

December 30, 2003

Present: First Selectman Richard Sears, Selectman Nick Solley.
Press: John Addyman, Voices; Sarah Sparks, Waterbury Republican
Public: Valerie Friedman, Tom and Betsy Burke, Bruce Cotton-Interstate Ford

Call to Order: First Selectman Sears called the meeting to order at 4:32p.m.

Minutes: Motion: To approve the minutes of the December 18, 2003 Board of Selectmen's meeting as presented by Nick Solley, seconded by Dick Sears and unanimously approved.

Visitors: Valerie Friedman asked the Selectmen for clarification in the **Commercial Timber Harvesting Ordinance**, of what is considered "personal use" vs. "commercial use". Nick Solley explained that generally the volume distinguishes the difference. Commercial Harvesting is usually on a large scale, large trucks, many trips on and off the property, etc. Valerie requested the Selectmen look at the permit and "tighten up the wording" and suggested it be re-named "Timber Harvesting Ordinance" with clearer wording on volume harvested, what requires permits, etc. Nick Solley agreed to follow up on this and review the current ordinance.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Police Vehicle Bid:** The following two bids were received for a new 2004 Ford Explorer, Special Service Police, four-door sports utility vehicle:

1. Interstate Truck Center, Hartford, CT \$23,492.00
2. Litchfield Ford, Litchfield, CT \$24,243.90

Nick Solley explained the bids would be reviewed and awarded at the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen which will be held on January 15, 2004.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Letter to the People:** First Selectman Sears explained the letter that went to all Postal Patrons in the towns of Bridgewater, Roxbury and Washington signed by the three First Selectmen. The Selectmen have reported a positive response. He explained that he had received an invitation from the Shepaug Youth Association (as did the other First Selectmen) to sign such a document. They met with school administrators and Resident State Troopers and discussed the increase in drug and alcohol use among the youth in the Region. It was agreed to write the letter, sign and mail as close to Christmas as possible. Prior to the letter going out, High School Principal Horrigan held a school assembly where the same subject was addressed and a letter from him went to all parents of high school students as well. Mr. Sears said he has been asked the question "What next?" Some towns in Connecticut have passed an ordinance supporting and giving the police the authority to go on to private property if they know of underage alcohol/drug use. Mr. Sears explained that unless such a law is passed on the State level, however, it cannot be fully enforced. The issue is "private property". There is energy to pass such a law. He is hopeful that through continued communication with the communities, there can be a constant awareness. At one time there was discussion of placing "School Resource Officers" in the schools. Questions of who would pay for this service have been raised, etc. as there are no longer state funds for this. At some point in the future, this may need to be addressed and endorsed. At the present, Mr. Sears is pleased that the school and police are addressing the problem. Mr. and Mrs. Burke commented positively on the letter and felt it very beneficial to let parents know what they are liable for.

- **Proclamation:** Mr. Sears explained that 2004 is the 225th Anniversary of the Town of Washington. **Motion:** To accept the following Proclamation by Dick Sears, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved:

"Town of Washington, 225th Anniversary Proclamation: Whereas the General Assembly of the sovereign Commonwealth of Connecticut on January 7th AD 1779 did establish the Town of Washington out of Woodbury and New Milford, and whereas said Town has united its inhabitants into a unique community of mutual service and friendship, with its own spirit and life style. Therefore, we, the Selectmen of the Town of Washington, do declare and proclaim that the year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Four, sometimes called the Common Era, be the Two Hundred Twenty Fifth Anniversary of our Town's establishment. The year shall be celebrated by solemn assembly, by parades, fireworks, illuminations and seemly recreation in gratitude for the past, in high hopes for the future and rejoicing in our present state. Given at Washington, Connecticut (Date), Signed (by the Board of Selectmen.)" A 225th Anniversary committee has been formed with Bill Fairbairn and Helga Hershey acting as co-chairmen. All groups will be invited to participate in the celebration. Organizations and businesses in Town will soon be receiving a letter.

- **Democracy Cup:** The Town of Washington will once again be awarded the Democracy Cup for achieving the highest percentage of voters in the State in the last election. The celebration will take place on Friday, January 9, 2004 at 3:00p.m. Dignitaries have been invited and there will be a "surprise visitor". The public is invited.

- **Thanks to Washington Volunteer Fire Department and Washington Ambulance Association:** Mr. Sears reported that two calls came into the office today praising the services of the Town's Fire and Ambulance services. Dick would like to thank them and our other civic organizations and the countless volunteers who are always standing ready to serve the Town and its people.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:58p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Anne Greene
Selectmen's Secretary