

TOWN OF WASHINGTON

Board of Selectmen

Minutes

February 1, 2024

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: Leslie Anderson, Susan Smith, Joan Lodsins, Bob Papsin, Torry Whitman, Danny Paige.

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 January 18, 2023 meeting of the Board of selectmen. By Jim Brinton, seconded by Jay Hubelbank and unanimously approved.

Communications: None.

Appointments/Resignations: None.

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

- **Revaluation:** To have a better understanding of how the revaluation will impact things moving forward, a meeting will be scheduled with the Assessor, the Board of Assessment Appeals, the Board of Selectmen, Finance Director, and representatives from the revaluation company.
- **Lake Waramaug:** Washington, Warren and Kent, along with Terra Vigilis Environmental Services, are conducting a survey to gather information on how people use the lake, understand protecting and managing it and to assess concerns for large wave enhancing vessels on the lake. The results of the survey will be analyzed and a final report will be made available to all town and lake residents.
- **Invitation to Bid - Transfer Station Bids for Hauling and Disposition** – has had several responses. Bids are due on February 29th 2024 by 4:00p.m.

Selectmen's Report:

- **Jay Hubelbank** reported that work on Town Ordinances continues and once fully reviewed and, if necessary amended, will be available on-line. Zoning regulations should be searchable and on-line within 2 to 3 months. Jay also reported on replacing a streetlight at the old town garage site with a solar powered light. If this proves to work well, the Eversource pole will be decommissioned and other poles in Town may be replaced.
- **Dean Sarjeant** reported that Washington's share of the budget for the Housatonic Valley Health District will decrease due to a decrease in the per capita. The Health District is doing a great job with services and programs, provided, etc. Washington and New Milford will not be involved in the costs associated with previous legal matters.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Meeting Protocols:** Several months ago, the Board of Selectmen sent the following letter regarding behavior and conduct at Board and Commission meetings. Due to behavior recently observed at a Commission meeting, Jim Brinton felt it appropriate to again post the letter and remind the public to show respect and that it is inappropriate to engage commissioners and staff outside of a meeting or after public comment is closed:

Recently we've noticed some behavior at a few of our 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 non-profit 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.

Not only do we hope that our residents will find a group or cause in which to spend their time and energy, but 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 that 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 our residents have proven time and again that they meet and indeed exceed the high expectations we all expect from people who live in Washington. Let's work together to maintain these high standards.

Respectfully,

James L. Brinton

Jay Hubelbank

Dean Sarjeant

- **Automated Traffic Calming** speed limit signs: Jim Brinton and three other towns will be meeting with Traffic Logic and will have more information available at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

Visitors: None.

Adjournment:

- **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting at 5:52p.m. as there was no further business for discussion. By Jay Hubelbank, seconded by Dean Sarjeant and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Anne Greene
Selectmen's Assistant