

# April 28, 2011

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

**Present:** First Selectman Mark E. Lyon, Selectmen James L. Brinton and Nicholas N. Solley.

**Public:** Jason & Carolyn Hyde, John Meeker, Chris Collum.

**Call to Order:**

First Selectman Lyon called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m.

**MOTION:**

To add subsequent business not already on the Agenda.

By Mark Lyon, seconded by Nick Solley.

Discussion: this business would be a discussion of agenda items for the May 19, 2011 Annual Town Meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Motion:

To approve the minutes of the April 14, 2011 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

By Mark Lyon, seconded by Jim Brinton and unanimously approved.

**Communications:**

\* Email/letter from Chris Charles re: Pedestrian Bridge on Route 47

as a follow up to his letter of April 8, 2011 that became part of the minutes of the April 14, 2011 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. In this letter, Chris makes additional observations, comments and suggestions including the cost of the alternate bridge vs. the proposed DOT bridge; working with DOT regarding alternate railing installation on their bridge that would satisfy DOT's requirements and Steep Rock's concern about the view of the river being obscured; the need for an Inland Wetlands permit and the importance of hiring a consultant and engineer at the applicant's (Steep Rock) expense. A copy of the original letter is attached to these minutes filed with the Town Clerk.

**Appointments/Resignations:**

\* Appointment of Robert Tomlinson as the Town of Washington's representative to Litchfield County Dispatch Board of Directors. Mark has spoken with the Chief of the Washington Volunteer Fire Department and the Chief of the Washington Ambulance Association both of whom endorsed Robert "Rocky" Tomlinson's appointment.

Motion:

To appoint Robert Tomlinson as the Town of Washington's representative to the Board of Directors of Litchfield County Dispatch.

By Mark Lyon, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

**First Selectman's Report:**

Mark Lyon reported on the following:

\* Wilbur Road Parking:

Nick Solley attended the last Zoning Commission meeting to discuss the issue of employees of the Community Table restaurant parking on Wilbur Road that was brought to the attention of the Selectmen at the last meeting. Nick reported that Zoning was willing to work with the Board of Selectmen to resolve the problem. Mark has also spoken with the architect for the restaurant about parking plans and is waiting for a call from the proprietor to discuss alternate plans further. Carolyn and Jason Hyde thanked the Selectmen and asked if there was an idea of how long it would take to resolve this. Mark assured them that although he could not give a “date”, the Selectmen would be persistent and continue to work on it.

\* Letter from Conservation Commission re: decommissioning of street lights:

The CC recently took an inventory of street lights on Town roads with the thought of identifying some that could be decommissioned as they “do not provide a clear or compelling public benefit relative to their energy consumption, cost of operation and light pollution impacts”. Mark explained that streetlights cost the Town approximately \$28,000 a year and felt the proposal of the CC may have merit. Residents in the areas of possible “decommissioning” would be consulted, possibly a public meeting held, etc.

\* Route 45 Road Project is progressing and at the last meeting with the State inspector, appears to be on scheduled for completion by Memorial Day Weekend.

\* Route 47/Hidden Valley Bridge:

Mark attended a pre-construction meeting – work on the traffic bridge may begin as early as this week with tree work. He advised there might be some disruption to vehicular traffic until the one lane bypass bridge is set up. It will be the responsibility of the contractors to provide traffic control. Steve Law, Executive Director of Steep Rock, also attended the meeting and was assured that access to Hidden Valley would not be interrupted.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

\* Board of Selectmen letter to Region #12:

As approved at the last meeting of the Board of Selectmen, a letter signed by the three Selectmen will be mailed to Region #12 Board of Education and Administration expressing disappointment in the Regions 2.23% increase in the proposed budget.

**NEW BUSINESS:** \* Report on 2011-2012 Proposed Budget:

Mark reported the numbers are finalized for the 2011-2012 proposed budget with a 1.5% overall increase. The Town’s Annual Budget Hearing is scheduled for Thursday, May 5, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. Town residents can vote on the proposed budget at the Town’s Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 19, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at Bryan Memorial Town Hall.

\* Discussion of Town Meeting Agenda:

The agenda for the May 19th Town Meeting will need to be set at the Board of Selectmen’s meeting on May 12. Discussed agenda items today included: 1) voting on the proposed General Fund Budget and Nonrecurring Capital Fund Budget. 2) Nomination and Election of two Board of Education members. 3) Discussion of four-year terms for the Board of Selectmen, Treasurer and Tax Collector. Mark explained it was his feeling that the decision as to whether or not to go to a four-year term should be decided by a ballot vote as opposed to a Town Meeting vote as occasionally turn out for Town Meetings is very low – referendums and general elections usually have a much higher turn out. If at a Town Meeting, the legislative body agreed to put the question of a four-year term on the ballot it would be done in

November 2011 and, if approved, become effective November 2013. Jim Brinton asked if there was a small turnout (10-15 people) at the Town Meeting and they did not wish the question to go on the ballot in November would that end further discussion. Mark explained that the Board of Selectmen could override that decision and request that it be placed on the ballot in November. Chris Collum stated he felt items approved/disapproved at Town Meetings should be by a quorum of the voters rather than 10-15 people making decisions for the entire Town. Mark explained he would again check into this but felt there were statutes governing this and the number of attendees at the Town meetings that would be required for a quorum may further complicate the voting process. John Meeker asked Jim Brinton his feeling on the formation of an Ethics Committee if four-year terms were approved, as Jim had previously stated he did not feel such a committee necessary with two-year terms. Jim stated he was and is opposed to four-year terms. Nick Solley remembered the question being put to the townspeople at an information meeting several years ago and the majority was opposed to the four-year term change. However, the Selectmen felt that it is a different time and should be a discussion for the public again. 4) Possible action needed to transfer funds to cover the overage in the Winter Maintenance budget line item. 5) A STEAP Grant has been awarded to the Town, specifically to fund the alternate pedestrian bridge in Hidden Valley (as opposed to the proposed DOT pedestrian bridge). Should it be determined this project will be done – other funding and permits in place, etc. the Town Legislative Body will need to approve the spending of the grant funds. Most likely, a Special Town Meeting will need to be held for this vote.

**Visitors:**

\* Chris Collum inquired about employees of the Town using the Town's gasoline pumps to fill their private vehicles and the use of Town-owned trucks by the Highway Director and Road Foreman for personal use. The Selectmen explained that the employees should not be filling their vehicles with Town gas, and explained the use of the trucks as part of the Director's and Foreman's employment package.

\* John Meeker referred to the latest Town Newsletter indicating that the Board of Education nominations and elections would take place at the May 19th meeting and inquired about the action he believed the Selectmen took at a February Selectmen's Meeting to have a Special Town Meeting in March or April to nominate Board of Education candidates and place their names on the ballot for election at the May Referendum. The Selectmen acknowledged having this discussion and agreed to check the minutes regarding the action they took. John also inquired about the status of funding from the State – what income to the Town may be cut. The Selectmen explained this is a difficult area when planning the next budget, as the amount of the State grants that will be received by the Town are not yet confirmed. The current State budget proposals maintain current grant funding levels.

**Adjournment:**

Motion:

To adjourn the meeting at 6:12 p.m. as there was no further business for discussion.

By Mark Lyon, seconded by Nick Solley and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Anne Greene  
Selectmen's Secretary