

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

March 6, 2017

1. M. Case called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending for the Board were M. Case and T. Drugmand.
2. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance M. Case made a motion to review and accept the minutes from 2/27/ 17. T. Drugmand seconded the motion and the minutes were accepted unanimously.
3. T. Drugmand was recording the meeting.
4. **Highway Department:** T. Johnson reported receiving a letter in the mail from Lillian Fox regarding problems with the Washington Mountain Road (WMR) construction. He gave a copy of the letter to T. Drugmand. In it Lillian Fox stated that a strong concentration of salt had been found in her well on WMR at the junction with Frost Road. T. Johnson had communicated the details of this and other problems with the road construction to Baltazar. They have not replied to him yet.

J. Hostetter continues to research the construction of the collapsed culvert at the top of Frost Road. She is trying to date the construction and verify details of the land-taking.

The Town received a grant for \$250,000 under the Small Bridges Program to reconstruct the Middlefield Road bridge. M. Case asked what the next steps are in this process. T. Johnson replied that the first step is to confirm whether or not we can use the existing abutments. That done, we can go through the bidding process. Phil Clark of Horizon Engineering has the documentation on the abutments. We need to confirm that DOT received that documentation from him. Our plan has to be approved by DOT before we can proceed with the work. A decision was made to wait for J. Huebner's return before discussing this issue with DOT. T. Johnson told the

Board that he had spoken with Cathy Stevens for clarification on the use of our Chapter 90 money.

5. **Police:** The subject of the recent repairs to our School Bus was discussed. Chief Breen confirmed that he had to take the vehicle to Johnson Motors twice before the problem was corrected. We received 2 bills for the work even though the Ford dealer indicated to him that we would only be billed for the final repair which actually fixed the problem. We have been billed for a total of \$4428. The cost of the first repair was about \$300. Chief Breen has requested that the bill be reduced by this amount. Ford has not cooperated. It was decided that T. Johnson will give Chief Breen a copy of the bill to take with him to a meeting with the dealer to settle the dispute. T. Drugmand offered to go with him as a representative of the Select Board.

6. **Shared Services with Becket:** K. Lew briefly reviewed his recent discussion with Becket Town Administrator, Ed Gibson. The subject was Becket's request that we cover more of the cost of the municipal services we share with them. Increasing our contribution for fire protection and for the operation of Becket Beach was explored. However the main issue discussed concerned increasing our financial support for ambulance service. The gap between what Becket is billed for this critical service and what it recovers in insurance payments is great. There was discussion between Finance and the Select Board about whether or not Becket is missing opportunities to collect additional revenues.

M. Case said he had learned that Hinsdale may be interested in providing Washington's ambulance service. This may be a viable option for us. Before approaching Hinsdale, he will discuss this with Select Board Chair J. Huebner after he returns from vacation.

7. **CBRSD Feasibility Study Vote:** M. Case confirmed that there will be a ballot election on April 8th to determine if taxpayers of the District want to spend \$850,000 on a feasibility study that will determine if we re-build Wahconah,

renovate it or do nothing. CBRSD officials based the \$850,000 estimate on what other area schools have paid for similar assistance in their planning. We will have to go out to bid if the vote is to renovate or re-build.

- 8. Tax Collector:** Our Tax Collector, Melissa Martinetto, is getting a feel for her new position. Treasurer Glenn Grogan is coaching her in our financial practices. J. Hostetter has helped with collection software basics and is helping with computer access to the Tax Collector's email. J. Nelson has gotten Melissa set up on our phone system. However the Board recognized that she is still in need of professional training in the specific details of Collecting. T. Drugmand made a motion that we hire an experienced trainer to get her up to speed before the tax season accelerates over the next few weeks. M. Case seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Assessor Consultant Karen Avalle and Finance Chair K. Lew will help to identify a trainer and will advise on our immediate need to authorize and issue overdue excise tax bills.
- 9. Special Town Meeting:** K. Lew led discussion of his draft articles for the Special Town Meeting scheduled for March 20th at 7:30 PM at Town Hall. After discussion and amendment of the draft T. Drugmand made a motion to approve the Articles as modified. M. Case seconded and the Articles were approved as written. A copy of these Articles is attached to these minutes. Following the vote to approve, Chief Breen was dispatched to post the articles at the 3 customary Town locations: on the bulletin board outside Town Hall; at the salt shed near the Transfer Station and at the Old Town Hall on Washington Mountain Road. On his return to Town Hall he reported that the Articles had been duly posted.
- 10. Board of Health:** V. Cormier reported that the letter sent last week by Select Board Chair J. Huebner to Eyal Shapira of Washington Mountain Road had not yet been picked up at the Becket Post Office. No one had been available to sign for the certified letter at the residence when the Post man attempted delivery. He left a slip asking Mr. Shapira to pick it up at the

Post Office. The letter concerned his responsibilities and state permitting requirements to continue operating a camp on his property.

The Board asked her to contact Eversource for information on herbicide application in Town.

11. WiredWest/Broadband: S. Nelson will update the Select Board on the outcome of the upcoming March 9, meeting with state officials.

12. Meetings: T. Drugmand will attend the MMA meeting in Lenox this Friday at 8:00 am. BRPC will hold a dinner meeting on 3/30 which will include discussion of environmental damage caused by stormwater runoff. April 8th is the date of the referendum on the Wahconah feasibility study. There will be a Capital meeting on Monday April 10 at Town Hall at 7:30. The ATM meeting this year will be on Wednesday May 10th. Annual Town Elections will be on Saturday May 20th from 12-4.

13. Brief Items: There are no developments on the cemetery land promised by Pittsfield or the proposed veterans' memorial.

14. Adjournment: T. Drugmand made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 pm. M. Case seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Nelson