

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – December 7, 2015

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 November 30, 2015. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
3. J. Huebner and E. Bond discussed the continued speeding and traffic problems on Frost Road. E. Bond explained that he had placed a cone in the middle of the crosswalk in front of his house. Not only did the speeders disregard it, someone hit it and carried it down the road. E. Bond estimated that some of the cars and trucks traveling downhill on Frost road hit speeds of 50 – 60 MPH in front of his house. J. Huebner will contact the State Police about the speeding problem. M. Case asked Chief Breen to place the solar powered Speed Indicator wagon on Frost Road wherever E. Bond thinks it will be most effective and to keep it there for as long as the construction continues. E. Bond also mentioned that he installed lighting at the Town Park to illuminate the Route 8 sign at night.
4. J. Huebner said that he had attended the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meeting last week in Pittsfield at BRPC. He concluded that MassDOT is a very poor communicator. He was however glad to see that our Summit Hill Bridge project is still on schedule at a cost of \$2.2 million. M. Case observed that when they start work on that bridge the state will probably close it. J. Huebner reminded all that there will be a meeting on the Summit Hill bridge repairs next Monday, December 14 at 6:00pm in Town Hall before the Select Board Meeting. This will be a public meeting to review DOT's plan to date. Several residents (including J. Huebner) mentioned that they thought it should be rebuilt as a 2 lane bridge and voiced their dissatisfaction that that was not planned. He urged

them to come to the meeting next week on the 14th and “howl” about DOT’s not building a second lane.

5. J. Huebner mentioned that he will go to the meeting tentatively scheduled for December 22nd to sign the Community Compact supporting shared services and regionalization in Berkshire County. The Board voted unanimously to sign the Compact after Rep. Pignatelli’s presentation on November 9th.
6. Chief Breen said that he will attend a MEMA meeting on Wednesday night. He hopes at that time to be able to clarify a date for MEMA to visit a Select Board meeting. He also mentioned that he had received a complaint about children playing unsupervised on Frost Road in front of the red house on the curve at the crest of the hill while large trucks from the Washington Mountain Road (WMR) construction passed by. He fears that something tragic will happen. He has spoken to the family several times about the dangers of allowing the children to play in the road. The Board instructed him to contact the parents immediately to warn them that they are endangering their children and that as the Town’s 52A mandatory reporter he must call Child’s Services and report them. He also told the Board that he had to intervene last week when an elderly man from Becket was having trouble driving through the WMR construction. As he was driving recklessly and resisted assistance, Chief Breen will have to report him to the Registry.
7. D. Fish told the Board that the old 550 truck will need a \$ 6500 transmission repair. J. Huebner reminded him that they will both be attending the Complete Streets program organized by DOT on Friday from 1:00pm to 3:00pm in Pittsfield at The Hotel on North. The program will include information on improvements such as establishing bike paths by painting a bike icon at the side of the pavement as Pittsfield has done along Elm Street.

8. K. Lew told the Board that he will review the Finance Committee's long term plan for the Town on December 21st.
9. J. Huebner asked P. Clark about his plans for the Middlefield Road bridge. P. Clark confirmed that we will not receive a MassWorks grant for the bridge. As we have already funded the bridge repairs we can do the work this spring. Regarding Holden's failure to build a permanent bridge for Cross Place Road, P. Clark explained that he had consulted with Town Counsel only to confirm bidding requirements, not to evaluate construction plans. He will review technical requirements himself. J. Huebner asked J. Nelson to confer with P. Clark and to research bidding requirements if needed.
10. J. Huebner asked Mary Jarvie to try again to send him assessor's maps of the Washington area impacted by the expansion of the Silvio O. Conti conservation district.
11. J. Huebner reported that FEMA has approved the pipeline project moving forward. Washington will not be impacted by the pipeline as it is planned.
12. He also reported attending the recent county Board of Health meeting which covered the issues of poverty and health in the Berkshires. J. Huebner said that with young people leaving the County for better employment opportunities and with the aging population growing, we are at a low ebb. Despite the best efforts of many hard-working people and organizations, the county still struggles with poverty and opiate issues.
13. M. Case said that there is no news on the cemetery land. Hinsdale has declined to manage our veterans' program. We will have to wait until January and the new Pittsfield administration to learn whether that city will establish a regional veterans' office. We still have the option of using the program established in Northampton.

