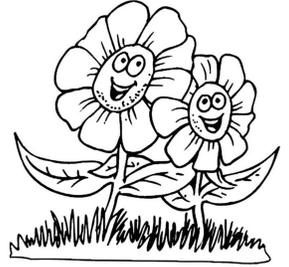


April 2016



Attention high school seniors.... A reminder that completed applications for the Washington Scholarship are due by April 15. If you have questions, please contact Linda Levernoch 623-8309.

Emma Bailey Scholarship Fund Applications have been mailed to all Class of 2016 graduating seniors residing in Washington. Those who plan to attend college or trade school in the fall should complete and return the application to the Town Hall on 8 Summit Hill Road. If you have any questions or have not received an application please call Jodi Hostetter at 623-8878.

SENIOR NEWS: After the COA dinner on Friday April 15th Louise DeRagan, RN, will give a brief presentation about a home blood pressure monitoring program managed by Berkshire Health Systems. Participants will receive a FREE automatic blood pressure cuff and will be taught how to use it.

There's more good news for Seniors and anyone else with balance concerns which may make them apt to fall. Lynn Proulx of Porchlight VNA of Lee will start her popular FREE class, "Move in Time" at Town Hall on Wednesday, May 4. Learn how to avoid falls and the injuries they cause. Learn gentle stretches and therapeutic exercises to gain the strength and flexibility you need to stay safely on your feet! This is a one hour class every Wednesday from 10:00 to 11:00 for 6 weeks. Call 623-8878, extension 1 to request more information.

What's happening with broadband and WiredWest?

As you may be aware, the effort to bring high-speed internet to our homes and businesses in Washington and 43 other small towns in western Mass. has been put on "pause" by the Baker Administration while they review the project. They have tasked the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, which oversees the project, with developing a strategy to roll out broadband service.

You might ask, "Why have they waited until now to come up with a strategy?" MBI should have done this long ago, so there's no good reason why they haven't. And you want to know, "How long will the pause continue?" We were told it would not last long, but it's already in its third month!

Feeling the frustration in our member towns, the WiredWest Board of Directors, at our meeting on March 26, agreed on a course of action to get the project moving. We're drafting a resolution and asking Select Boards in our towns to pass it and send it to the Governor. We'll also be creating a petition to the Governor which you will be able to sign and send online.

The buck stops at the Governor's desk. We need to work together to have him release the project funding and get the broadband ball rolling again. With your support (and yes, patience) we will.

Steve Nelson, Washington Delegate to WiredWest, 413-623-2221, steve@wiredwest.net

At the Select Board meeting on Monday, 3/21 we heard the apology of the Baltazar construction chief for not waiting for final word from the Town before excavating part of our Old Common. We will hold him to his promise to restore the site to its former beauty. Ed Neumuth has been asked to help in the restoration/replanting by identifying the various native groundcover plants which anchored the soil. Most people who have contacted us so far want their Old Common "put back the way it was". We may take this opportunity to limit the casual parking lot for snowmobilers' trucks etc. that has developed at the site.

Annual Town Meeting:

Wednesday, May 11, 2016

7:00 PM

Washington Town Hall, 8 Summit Hill Road

Annual Town Election:

Saturday, May 21, 2016

12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Washington Town Hall, 8 Summit Hill Road

Voter Registration Deadline for the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election

Any town resident that is not currently registered to vote and would like to vote at the Annual Town Meeting and in the Annual Town Election must register with the Town Clerk on or before Thursday, April 21, 2016.

A special voter registration will be held on Thursday, April 21, 2016 from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM to 8:00 pm at the Washington Town Hall. You can also register to vote online: <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/OVR/>

If you are not sure if you are registered to vote, you can check your current registration status here:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx>

Absentee Ballot for the Annual Town Election

If you will not be available to vote during the polling hours of 12:00 PM and 4:00 pm at the Annual Town Election on May 21, 2016 you may request an absentee ballot.

Please complete an absentee ballot application: http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/absentee_ballot.pdf

The deadline to apply is 12:00 PM on Friday, May 20, 2016, but please take into consideration the time required for your application to be received and a ballot to be mailed. All absentee ballots must be received before the polls close on election day.

Questions? Contact the Town Clerk. 413-623-2185 or washingtontownclerk@yahoo.com



Becket Washington Community Fair

Calling all small businesses, artists, and crafts people!!!!

I am writing you today because we want to share some exciting news. This past summer 8 different non-profits in Becket and Washington formed a new coalition named the BWCP. Our first mission is to expand and improve the former Becket Village Fair to include the town of Washington. This year, the fair will be Saturday, July 9th in the North Becket Village and focus on community cohesiveness and local businesses & services.

We have two levels of giving that we are offering local businesses.

A \$15 payment will show a commitment to appear at this year's fair with a table space to display/sell your work or services.

A \$50 payment will show a commitment to the fair along with having your business name appear on our publicity for the fair as a business sponsorship

Both options will provide you a unique opportunity to promote your business or service to our community members and any money collected will be donated to the Becket Washington PTO to support their year round funding obligations for children at their school. Please consider securing your place at this exciting event. Our deadline for tables and sponsorships is June 1st, 2016. Contact me by email for more information.

