

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Board of Selectmen

Minutes

June 8, 2023

HYBRID MEETING

Minutes are subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen.

Present: First Selectman James L. Brinton, Selectmen Jay Hubelbank and Dean Sarjeant.

Public: Daniel & Susan Paige, Linda McGarr, Leslie Anderson, Susan Smith, Ross Bartfield, Edgar Berner, Andrew Carron, Chris Charles, Jamie Fellner.

Press: Ann Jamieson – VOICES.

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

Approval of Minutes:

- **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the May 25, 2023 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved.

Communications:

- **Letter from Daniel and Susan Paige re: 25 Moody Bridge Road:** The Paige's are requesting the Town consider allowing them to purchase a small strip of land at the front of their property from the Town that would allow them an alternative access to their property. The Selectmen explained the process which would involve research as to the exact location, size, etc. If approved by the Board of Selectmen, the sale to the Paige's would need to be approved at a Town Meeting.

Appointments/Resignations:

- **Motion:** To reappoint:
 - **Joline Audet and Bruce Bennett** to the Inland Wetlands Commission until 6/30/2026.
 - **Melinda Ely Dubow** as an alternate to the Inland Wetlands Commission until 6/30/2026.
 - **Robert Tomlinson** to the Judea Cemetery Commission until 6/30/2028/
 - **Sandy Papsin** to the Lake Waramaug Authority until 6/30/2026. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

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

- **Letter from the Board of Selectmen: Motion:** To post the following letter on the Town's website and send to the Land Use Board and Commission Chairman:
Recently we've noticed some behavior at a few of our board and commission meetings that we feel is in contrast to the way the town has conducted itself for many years. We, as the Board of Selectmen, felt it was important to address this conduct and to make it clear to everyone what we believe has made Washington a unique place to live.
The Town of Washington believes that residents have the right, and in fact, the responsibility to take part in how the town operates and makes decisions. We have a long history of having the one of the highest percentage of residents participating in local, state and federal elections, as well as volunteering to fill positions on our various boards and commissions. Not only do we volunteer for town government, we actively volunteer for our fire department, ambulance

association, and the many nonprofit groups in town that seek to make Washington a better place.

Participating in these organizations is a privilege and an expectation for those of us living in Washington. It brings joy to those who serve, and it also brings responsibility. One important aspect of participating is remembering that working together is critical to any organization's success.

Whether you're a member of a commission or board, or participating as a member of the public, we expect everyone to act in a manner that respects all people no matter their beliefs. As a town we expect everyone to listen to others without interruption, speak when recognized and respect those who have agreed to take on a leadership role. Especially important is the respect the chair of a committee deserves. Running a meeting is no easy task. We cannot and should not accept behavior that belittles, bullies or threatens others. We believe it is vital to the continued success of our town to accept that our opinions will not always be accepted by the majority, and to agree to disagree in a respectful manner. We may not always get what we want, but we must respect others who have taken the time to participate.

We feel strongly that the same courtesies and respect be extended to all staff and employees. Whether it's Public Works, Land Use, Clerks or elected officials, all of these individuals work tirelessly to serve the residents of our community.

Shepaug High School athletes have long been recognized by their peers as athletes who show the utmost sportsmanship in the Berkshire League. Our sons and daughters win and lose with dignity. Let's all try to live up to their example and treat each other with the same respect we expect people to treat us.

The vast majority of our residents have proven time and again that they meet and indeed exceed the high expectations we have for those of us living in Washington. Let's work together to maintain these high standards.

Respectfully

James L. Brinton

Jay Hubelbank

Dean Sarjeant

By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. Discussion: The Selectmen expressed their opinion that a pattern of inappropriate behavior at meetings has been observed and noted that there will obviously be differing opinions but Chairmen, Commissioners, and staff deserve to be treated with respect. The motion passed unanimously.

- **The Washington Food Market** is celebrating their 50th Anniversary this summer and **Dowler's Garage** is celebrating it's 75th. Congratulations to these two businesses who have contributed so much to the Town.

Selectmen's Report:

- **Jay Hubelbank** reported the solar panels have been installed on the Depot Firehouse at no cost to the Town. The project was funded by the Connecticut Green Bank. Jay would like to re-examine the possibility of placing them on the Town Hall in the future. Jay inquired about the Tunnel Road Bridge replacement project. Jim Brinton explained there had been some difficulties encountered however the project is progressing on schedule and should be completed by November. The use of Spring Hill Road to access Steep Rock has not presented any problems.
- **Dean Sarjeant** reported that the Lake Waramaug Keepers program has been stalled until further notice from the DEEP and State Police.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Police Traffic Data:** Jim Brinton reported that there had been issues getting the police traffic data from the State terminal however the problem seems to have been resolved. Data was collected over a two-month period on Old Litchfield Road, Baldwin Hill Road and Wykeham Road. Old Litchfield Road: there was an average of 2000 cars a day; speed limit ranged from 22mph to 43mph with an average of 39mph. Baldwin Hill Road: an average of 3000 cars a day, speed limit ranged from 32mph to 45mph with an average of 39mph. Wykeham Road data should be available in the next day or two. In order to collect data on State roads, there is specific criteria and procedures to follow and WiFi is also needed. Jay Hubelbank suggested Resident Trooper Hamel be invited to the next meeting.
- **Lake Waramaug:** Jim Brinton reported that he has been contacted by several boat owners that are opposed to the proposed Ordinance that would prohibit wake boats. He further explained that the proposed Ordinance would not ban the type of boat but rather the use of the boat. Work continues with Washington, Warren, Kent and the DEEP. All three Towns will need to approve the Ordinance at Town Meetings.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Scheduling a Special Town Meeting: Motion:** To schedule a Special Town Meeting for July 6, 2023 at 6:30p.m. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. Discussion: The Agenda would include selling back a piece of the Johnson property on Scofield Hill Road, approval of ARPA funding for Greenwoods counseling. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion to add subsequent business: To add approving ARPA funding in the amount of \$25,000 to the Washington Scholarship Fund. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. Discussion: This approval will be referred to the Board of Finance for their approval. It will then be added to the Agenda of the above-mentioned Special Town Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Renewal of Harmon Lease of the Old Firehouse: Motion:** To approve renewing the lease between the Town of Washington and Harmon of the upstairs of the Old Firehouse for the period July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

Visitors:

- **Linda McGarr** attended this evening's meeting to discuss the new policy of paying for beach passes. Information being published states that passes need to be purchased on line only. Linda, as Treasurer, feels that cash, as a legal tender, should be accepted. Jim Brinton offered to look into this further with the Town Attorney.
- **Ross Bartfield** thanked the Selectmen for the traffic data information however he feels that the data collected from the Wykeham Road speed sign may not be accurate due to its placement. Jim Brinton offered to move it to different locations.
- **Jamie Fellner** expressed her concern about speeding throughout the entire Town and specifically asked about Fenn Hill Road and the possibility of more enforcement and the possibility of installing speed bumps and cameras that not only record the speed but can also issue tickets. The Selectmen explained that the ticket issued as a result of the speed cameras are not considered valid in the State of Connecticut. The Selectmen continue to work with our State representatives and the Northwest Council of Governments to resolve this issue. Jim also explained that towns that have used the speed bumps have in many cases removed them due to

damage to the roads, increased noise, etc. He urged the public to be active and also contact our representatives.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:12p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Greene
Selectmen's Assistant