

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

March 26, 2018

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 March 19 as written. D. Grillon raised a question about item #11 concerning the location of New Lenox Road. It was agreed that part of it is located within Washington's borders. T. Drugmand seconded the motion to approve the March 19 minutes and the motion passed unanimously.
3. **Police - Appointment:** J. Huebner made a motion to appoint Nicole Miller, part-time officer in Becket, as our Administrative Police Chief for the rest of fiscal year 2018. D. Grillon seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously. Town Clerk, Allison Mikaniewicz will do the actual swearing in of Officer Miller next week. T. Drugmand raised the question of also appointing Officer Miller as Dog Officer. J. Huebner deferred that question to later in the meeting when the Board would take up several additional issues with Officer Miller. J. Huebner mentioned that several pending firearm applications were in the Police Office awaiting processing and that we also need to discuss the Police cruiser. He asked Officer Miller to step back into the Auditorium later in the evening.
4. **Ambulance Service:** J. Huebner recognized Brian Andrews, President of County Ambulance, Washington's preferred carrier. He had asked Mr. Andrews to attend the meeting to assist the Select Board in understanding the financial aspects of ambulance service. Becket has invoiced the Town \$5,000 for their back-up services to County. Mr. Andrews reported that County had received 23 dispatches for Washington. They had actually transported 16 out of this 23. For 3 out of this 23 they could not respond. Their service capability has been strained this year by increased demand

from numerous small towns. They have made it their policy to extend service to these towns. As a result, County's overall volume has increased. They have added a new truck to keep up with demand. Finance Chair Kent Lew indicated Becket reported responding to 8 calls that County could not cover. He wondered if Becket could have gotten a financial boost from the overall increase in volume. However, after discussion it was not clear that the town in question was Becket.

Brian Andrews explained that ambulance companies can be reimbursed from several different sources. The companies themselves carry insurance as do many of the patients transported. Some of these insurances are from private companies and some are government backed like Medicare. However in some instances the insurers refuse coverage and then everyone scrambles to find a solution.

Brian Andrews pointed out that Becket's volume is low. As a result of that it is difficult for them to break even. They have to maintain a "standing" staff to meet state and federal licensing regulations. He told the Board that he will be checking with the Sheriff's Office to verify volume figures and will get back to the Board with that information.

J. Huebner said that County's service to Washington has been good and that we will be renewing our contract with them for next year.

5. **Board of Health:** Jan Huebner, BOH Member, signed a letter to the Center for Sharing in support of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's (BRPC's) application to the Center for a Cross Jurisdictional Sharing (CSJ) grant opportunity. The grant is to be used by the Town to train and support BOH staff in their administrative responsibilities, to develop efficient processes and to run an organized office serving our residents. The Town contracts with the Berkshire Public Health Alliance to provide credentialed inspectors.

Craig Willis was in attendance at tonight's meeting. The Board reminded him about the upcoming Board of Health hearing concerning one of his properties located on Upper Valley Road.

6. **Highway:** The Board discussed the status of Highway crew member Dave Fish's CDL license. Tom Johnson confirmed that he has a hydraulics license which qualifies him to do some limited driving. However the Town needs him to be fully qualified and able to do any necessary driving. T. Johnson said that he had contacted the DMV for clarification of the difference between a CDL and a hydraulics license and did not receive a clear explanation. T. Drugmand emphasized that we need to have something in writing from Dave regarding his legal status with regard to his CDL.

T. Johnson told the Board that Foresight estimates that the Middlefield Road bridge will greatly exceed our \$500,000 budget if we go with concrete and even a metal bridge may exceed it. J. Huebner will contact Foresight. The estimate would be closer to \$500,000 if we go to the aluminum option rather than construction. T. Johnson has checked on the situation with the Upper Frost Road culvert reconstruction. A hazard mitigation grant is still possible. We are higher on the list, but no awards will be made soon. Work on the small plow truck is nearly complete. He is working on the registration now.

A discussion about building lot numbering acknowledged that Chief Breen had assigned a number to each lot in Town after the curb cut and driveway were in. The Select Board expressed their opinion that the Assessors should be our source for lot numbers.

