

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

October 16, 2017

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner, T. Drugmand and R. Grillon.
2. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from 10/2/17. T. Drugmand seconded and the motion carried unanimously. T. Drugmand was recording the meeting.
3. **Highway:** J. Huebner said that the Town had gotten an estimate on reconstruction of the Middlefield Road bridge from a second engineering firm. The quote was \$500,000. He considered the quote very high and said that he found it hard to spend that much money on that bridge. He has previously approached Middlefield about participating. They declined to do so. T. Johnson told the Board that progress on the Summit Hill Bridge is moving ahead steadily. J. Huebner will email DOT for an updated estimate of the completion date. T. Johnson said that it still looks like Maxymillian's work on Eden Glen culvert will be completed by the end of October. J. Huebner reported receiving the weekly payroll report from Maxymillian for the period 9/30 to 10/06. J. Huebner also said that he received a report on Washington Mountain Road from DOT. DOT indicated that the project was not meant to be a "deep repair" job. That was not the Town's understanding. T. Drugmand suggested that it might be appropriate to discuss with Town Counsel. T. Johnson said that DOT had reached out to him. They discussed the Dorval's driveway flooding problem, but DOT did not take action to address the issue. The Board agreed that Lane Paving had done a poor job on their portion of the work. T. Johnson said that it was difficult to guess what the road will look like by Spring. According to the DOT report, responsibility for Washington Mountain Road was returned to the Town on August 29th.

T. Johnson told the Board that he has had some problems selling our old equipment as he had difficulty finding titles to some of our oldest vehicles. On the plus side, he discovered that there might be some parts' value in our old trucks – perhaps as much as a couple thousand dollars. He has been following equipment auctions on line. He needs a letter from the Town authorizing him to purchase equipment for the Town. J. Huebner asked him to email him an example of such an authorization letter and he will sign it. T. Johnson reported that the crew has nearly finished installing the poles requested at the Transfer Station. He has checked M. Bennett's property for signs of erosion and has not found any sign of flooding yet. Upper Cross Place Road was raised up on Thursday.

- 4. Board of Health:** J. Paxton Huebner, member of the Board of Health, reported to the Selectmen that the flu clinic being held at Town Hall that evening had been very successful. Over 20 people had received flu shots.

There was brief discussion of Summit Hill Campground water system that DEP found to be out of compliance. A copy of the report will be sent to the Berkshire County Board of Public Health.

- 5. Virginia Lake Estates:** Dick Spencer reported that he had forwarded documents relative to the property to Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard for review. Tax Collector Gina Campbell will be following up on tax taking of two properties with Attorney Pollard. Dick Spencer will be meeting with him.
- 6. Five Acres of New Cemetery land:** Now that the City of Pittsfield has after many years agreed to turn the acreage on Washington Mountain Road over to the Town, some issues have come up. J. Huebner said that both he and Assessor Consultant Karen Avasle have searched unsuccessfully for the original survey of the cemetery land. The survey was thought to have been done by Almer Huntler and Company. The Select Board will get back to the City of Pittsfield on this question. K. Avasle had indicated that transferring

title to this land, because it is located in the watershed area, may be complicated. It may have to go to the Pittsfield City Council. She also noted that the agreement indicated that the land was to be used for a cemetery or any other purpose.

7. **Borgnis Landfill:** J. Huebner reported that there have been no developments on this issue. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has indicated that there is some money available for clean-up of such sites but has taken no action.
8. **Police:** Chief Breen told the Board that land owners on Summit Hill Road, Mr. and Mrs. Cruz, reported to him recently that the gate to their property has now been stolen three times. Chief Breen had been working with them since the first gate was stolen. He searched around Town for the gates. However no leads or clues to the whereabouts of the gates or to the identity of the thieves have been discovered. He will fill out a complaint form for the Cruzes so they can submit to their insurance company.

