

## Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen – February 22, 2016

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. As the first order of business, J. Huebner made a motion to approve the minutes of February 1, 2016. M. Case seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously. J. Huebner also motioned for approval of the minutes from February 8, 2016. M. Case seconded and the vote to approve was unanimous. J. Huebner abstained from voting as he was not present on 2/8/16.
3. D. Spencer told the Board that he had a productive talk with Ray Bolduc, Emergency Management Director for Hinsdale, on a number of topics important to Washington. Regarding the Summit Hill Road Bridge reconstruction, R. Bolduc praised the expertise of Mark DeVylder, bridge construction manager for DOT. On the subject of Cross Place Road and Holden's failure to complete the job, R. Bolduc mentioned J. Gill Engineering as a good choice to complete the job. We held back \$6,000 from the first phase of Holden's work. One of the reasons we chose Holden was their low bid.
4. S. Nelson, the Town's delegate to WiredWest, gave the Board an update on the broadband project and his role in it. As the result of his recent Op-Ed column in the Berkshire Eagle critical of MBI, he was asked to resign from the Negotiating Team, the Executive Committee and as Legal/Governance Chair. He told the Select Board that he would like to continue in his role representing the Town as our delegate to the Board of Directors, which meets monthly and is composed of delegates from the 40-plus member towns. M. Case made a motion that we re-affirm S. Nelson as Washington's delegate to the Board of Directors. J. Huebner seconded and the vote to re-affirm was unanimous. J. Huebner said that he will draft a letter to Wired

West in support of S. Nelson continuing to serve on the WiredWest Executive Committee in addition to the Board of Directors.

S. Nelson explained that the main challenge right now is to get the push for broadband re-started. He made this point in his Op-Ed column in the Berkshire Eagle. Broadband has been put on “pause” by the state as they consider options for moving forward. S. Nelson would like to see the towns adopt the Operating Agreement, which is based on the towns working together as a coop with shared ownership of the network. It was agreed well over a year ago that MBI would build and Wired West would own and operate a regional network. MBI now supports each town owning its portion of the network separately. He told the Board that many towns believe Gov. Baker has not been given a true picture of WiredWest’s goals and accomplishments.

J. Huebner read the letter he had drafted to the WiredWest Board of Directors. He asked J. Hostetter to type the letter and send it by Certified mail to the Chair of the WiredWest Board of Directors. He asked for copies of the letter to be sent to Sen. Downing, Rep. Pignatelli and Gov. Baker.

5. Phil Clark told the Board that his estimate for finishing the Cross Place Road work including the design, engineering and construction is \$22,500. That is a hard quote. He had previously sent a detailed 3-page letter to the Board outlining his proposed approach to the project. J. Huebner made a motion to hire P. Clark’s company, HCS Civil and Environmental Engineering, LLC, to finish the Cross Place Road job. The motion was seconded by M. Case and the vote to hire HCS was unanimous. This bid is about \$ 5,000 more than we would have paid Holden. K. Lew added that we have to review our spending plans. He needs updated budget numbers from all. We still have 2016 Chapter money. Regarding the Middlefield Road bridge. P. Clark suggested that the best plan might be to build a culvert rather than re-building the old abutments. P. Clark reiterated that the plan with Eden Glen

is to dredge out the glen and develop the area as a park. The companion project is to build a new culvert.

6. D. Fish signed paperwork in the amount of \$ 89,497.32 for a new tractor. He noted that DCR is not in a hurry to get the Bailey bridge back from Cross Place Road. We could perhaps use it for Bullard's Crossing in the future, but DOT has no interest in this plan now. J. Huebner reviewed changes in our Personnel Policy which affect hours and pay for the Highway Crew. D. Fish raised some issues about retirement pay. K.Lew said that he has been looking into retirement pay questions. D. Fish told the Board that we are \$5,000 over budget on winter roads. We had a big salt bill. The Board asked for an accounting of how the funds were spent. D. Fish told the Board that he has a set of the complete Washington Mountain Road plans. They are about 500 pages long. J. Huebner asked him to bring the plans to Town Hall to be held for residents' review by the Clerk. She will be the custodian of the plans.
7. J. Huebner said that he had attended the Community Compact meeting down in Great Barrington. He learned that there is no money behind this program. Rep. Pignatelli will try to communicate the benefits of shared services and bring the towns together
8. J. Huebner asked for an update on the regional school district budget discussions. M. Case said that they are considering modelling and using the UMASS contract structure. The goal is quality education and sustainability. Using this modelling software they can evaluate scenarios. Ninety thousand dollars has been donated by a private party for the software. They may decide to rebuild or remodel Waconnah. A tentative budget was presented by the state. It was a bit lower than last year, though our assessed share is a bit higher at \$18,000. K. Lew said that the representative from Cummington expressed why they want to leave the district. A delegation will come to each member town to present their plan for leaving. D. Spencer is part of negotiating team working on how or if

Cumington should be allowed to quit the regional district. In one of the scenarios Cumington would borrow \$3,000,000 in a lump sum to pay off the district right away. Then they would pay off the debt over 20 years. If Cumington refuses to pay we could be left with a large debt.

9. K.Lew told the Board that there has been no action on North Lake to date. We own several larger parcels there of about 5 or 6 acres. D. Spencer added that the property is landlocked, but on his recent inspection is clearly open for public access by foot.

10.J. Huebner mentioned the following items briefly:

- a. Chief Breen said that we will have a visit from MEMA next Monday night. They will need 20 minutes to present.
- b. MMA will have its spring meeting in Sudbury on March 10.
- c. There will be a Legislative Breakfast on Feb. 26 in Lee.
- d. Westfield Wild & Scenic meets this Thursday. They are pleased with the culvert work so far on WMR.
- e. Sean Connors said that he does not think Eyal Shapira wants to use his rough stone for our veterans' memorial.
- f. Pittsfield will take over veterans' services for the Town. We will pay \$500 per year for this service. This is a reasonable price. M. Case worked for several months to bring this about. It still has to be approved by the City Counsel. J. Huebner made a motion to accept this offer from Pittsfield with the first fee to be paid in FY 17. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
- g. The United Way has a program to build Book Houses in various towns which will offer free books to kids.
- h. Budget forms are to be submitted to the Board in 2 weeks.
- i. J. Hostetter reported that she is evaluating several heavy duty shredders for the Town. She has posted the financial report on the web site. She has put the members of the Becket Washington

Community Partnership on the Tracks list. The Conflict of Interest list is growing.

- j. The Board signed the warrant for the March 1 primary election.
- k. The Board discussed with J. Hostetter the recent mismailing of 2 important letters. They informed her that they are considering putting a reprimand in her file and if it happens again she will be fired.

11.J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45. M. Case seconded and the motion to adjourn was unanimous.

Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Nelson