14.. S. Nelson updated the Board on recent developments in the building of the broadband network. He said that after months of hard work by delegates from WiredWest's member towns, its Executive Committee, and its outside counsel, an Operating Agreement for converting WiredWest to a Limited Liability Company was all but complete, with a target date of January 9 for Select Boards to sign it. After reviewing it, the lawyer who represents 13 of the towns was satisfied with changes he requested to the document. All was in readiness for WiredWest to move ahead with the next phase of the project.

However at the very last minute, with 15 minutes notice, MBI informed Nelson that it was about to announce to town officials and the media that it would not release funds to WiredWest and was recommending that towns not sign the Operating Agreement. Providing no details, MBI pointed to results of an incomplete and unreleased study of WiredWest's financial plan which they commissioned from WiPro, an outsourcing firm based in India, as the reason for their actions. WiredWest's financial plan was closely vetted and approved by the leading municipal broadband consulting firm in the US, CTC.

WiredWest believes that MBI deliberately timed their announcement to disrupt the signing of the Operating Agreement, which is sure to strengthen the cooperative and its commitment to building a shared regional network at lower cost and lower risk to the towns. MBI supports each town building and operating its own network. J. Huebner said that he was appalled by MBI's behavior and very condescending language.

MBI has announced 2 public meetings on these developments. The first will be held on Monday, December 14 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in Greenfield at the John Olver Transit Center. The second will be held on Thursday, December 17 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm in Great Barrington at Berkshire South Community Center. J. Huebner will try to attend the Great Barrington meeting. He requested a report on the December 14 meeting from S.

Nelson, who agreed to email a summary to him. S. Nelson gave a copy of his point-by-point rebuttal of MBI's criticism of WiredWest to the Board. A copy is attached. He asked the Board to express their firm support for shared ownership in the form of a resolution. The Board agreed to do so. J. Huebner made a motion that "We hereby affirm our support for shared ownership of the regional broadband network through WiredWest." M. Case seconded and the vote for shared network ownership was unanimous.

J. Huebner asked S. Nelson about a letter critical of WiredWest sent by the Colrain Select Board to State Senate President Stanley Rosenberg and copied to Select Boards of WiredWest member towns. S. Nelson said that members of the WiredWest Executive Committee had met with the Colrain Select Board at their request on several occasions and responded to their questions and concerns. He said that the letter was instigated by the Colrain Town Administrator, who was very negative about WiredWest from the start.

15.J. Hostetter told the Board that the Town tree lighting ceremony will be held from 6-8pm on Saturday December 19th. She submitted a permit request for temporary food. The Select Board signed the permit. She also requested use of one of the new bookcases to store and display Town Annual Reports. The Board approved this request enthusiastically.

16. J. Huebner reported receiving a Public Notice from the Town of Lee for a special permit.

17.J. Hostetter will contact our septic haulers regarding our certification requirements. J. Huebner told her to charge the Building Maintenance Account for the shredder costs.

18.G. Grogan told the Board that he would like to know more about how the Town of Leverett was able to build its own broadband network as well as why Otis dropped out of WiredWest. K. Lew agreed that we should look

into these cases to understand what others have done. K. Lew will do some research. G. Grogan also mentioned that we are receiving \$108 interest per month from East Hampton Savings Bank.

19.J. Hostetter told the Board that the Becket/Washington Community Association has requested a spot on the agenda.

20.J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. S.Lennon seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Nelson