

Meeting of the Washington Select Board – April 11, 2016

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm. Attending for the Select Board were J. Huebner and S. Lennon.
2. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of April 4, 2016. S. Lennon seconded and the minutes were duly accepted.
3. Board of Health member Vera Cormier reported to the Selectmen that we netted a profit from fees for our work with Berkshire Regional Health Alliance in FY 2015. The Board reviewed and approved this report.
4. J. Huebner said that he had spoken with DOT's Project Engineer, Zahid Pervaiz, on Wednesday regarding residents' complaints of flooding due to the Washington Mountain Road (WMR) construction. Barbara Keyes and Dick Grillon described their problems with flooding. J. Huebner will continue to meet with Baltazar about these and other drainage problems. B. Keyes asked if she could remove the tubes Baltazar has laid down through her flower bed.
5. Highway Superintendent Tom Johnson told the Board that he had cleared a culvert which had overflowed due to the WMR work. Sand bags had plugged the pipe. He speculated that a larger culvert might be needed. J. Huebner advised that he speak with Baltazar every day to keep on top of developing situations. Trish Drugmond, resident of WMR, supported this strongly.
6. J. Huebner reported receiving a letter from Laurie Casna of CBRSD relative to our students applying for vocational education for the next school year. As of April 5th we have two students seeking voc - ed. They are: Jacklyn Guthrie of South Washington State Road and Tyler Lampro of Washington Mountain Road. They will attend 2 different schools. We are reminded that additional students may be added to the list in September.

7. J. Huebner told the meeting that the Town also received a copy of a letter from the Town of Cummington Selectmen clarifying developments in that town's efforts to withdraw from CBRSD and providing updated financial details of their planning. Agreement was reached on the percentage of the liability Cummington would agree to pay. That is 3.82%. The total liability for which Cummington is responsible would be \$ 2,199,361. They have offered to pay a lump sum of \$500,000.
8. Cummington and CBRSD will continue discussions to achieve the best agreement possible before sending anything to the towns for a vote. Our Finance Committee had already been briefed on most of this information. D We will have to alter the 7 town agreement. There will be a meeting to discuss this at Nessacus on April 12. The geography of Cummington's workforce has moved east toward Northampton and the Valley.
9. Carol Lew told the Board that she and Ed Bond had met with construction manager Kyle of Baltazar about the restoration of the Old Common. Carol gave him a copy of the plan she had developed for the site and which the Board had approved last week. Baltazar agreed in principal with the proposal. Carol and Ed will be monitoring progress closely. Carol reported lots of activity at the site which is adjacent to her home on WMR. A variety of trucks and personnel move through the area all day. Ed said that Carol has kept him in the loop on developments. The Board agreed to give them a statement of expectations. Trish Drugmond added that she thought more and better signage was needed throughout the work site. Ed Bond observed that Tom Delaney and White Wolf are slowing their trucks, although they do speed up above. Vera Cormier said that she has noticed little police presence on WMR.
10. Washington's Delegate to WiredWest, Steve Nelson, updated the Board on broadband developments. Select Boards at WiredWest member towns had been asked to write letters to Governor Baker expressing their frustration with the state's role in the ongoing lack of progress toward bringing high-

speed broadband to unserved Berkshire towns. The Boards were also asked to sign a “Resolution In support of a Regional Last-Mile Fiber Broadband Network”. The Board had prepared both of these documents. J. Huebner made a motion to sign the Resolution and the Town’s letter to Governor Baker. The Resolution calls for MBI to complete their various “studies” by June 30 and to work with WiredWest to jointly produce an actionable plan that is acceptable to the towns and that can be implemented without further delay. S. Lennon seconded and the motion passed unanimously. S. Nelson told the Board that MBI had been studying the use of wireless technology in Middlefield. WiredWest requested a grant of \$500 from the Town. J. Huebner made a motion to approve this request. S. Lennon seconded and the vote to approve was unanimous.

11. General discussion of the Budget was taken up. K. Lew passed out copies of the current budget snapshot and summaries. J. Huebner asked him to highlight the items that were new. K. Lew responded that as raises had not been given to Town employees for a number of years the Finance Committee had agreed that raises of 2.5 % would be approved. This applies to all salaried or hourly employees except the Highway Department which uses a different scheme of \$1.00 per hour. J. Huebner asked Tom Johnson how much we have spent in FY 2015 on extra help. T. Johnson replied that he will research this for the Board. He added that we pay \$15/hour with a 3 hour minimum.

The budget summary indicated that Non-medical insurance increased by \$6,000. The largest increase was in medical insurance. The good news was that we retired the debt on the cruiser and the highway garage. We still have the school bus and one snow plow on the books. The Finance Committee spent much time writing guidelines for budgeting. They restructured health and safety payments and are looking into components of Police phone costs. Lower gas prices have reduced Highway costs a bit, though we have more vehicles. Free cash is about \$80,000. Stabilization is about \$180,000. The Board would like to see that increased if possible. K.

Lew has a good process in place to understand watershed PILOT funds and to protect the Town's share of those monies.

J. Huebner expressed his wish to contain the tax rate by moving some stabilization funds into that account. DCR money which we expect this summer could also help to limit any tax increase. We will need to have a debt exclusion vote to cover Eden Glen. The people will decide whether to fund the recreation area or not. D. Spencer was asked to tell J. Hostetter to add it to the warrant. The warrant will be reviewed and signed on April 25.

12. The Board made a motion to accept the 3/28 Special Executive Minutes. The vote to accept the minutes was unanimous. D. Grillon expressed his opinion that the Board should make public what the subject was.

13. Town Treasurer Glenn Grogan had some personnel questions regarding the Highway Department employees. He believed that they should not be permitted to take vacation before they accrued the required work days. The Board agreed and asked him to take an audit of our vacation system.

14. J. Huebner announced that on Saturday, April 30 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm there will be a county-wide Prescription Drug Take- Back Day. The closest drop off point for Washington Residents will be the Dalton CRA.

15. J. Huebner mentioned that there was no news on either the cemetery land or the Veterans's Memorial. The Cultural Council grant had been received as had the CSX yearly operations plan. The latter will be given to T. Johnson.

16. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn at 9:07 pm. S. Lennon seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Nelson