

To our Washington neighbors:

November 2016

We hope that many of you have already taken advantage of the new early voting times but if not please make your voice heard on November 8. Voting is the most important duty – and privilege – that we have as citizens!

Congratulations to Mike Case, newly elected President of the Berkshire County Selectman's Association.

Central Berkshire School Superintendent Laurie Casna will be at the Select Board meeting on November 7 starting at 7. Please join us.

Our great team of Assessors has done some research and it turns out that non-profit tax status does not apply if the property is not being used to support the organization's purpose. As of January 1, 2017 a tax bill will be handed to the owners of Bucksteep.

Road & Bridge:

- New guard rails have been installed on Washington Mountain Road; the final layer of blacktop followed by line painting will be done early this month.
- Blotz Road has been finished and all of our paved roads have had lines painted using Chapter 90 funds per DOT regulations.
 - Thanks to our road crew for salvaging the straw wattles and bringing them to the Transfer Station; many of you took advantage of that!
- Now that the public hearing on moving utility poles has been done the new Cross Place culvert will be completed this fall.
- Two other public hearings cleared the way for utility pole relocation for the Frost Road culvert and Summit Hill Road bridge to proceed; we don't yet have a firm start date for either project, but both should be completed next summer.
- The latest word from DER regarding funding for the removal of the Eden Glen dam is that we should expect their answer within the month. We are looking at other options, including an expansion of the Eden Glen grant's scope, as well.
- No word yet on funding for the Middlefield road bridge through either a MassWorks grant or the new small bridge program.
- The Board will contact the bridge supplier that Monterrey hired to replace a culvert DOT said would cost over \$1 million for just \$128,000. This may be helpful to us for the Middlefield bridge as well as possibly re-opening the Lower Valley Road bridge.

The pole survey to prepare the installation of fiber optic cables is scheduled to start by the end of the month. Meanwhile MBI seems to be pushing for private companies to take over the final installation. The Board has invited Charter Communications – the company Hinsdale has chosen for its broadband service – to present to us. Private service would avoid up front costs but might prove more costly in the long run.

- We'll post an announcement at the Transfer Station and the Town Hall once we have a date.

Solect Energy, a Massachusetts firm, has approached us about putting in turnkey solar power for the Town's buildings. Meanwhile the Syncarpa initiative in Becket seems to have stalled out.

We hope everyone got to the Pumpkin Walk! Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving. Now go vote!

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Tricia Drugmand
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board