

To our Washington neighbors:

October 2015

The annual Sons & Daughters reunion hosted almost 50 people despite a rather overcast day. The food was great, particularly the pies – Trish Drugmand and her daughter Dana took prizes for both apple and raspberry – the music wonderful, but the highlight, as always, was the celebration of our Town's history and character that makes us all proud to live here. Thanks to all those whose efforts made for a special occasion. For anyone who missed it – see you next year!

Congratulations to our whole financial team! The Town's tax rate was the fourth one certified in the Commonwealth. The modest increase of 1.6% reflects both the loss of our largest taxpayer – Bucksteep – to tax exempt status as well as growth from new construction.

We had a visit from Eric Nakajima, Director of the Mass Broadband Institute (MBI). MBI is a government agency which acts as the conduit for the state's portion of the funding for the high speed internet construction by WiredWest. MBI is now insisting that the Town's borrowing authority is insufficient proof of our intent to go forward with this project that is vital to our economic viability and wants us to have a debt-exclusion vote. The vote has no financial implications for the Town but without it MBI will not include us in the early planning for construction of the system. The vote is scheduled for Saturday November 14 from 12-4.

Although we may still be able to put the Cross Place culvert out to bid, It appears unlikely that we will be able to complete the construction this year. If so we will seek recovery of at least some of the money paid to the design contractor, Holden.

Balthazar, the contractor who will be reconstructing Washington Mountain Road, has started preliminary work.

We hope to see you all at a Special Town Meeting at 7:00 on Monday October 26. There are three ballot questions, to see whether the voters:

- Want to spend roughly \$110,000 to restore the Eden Glen Dam area or a slightly lesser amount to remove the dam.
- Will approve a business by-law to require everyone in Town with a home-based business to register and pay a \$10 annual fee. This will insure that all business activity conforms to our zoning and the character of the Town is preserved.
- Will continue to support the Town's participation in the Pipeline Working Group since we no longer appear to be in the pipeline's path.

There will also be free flu shots available at the Town Hall before the Special Town Meeting on October 26 from 5 to 7. Get protected!

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board