

To our Washington neighbors:

May 2017

Thanks to all of you who took the time to vote in the April 8 special election for the Wahconah Feasibility Study. The measure was passed by a comfortable majority of all the Seven Towns citizens who voted, but Washington's turnout was high and our voters had the highest approval percentage of all.

- The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) will fund more than half of the study.
- The study will result in detailed plans for either refurbishing the high school or building a replacement. In either case MSBA will provide more than half the funding. Any actual construction will need to be approved by both the School Committee and the voters.
- Look for monthly updates on <http://www.CBRSD.org>.

Commonwealth Woodstove Change-Out Program: Massachusetts residents or businesses currently operating a non-EPA-certified wood stove or fireplace insert can get a rebate of up to \$1,750 - or even \$3000 if you meet certain income requirements – by replacing an existing stove with an eligible, cleaner and more efficient model. To see if you qualify, learn more about this year's program, and find a participating stove professional, visit <http://www.masscec.com/get-clean-energy/residential/commonwealth-woodstove-changeout>

Road & Bridge:

- We have issued an RFQ for the design of a bridge or culvert to replace the Middlefield Road over Coles Brook. We are hopeful that a replacement structure will be in place before winter.
- We are still waiting for the Eden Glen project preconstruction meeting to be scheduled; until then we don't know the planned dates for closing the road.
- We have communicated our concerns with Washington Mountain Road (deterioration of the roadbed, restoration of the Town Common, etc.) to DOT and the contractor.
- Work should be started on the Summit Hill Road bridge over the CSX tracks; school buses have been re-routed over the newly-improved Old Middlefield Rd and the Becket PO has arranged for mail deliveries.

The Select Board is considering a contract with Westfield Gas & Electric (WG&E) to design our high speed internet system. WG&E is a Municipal Light Plant, not a corporation, is recommended to us by WiredWest, is doing design work for other communities and provides high speed internet service in Westfield. The expected cost is significantly below what MBI has budgeted for us (the design will cost the Town nothing) and any unused appropriation can go towards construction.

We hope to see you all at the Annual Town Meeting, Wednesday May 10 at 7. There are two new by-laws for consideration: the first, "Revolving Funds", formalizes how the Town's various revolving funds for our inspectors and fund-raising activities are managed; the second, "Right to Farm", assures that any Town resident can pursue farming but precludes commercial farming.

Thanks to the many residents who have donated to the Emma Bailey fund the Town can carry on our long tradition of supporting our college-bound students.

Don't forget to vote in our Town elections Saturday May 20 from 12 to 4.

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Tricia Drugmand
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board