

To our Washington neighbors:

March 2016

Our State Senator, Ben Downing, announced that he will not seek re-election this November. Ben has been a good friend to the Town and we wish him all the best in any new direction he chooses.

Peter Blake, our former Veterans' Agent, has brought forward a design for the proposed addition to the Veteran's memorial at the Old Town Hall that will include the names of all who have served since the Town was founded. The Board has asked Eyal Shapira to assist in fund-raising to realize the design. Anyone desiring to help in any way please contact Mr. Shapira.

- We have also resolved our need for a new Veterans' Agent by signing an inter-municipal agreement with Pittsfield. The cost will be capped at roughly what we have budgeted. Thanks to Mike Case who served as interim Agent and who made the agreement with Pittsfield happen!

Phil Clark recommended that the existing abutments to the Middlefield Road bridge need to be reinforced or replaced. The Board agreed and, while this will add some cost to the project it remains within the approved budgetary limits. The bridge will be replaced this summer.

Select Board Chair Jim Huebner attended the first meeting of the Community Compact municipalities organized by our State Representative, Smitty Pignatelli on February 4. The group will work on identifying projects to reduce costs and improve services. Potential projects were discussed, including ambulance service; common personnel policies and practice; shared expertise for benefits and other technical support. Several other participants joined Jim in asking Smitty for help with the MBI/WiredWest controversy that appears to be delaying implementation of broadband.

- Although the Director of MBI has resigned it is not yet clear whether this state agency is going to help or hinder the construction of the fiber optic network in Town that we so desperately need for our economic future because the Baker Administration has put last-mile broadband on "pause".
- Despite this Board's protest Steve Nelson, Washington's delegate to WiredWest, was asked to step down from the WiredWest Executive Committee after nearly five years of volunteer service. Although Steve will remain active in the organization, this suggests that WiredWest may be kowtowing to MBI rather than acting in the Town's best interest.

We have terminated our contract with Holden Engineering for the design and replacement of the Cross Place bridge. Holden failed to comply with our specified time frame, which delayed the new bridge a year and did not even submit useful plans. We have hired HCS Engineering to complete the work and expect to let construction bids this spring.

We are still waiting for a response from DOT to our demand for the resolution of issues with their proposed schedule and alternate routing during the reconstruction of the Summit Hill bridge over the CSX tracks. We have also reached out to Senator Downing for his help.

The detailed plans for the complete reconstruction of Washington Mountain Road are available for review at the Town Hall under the care of our Town Clerk, Alison Mikaniewicz.

We hope that everyone took the time to vote in the March 1 primary. Democracy's success and the responsiveness of government is directly proportion to citizens' participation!

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board