

WASHINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

13 November 2017

In Attendance: Kent Lew, Dick Spencer, and David Weissbrod
Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Finance committee meeting minutes from October 16 were approved as amended.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Renewable Energy Presentation with Select Board.** (See Select Board minutes.)

2. **Small Town Summit Report.**

Kent reported on his first experience with the Rural Commonwealth at a meeting held in Goshen. Its goal is to voice concerns with the legislature on behalf of rural Massachusetts's communities. Attendees shared ideas and voiced problems of their communities –often common problems shared by many others. There was a discussion of changes to state's valuation of state-owned land per recent Modernization Act. Kent provided us with 2017 Cherry Sheet of state-owned land in Washington and the state's newly categorized three types of land evaluation. For Washington's 11,555.58 acres, there is a slight increase of \$419 in valuation. Land evaluation would be every two years as opposed to the old system of every four years. Full funding of the land by legislature would be best remedy to town's payment!

Kent said that there was some discussion of broadband and the possibility of the state paying more for all costs for rural broadband.

Kent said he would monitor future meetings.

3. **Strategic Planning Process.**

We reviewed town's proposed strategic planning outreach statement provided to us by Jim Huebner, chairman of group. Representing the Finance Committee, Kent and Dick are listed as prospective members. There are also at least two members from the Planning Board, as well as other town residents named as prospective participants to the group. We agreed that it was

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important to get as much input from as many town residents as possible, including second-home owners. A questionnaire should be considered for distribution at start of this process. The intent or goals of the group should be made more obvious in the outreach statement. "Planning for the town's future" is one way to phrase it but perhaps acknowledge the importance of maintaining the quality of our rural surroundings and at the same time look for opportunities to grow town's revenues. The schedule for this Planning Group's "articulation of a vision for the future" is June 2018, with the creation of a Town Plan in December and implementation. On-going monitoring and review, as needed, would follow.

The Select Board/Fin Comm will kick-off the process by end of this year.

4. Pittsfield Stumpage.

We received a check for \$24,502.30 from Pittsfield. It is for four different cuttings, the most recent one for a cutting in 2017, and for three cuttings in 2014. We wondered why 2014 cuttings are just being paid for now. Perhaps they were not completed until 2017? Kent said he'd look into this and wondered if we should start providing Pittsfield with estimates as soon as cutting plans are received. This would require that the Finance Comm receive cutting plans as soon as they are submitted to the town.

5. Any New Business.

Tom Johnson stopped in and presented us with the good news that he has sold three pieces of equipment on line, totaling \$3,385. The items sold and their selling prices are: \$990 for an old air compressor, \$470 for a roller with trailer, and \$1,925 for a 1984 Chevy Pickup. Tom will continue to look for other items to sell. While Tom was with us, he asked about the status of the plowing invoice for Hinsdale. Jody, overhearing our discussion, said she would send a new memo to them of the 2-town agreement.

Our next meeting is planned for Dec 11, 2017.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03PM.

Respectfully,

David Weissbrod, Clerk