

To our fellow Washington residents:

January 2015

Happy New Year!

The Select Board has also served as the Board of Health over the years, but, as with many other aspects of municipal government, public health has become a more complicated and demanding issue. If you or anyone you know in Town has a background in a health-related field and would like to serve on the Board of Health, please let us know. We are still looking for someone interested in serving as Tax Collector and the Cultural Council is also looking for volunteers.

Although the latest pipeline route proposal from Kinder-Morgan bypasses our Town, we must be cautious that it does not change again! At the Special Town Meeting on December 15 our voters passed a resolution that the Select Board actively oppose any pipeline in Berkshire County and also appropriated up to \$20,000 over the next two years in support of the legal and technical work being coordinated through Berkshire Regional Planning - and we thank BRPC's Director, Nat Karnes, for presenting! The voters also approved the Town joining in a consortium to buy electricity at low rates.

Doug Plachcinski of Berkshire Regional Planning reported on the PASER (Pavement Surface Evaluation and Rating) study of our roads. The Town maintains over forty miles of roads, roughly half of them gravel.

- Most of our gravel roads are in excellent shape; Doug cited the fact that the drainage and width were especially well done. Better crowning, widening and drainage were recommended on some roads as was the purchase of a vibratory roller for compacting.
- For the next five years, a third of our pavement needs only routine maintenance; roughly half needs some capital preventive maintenance, and a couple miles of Upper Valley and Frost Roads need significant repairs. Doug laid out a project list with estimated costs for the work which should all fit within our Chapter 90 budget from the Commonwealth.
- The study will be posted on the Town's website when the project prioritization and scheduling is complete.

FEMA has granted us \$788,350 to mitigate flooding on Frost Road at Depot Brook. The road will be widened and the size of the culvert increased. **NOTE: We will decide based on cost and safety whether to preserve or remove the Eden Glen Dam. If you have any thoughts about the dam, please let us know!**

- The project needs voter approval to fund the amount above the FEMA grant and we also need to fund the Cross Place and Middlefield Road bridges. We expect to have a comprehensive proposal for a Special Town Meeting in the first quarter.

DOT has announced that they will place a severe weight limit on the bridge that spans the CSX tracks on Summit Hill Road. The Select Board has sent a letter demanding that DOT begin work immediately to make the bridge passable by emergency vehicles, oil trucks and our snow plows!

- Despite the intervention of Representative Pignatelli, all we got from DOT is an offer to meet with us on January 6. At that meeting we will also demand to know why it has taken almost two months for DOT to approve the use of the temporary bridge we have secured for Middlefield Road.

The Tree Lighting Ceremony on December 20 was well attended by carolers who worked their way through our songbook – and the cookies and cocoa. This is fast becoming another of the Town's signature events along with the Hoot, Sons & Daughters and the Pumpkin Walk. Thanks to Jodi Hostetter for making it happen.

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board