

**TOWN OF WASHINGTON**  
**Board of Selectmen**  
**Minutes**  
**December 12, 2019**

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

**Present:** First Selectman James L. Brinton; Selectmen Jay Hubelbank and Michelle Gorra.

**Public:** Donna Alex, Sheila Anson, Harry Wyant, Chris Charles, Rod Wyant, Tracy Rebillard, Rebecca Rebillard, Mariah Murray, Leslie Anderson, Joan Lodsins, Barbara Boucher, Linda McGarr, Wayne Hileman, Janet Hill, Lillian Lyon, Mark Lyon, Ray Reich, Susan Smith.

**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 November 26, 2019 meeting of the Board of Selectmen with the following correction: The meeting was called to order by First Selectman Jim Brinton (not Mark Lyon). By Michelle Gorra, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved,

**Communications:** The following Communications were received:

1) **Letter from Rebecca Rebillard:** To: Board of Selectmen

From: Rebecca Rebillard

Date: December 9, 2019

Re: Removal from Zoning Commission

I am disheartened by the Board's decision on November 26, 2019 to remove me from the Zoning Commission. From the meeting minutes, I have discerned the reason for my removal is solely based on my party affiliation. My party affiliation has no bearing on my ability to make a decision in the best interests of Washington as it pertains to Zoning. I think this is evident being my appointment was based on the recommendation from the Chairman of the Zoning Commission, Nick Solley, who happens to be affiliated with the Democratic party.

I am questioning whether this decision is based on precedence. If it is, I am sure the Board will agree just because this is how we have always done something, doesn't mean it is the right way. Washington is a vibrant town and this is the perfect example (allowing vacancies be filled by the most qualified candidate regardless of party affiliation) of a change that would be for the betterment of the town. I agree with Mr. Hubelbank's recommendation that candidates be interviewed by the board and think that given the opportunity I would be able to prove that party affiliation is not as important as ability, vision and commitment.

Ms. Gorra and Mr. Hubelbank's platform stated, "...we actively work to ensure that all town governing bodies are fully staffed with passionate citizen volunteers." For this reason, I hope this position is filled expediently by a qualified candidate. Being that the DTC had not recommended anyone to fill the alternate vacancy I filled in June, and did not run anyone for this position in November, I do not believe they have a candidate in mind. It would be a disservice to the town to leave the position open when there is a passionate and willing volunteer available.

I am dedicated to serving our town and hope that I am once again given the opportunity to do so.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Rebillard

- 2) **Letter from Mary Anne Greene:** Thank you for the opportunity to address the Board of Selectmen and assembled attendees.

Let me begin by stating it has been my pleasure to serve the Town of Washington as an employee for thirty years and as a Selectmen Administrative Assistant for twenty-five. I have worked for five First Selectmen and their respective boards-attending all Selectmen meetings and having the responsibility of taking and transcribing minutes. I have served on Commissions and various Committees and have marveled at the devotion and work that has been accomplished — not by me — but by the collective work of volunteers who have only the best interest of the Town at heart. Never have I ever considered what political party an individual is affiliated with — everyone has worked only for the betterment of the Town.

Not everyone is going to agree on a particular matter —and that is what eventually makes for the best decisions and actions.

The November 26, 2019 meeting of the Board of Selectmen was the FIRST meeting I have ever attended that had a result, in my opinion, determined by partisanship. The vote to remove Rebecca Rebillard from her appointed seat as an alternate on the Zoning Commission strictly because she is a registered Republican (an appointment requested by the Zoning Chairman — a Democrat) was disappointing to say the least. If the DTC and the Selectmen who voted for this removal, had requested a review of the process and/or a tabling of the removal until further discussion, it would have demonstrated what Washington has always been good at — working together to resolve disputes and come to a conclusion that had been thoroughly vetted. It was stated this removal was not "personal". Her enthusiasm and ability has been acknowledged by others with no regard to party affiliation. Every Commission, Committee and Organization in Washington has been discussing the need to have young individuals and families move to Town and to become involved. Rebecca is a native of Washington who has chosen to continue to make it her home for years to come. She is the first recipient of the Town's Down Payment Assistance Program — purchasing her own home and choosing to become involved in Town government.

I know and love this Town well enough to know we will resolve this — and other issues that will face us in the future — if only we work together regardless of our being Republican, Democrat or Unaffiliated.

I mean no disrespect for those who feel differently than I. I look forward to working with this Board of Selectmen with the same commitment I have always had.

Mary Anne Greene

12-12-19

#### **Appointments/Resignations:**

- **Resignation of Laird Davis and Tony Bedini: Motion:** To accept the resignations of Laird Davis from the Inland Wetlands Commission and Tony Bedini as a Land Use Hearing Officer with gratitude for their service. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved.

