

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

February 27, 2017

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, M. Case and T. Drugmand.
2. T. Drugmand was recording the meeting.
3. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of February 13, 2017. M. Case seconded and the minutes were accepted unanimously.
4. **Selectmen's Letter:** J. Huebner made a motion to accept the March Monthly Selectmen's letter. M. Case seconded and the letter was accepted unanimously.
5. **Highway Department:** T. Johnson told the Board that with the help of Craig Willis they were able to back fill along Frost Road. They expect that this work will stabilize the road through the spring. The road bed is secure, though we still must find a way to repair the collapsed culvert which runs from the top of Frost Road. J. Hostetter did some research on that culvert and discovered that in 1981 on March 9 an initial meeting was held with a representative of the State Civil Engineers. It was decided that the state would pay the entire cost of building the culvert with funds from Ch. 90. The state would also be responsible for the land taking. In August of 1981 land taking from Richard Borgnis and the question of who would pay for surveying were discussed. J. Huebner asked her to try to find more information on the land taking.

J. Huebner will talk to Francisca Heming, head of DOT District 1, to see if the Town can use any excess funds from the \$250,000 Small Bridges grant we were awarded for Middlefield Road bridge reconstruction, for other bridge projects. Discussion followed regarding the other small bridges in need of

funding. It was decided that we need to get a ruling on whether Ch. 90 funds are actually the same as grant funds and can be used that way. K. Lew reminded the Board that we must still find \$90,000 to cover unanticipated costs on the Cross Place Road culvert. K. Lew will continue to work to get to the bottom of just what funds are available to us for this work. J. Huebner said that question will remain an ongoing agenda item.

P. Clark gave the Board an update on the Eden Glen culvert project. We have not received approval from DOT yet on this work. They requested additional information which P. Clark sent in several weeks ago. J. Huebner asked him to provide the names of all DOT officials involved in the decision. Concern was expressed that we could lose our funding from FEMA if the postponement lasts much longer. P. Clark said that work on the Eden Glen culvert hydraulics is ongoing. Regarding repairs to collapsed culverts, he advised that we dig a new culvert for Frost Road, not try to bore out the old one. The drill might not go through the rock. J. Huebner said that we must get a quote on drilling vs. digging. Drilling will be far less disruptive for residents of the road.

T. Johnson told the Board that he had programmed the generator and checked the battery. All is well with the equipment. Regarding the Washington Mountain Road construction all is not well. He said that there is still a lot of work to be done on drainage problems. Vera Cormier added that the curtain drain at the end of her driveway had not been connected as Baltazar had promised. T. Johnson was aware of this. J. Huebner asked him to make a check list of all the construction-related problems on Washington Mountain Road (WMR) and to keep updating the list as new problems come to light. He asked T. Johnson for the name of his contact at Ford concerning repairs to the school bus.

6. **Police:** Chief Breen confirmed that there had been an accident on WMR involving a Volvo and a section of guard rail. The State Police had gone up there to investigate but he has not yet received a report on the incident.

There was speculation that since Baltazar has still not completed the construction project, they may have to bear the cost of repairs. Chief Breen also confirmed that we expect to have 2 Voc Ed students next year. K. Lew told him that he needs a final count before Annual Town Meeting (ATM). Chief Breen informed the Board that the Town Hall custodian had not been given one of the new access keys. It was an oversight. The Board agreed that she should have a key. Chief Breen told the Board that the custodian knows that she cannot share that key with anyone. Following a brief discussion of security measures J. Huebner made a motion that the Town install a combination lock on the Clerk's door. This would protect both the Clerk's and Assessors' offices. T. Drugmand seconded and the measure passed unanimously.

7. **Administrative Assistants:** All Town employees must take the state annual Mass Ethics Training course online and receive their Certificate of Compliance. The Clerk is keeping track of completions. J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter to send out the link again so that all can complete the training. Regarding the Annual Report J. Hostetter told the Board that she has only one report still outstanding. That is the Electrician's. She will remind J. LaPier of his responsibility to submit the report. Regarding plans for disposal of the old file cabinets, she recommended keeping them at Town Hall until the weather improved. They will rust if moved down to the Transfer Station too early.

J. Huebner asked J. Hostetter who was responsible for working as Town webmaster in charge of our online site. She told him that she did that work and informed him that she had taken a course at BCC to gain the necessary skills. The Board offered to reimburse her for her tuition. She mentioned that she has been working to help Melissa Martinetto, our new Tax Collector, get up to speed. They are working on the excise tax process now. Mrs. Martinetto is interested in taking a seminar on Tax Collecting in Dudley, Mass. J. Huebner said that the Town will pay for her mileage and any fees necessary for her training.

8. **Financial Review:** J. Huebner thanked K. Lew for putting together a financial report to date. He was glad to see that we have \$75,000 in free cash presently. K. Lew told the Board that he had met with Dan Parnell for an update before he left on vacation. T. Johnson's categories had been set up to help him structure his budget. K. Lew sent out a spreadsheet to the Board last week. Highlights of the Town's financial position were discussed. J. Huebner said we must draft a warrant item for the ATM to have a clear vote on the Eden Glen dam/park question. K. Lew volunteered to wordsmith it. J. Huebner thanked D. Spencer for identifying grants available from Westfield Wild and Scenic that we may be able to take advantage of. It was decided that we need a bylaw for revolving costs. Details of the process will be worked out and the issue voted on at Annual Town Meeting.
9. **Insurance:** There will be further discussions with Dom Sinopoli about our options for adjusting our insurance coverage to save on vehicle premiums. D. Spencer will meet with him.
10. **Cost Sharing with Becket:** K. Lew met with Ed Gibson, Town Administrator of Becket, to discuss how our two towns can arrive at an equitable solution to the challenge of fairly sharing costs for essential services. Increasing our contribution to Fire Department and ambulance costs are major topics of discussion. Discussion will continue. K. Lew is considering asking BRPC for their help with this task.
11. **Seven Town Meeting:** D. Spencer said that our CBRSD assessment is going down.
12. **WiredWest/Broadband:** K. Lew told the Board that he and S. Nelson met with Todd Corcoran of MBI to review the pole survey data. They found that our original estimate was too low. We have 800 poles instead of an estimated 600 poles. This will affect our make-ready costs. We will be discussing with Becket and with Charter in Hinsdale how to share some of

the make-ready costs. The good news is that MBI seems to have changed its attitude from obstructionist to cooperative partner in getting the broadband network built. They have announced the “MBI Assist” program and appear to be preparing to release funds to the towns. Westfield Gas & Electric continues to be supportive of the regional network approach and is an attractive potential partner in the effort. On March 9th there will be an important meeting between the WiredWest Executive Committee and MBI.

13. Brief Items: There will be a public hearing at the Berkshire Athenaeum in Pittsfield on April 10th to discuss Eversource’s request for a rate increase; On March 28, the state will hold a regional workshop on planning a “21st Century Transportation System for Massachusetts” . This meeting will be in western Mass. Meeting location and time will be posted on BRPC’s website, www.berkshireplanning.org. Upcoming free CPR/Nalaxone Trainings will be held in Pittsfield, Great Barrington, Dalton and Lee. Contact Jennifer Kimball at BPHA for dates and times. 413-442-1521 x37.

14. Motion to adjourn: At 9:00 pm T. Drugmand made a motion to adjourn the meeting. J. Huebner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Nelson