

Meeting of the Washington Select Board at Washington Town Hall

November 21, 2016

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, M. Case and T. Drugmand.
2. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance J. Huebner made a motion to approve the minutes of November 14. M. Case seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
3. **Highway Department:** Superintendent Tom Johnson was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. He previously informed J. Huebner that he had looked into the recurring seepage on Johnson Hill Road near the entrance to Heartwood Road. This section of the road is frequently icy during the winter due to seepage. T. Johnson plans to put a blanket drain under the road and expects this will solve the problem. He said the road will be closed for up to 3 days during this work.

Last week J. Huebner learned that we will not be getting any funding from MassWorks for reconstruction of the Middlefield Road Bridge. He immediately contacted Mark DeVylber at DOT in Lenox and asked for funding under the new Small Bridge Program. DOT knew that we would ask for the Small Bridge funds if we were not awarded funding under MassWorks. M. DeVylber told J. Huebner to get the application in quickly as he will be putting the applications through this week. J. Huebner had previously sent our application.

Regarding the work on the Cross Place Road culvert J. Huebner reported that he had received a letter from the Army Corps of Engineers dated November 9th approving the work already done there. J. Nelson reported that the work on Cross Place culvert continues steadily with the contractor there every day so far.

There was brief discussion of some highway-related warrant items. Accountant Dan Parnell provided clarification.

4. **Washington Mountain Road:** J. Huebner received word from Baltazar that they have completed the paving. Final details on the job, like painting the center line, will be finished by June. It is too cold to paint now. M. Case added that Baltazar has been a good contractor to work with.

5. **Eden Glen Dam:** J. Huebner learned from Carrie Banks of the Department of Environmental Restoration (DER) that we will not be getting funds for the removal of the Eden Glen dam. However she is looking into other funds that might be available for the Town to use for an engineering study on site to get a better sense of our options and costs.

6. **Town Hall Offices:** Regarding the movement of personnel and office furniture within Town Hall last Monday, J. Huebner mentioned that it was perhaps a little more confusing than it should have been. He cautioned the Board to be careful to communicate clearly. Huebner asked Chief Breen to get keys made for the Building Inspector's file cabinets. He agreed to do so. Chief Breen told him that he is scheduling the locksmith to come to Town Hall to finalize the security changes. This probably won't happen until January. He has to coordinate on the project with Ed Bond who is currently recuperating from surgery.

7. **Administrative Assistants:** J. Hostetter reported that she is making good progress gathering data for the next Annual Report. D. Parnell has told her that he will have a draft of the financial data ready for her in January. The Administrative Assistants' reports are ready except for numbering. The Board of Health, Treasurer and Assessors are working on their information. She expects to have everything ready by deadline.

The Administrative Assistants will reserve 2 file drawers for the Planning Board's records. They will see that M. Wiley gets help with moving her files

to Town Hall if she requests it. They will also obtain the results from the underground survey of West Branch Cemetery conducted by film maker Leo Mahoney of Lee in June. He agreed to give the Town a full report of his results which will provide us with an accurate chart of all underground objects.

J. Hostetter told the Board that some old cemetery records are in deteriorating condition. She pointed out that veteran' records and maps indicating grave sites are among these. All are fading. The Board asked J. Hostetter to digitize these records as soon as possible and to store them together in one locked file cabinet.

Discussion followed about an appropriate picture for the Annual Report cover. Several suggestions were made – from pictures of the Old Town Hall to one taken the Pumpkin Walk.

J. Hostetter also told the Board about the very informative and important seminar she recently attended at UMASS. This was presented by the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association (MMMA). The Topic was “ The New Public Record Law”. Recent changes to MGL affect all cities and towns in the state. Ignorance of these laws can cause costly legal problems for municipalities large and small. Experts gave a briefing on all aspects of the new laws and described procedures towns must follow to be in compliance legally. J.Hostetter will share details of the changes in the law and her materials from the seminar with our Records Officer, Clerk Allison Mickaniewicz. Allison will in turn do some training of Department heads. J. Hostetter had the Board sign her expense report for the trip to Amherst. J. Hostetter will review the records request from American Transparency.