Huebner told Chief Breen that he has seen large trucks using Kirchner Road recently. As a number of them appeared to be over the permitted weight limit he asked Chief Breen to do some surveillance and to stop suspicious trucks. He advised Chief Breen to ask to see licenses, do a walk-around etc. and otherwise slow the drivers down in hopes of discouraging their future use of our roads. Chief Breen agreed to do so. He also reported stopping a speeder on Washington Mt. Road and warning him.

Vera Cormier reported hearing many gun shots in her neighborhood over the weekend. The noise was very loud and seemed closer to the homes than it had in past incidents. Dick Grillon agreed. V. Cormier said that on the night before this incident there was shooting at Bucksteep. The Board told her she would need to make a noise complaint to start an investigation.

9. **Broadband** : K. Lew and S. Nelson reported on their meeting last week with our network design contractor, Westfield Gas & Electric and their subcontractor, Precision Valley Communications. Selectwoman Trish Drugmand also attended. This was the kick-off meeting for the design phase of the project. She said that she was very impressed with WG&E's expertise and their positive attitude. S. Nelson agreed and said that their focus was on what they could do to help the Town minimize cost while building the network we would need. K. Lew said that WG&E understands the budget restraints of small towns. They focused on what Washington has to get done now. One of the areas of immediate concern were the homes along Middlefield and Johnson Hill Roads where we may have to lease fiber from Becket in order to bring the Broadband signal there.

The group left Town Hall to walk Lower Valley Road. They saw that it may make sense to run fiber between Johnson Hill Road and Cross Place Road perhaps through conduit rather than by placing poles on Lower Valley. WG&E pointed out that this may save the Town the cost of leasing pole space from Becket and may in the long run be a more cost effective approach. The decision was made to move ahead with this approach for now and see how it costs out. K. Lew asked if the Highway Department could help with laying the conduit.

The next step will be for WG&E to digitize our data, mapping out the distribution of the fiber. They will sketch out all the major routes in Town and determine where the system hub will be located. The group will meet again by December 1st to review the data and decide how to move forward.

10. **Building Maintenance Coordinator:** Matt Thomas told the Board that he has met with Ed Bond to review work to be done on the various Town buildings. He has patched the leak on the Old Town Hall roof for now. He will look into the cost of installing a metal roof there. P. Mikaniewicz will assist him with checking our fire alarms. On the subject of finding ways to bring new revenue into Town, Matt mentioned that he frequently rides in

off-road mountain bike races. These events often become fund-raisers for the towns involved, with food and drink vendors at the start and finish lines. Entry fees for the racers can also be charged .Liability issues must be considered. The Board expressed interest and thanked Matt for his ideas.

11. Forest Stewardship/ Sanctuary Assessment: The Select Board received a letter from Mass DCR informing us that our application for an initial grant to develop a 10- year plan for the 43.4 acres of Town land behind the Town Park has been approved. Accompanying our application for the grant was a detailed “Woods Walk Summary” of a site investigation by Peter Grima, DCR Service Forester, accompanied on the walk by D. Spencer and E. Neumuth. The grant for the plan is \$ 1406.20. The deadline for submitting our plan is May 1st, 2018. J. Huebner designated Dick Spencer to head up this effort.

12. Brief Items: The Tax Collector will attend a meeting of the Community Software Consortium on the development of affordable tax/accounting software for small municipalities; Notice was received from Lee concerning a public hearing on construction in the floodplain at 223 Washington Mountain Road in Lee; K. Avelle gave the Census questionnaire to Town Clerk Allison Mikaniewicz for completion; Municipal Energy Breakfast Series to be held – 10/17, 24,26; Selectmens’ Association Board Dinner on 10/19; BCBOHA Dinner on 11/19 at Pittsfield Country Club; Seven Town School Board meeting on 11/16 at Wahconah at 6:00 pm; Capital Meeting 10/30 at 7:30 in Town Hall.

13. Adjournment: J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55pm. T. Drugmand seconded and adjournment was approved unanimously.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted, Jan Nelson