM with MEMA. He and Phil Clark will attend.
- 27.P. Clark reported that DOT will allow replacing the Middlefield culvert bridge with a wooden deck and no work on the head walls. P. Clark is still working up the numbers.
- 28.J. Huebner recapped the two options for the Cross Place Road bridge with one option of using concrete and the other option of using steel for an estimated cost \$210,000.00 including engineering.
29. The Selectboard will meet with the Finance Committee regarding Capital Projects. K. Lew distributed a statement of cash flow for Fiscal 2015 and 2016 projects adding that the Frost Road/Eden Glenn project is listed because P. Clark included language in the grant application providing for reimbursement the \$8,800.00 already spent by the Town for the project. After projected reimbursement from FEMA and Chapter 90 the town would have \$280,650.00 in long term borrowing, which was broken down into an annual debt service flow and will not happen until FY2018... There was discussion on predicting interest rates, loan terms and inflation. G. Grogan informed the Board that he heard back from the USDA regarding a possible 40 year term loan. There was a discussion on if bridges are considered capital assets. There was also discussion on the Long-term annual debt service model spreadsheet factoring in the Town Garage,

Police Cruiser, School Bus, Plow Truck, Bridges, Wired West and impact to tax rate allocation. There was additional discussion on Wired West. There was discussion on FY16 Chapter 90 money allocated for the Cross Place road construction. J. Huebner summarized that the figures propose paying for Cross Place Road and Middlefield Road with Chapter 90 money and asked if D. Fish approved the use. K. Lew replied that D. Fish is on board and that using Chapter 90 money required moving Middlefield Road construction to FY2016. There was additional discussion on bidding process, time lines and offsetting the Town's cost with MEMA money. D. Fish will research that with Cathy Stevens.

30.J. Huebner asked D. Fish for an update on filling the upside of Cross Place Road. D. Fish replied that he can fill with stone. He can't get to the gravel yet, adding that he talked to the resident with the issue.

31.J. Huebner informed the Finance Committee that the Highway Maintenance Plan has been completed, that D. Fish needs to meet with them for numbers.

32.Fiscal year 2016 budget discussion was postponed to next week.

33.P. Clark reported on the mockup of the project sign. He is going to get the logo on the town letterhead professionally redone. It will be digital so it can be re-sized for the Town flag and other documents. The service will be paid with FEMA money.

34.P. Blake informed the Board that there is a new bill in front of the legislative body of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to do away with all Veterans' Service Agents in Massachusetts. They will be replaced by employees of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There is a large difference of opinion over this bill with fraternal organizations such as American Legion and the VFW. They are against it. He does not know how many towns are for or against it. M. Case added that it takes local control away. D. Spencer asked for the rationale behind the proposal. The Town will no longer be town reimbursement Veterans. Discussion followed.

35.J. Huebner reported that he received a suggestion to move one of the larger tables being used for the Selectmen meetings into the Finance Meeting Room so that there is more meeting room. K. Lew commented that the Finance Committee does not need the room. S. Conners commented that a larger table could be problematic if the exercise

group has to be temporally moved into that room.

36. There being no further business brought before the Board, J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 PM. M. Case seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Respectfully submitted,
Jodi Hostetter