J. Nelson told the Board that she is working with Crocker Communications, our phone service provider, to have a phone installed in the Board of Health office and to get the phone connection in the Treasurer's new office

wired. She will also meet with Jeff Sawtelle for an estimate of value on file cabinets which are no longer of use in Town Hall.

J. Huebner mentioned that the Assessors have an old computer to dispose of. J. Nelson will ask J. les for an assessment of value.

8. **Board of Health:** A resident of Middlefield Road was cited by the Board of Health for having garbage and rubbish on his property. He was ordered to clean it up. Ernie Lampron has not yet delivered his records to the BoH .
9. **Procurement:** J. Huebner reported that he still has not had a reply from Ed Gibson, the Town Manager of Becket, on partnering with Washington to share a procurement officer. He will follow up with Mr. Gibson on this.
10. **CBRS D:** Reporting on last week's Seven Town Advisory Meeting, M. Case told the Board that much of the meeting was about school building closings. The scope of options considered has expanded to include the lower grades as well as grades 9 through 12. The vote to proceed with a feasibility study will come up in June. By that time we should have the results of the modelling work that is going on now. M. Case emphasized that we have to continue moving ahead with this process. If we back out now we will not have the option to re-start. Our major fear is that Cummington will find a way to leave the district. Tours of the school building were given before the meeting.
11. **Berkshire Public Health Alliance:** Last week BPHA celebrated its fifth anniversary. J. Huebner learned that the Public Health Nursing service is the most frequently used. The need for inspectional services is not as strong as originally anticipated. The BPHA goes into its next year of operation financially solvent. J. Hostetter mentioned that the BPHA is one of many "custodians of our public records" as they maintain data on the health of our population as well as that of other towns.

- 12. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP):** Michelle Lampro, Manager of the Transfer station, has recommended that the Town sign up for an environmental audit of the Garage and the Transfer Station offered by the DEP. This will be a documentation review as well as a compliance check and information on latest best practices. There is no charge for the service. J. Huebner signed the agreement for the Small Town Environmental Partnership.
- 13. Solar Electrical power:** J. Huebner received a response to his inquiry from Syncarpha Solar of Sheffield. They agreed to make a presentation on their services at the Selectmen's Meeting on December 12th. Individual residents can sign up for their electricity. It does not have to be town-wide.
- 14. Police:** Chief Breen told the Board that he has secured the \$2200 emergency management matching grant. It will be used for cots and other equipment/supplies needed in Town during a time of emergency. To secure the match we were able to cite the amount of money we give to Becket for fire protection.
- 15. Wired West/Broadband:** S. Nelson told the Board that pole survey work will begin in Washington next week. On November 29 he, K. Lew and Todd Corcoran of MBI will meet with the survey crew and learn about the process.

A letter is being written to MBI by some of the northern Wired West towns taking issue with MBI's practice of ignoring their insistence that regionalization be recognized as a legitimate means to bring broadband to western mass. The representative from Rowe will ask to have MBI's RFP process stopped so that the Towns can have input. One of the fears is that MBI's practice will allow cable companies to cherry pick among the towns that they will offer to serve. They will choose the larger towns and leave the smaller ones behind with no broadband options. Wired West will ask to be put on the agenda for MBI's next meeting. Wired West never receives

more than one day's notice of these meetings. As they are held in Westborough, this essentially shuts us out.

- 16. **Brief Items:** Due to the Thanksgiving holiday the Selectmen's meeting agenda will be posted on Wednesday. The Board signed a sympathy card for Barbara Simmons on the loss of her husband Ralph and a get well card for Ed Bond; There is no news on the Veterans' memorial or the cemetery land.

- 17. **Public Notices:** Notice was received from the Town of Lenox Zoning Board of Appeals that they will hear the petition of My four Daughters LLC for a permit to place a sign larger than that currently permitted on their property at 25 Pittsfield Road. Hearing will be on December 7th.

- 18.J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn at 8:30pm. M. Case seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Nelson