

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – February 1, 2016

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner and M. Case.
2. After leading the group in the Pledge of Allegiance J. Huebner made a motion to approve the minutes from January 25, 2016 as written. M. Case seconded and the vote to approve the minutes was unanimous.
3. Mark Levernoch asked the Board about the status of the renovation of the Summit Hill bridge. J. Huebner told him that the Board had sent a letter to DOT in December and has had no reply yet. He will email DOT for an update this week. M. Levernoch said that he understood we will probably not see 2 lanes on the new bridge. He was concerned about the condition of the access road to Summit Hill Road and the Campground this summer when the bridge is closed.
4. J. Huebner made a motion that the Board approve and sign 3 letters he had written on Town business. The first was written to Senator Benjamin Downing expressing our appreciation for his decade of service to the Town and to all of Western Massachusetts as our state Senator. Sen Downing announced last week that he will not seek re-election. J. Huebner moved that the Board sign this letter. M. Case seconded and the letter was approved unanimously and duly signed.

The second letter was to Mr. Eyal Shapira of Washington Mountain Road and described preliminary work done on developing a proposal for an expanded Veterans' Memorial at the Old Town Hall. Former Veterans' Agent Peter Blake is working on such a proposal. His letter and progress report is attached to these minutes. In his letter J. Huebner reminded Mr. Shapira that he had offered his assistance last spring at the Annual Town Meeting and asked him if he would help by heading up the fund-raising for

the memorial. J. Huebner moved that the Board approve and sign this letter. M. Case seconded and the letter was approved unanimously and duly signed.

The third letter was written to Peter Holden of Holden Engineering and Surveying of Bedford, New Hampshire. Holden is the firm which the Town hired to provide engineering services for the replacement of the culvert on Cross Place Road. The letter provides details on the inadequate and unacceptable engineering and project planning work done by Holden. The letter states clearly that the Town considers Holden to have failed to exercise reasonable diligence in performing the work according to the contract schedule and deliverables and that the Town hereby terminates the contract based on a material breach. No further money will be paid to Holden. J. Huebner moved that this letter be approved and signed by the Board. M. Case seconded. The vote to approve was unanimous and the letter was duly signed.

5. Ed Bond reported to the Board on his efforts to improve exterior security lighting at Town Hall. He inspected and tested many of the existing lighting fixtures and found that most just needed new bulbs. He will be replacing bulbs on the roof and on the fascia. He also observed that the parking lot behind the building is in poor condition and represents a hazard in itself, especially after dark. He will put up a photo-voltaic light above the back door. All of the exterior lights can be controlled by a switch inside the building. No electrician will be needed.
6. Ed Bond told the Board that he needs to know the Town's plans for our historical buildings: the Old Town Hall, the little Red Schoolhouse and the Chapel. Ed wants to know what he will be asked to do and what to plan for. J. Huebner said that he will contact the Historical Commission, the Sons and Daughters and the Chapel Commission and ask them to share their needs and vision for these properties. K. Lew added that this information will also be very helpful to the Finance Committee.

7. K. Lew reported to the Board that as discussed at last week's meeting he has gone ahead and arranged temporary shut off's of the power at the Old Town Hall and the Town Park, yielding cost savings for the Town. Electricity will be turned on again for the Spring Clean –up at the Park and before painting and repairs at the Old Town Hall take place over the summer. He will speak with the Chapel Commission about their power needs also. Trish Drugmond commented that the only heat in the Chapel is a wood stove. It was mentioned that we only charge \$25.00 for weddings and that perhaps we could raise that to generate funds for improvements and preservation at the Chapel.
8. J. Huebner reported that the Board had received a letter from the Colrain Board of Selectmen expressing their approval of the Mass. Broadband Institute's RFP for the Last Mile Networks Project and looking forward to its completion.
9. He also reported receiving a Notice of Vote from Pittsfield that the petition of the Cafua Realty Trust regarding a ZBA appeal has been continued to 2/23/16 at 7:00 pm in Room 203 in City Hall.
10. M. Case observed that he learned at the Seven Town Advisory meeting last week that the state increased only our contribution to the school district budget. The other 6 towns 'contributions have decreased. He was surprised that the vote on Cummington's request to withdraw from the District passed. He believes that Cummington can't afford to withdraw.
11. S. Nelson reported to the Board on the status of Wired West's efforts to bring Broadband internet to our region. He said that progress has slowed as the DOR closely examines financial plans to be certain that towns will be able to afford the project. Some improvements have been made already which strengthen Wired West's financial model and which are acceptable to MBI. Likewise there has been pressure on MBI to justify its own approach. There have been objections from the towns to the short notice

to approve the MBI RFP and to the document's details. S. Nelson attended MBI and Mass. Technology Commission (MTC) meetings last week. The MBI RFP has not been finalized yet. MBI has to justify the workability/sustainability of their plans. MBI must respond to all questions on the RFP asked by the towns and there are many. S. Nelson said that Wired West needs support from the delegation at this point. They are going to have to ask the towns to speak up also. J. Huebner said that he is planning to attend the Commonwealth Contract meeting on Thursday and given the opportunity will voice the Town's support for the "shared service" model represented by the Wired West cooperative.

12. DOT is asking for projects to add to the TIP list. J. Huebner observed that Washington has done very well in the last year garnering the state's support for our infrastructure projects. We have received over \$10,000,000 recently for our projects. D. Fish agreed that this is not the time to press the state for more funding. We will get quotes on Eden Glen and Middlefield Road bridge. Eden Glen will go out to bid in April.

13. Kent Lew looked into overtime policy for hours over 40 per week. We can offer to pay overtime for less than 40 hours according to statute. D. Fish said that the crew objects to not getting overtime if called out during a holiday week. Holidays are different from other paid time off. He added that there is a personnel issue separate from the holiday issue. J. Huebner agreed. He asked D. Fish to inquire about what other towns do about overtime for holiday work. He agreed to do so. J. Huebner will write up a Personnel Policy amendment.

14. J. Huebner emailed the Recycling Report to M. Lampro for her to fill out.

15. J. Huebner has received a soft quote from Phil Clark of \$15,000 to \$20,000 to finish Holden's engineering work on Cross Place Road.

16. There is no news on the cemetery land.

17.J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 pm. M. Case seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Approved: _____

Approved: _____

Respectfully submitted, Jan Nelson