



May 2015



**Washington: will we move ahead or will we be left behind?**

We're facing one of the most important questions to come up in town in many years: whether to be part of the WiredWest regional broadband fiber network that will deliver high-speed internet service to people, businesses and other organizations in western Mass.

With it, our economy will grow, families will buy or build homes here, our kids will be able to do schoolwork online, our seniors will get the benefits of online telehealth services, our business and professional people will be able to work from home and create jobs here, we'll be able to watch movies and TV shows online, and the money we spend for internet, phone and TV will stay local.

Without it, economic growth will pass us by, people will move to other towns, our population will continue to decline, our schools will be shut down and teachers will be laid off, and we will miss out on all the other benefits of the internet, which more and more is essential to our day-to-day lives.

Let's not miss out on our chance to move ahead. **Sign up for broadband** at [wiredwest.net](http://wiredwest.net), and **vote for the broadband article** at Town Meeting on Wednesday, May 6 at 7 pm.

Steve Nelson, Washington Delegate to WiredWest, 413-623-2221, [steve@wiredwest.net](mailto:steve@wiredwest.net)

**Summer Writing Workshops with Lara Tupper**

**Mondays** at the Becket Arts Center, 7 Brooker Hill Rd., Becket, MA  
June 1-July 20, 7:00-9:00 pm (8 sessions)

Join this friendly summer gathering for writers of fiction or nonfiction. Workshop sessions will begin with brief writing exercises followed by time to share work in a supportive setting. Please email [laratupper@gmail.com](mailto:laratupper@gmail.com) for more details.

Lara Tupper, MFA, is the author of *A Thousand and One Nights* (Harcourt and Untreed Reads), an autobiographical novel about singers at sea. A graduate of Wesleyan University (BA English) and the Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College (MFA Creative Writing), she taught at Rutgers University for nine years and now presents writing workshops throughout the Berkshires. She facilitates a warm, unpretentious space for writers to gather. [www.laratupper.com](http://www.laratupper.com)

Attention high school seniors. If you haven't already submitted your application for the Washington Scholarship, please be sure to do so by May 15. Please send forms to Linda Levernoch, 387 Upper Valley Rd., Washington, MA 01223.

**The Seniors Potluck** is scheduled for Friday, May 15, 5 pm, town hall.

To our fellow Washington residents:

May 2015

For the first time the Town's Board of Health will have non-Select Board membership. Thanks to Vera Cormier and Barbara Keyes for stepping up and volunteering. Both Vera and Barbara have attended training to help them get started.

Update on our highway projects:

- The Cross Place/Depot Brook culvert will be replaced this summer.
- Exploratory work on the Frost Road/Depot Brook bridge has begun but construction will not start until the summer of 2016.
- DOT has approved a one-to-one replacement of the Middlefield Road/Coles Brook culvert which means a significant savings over a redesign. Now that the span has a new deck the full replacement will probably not happen until next summer.
- DOT has told us it is preparing a design for the Summit Hill Road/CSX bridge for review this month but still offers no details or construction timetable. We have reached out to the new Secretary of Transportation to ask her to expedite the process.
- The bid opening for the complete reconstruction of Washington Mountain Road is scheduled for May 27. Once DOT awards the contract we will have a better idea of timing.
- The highway department took a recommendation from the BRPC study of our roads and used Chapter 90 funds to purchase a vibratory roller to better maintain our dirt roads.
- The Town received \$25,421 in supplemental funds for "pothole repair". We have also gotten additional Chapter 90 funding for a total of over \$500,000 available in FY2016.

Since we have hired Phil Clark for engineering support on virtually all our highway work he has decided to step down from the Conservation Commission to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest. Ken Walls will also be stepping down, We thank them both for their years of great service on the Commission. Any volunteers to take their place?

Congratulations to Kent Lew and our Finance Committee for securing a grant to help us develop a financial master plan for the Town! The plan will encompass infrastructure maintenance, explore and investigate how we can best address North Lake Estates.

