



November 2014

To our fellow Washington residents:

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We hope everyone has seen the article about the John F. X. Keator Pumpkin Walk in the October issue of Berkshire Magazine and that everyone attended this signature Washington event. Thanks, as always, to our volunteer community. You make us all proud to live here.

Our new phone system is up and running. The system adds great efficiency for contacting Town officials and saves the Town money! Thanks to Jan Nelson for her efforts.

The MA legislature has appropriated \$50 million of the estimated \$120 million needed to bring “last mile” fiber optic internet to all of western Massachusetts to greatly enhance our economic viability. Wired West – the group we belong to along with 46 other communities – is working with the MA Broadband Institute on the financing details. Most likely the Town will be expected to borrow money which would be repaid by user fees. As with all capital expenditures, voter approval will be required.

Plastic bags are now available at a “pooper- scooper” station at the Town Park. Everyone walking dogs is being asked to clean up after them.

A representative from the Hampshire Council of Governments will present to the Select Board on Monday November 3 regarding lower rates through the aggregated purchase of electric power.

A number of residents got free flu shots at the clinic put on by Berkshire Public Health Alliance on October 6 at the Town Hall. We expect this to be a yearly event, so plan for it next fall!

Several small business owners have told the Board that they are paying higher premiums for their health insurance. Thanks to Representative Pignatelli, we were contacted by MassHealth. The bad news is that premiums are rising but there are two programs to offset costs: the IRS offers small businesses a tax credit of up to 50% of premiums, and MaHealth will rebate 15% of premiums for small businesses enrolling in their Wellness Track program. Two pdfs explaining the programs are available on the Town's website or through <http://www.mahealthconnector.org/>.

Highway updates:

- Thanks to our highway crew for the great improvement made to the Town Garage/transfer station roadway.
- Initial PASER results are that the Town's roads are in good shape both relative to the past and to our neighbor towns. The formal report should be available soon.
- We received eight responses to our RFP for engineering to replace culverts on Lower Valley, Cross Place and Lower Sargent. The Board invited three of the bidders for a Q&A session and has chosen Holden Engineering. Next steps are to ask the voters for borrowing authority to proceed (see below). We can then negotiate a contract with Holden. We expect to be able to bid the actual construction next year – which will also require voter authority – and are pursuing ways of supplementing Town funds with state and/or federal grants.
- No word yet from FEMA on grant funding for Depot Brook/Eden Glen; the National Park Service is planning a site visit on 10/30.

Please plan to attend a Special Town meeting at 7:15 on November 10. Voters will be asked to approve borrowing for the design of new culverts for Cross Place, Lower Valley and Lower Sargent Roads. Residents will also be asked to vote on the Town's position to approve or oppose the Kinder Morgan natural gas pipeline.

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board



Washington Tracks
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To Vote
Tuesday, November 4th
& to support the Election Day Bake Sale!

The monthly pot luck for Washington Seniors will be held November 21 at town hall at 5:30 p.m. Please bring a dish to share. The Washington Seniors wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving

THANK YOU to everyone involved in making the John F.X. Keator Memorial Pumpkin Walk a success. We now have a foam pumpkin carving of John, so he'll be at the walk every year - thank you Jeri!

Please send your Tracks info by 25th of the month
_mrsabeski@mac.com
put TRACKS in the subject