

Meeting of the Washington Board of Selectmen at Washington Town Hall

December 19, 2016

1. J. Huebner called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Attending for the Board were J. Huebner and T. Drugmand.
2. After leading the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance J. Huebner made a motion to accept the minutes from December 12, 2016. T. Drugmand seconded the motion and the vote to accept the minutes was unanimous.
3. **Council on Aging:** Steve Deloye presented the Board with the 2016-2017 COA state grant contract. The Board Chair signed the document and thanked him for his work with our seniors.
4. **Town Hall Security:** The Select Board clarified with Chief Breen that the new keys will be made on January 4. They will be distributed to persons approved for access to the building on Monday, January 9th, the first day Town Hall is open for business in 2017. Those persons approved to receive the new keys will be notified before the 9th. T. Drugmand is working on a revision of our policy concerning the responsibilities of key holders.
5. **Payments to the Treasurer:** The Board reported receiving a check for \$50.00 from Joseph George Contracting of Greenfield, MA for a building permit to install insulation at 44 Stone House Road. They also received a check for \$30.00 from Clifford Oil for a permit to install a 120 gallon propane tank at 572 Washington Mountain Road.
6. **Parks Commission:** The Parks Commission submitted to the Board a request for \$158.00 in reimbursement for the Town Christmas tree lights. The Board Chair signed the expense request form.
7. **Highway Department:** Tom Johnson told the Select Board that he has the Cross Place Road materials in the Highway Department yard. He has stone

and gravel, a good mixture for road repairs. He confirmed that construction of the Cross Place Road culvert is complete. He said that In the spring the contractor will return to replace or revive plants, bushes and small trees that were removed to build the temporary access road. He has not heard from P. Clark about Eden Glen contract status. There was brief discussion of a sanding issue on Schulze Road which has been corrected. T. Johnson said that the Highway Department has shoveled out a number of mailboxes. It was agreed that the Highway Department will get 2 keys for the new security system at Town Hall.

- 8. Syncarpha Solar Electric Presentation:** At the Select Board's request a representative from Syncarpha made a brief presentation about his company's Community Solar Program and conducted a question and answer session afterward. The main advantages of Community Solar are that it allows people whose houses are poorly oriented for roof-top panels or whose town does not have the infrastructure to bring solar electricity to residents, to participate in solar electric savings.

Syncarpha is underway building two large solar farms in the Berkshires. One is located in Pittsfield and one in Hancock. When installation of these solar arrays has been completed Syncarpha will sell the energy to Eversource which will in turn give a 10% credit to each subscriber. Right now they are working at simplifying the process with Eversource. Subscribers will receive a credit on the whole bill, not just on the supply portion. Syncarpha currently has about 20% of the subscriber base it needs and is seeking customers.

K. Lew asked about the timeframe to sign up for the service. The Syncarpha representative told him that enrollment will be on a "first come, first served" basis. There is no money down. There is a ten year contract which can be broken if the subscriber decides to switch to installing solar panels on his own property. Syncarpha has completed 15 large solar projects and can provide references. They require a 650 credit score to sign up. They

expect to be up and running in Berkshire County in the January to February time frame. For more information, we have some Syncarpha brochures in the lobby. You can also check their web site at: www.syncarpha.solar. We expect to have additional information about the program on our Town web site soon. J. Huebner said that he will recommend that we sign the form for the Town to participate in the Syncarpha program.

- 9. Special Town Meeting:** K. Lew told the Board that we will have 2 outstanding invoices from Horizon to deal with in January. One is for the preliminary work on Eden Glen and the other is for Blotz Road. We will need a Special Town Meeting to settle these accounts. The total will be about \$30,000. We also need to have a vote to clarify the Town's wishes for Eden Glen Dam. Currently we are unlikely to get grant money to remove the dam. If the Town votes to rescind the initial vote to restore the dam, we can pursue removal grants.
- 10. Finance Committee:** K. Lew reported that he has had discussions with Sinopoli Insurance , trying to identify a better way to approach the Town's insurance. Mr. Sinopoli would like to help the Town out. He is a newer resident. J. Huebner cautioned that insuring towns is not the same as regular insurance. K. Lew indicated that he understood the difference – especially since most of our assets have wheels. J. Huebner mentioned that we need to have our long range financial plan. There are many questions to consider.
- 11. Building Maintenance:** T. Drugmand will ask Ed Bond who we should call to fix the recurring winter roof leak. Water has again leaked in from snow melt onto the Town Hall corridor in front of the Treasurer's office.
- 12. Monthly Selectmen's Letter:** J. Huebner made a motion to accept the monthly Selectmen's letter. T. Drugmand seconded and the letter was approved unanimously.

13. Tax Collector: J. Huebner reported that we have had no success yet in finding a replacement for Sandi Cameron, who has resigned the Collector's post. J. Hostetter has placed an ad with Berkshire Works, the county employment agency. J. Huebner has been trying to get a grant for shared financial services through the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC). He will also ask previous collector, Belinda Phillips, if she can cover the post for a short time. He had spoken with Linda Levernoch and she was not interested in the job. The Tax Collector gets a "demand payment" in addition to the salary of \$4,000 annually. The demand usually amounts to about \$2,000. G. Grogan said that he had looked into getting a qualified intern, but has had no success.

14. Wired West: S. Nelson told the Selectmen that a little under half of Washington's poles have been surveyed to date. He estimated that the work will be finished by the New Year. Wired West is finishing work on a resolution for small towns to demand input into MBI policy. The goal is to make our case through our Select Boards directly to Carolyn Kirk, Deputy Director of the state Office of Housing and Economic Development. We want to be able to appeal directly to her about the importance of a regionalized network. She was a municipal official herself, serving for a number of years as Mayor of a small city north of Boston. We believe she will understand our position and sense of urgency.

15. Veterans' Memorial: Chief Breen reported to the Board that he had spoken with Eyal Shapira. Mr. Shapira agreed to meet with him and Peter Blake to discuss the idea of building a memorial to Town veterans. Options for funding this proposed project will be explored. All agreed that we need to know what our plan will be before we can estimate the cost.

16. Administrative Assistants: J. Nelson told the Board that on Wednesday, December 14 Crocker Communications, our phone service provider, installed a phone in the new Board of Health office at Town Hall. Both Jan Paxton Huebner and Vera Cormier of the Board of Health were in

attendance and received training on using the new phone. Crocker also facilitated the re-recording of the Town Hall general greeting to include the new direct line for the Board of Health. Wiring in the former Building Inspector's office was checked by the technician from Crocker and found capable of serving the Treasurer's existing phone, thus saving the Town the cost of running new wiring from the board in the Accountant's office..

J. Nelson also mentioned that we will again offer the Falls Prevention course that was so popular last spring. The course is free and open to all adult residents. It involves simple, gentle and effective exercises to keep people on their feet. The course starts at 10:00 on Tuesday April 13 and will meet every Tuesday after that until May 18th. More information will be available as we get closer to Spring.

J. Huebner signed an expense report submitted by J. Hostetter in the amount of \$ 45.00 for her mileage incurred traveling to Amherst for the New Public Records Law seminar.

17. Brief Items: K. Lew to investigate the legitimacy of letter received at Town Hall awarding Board Chair a large sum of money. Chief Breen to get lock installed on Building Inspector's file cabinet now located in the conference room. J. Huebner received a copy of our insurance company, MIIA's, bulletin requesting the names of nominees for Director of the company.

18. J. Huebner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 pm. T. Drugmand seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Accepted: _____ Date: _____

Accepted: _____

Accepted: _____

Respectfully submitted, Jan Nelson