- **Appointment of Susan Branson as a full member of the Inland Wetlands Commission: Motion:** To appoint Susan Branson as a full member of the Inland Wetlands Commission until 6/30/22 moving up from an alternate. By Jim Brinton. Selectman Jay Hubelbank requested this appointment be tabled until further discussion on the Appointment Policy occurs. Selectman Michelle Gorra agreed and the appointment was tabled.
- **Motion: To Reappoint:**
  - Linda Frank and Tyler O'Hazo** to the Conservation Commission until 1/1/23.
  - Ryan Conroy** as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission until 1/1/23.
  - Susan Averill** to the Historic District Commission until 1/1/25.
  - R. William Fairbairn** as an alternate member of the Historic District Commission until 1/1/23.
  - Tammy Rill** to the Housing Commission until 1/1/23.
  - Joseph Fredlund, Whitney Ryan and Carrie Rowe** to the Parks and Recreation Commission until 1/1/23.
  - Dimitri Rimsky** to the Planning Commission until 12/31/24.
  - Carole Matteo** as an alternate member of the Planning Commission until 12/31/22.
  - Patrick Kessler and Thomas Accousti** as constables until 12/31/21. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved.

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

- **Budget Process:** Linda Gomez will begin contacting Departments regarding the 2020-2021 Budget – providing them with a mid-fiscal year report. Budget workshops will be held in February and March. The proposed budget will be presented to the Board of Finance prior to the Town's Budget Hearing on May 7, 2020. Final vote on the budget will be at the Annual Town Budget Meeting on May 21, 2020. Jay Hubelbank requested that all Departments be invited to present their budget requests in person with the new Board of Selectmen

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

- **Transfer Station Update:** The company installing the compactor will be checking the site to make certain all specs have been made and are in place. Installation will hopefully occur in the not too-distant future. Jim Brinton will be meeting with Wyant and Company (responsible for running the Transfer Station), Highway Director Kevin Smith and abutting neighbors.
- **Tunnel Road:** Highway Director Kevin Smith will be meeting with engineers.
- **Rabbit Hill Road Bridge:** Barriers will be installed on the bridge for safety reasons until the work is completed. Jim Brinton will be holding a meeting Monday, December 16<sup>th</sup> with Highway Director Kevin Smith, Cardinal Engineers and Rabbit Hill Road residents to explain the work that will be done and to hear concerns.
- **Washington Gives Update:** Thomas Hennick, State Freedom of Information Commission, has indicated there will be no Freedom of Information issues if the Board of Selectmen participates.
- **National School Choice Week:** Michelle Gorra reported she has done research on the organization that requested the Selectmen pass a Proclamation declaring January 26 – February 4 as School Choice Week and does not feel there are any political ramifications to it's being passed. Jay Hubelbank requested that more thought be given to passing the Proclamation until more can be learned about the Organization's mission.
- **Discussion of Appointments Policy:** Jay Hubelbank had submitted a draft of a proposed policy for filling vacancies on the Town's Boards and Commissions. Jim Brinton addressed several of the points and felt that the most prudent way to proceed would be to review the

recommendations in the proposal with Town Council. Michelle Gorra and Jay Hubelbank, who did not think the appointment of Rebecca Rebillard followed proper procedure (and ultimately voted for her removal) spoke of the need to gather the opinion of Council, Elections Enforcement, State Statutes, etc. as soon as possible. Numerous members of the audience expressed their opinion on the removal of Rebeca Rebillard from the Zoning Commission – feeling the decision to remove was made too quickly. Others spoke of the need for a policy to be put into place and had suggestions as to what and how procedures should be followed.

- **WiFi in the Depot:** Jay Hubelbank reported the antennas have been installed in the Town Hall cupola and at the Washington Primary School. Once the hook up is completed, the WiFi signal can be beamed to the Depot and repeaters located throughout the Depot will strengthen the signal.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Discussion of POCD:** Jay Hubelbank reported that Planning Commission member, Tim Cole, has reviewed the POCD and what each Board and Commission should be accomplishing according to the Plan. Jim Brinton reported he had met with Tim Cole this afternoon. Tim will provide the Selectmen with a summary of the 26 recommendations that apply to the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen will begin to review what has been accomplished and what recommendations need to be addressed.
- **Approval of 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting Dates: Motion:** To approve the following Board of Selectmen meeting dates for 2020: January 9 & 23; February 6 & 20; March 5 & 19; April 9 & 23; May 7 & 21; June 4 & 25; July 2, 16 & 30; August 13 & 27; September 10 & 24; October 8 & 22; November 5 & 19, December 3, 17 & 30. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved.

**Visitors:** Comments from visitors were made in the “Discussion of Appointments Policy” section of the meeting.

#### **Adjournment:**

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 6:46 p.m. as there was no further business for discussion and to extend the wish for a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season! By Jim Brinton, seconded by Michelle Gorra and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Anne Greene  
Selectmen’s Assistant