

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Board of Selectmen
Minutes
February 3, 2022**

MEETING WILL BE HELD VIA ZOOM ONLY

Minutes are subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen

Present: First Selectman Jim Brinton; Selectmen Jay Hubelbank and Dean Sarjeant.

Public: Leslie Anderson, Ted Bent, Chris Charles, Larry Gendron, Judie Gorra, Michelle Gorra, Troy Kaiser, Chuck LaBella, Ethan LaBella, Lindsay Larson, Joan Lodsins, Susan Smith, Robert Woodroffe.

Press: Linda Zukauskas – VOICES.

Call to Order: First Selectman Jim Brinton called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: To approve the minutes of the January 20, 2022 meeting of the Board of Selectmen by Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. The motion passed unanimously.

Communications: None.

Appointments/Resignations: None. Jim reported he is waiting to hear back from the town attorney regarding the appointment of an individual to a town commission. The individual is currently doing work for the town and the Selectmen want clarification that there would not be a conflict of interest.

First Selectman's Report: Jim Brinton reported the following:

- **Bridges:** Replacement of the bridge on Calhoun Street is scheduled to begin on Monday, February 7th and is expected to be completed in two months. Detours will be noticed.
- **Bryan Memorial Town Hall:** Town Hall offices had been working with a flex schedule with employees working split shifts but returned this past week to the normal schedule. Visitors to the town hall are still by appointment only but that may change at the end of next week if numbers continue to go down.
- **Region-12 Buildings:** As previously reported, Superintendent of Schools, Megan Bennett, requested the First Selectmen of Bridgewater, Roxbury, and Washington to meet with her and Facilities Manager, Don O'Leary, to walk through the elementary schools to assess the conditions and needs. These buildings are owned by each town and need work. Those tours are completed and now the Selectmen will follow up with the superintendent and facilities manager to discuss a plan of action. Jay Hubelbank requested that the assessment of all three buildings be made available to the board for review.
- **USPS COVID 19 Test Kits:** There is a link on the Washington website on the Explore Washington Facebook site with information about free test kits provided by the United States Postal Service.

First Selectman's Report (continued)

- **Capital Plan:** In the process of re-establishing a long-term capital plan for the town. The last completed was 2015 and it is necessary to have a ten-to twenty-year plan in place for the replacement and upgrade of vehicles, bridges, buildings, etc., in order to apply for the grants available for Washington. This plan needs to be approved and adopted by the Board of Selectmen as well as at a town meeting. Jay Hubelbank asked if this plan was being created by the Buildings and Property Committee and Jim replied that he is working with different departments in the town (i.e, Buildings and Property, Public Works, Fire Department, EMS) to come up with an assessment. For practical reasons, it is beneficial to have a guide on what is needed over the next few years. This plan should be put before a town meeting in March. The funds are coming from the State of Connecticut's **Local Capital Improvement Funds** and have been accumulating since 2015.

Old Business

- **Discussion of amending the Ordinance regarding Automatic Police and Fire Alarms:** Chuck LaBella and Ethan LaBella are working with Fire Marshal, Troy Kaiser, on an amendment to the ordinance concerning automatic police and fire alarms for businesses, schools, commercial and governmental structures but not residents. Troy had suggested requiring lock boxes for those places that have restricted access. There was discussion about whether or not police and firefighters are held harmless upon entering a structure. Chuck suggested that emergency personnel would only enter the building to investigate if there is smoke or fire; otherwise would wait until the appropriate people are contacted. Jim tabled further discussion until he is able to speak with the town attorney and Chuck was supportive of this decision.

New Business:

- **Discussion of Amending the Ordinance to Establish an Affordable Housing Fund:** Michelle Gorra and Judie Gorra are recommending to the town to increase the \$5,000.00 Affordable Housing Fund to \$10,000.00. It would have to be approved by Board of Finance, Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting. Discussion included the \$10,000.00 down payment assistance from the town for first-time homeowners who may decide to refinance for any reason and would have to go back to the Housing Development Fund for approval. The Housing Commission has drafted a proposal to the Board of Selectman. Michelle Gorra asked if the Board of Selectmen needs to vote on this request to take it to a town meeting. Jay Hubelbank requested a copy of the ordinance before voting. No action was taken.
- **Town Informational Meeting on Solar Options:** Jay reported that an informational meeting is scheduled for February 16th. It is strictly informational for public feedback on the subject.

Visitors:

- **Sheila Anson** commends the Highway Department for doing a great job this winter keeping our roads clear and safe.

Adjournment:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 6:00 PM as there was no further business for discussion by Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila M. Anson
Acting Clerk
February 9, 2022