

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

December 18, 2017

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. 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 12/11/18. R. Grillon seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.
3. **COA:** Steve Deloye, COA Director, told the Board that he will be publishing regular COA news and announcements in the Tracks. It will be a municipal calendar. T. Drugmand expressed her strong support for this development.
4. **Highway:** J. Huebner reported receiving a letter signed by Patricia A. Leavenworth P.E., Chief Engineer at DOT, confirming that Washington will receive an increase in the amount of \$250,000 to our initial award of \$250,000 for the reconstruction of Middlefield Road over Cole's Brook Bridge. This brings our total award to \$500,000, the maximum amount allowed under the Municipal Small Bridge Program. The DOT Contracts Section has been advised to make this change. J. Huebner will contact Foresight Engineering, our contractor, to let them know that we have received the green light from DOT.

Tom Johnson told the Board that he has not yet had the new truck lettered but will do so soon. He did get the grant for the Upper Frost Road culvert re-notarized and will submit it. J. Huebner added his signature to the document. K. Lew reported that a car got stuck in a snow bank adjacent to his driveway on Washington Mountain Road. The driver clearly ignored the warning sign. A large flatbed truck towed him free. J. Huebner reported receiving a check in the amount of \$ 4500 from Hinsdale for last winter's plowing. He asked Treasurer G. Grogan to check with J. Hostetter to verify the amount of the payment.

- 5. Police:** Chief Breen requested a property map to use on his inspection of Woody's next month with the Board of Health. He needs to understand the location of the property lines. He reported that he did contact the woman who claimed that he collided with her car last week coming out of the school driveway. She has just asked for a paint kit to touch up her bumper. T. Drugmand said that this woman must sign a statement confirming that the incident is settled with the receipt of the paint kit. Chief Breen agreed to get a signed statement.
- 6. Fire Chief's Report:** Fire Chief Paul Mikaniewicz told the Select Board that per their request he had asked a professional to inspect the fire alarm system at Town Hall. He has received a detailed report that he will forward to J. Huebner. The report indicates that a major update of our fire alarm system is needed. Engineering work will be required. We will have to go out to bid for the work. On the subject of his dry hydrant search, P. Mikaniewicz reported that the spot he identified on Upper Valley Road was the only site he found. He will speak to a contact about getting a grant to develop the dry hydrant.
- 7. Selectmen's Monthly Letter:** J. Huebner made a motion to accept the Letter for January. R. Grillon seconded and the motion was accepted unanimously. J. Huebner will forward the Letter on to L. Guthrie for printing in Tracks.
- 8. WiFi Issue:** The Board had received a report that the Town Hall WiFi was not working. They asked Glenn Grogan to try a re-boot. If that does not fix the problem we will contact J. Les or Crocker Communications, the installer.
- 9. Virginia Lakes:** J. Huebner said that he has spoken to Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard about our options for developing a plan that doesn't involve auctioning the vacant properties. A number of property owners have expressed interested in acquiring more of the plots. J. Huebner said that one option is to offer the plots for sale and place a valuation on each. They

will need to meet the assessed value. Back taxes will have to be paid. This approach must be approved at Annual Town Meeting. R. Spencer said that we need to identify the lots buyers may be interested in. Finance Chair K. Lew indicated that we need to bring North Lake to conclusion. It was agreed that selling to the Nature Conservancy would take the property off our tax rolls and so would not be our first choice of action. There was general agreement that there are still a number of details to work out.

- 10. Treasurer:** G. Grogan told the Select Board that he received notification from Easthampton Savings Bank that the Town has paid off the \$20,000 loan we took out to pay for the new school bus in 2014.
- 11. Planning for Washington's Future:** K. Lew told the Board that only himself, J. Huebner, Dick Spencer and Jodi Hostetter have confirmed that they will work on the long range planning project. Dominick and Kim Sinopoli are considering joining the group as primary and alternate. J. Huebner said that he had spoken with Berkshire Regional Planning about our project. They recommended that we apply for a **DLTA** grant and also suggested that we apply for a Community Contract grant as that might increase the amount for which we can apply. K. Lew will work on this.
- 12. Massachusetts Municipal Association:** J. Huebner reported receiving an invitation to the organization's meeting in Boston on January 20th. This is the MMA's annual business meeting and takes place during the MMA 2018 Annual Meeting and Trade Show. He cannot attend.
- 13. Resident Complaints:** F. Kennedy told the Board that someone had left a large number of Gideon Bibles at Town Hall. He objected strongly to this and asked that the Board remove the Bibles. After some consideration the Board agreed that the literature was unrequested and unapproved. They requested the immediate removal of the Bibles.

Select Woman T. Drugmand reported that a resident of Washington Mountain Road had come to her with a harassment complaint of excessive night lighting at Pugzee's farm. The woman said that the very bright perimeter lights over-illuminate the area adjacent to the Farm. Much of the light shines directly on her property and constitutes a nuisance. D. Spencer mentioned that we do have a nuisance bylaw which can be brought into force. The Board agreed that they will need to investigate before any action is taken. **The abutter who made the complaint will be following up. R. Grillon questioned the residency of the owner of Pugzee's Farm, E. Shapira. The answer to this question will determine if he owes any personal property tax on Pugzee's Farm. Dick Spencer agreed that personal property tax might be owed if the property is not Mr. Shapira's primary residence.**

14. **Broadband:** K. Lew said that he had spoken to Westfield Gas and Electric about their survey of areas to be served in Town. Mistakes had been made by the survey company and some homes in Hinsdale and elsewhere had been included in the Washington PDU's (Physical Dwelling Units). K. Lew has been comparing the survey information with Census Bureau data and noting discrepancies. We need to get through this exercise before we will have a good map of our wiring route and a fair estimate of cost.

S. Nelson provided an update on the status of WiredWest. He told the Board that 14 towns have now signed the MOU with perhaps more to come when they realize how difficult it will be to run a broadband network themselves. K. Lew added that the larger the group is the better control we will have over some costs. The group of fourteen towns has over 6,000 households among them. This is critical mass for moving forward as a group. Becket has still not signed up. That is a concern as we need to access the broadband signal through their territory. S. Nelson said that the Becket WiredWest delegate returns soon from a long absence and the hope is that he will support joining WiredWest now that the MOU is no longer binding.

15. **Park Commission:** The Board discussed upcoming activities in the park. It was agreed that we need to look into liability coverage for the ice skating rink being planned for this winter. J. Hostetter said that it will be set up in January. The soccer field seems the most likely location. We expect to have big events in the Park over this summer. The Becket Washington Community Association (BWCA) has asked to hold the Brouhaha fair in July. The Becket Federated Church has asked to hold a country fair and car show in the park in August. The Becket Police also want to hold another car show in the park. The Parks commission is discussing setting a reasonable “rental” fee for Park useage to cover our costs for police presence, grounds maintenance, liability insurance etc. They are also updating our application for park usage. T. Drugmand will look into the legalities of charging for use of our park and into our insurance liability.

16. **Administrative Assistants:** J. Hostetter told the Board that some annual reports have come in in response to her request.

17. **Net Metering:** J. Huebner took a net metering survey with him to fill out.

18. **Adjournment:** J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. T. Drugmand seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted, Jan Nelson