Michelle Raymer

BWCP Chairperson, Mraymer71@yahoo.com

The 12th annual Berkshire county garden symposium will be held at Lenox High and Middle school on April 9th with classes starting at 8:45. Fifteen classes will be presented in three groups and include Organic Gardening, Propagating with Stems and Roots, Growing in Water, Container Gardening, The Healing Garden. Beneficial birds, butterflies and Insects for your garden. Growing Blueberries and Strawberries, Protecting your Garden from Wildlife, Growing Hostas, Orchids, Your Kitchen Garden, Raised Beds, Seed Saving, Seed Starting, and Beginning Gardening. Registration is \$30 through March 28 and after March 28 is \$40. And includes lunch and breakfast snacks. There will be a sale of early vegetables and flowers, a garden glove sale and booths from gardening and environmental groups. Call or e-mail Marilyn Wiley 623 5859 or Marilynwiley8@gmail.com for more information.

After nine years of dedicated service to the Town as our Highway Superintendent, Dave Fish is stepping down but will remain a valued member of our crew. Tom Johnson will fill in as Superintendent on a trial basis. Tom has served the Town well during his years on the highway crew and has both Dave and his own extensive supervisory experience to guide him.

The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) is holding a hearing on March 29, 2016 at BCC to address Tennessee Gas's request to enter upon properties whose owners have not granted it to conduct surveys in regards to their proposed pipeline. We expect DPU to grant access but with conditions imposed based on the comments and concerns of the landowners.

Some citizens have asked that we reconsider whether the existing abutments to the Middlefield Road bridge need to be reinforced or replaced. The Board will consider spending money on an engineering opinion, although this will just be additional cost if the abutments are not sound.

Baltazar Construction has started staging materials along Washington Mountain Road to support the reconstruction this summer. This includes the use of a half-acre on the Old Town Common for crushed stone to support the first phase of the work.

- The Board gave preliminary approval for use of the Common before consideration of it as a historical site was complete; Baltazar jumped the gun on preparing the site, but nevertheless the Board did give formal albeit belated approval, since the site preparation could not be undone and use of the site will shorten construction time by up to two weeks. The Common will be fully restored by the beginning of June and several of our citizens are looking into ways to further enhance the property.
- Baltazar has been responsive to our concerns about drainage as well as safety during the construction period; we expect a fully reconstructed road by early fall.

DOT is moving with its typical glacial speed to replace the Summit Hill bridge in the summer of 2017. We have demanded that they at least provide a detailed assessment of different detour routes and take another look at widening the replacement structure to two lanes.

Another month has passed and there has been very little movement towards getting the construction of the last mile of the fiber optic network done in Town. The Baker Administration is "studying" the issue and MBI – who holds the purse strings – seem paralyzed. Meanwhile Steve Nelson on his own initiative organized a meeting of all the Towns who support WiredWest's plan of a jointly-owned network at our Town Hall on March 22 to brainstorm ideas to expedite the project. Steve and other attendees carried our message to WiredWest's Board meeting at the Becket Town Hall on March 26.

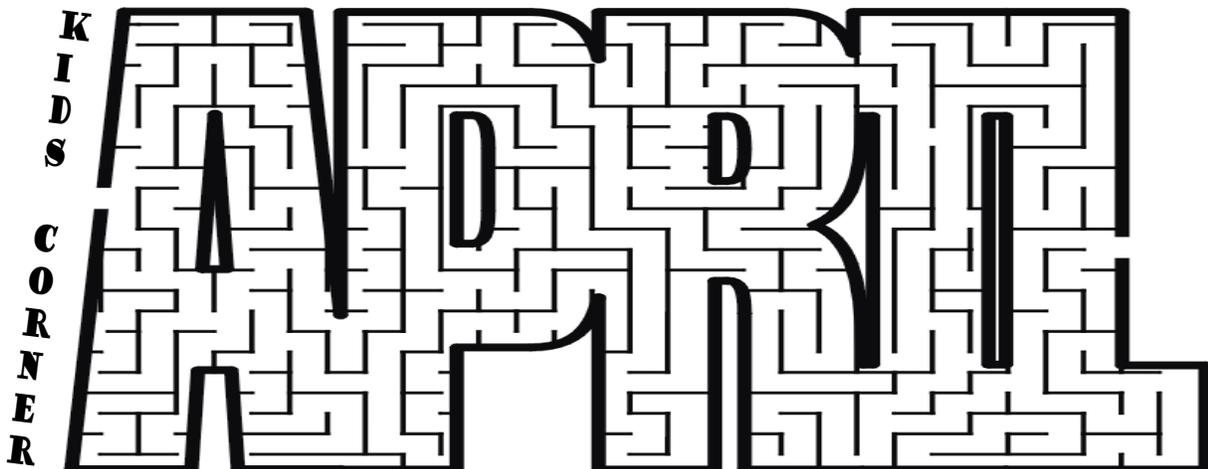
- We are pleased to report that WiredWest's Board has suspended negotiations with MBI because of MBI's lack of responsiveness and failure to act according to its charter to bring broadband to Western Massachusetts. Further, member Select Boards will send a resolution to the Governor demanding that the broadband project go forward as soon as possible. A citizens' petition to the Governor will follow. Stay tuned!

Please mark your calendars for our Annual Town Meeting – Wednesday May 11 at 7 pm and our Annual Town elections on Saturday May 21. Your participation is the basis for good government – at all levels!

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Shaun Lennon
Select Board Clerk

Mike Case
Select Board





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Please put TRACKS in the subject line.