

## Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

May 15, 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. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from May 8 as written. M. Case seconded the motion and the decision to accept was unanimous.
3. **Summit Hill Bridge:** A family from Summit Hill Road expressed their concern about several issues affecting them and their neighbors as a result of the planned reconstruction of the bridge. They objected to the location of their mail boxes next to Town Hall. That would be a long round trip for them. J. Huebner said that he had tried to negotiate other locations with the Postal Service but they would only agree to the Town Hall location. DOT has still not told us when the bridge work will begin. There is still no grading on East Washington Road. That road has to be safe before the Town will permit the bridge work to begin.

The Summit Hill residents pointed out that there was still one pole on Upper Valley Road to be moved. They were worried that this could delay the project further. J. Huebner told them that the Town had held a public meeting with Eversource last fall during which detailed plans were made and paperwork was signed about moving any poles which were in the way. Eversource is well informed about the pole situation and their responsibilities related to that issue. J. Huebner said that he will contact the contractor to be sure they have been in touch with Eversource.

Later in the meeting Tom Johnson reported that a change to the construction plans meant that no poles would have to be moved.

4. **Police:** Chief Breen reported that starting tomorrow the Sherriff's Department would be on Washington Mountain Road (WMR) managing traffic during line

painting. The process will take 2 days to complete. The fog line will be laid down first and then the center line. We are not sure if reflectors will be added. Chief Breen also told the Board that he has secured a 50 person emergency kit containing bedding, flashlights etc. It will be locked in the Emergency Trailer at Town Hall. The cost to the Town is \$2500, paid fully by a grant. J. Huebner made a motion to make the purchase of the emergency supplies. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- 5. Highway Department:** T. Johnson and T. Drugmand met and discussed the problems with WMR residents' mailbox access. A number of residents cannot safely access their boxes due to the new pavement. T. Johnson has added this problem to the Baltazar punch list. He has given them a well-documented book listing all the problems which have surfaced to date. Baltazar has until the end of June to complete all the work on the punch list. T. Drugmand urged residents to document their complaints with T. Johnson to get on the list.

Frost Road will be closed starting on 5/15. Phil Clark of Horizon Consulting will report to the Board on the Eden Glen project each week. J. Huebner gave the folder documenting our Frost Road agreement with Eversource on pole moving to T. Johnson.

The Highway Department requested that the Town reimburse members for the cost of their professional licenses. The cost is \$150 per license. J. Huebner made a motion to approve paying the cost of their professional licenses to the Highway Department. M. Case seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Regarding the Middlefield Road bridge reconstruction, J. Huebner reported that the Q & A session for potential bidders will be held on 5/16 starting at 11:00 at Town Hall and progressing for a site tour after that. To date only one out of a dozen companies which requested the RFQ has confirmed for the event on the 16<sup>th</sup>. J. Huebner said that he will be at Town Hall at 11:00 to conduct the meeting and tour.

J. Huebner reported that Town Counsel is reviewing the agreement sent by the Street Scan Company on their proposed ground penetrating radar scan of our roads. Counsel has suggested some changes. We expect to hear back from Street Scan on the changes requested. The Finance Committee had recommended going forward with the Street Scan service as it should save the Town money and time going forward.

6. **Finance Committee:** J. Huebner gave Committee Chair K. Lew the letter we received from the Division of Local Services authorizing the payment of \$103, 650. 64 to Washington for our Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT funds) on the forest land. K. Lew welcomed the addition to our coffers.
7. **Ambulance Service:** J. Huebner reported that he had received an agreement from County Ambulance to support the Town's ambulance needs. There will be no charge to the Town for their services. We must draw up a complex Service Area plan for the state. J. Huebner will speak with the Becket Town Administrator about our decision on ambulance service providers.
8. **Town Cemeteries:** Dick Grillon, Sexton, told the Board that he had met with Peter Blake to discuss ways in which the Town might act to restore some of the oldest veterans' graves in West Branch Cemetery.
9. **WiredWest/Broadband:** S. Nelson told the Board that the monthly WiredWest meeting last Saturday was well attended and there was commitment to forging ahead. Some member towns have received their allotments for design, engineering and construction from the state. K. Lew and S. Nelson plan to have our application for funding completed by the end of the month. They are concerned that our allotment may not be sufficient as it was computed by MBI based on an erroneous estimate made by their consultant. They are addressing that problem.

WiredWest is working out details of an agreement with Westfield Gas and Electric to service the network and customers. Becket will make a decision on whether to

go with Charter Cable or to build its own fiber network. If they choose Charter we will have some connectivity problems to solve. Charter has no interest in serving Washington. M. Case said that Lanesborough went with Charter and is unhappy with that decision.

**10 Tax Collector:** J. Huebner spoke with Peggy DiSantis, a certified Collector for the Town of Lee, about our need for an experienced Collector. She agreed to come in to Town Hall to meet the Board on May 22. They will discuss her interest in working out an arrangement to take over our Collector's position. That will soon come open again in Town. Her daughter may be qualified for an assistant's position and will accompany her.

**11 ATM Feedback:** T. Drugmand opened discussion on the recent Annual Town Meeting. She said that some residents had told her that they thought the meeting went too quickly. They had no chance for discussion of the issues. T. Drugmand mentioned that several towns have begun to hold pre-ATM meetings to explain the articles and issues to interested residents, making for a more productive and interactive ATM. She also was told that people were afraid to ask questions at our meeting. Some thought that the dispute that occurred was handled unprofessionally. D. Grillon added that he thought the Right to Farm bylaw was too long to read aloud during the meeting. T. Drugmand said that she will organize her thoughts on the feedback for further discussion with the Board.

**12 Ed Bond Letter:** J. Huebner reported that he had received a letter from E. Bond in which he resigned from all of his Town positions by June 1. J. Huebner will speak to him and send a letter in reply. T. Drugmand mentioned that Ed Neumuth had expressed interest in the moderator's position some time ago.

**14 Brief Items:** D. Grillon asked M. Case if his election signs were printed with Town funds. M. Case responded that they were not; J. Huebner will meet with Mayor Tyer of Pittsfield in the near future; Becket Athenaeum will hold a lecture on the history of October Mountain State Forest on Thursday May 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8:00pm. RSVP to 413-623-5483.

**13 Adjournment:** J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm. T. Drugmand seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Jan Nelson