Please plan to attend the Annual Town Meeting on **WEDNESDAY** May 6th at 7 pm. In addition to the budget we have four very important ballot questions:

- Should we adopt clarifying language for our home-based business by-law?
- Should we expand on the memorials at the Old Town Hall to honor Town residents who served in the Revolution, War of 1812, Civil War, Korea and Vietnam?
- Should we fix up or remove the dam on Depot Brook at Frost Road? Either way will require some expense. What do you think?
- Should the Town go forward with providing high-speed internet service to all our households through WiredWest? We need to approve borrowing authority to underwrite the installation with the expectation that user fees will cover the debt.

**Above all, please exercise your most important civic duty and vote at the Town Hall on Saturday May 16 between noon and 4 pm!**

It is finally Spring! We hope everyone gets to the Town Park Saturday May 2 to get it into shape!

Jim Huebner  
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon  
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case  
Select Board



**Our 9th Annual  
Hoot is Sunday, August 2nd  
12:00-8PM at the Town Park  
a "fun"raiser for the schools of  
Central Berkshire  
[www.hilltownhoot.com](http://www.hilltownhoot.com)**

## Help is at Hand!

Neighbor-to-Neighbor, an initiative of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, provides emergency assistance for residents of the Hilltowns (Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington and Windsor) who are in economic distress.

Small grants (generally up to \$500) are available to help with overdue utilities, medical bills, short-term housing costs and transportation problems. Payments are made to the vendor (landlord, utility company, pharmacy or mechanic) on behalf of the community member in need.

Please help us make sure that our neighbors in need are aware of this resource.

Berkshire Taconic partners with Dalton CRA to distribute Neighbor-to-Neighbor funds.

Those in need should contact:

Alison Peters, Executive Director

400 Main Street

Dalton, MA 01226

Phone: 413.684.0260

Email: [apeters@daltoncra.org](mailto:apeters@daltoncra.org)

## WSH Proposed Warrant Article 02.11.15

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the proposed zoning amendments to the Town of Washington's Zoning Bylaws with respect to home occupations (aka home based businesses) proposed by the Planning Board, as more particularly described below, or to take any other action relating thereto.

(New text in italics, deleted text in strikethrough) Amend Section 2 as follows:

~~Home Occupation: a business engaged in within a dwelling or its accessory structure by a resident thereof, involving no undue traffic, noise or other factor unusual to a residential premise. For the purpose of this By-Law, home occupation does not include gift shops or any other similar retail establishment.~~

Home Based Business: any business, profession, occupation or trade conducted for gain or support within a dwelling or accessory building thereto where such use is incidental and secondary to the use of the property for residential purposes and which does not change the essential residential character of the building and property.

A. Home Based Business – General: a home based business carried on solely by one or more residents of the dwelling and up to one non-resident employee.

B. Home Based Business – Special: a home based business carried on by one or more residents of the dwelling and at least one of the following:

1. Two (2) or more non-resident employees are employed at the home based business.
2. Two (2) or more non-resident employees drive to the home based business and work off-site.
3. On-site retail sales are part of the home based business.
4. Client or customer visits are expected to exceed five (5) per day.
5. The use, storage or manufacture of any highly toxic, explosive, flammable, combustible, corrosive, radioactive or similar hazardous materials on the premises in amounts exceeding those which are typically found in residential uses.

Amend Section 4.1.5 (A) as follows to allow by-right:

~~(A) The use of a room or rooms in a dwelling or accessory building by a resident occupant for:~~

1. ~~The practice of a recognized profession~~

WSH Proposed Warrant Article 02.11.15

~~2. —The use of a resident carpenter, painter, plumber, electrician, or other artisan in connection with his trade~~

~~3. —The conduct of a home occupation by a resident, provided that there is no external evidence of any business other than a permitted sign for the identification of such business.~~

(A) Home Based Business - General

Amend Section 4.2.6 as follows to allow by special permit: (and to renumber the remaining sections accordingly)