T. Johnson requested permission from the Board to take the Tundra truck home to his residence at the end of the work day to be able to answer after hours calls more efficiently and to minimize use of his own vehicle for Town business. All Board members were in agreement with this request. K. Lew suggested that we get a monthly odometer reading so that we know that

we are getting the value we expected to get from the truck. All agreed with this suggestion.

7. **Administrative Assistants:** Per request of the Board Chair, Jodi Hostetter reported that flags lowered for Chief Breen's passing should be raised to full staff now that burial is over. She told the Board that she is checking on our receivable from Hinsdale for this winter's plowing. J. Huebner told J. Hostetter that he has approved resident Donna Simpson's request to use the Auditorium for a scholarship fundraiser in December. T. Drugmand said that she has asked J. Hostetter to organize an overall Town Calendar to be posted online and at Town Hall. J. Hostetter told the Board that ethics certificates are still coming in to her office from Town employees. K. Lew told her that he will let her know when to get the ATM paperwork started.

8. **Police – Next Steps:** J. Huebner said that we received excellent recommendations on Nicole Miller from Becket. He clarified that we do not have an obligation to her at this point beyond July 1, 2018. J. Hostetter, who had worked with Officer Miller on the details of the fundraising car shows, said that she thought Nicole was a good presence in the Town.

Sean Connors volunteered to head up a search committee for Victor's replacement. J. Huebner asked him to finalize the committee by next week and to report to the Board. J. Huebner said that we need to understand the legal criteria for appointing the new Chief in order to determine the criteria for the Police Chief's duties.

T. Drugmand offered to research our requirement for constables. We currently have only Shaun Lennon in that capacity. Several others have expressed willingness to serve to J. Huebner. J. Huebner said that he has reached out to Paul Mikaniewicz to be our Community Response Coordinator.

Officer Miller returned to the Select Board meeting after spending some time in the Police Office. She reported that new door locks are needed below the combination lock. She was given a new building access key. J. Huebner asked her if she was comfortable with assuming the duties of Dog Catcher, Pound Keeper and Animal Inspector in addition to working as Chief of Police. She agreed to do so and told the Board that she knows the relevant regulations. J. Huebner made a motion to appoint her as our Animal Control Officer, a new title that covers all three positions. T. Drugmand seconded the nomination and the motion passed unanimously. T. Drugmand asked her to forward her resume to the Board. Officer Miller agreed to do so.

9. ATM Preparation: J. Huebner told the Finance Committee that he wants a “dummy” of the ATM warrant in 2 weeks. We need to sign and post the warrant on April 30th. He told the Board that he will put together the materials for the warrant question information session on May 5. He will get any information needed on the Green Communities program from Mr. Barry. More than half of Massachusetts towns are participating. D. Spencer said that some of the newer houses in Town are already built to Green Communities standards. People need to know the tests which the standards require as well as the building goals.

10. Monthly Select Board Letter: J. Huebner made a motion to approve the monthly letter as written, including an extra page devoted to Chief Breen. T. Drugmand seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

11. Broadband: K. Lew had the fiber network pole attachment bonds ready for the Chair to sign. J. Huebner did so and returned the documents to K. Lew. The Town is signatory for these bonds. The make ready process of preparing our poles for the fiber will begin in Town on April 11th. Discussion of possible costs to homeowners who have longer driveways followed. K. Lew said that he had been researching private roads in Town to better understand those requirements. Only about 50 driveways have long drops.

The utility companies will pay to replace any rotten poles. His total count of Town poles is 750. He thanked J. Hostetter for giving him an updated list of building permits.

12. Pugzee's Farm: D. Grillon told the Board that he had done some research and learned that Mr. Shapira still has not removed the Homestead Act provision from his property in Lenox. J. Huebner will follow up on this with Town Counsel. D. Grillon also brought to the Board's attention that Mr. Shapira has not paid any excise tax to the Town of Washington since his claimed residence and voter registration.

13. Adjournment: At 8:44pm J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting. T. Drugmand seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Accepted: _____ **Date:** _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted,
J. Nelson