

TOWN OF WASHINGTON
Board of Selectmen
Minutes
January 20, 2022

MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ONLY

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

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

Public: Chris Charles, Joan Lodsins, Alan ten-Hoeve.

Press: Linda Zukauskas – 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 January 6, 2022 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

Communications: None.

Appointments/Resignations: Jim Brinton explained that an individual has submitted a resume and expressed interest in filling a vacancy on one of the Town Commissions. This individual has attended meetings, has the support of the Chairman and of the DTC and RTC. However, 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:

- **Bridge Projects:** Bids were opened for the rehabilitation of Whittlesey Road Bridge last week. Work will begin in July or August and should take roughly 3 months. Calhoun Street Bridge construction will begin in February and last roughly 2 months; Rabbit Hill Road Bridge construction will begin in July and last roughly 3 months; Tunnel Road Bridge construction will not happen until sometime next year and will roughly be an 8-month project.
- **Town Hall work schedule:** Due to COVID, the Town Hall offices have returned to a flex schedule with employees working split shifts.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **WPS walk-through:** Superintendent of Schools, Megan Bennett, has requested the First Selectmen of Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington meet with her and Facilities Manager, Don O'Leary, to walk through the Primary Schools to determine the conditions, needs, etc. The WPS walk-through had to be rescheduled due to weather. When it is rescheduled, both Dean Sarjeant and Jay Hubelbank would like to attend as well.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Resolution: Hazard Mitigation Plan: Motion:** To adopt the following Resolution: WHEREAS, the Town of Washington has historically experienced severe damage from natural hazards and it continues to be vulnerable to the effects of those natural hazards profiled in the plan (e.g. flooding, high wind, thunderstorms, winter storms, earthquakes, droughts, dam failure,

and wildfires), resulting in loss of property and life, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Washington Board of Selectmen approved the previous version of the Plan in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Washington and Northwest Hills Council of Governments developed and received conditional approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, 2022-2027 under the requirements of 44 CFR 201.6; and

WHEREAS, public and committee meetings were held and public input was sought in 2020 and 2021 regarding the development and review of the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, 2022-2027; and

WHEREAS, the Plan specifically addresses hazard mitigation strategies and Plan maintenance procedure for the Town of Washington; and

WHEREAS, the Plan recommends several hazard mitigation actions/projects that will provide mitigation for specific natural hazards that impact the Town of Washington, with the effect of protecting people and property from loss associated with those hazards; and

WHEREAS, adoption of this Plan will make the Town of Washington eligible for funding to alleviate the impacts of future hazards; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Board of Selectmen:

1. The Plan is hereby adopted as an official plan of the Town of Washington;
2. The respective officials identified in the mitigation strategy of the Plan are hereby directed to pursue implementation of the recommended actions assigned to them;
3. Future revisions and Plan maintenance required by 44 CFR 201.6 and FEMA are hereby adopted as a part of this resolution for a period of five (5) years from the date of this resolution.

An annual report on the progress of the implementation elements of the Plan shall be presented to the Board of Selectmen.

By Jim Brinton, seconded by Dean Sarjeant. Discussion: Jim explained this Plan needs to be adopted every 5 years and has been reviewed by Emergency Management Director, Ethan LaBella and emergency Services. The motion passed unanimously.

Visitors:

- **Joan Lodsins** inquired about the COVID test availability. Jim explained there are less than 20 left from what the Town received and they are being held for residents with disabilities.
- **Alan ten-Hoeve** attended this evenings meeting 1) to ask Jim Brinton to again report the number of positive COVID cases in Town in his weekly updates to residents. Jim explained that this has become difficult due to the number of people taking "home tests" and not reporting results to the Department of Health. Therefore, numbers that may be supplied by the DPH are not necessarily accurate. 2) Alan also requested that the Town reconsider issuing a "mask mandate" again as in the early days of COVID. Alan feels that leaving it up to the individuals and businesses is not working to slow the spread of COVID. According to Alan, the State has Washington as having 126 positive cases in the first 3 weeks of January. On this topic, Jim explained that the Director of Health has not been in favor of implementing this mandate

because if it is not mandated across the entire State, it simply is not effective. Currently, most positive cases seem to be originating from social gatherings. Local businesses simply do not have the resources to enforce such a mandate. Following discussion, the Selectmen agreed to speak with the Washington Business Association regarding posting of signs that would “highly recommend” the wearing of masks.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 5:58p.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