4.2.6 Home Based Business – Special

Amend to add a new Section 6.6 as follows:

6.6 HOME BASED BUSINESS

A. Standards for All Home Based Businesses

1. No external evidence of the home based business other than a permitted sign for the identification of the business as allowed by Section 6.4.
2. Any outside storage of inventory, equipment or commercial vehicles registered to the home based business with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 lbs. or greater related to the home based business shall be screened with mature native vegetation, earthen berms, fencing or similar measures so as to not be visible from adjacent properties and the public right-of-way.
3. Sufficient off-street parking shall be provided for the residents of the dwelling, the non-resident employees and clients/customers.
4. Excluding parcel delivery services, commercial freight deliveries related to the home based business shall be limited to two per day.
5. Any outdoor lighting for the home based business shall be shielded or directed away from adjacent properties.

B. Reasonable Conditions for Home Based Business - Special

The Planning Board may impose reasonable conditions on the special permit for a home based business - special including, but not limited to a restriction on the hours of operation, number of non-resident employees, number of commercial vehicles, maximum floor area, off-street parking and the maximum number of customers/clients visiting the home based business - special.

## **FY16 Budget Summary**

The appropriations for the Town's FY16 budget come to a total of \$1,574,851. This is a net increase to the town's budget of \$65,408 (4.33%) over FY15.

This overall increase can be attributed directly to changes in the budget items over which the Town has little or no direct control — e.g., CBRSD school budgets, insurance & pensions, dues & fees required by membership organizations or for outside services, and interest & principal on long-term debt. The net increase in these line items for FY16 is \$67,361 (9.36%). An itemization of these is attached.

Within the rest of the Town's operating budget, there are a number of department accounts which show decreases — some small, some not so small. These changes do not, on the whole, represent any decrease in services. Most of these can be viewed as a "re-set" to more accurately reflect actual spending. This year, the Finance Committee reviewed line items closely against actual expenditures over the past five years. When an account was seen to be historically underspent, adjustments were made to the appropriation based on either a recent maximum or a reasonable projection from the spending pattern.

The money realized from resetting these accounts has been used to offset discretionary increases in other parts of the budget, including increases to Highway Dept. Winter Roads, Road & Bridge, Machinery Maintenance, and payroll accounts, as well as Council on Aging events, Accounting Officer training, and improvements for the Town Park.

It has also been used to fund a significant increase in our Reserve Account. The Reserve Account is set aside for "extraordinary or unforeseen" expenditures and is administered by the Finance Committee. By consolidating some of the historic excess from department budgets into a contingency fund such as this, we will have greater flexibility when responding to major unexpected expenses, like the next time a truck engine suddenly needs to be replaced, for example. As with other accounts, any unneeded funds are released to the General Fund at the end of the year to be certified as Free Cash.

Because the State's budget for municipal aid has not been finalized and local revenue estimates have not yet been approved, it is not possible to give a definitive FY16 tax rate for this budget at this point. The Finance Committee's preliminary estimate for the tax rate is \$14.02, an increase of 4.55% over last year. This is intended as a conservative estimate. Hopefully, factors such as new growth in the Town's tax base may prove to reduce this rate slightly.

