

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

October 23, 2017

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner and R. Grillon.
 2. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance, J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes of October 16, 2017. R. Grillon seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
 3. J. Huebner welcomed a couple who are new residents of Summit Hill Road to the meeting.
 4. **Highway:** The Board reviewed a letter written by J. Huebner to Patricia A. Leavenworth, the Chief Engineer at MADOT Highway Division in Boston. The letter concerned the Middlefield Road bridge and the Town's need for additional funding to complete reconstruction of the bridge. Our engineer at Foresight Engineering has declared the existing abutments unusable. In his "Engineer's Opinion of Probable Cost", to replace the abutments and complete the reconstruction will add another \$250,000 to the cost for a total of \$500,000 +. The first 250,000 was provided by the state as a Small Bridge Program Grant. The Select Board asks that our grant total grant be increased to \$500,000, with the Town covering any costs beyond this. Included with our letter to MADOT are supporting letters from the Middlefield Board of Selectmen and one from the Chair of the Becket Board of Selectmen. Both of these towns are the chief beneficiaries of the bridge and in their letters state that their residents and emergency services depend on using the bridge.
- J. Huebner made a motion to sign and send the letter to MADOT in Boston. R. Grillon seconded and the vote to send the letter was unanimous.

Regarding the Summit Hill Bridge, T. Johnson said that we still expect the work to be completed in the next two weeks. He estimates that it will take longer to clear snow from the intersection with Upper Valley Road this winter due to the addition of new fencing by CSX. He also mentioned that work on Eden Glen Culvert has been completed. The large FEMA sign will remain in place until we have closed out financials and settled any final details. T. Johnson observed that traffic down the re-opened Frost Road is fast. He speculated that this might be the result of the construction slightly altering the lower slope and creating a steeper drop.

T. Johnson told the Board that he is still working on getting bids for and sales of some of the Highway Department's surplus equipment. He will send the Board a sample of the authorization form he needs to carry out these tasks. He is making preparations for winter now and is pricing out sand and salt. He thinks the prices may be coming down a bit as there are new suppliers in the market.

5. **Virginia Lakes:** Dick Spencer told the Board that he has conferred with Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard about how best to sort out the Town's options for disposing of the land. He is ready to send a mailing to two groups of current property holders and presented letters for the Board to sign. The two groups comprise Unit 1 and Unit 2 of the property. There are 22 owners on the tax rolls. Seventeen or eighteen of these are still paying taxes to the Town. D. Spencer told the Board that Jeremia had reviewed and approved the letters. The ownership of roads inside the project is still the big issue. Researching the road issues will determine what we can do with the property going forward. There are over 20 acres in the North Lake area. J. Huebner made a motion to sign the letters. D. Grillon seconded and the motion was unanimously approved by the Board.
6. **Cemetery Land:** K. Avelle joined the meeting and confirmed that she had located the original land survey of the five acres promised to Washington by the City of Pittsfield. We must now order a copy of the survey to settle

matters with Pittsfield. The Select Board agreed with her and asked Jodi Hostetter to work with K. Avalle and use the Town credit card to order the documents. Dick Grillon said that the Town has needed additional cemetery land for a number of years. That parcel was old farm land and there is no timber worth cutting.

- 7. Solar Electricity:** J. Huebner said that Mike Knapic, Governor Baker's representative to Western Massachusetts, who is associated with the Churchill Road solar facility in Dalton, has reached out to him. D. Spencer said that the schools have negotiated a deal to buy their electricity at an 18% discount off the grid and the Select Board hopes to set up a similar relationship for the Town. Mike Knapic gave J. Huebner the names of some contacts to explore this with. We hope to use solar electric power to run Town Hall and to make it available to all residents.
- 8. Tree Warden:** Craig Willis has filled the post of Tree Warden in past years. Tom Johnson was mentioned to take over the position, however he is not a Town resident. K. Lew suggested that perhaps we should consider whether we want an active or a reactive warden before making a decision. J. Huebner thought the nomination could wait until the next Annual Town Meeting.
- 9. Town Forest:** D. Spencer mentioned that the forester who assists with our Forest Stewardship and Bird Habitat Assessment Plan will probably want a contract with the Town. The Plan completion deadline is May 1st.
- 10. Police:** Chief Breen told the Board that he has the information he needs to fill out the complaint for the Cruz family about the thefts of their three gates. He will do so. He told J. Huebner that he had not stopped any heavy trucks on Blotz Road yet. There was a discussion of the proper protocol for the handling of police emergency situations in Washington. J. Huebner said that emergency calls are to go to the State Police first. Victor will be updated on the situation by the dispatcher after that. This is the process

that all parties have agreed upon. Chief Breen was upset that this protocol was not followed after a recent suicide attempt in Town. The Becket Police, not the dispatcher, called him with the information. J. Huebner asked that the original protocol agreement letter of June 6, 2012 be located and reviewed. Discussion of using additional police help at the Pumpkin Walk followed.

11.Meetings: J. Huebner said that he will attend the MPO meeting in Pittsfield tomorrow. He reported receiving an invitation to the Jacob’s Ladder Business Committee dinner and meeting to be held in Chester on November 16th. Dick Grillon will consider attending as there is no charge for the event and contacts made there could support the Town’s interest in exploring future business opportunities. Westfield Wild and Scenic will hold their next meeting on October 26th at 6:00pm in the Chesterfield Four Seasons Club. The Berkshire County Board of Selectmen’s Association Annual dinner will be held at Crissey Farms on October 26 and the Seven Town school board meeting will be at 6:00pm on November 16 at Waconah. There will be a Capital Assets Meeting next Monday, October 30 at Town Hall. There will also be a discussion of revenue opportunities for the Town.

12.Adjournment: J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. D. Grillon seconded and the vote to adjourn was unanimous.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted, Jan Nelson