Finance Committee Kent Lew, chair

<b>FY16 Non--discretionary Budget Items</b>	<i>FY15</i>	<i>FY16</i>	<i>net</i>	
<b><i>School District Capital</i></b>				
Becket--Washington School	\$52,656	\$51,206	(\$1,450)	-2.8%
Nessacus	\$2,410	\$3,515	\$1,105	45.9%
Wahconah - renovation	\$2,476	\$2,497	\$21	0.8%
Craneville Roof	\$397	\$344	(\$53)	-13.4%
Kittridge	\$230	\$340	\$110	47.8%
Kittridge Windows	\$21	\$365	\$344	1631.1%
Craneville HVAC	\$2	\$88	\$86	4300.0%
Security Updates/Wahconah sidewalks	\$15	\$977	\$962	6413.3%
<b><i>School District Operations</i></b>				
Minimum Contribution	\$435,744	\$460,235	\$24,491	5.6%
Transportation Assessment	\$25,704	\$31,415	\$5,711	22.2%
Basic Budget Balance	\$124,858	\$126,605	\$1,747	1.4%
<b><i>Town Operations</i></b>				
Health, Dental, Life Insurance (town share)	\$20,000	\$23,000	\$3,000	15.0%
Berkshire County Retirement	\$16,796	\$24,297	\$7,501	44.7%
Berkshire Cty Planning	\$379	\$388	\$9	2.4%
Enhanced 911	\$8,288	\$8,536	\$249	3.0%
Public Health Nurse	\$1,021	\$1,124	\$103	10.1%
Southern Berk. Solid Waste	\$1,822	\$1,937	\$115	6.3%
<b><i>Debt Service</i></b>				
Interest on Short--Term Notes	\$1,500	\$3,500	\$2,000	133.3%
Town Garage	\$10,000	\$9,200	(\$800)	-8.0%
Police Cruiser	\$6,532	\$6,400	(\$132)	-2.0%
School Bus	\$8,829	\$8,700	(\$129)	-1.5%
Plow Truck	\$0	\$22,372	\$22,372	
	<b>\$719,680</b>	<b>\$787,041</b>	<b>\$67,361</b>	<b>9.36%</b>



Washington Tracks  
Town Hall  
8 Summit Hill Rd.  
Washington, MA 01223

[www.washington-ma.com](http://www.washington-ma.com)

## Support Our Local Businesses

### **The Becket General**

30 Washington Street  
Becket, MA 01223  
Heather Anello, owner  
Coffee bar, Deli, Sandwiches & Pizza  
Beer, Wine, Groceries & Dairy Products  
Ph: 623.5700 / Fax: 623.5707

### **Hilltowns Veterinary Clinic**

Dr. Sharon Lynch, MVB  
133 South Washington State Rd  
Washington, MA 01223  
Phone: (413)623-5329  
[www.hilltownsvetclinic.com](http://www.hilltownsvetclinic.com)

### **Horace Mann Insurance Agency**

Po Box 772 Becket Ma. 01223. Phone  
413)623-2112.  
Fax 413)623-5551.  
Provide all Personal Lines of Insurance. Provide  
Financial and retirement products too.

### **Independent Stampin' Up! Demonstrator**

Sue Paquette  
623.5918  
"quality stamp sets, card stock, ink pads, etc -  
I offer creative & fun parties for you and your  
friends in your home or mine.

### **Justice of the Peace**

Dorothy Filanowska  
(413) 446-6921 /  
[dora@justicedora.com](mailto:dora@justicedora.com)  
<http://www.justicedora.com>

### **Mark Newton's**

**Full Service Pet and Home  
Care, also light ground  
maintenance, minor home  
repair & snow plowing**  
Pet sitting in your home: Dogs,  
Cats, Horses, and so much  
more Passionate, Reliable, and  
Caring.  
413 623-2254 or email:  
[markspetcare@gmail.com](mailto:markspetcare@gmail.com)

### **Summit Hill Campground**

34 Old Middlefield Rd.  
Washington, Ma. 01223  
413-623-5761  
Great Family Camping  
Tents,R.V.s Motor Homes  
Full Hook Ups  
Pet Friendly  
Seasonals Welcomed  
Events scheduled May through sept

### **Your Way Computer**

Frank Kennedy  
1153 Washington Mt. Road  
Washington, MA 01223  
Call: 623.5180 / Fax: 623.2018  
E-Mail:  
[carolandfranksr@carolandfrank.com](mailto:carolandfranksr@carolandfrank.com)  
By appointment only

**Email your TRACKS info by the 25th of the month to:  
[mrsabeski@mac.com](mailto:mrsabeski@mac.com)  
Please put TRACKS in the subject line.**