



MAY 2020

To our Washington neighbors:

May 2020

Jan Nelson passed away last week after a valiant thirty-year long struggle with cancer. Jan was an integral part of our Town, working with the Select Board, the Historical Society, and generally making herself helpful when and where needed. We deeply regret that in this time of pandemic any memorial services are not possible – one more reason to get through this trying time. Our hearts go out to her husband of fifty years Steve and her son Nathaniel. We are grateful to have known her.

The Select Board met again by conference call on April 13. The Board will next meet April 27, then May 11. Meetings are posted at the Town Hall and on our website with a phone number and a PIN number for anyone who wishes to call in.

- We have been able to correct the hack of the Tax Collector's e-mail by changing it to Washingtontaxcollector@gmail.com. Tax payments can be mailed or made online. The Select Board voted to waive fees and penalties until June 30; see the announcement elsewhere in Tracks.
- We will open bids for the reconstruction of the Middlefield Road bridge at 7:30 on April 27; we hope to get at least one bid below the Small Bridge grant amount of \$500,000 and finally – almost six years after DOT condemned the old bridge – replace it.

The societal shutdown brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic continues. The next date to watch is May 4 which was the extent of the current guidance; however, travel restrictions and closures may remain in force well past that, so plan accordingly.

- We have had several homes undergoing voluntary quarantine either because of suspect symptoms or because the occupants are new or returning to Town.
- Rentals of any kind have been banned; the Board of Health has sent letters to all properties in Town known to be rented as Air B&B or otherwise. Summit Hill Campground will not be opening unless and until there is new guidance from the MA Department of Public Health.
- We are tracking all costs encumbered by the Town because of the pandemic in expectation of reimbursement by FEMA.

Although Berkshire County's per capita infection rate has eased we still have a mortality rate higher than average with 383 confirmed cases and 26 deaths. Please stay in and wash your hands often. If you must go out, please wear a mask and practice social distancing. Seniors and those with underlying health problems please ask for help:

- Council on Aging 413-394-0003 or washingtoncoa@gmail.com
- Emergency Management 413-212-7152 or genergoebel@gmail.com
- The Elizabeth Freeman Center which offers free and confidential services for victims of domestic and sexual violence in Berkshire County has remained open through the shutdown. Their contact number is 1-866-401-2425.
- The USDA has published a Rural Resource Guide that lists programs providing immediate and long-term assistance to rural communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. These programs can support recovery efforts for rural residents, businesses and communities. Opportunities are categorized by customer and assistance type: https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA_COVID-19_Fed_Rural_Resource_Guide.pdf

- PAID work from home: Partners in Health was recently contracted by the State of Massachusetts to work on contact tracing. They are looking to fill 800 positions immediately. Pay is \$27 per hour for people who can work 20-40 hours per week. Apply at: <https://www.pih.org/covid-team>. You can write to Penny (pennyoutlaw@comcast.net) with any questions.
- <https://www.buoyhealth.com/> offers a free assessment of your symptoms and information about COVID-19.
- If you believe you have been exposed to COVID-19 or know others who may have been and have symptoms contact our Public Health Nurse at alliancenurse@berkshireplanning.org or our Board of Health japhuebner@gmail.com 655-8668.

Town Status:

- The Town Hall remains closed to the public until further guidance from the Governor.
- Town operations continue; contact information is printed here in TRACKS and is available on the Town website. <http://www.washington-ma.com/boh.html>
- Emergency services remain on call.
- The Transfer Station is keeping normal hours on Wednesday and Saturday but will not accept white goods, electronics or construction waste; the swap shop remains closed.

Other news:

- We received two bids for the demolition of Woody's, both from local contractors. However, the low bid was withdrawn and the other was prohibitively high. The Board will have to make alternate plans to rid the Town of this eyesore.
- Our Broadband network construction is almost complete; you will be contacted when the actual house-to-network connection is scheduled. If you have not yet signed up, this is your last chance to do so and get the connection credit!
- The replacement of five culverts along Summit Hill Road may be postponed until fall.
- Work on our new Wahconah High School continues with the installation of a temporary road and other site preparation. All necessary precautions due to the pandemic are being taken by the contractors.

Thanks again to Lisa Guthrie and Michelle Beemer for issuing additional **TRACKS** so we can keep everyone informed.

Stay home, stay safe, check on your neighbors, friends, and family members; we will get through this together with everyone's help.

Time to get outside and start the garden!

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Tricia Drugmand
Select Board Clerk

Dick Grillon
Select Board

Attention High School Seniors: The Emma Bailey Scholarship Fund is accepting applications for 2020 scholarships. Applications can be found online at <http://www.washington-ma.com/emmabailey.html> or call 413-623-8878 extension 1 to request an application by mail or email.



Town of Washington

8 SUMMIT HILL ROAD P (413) 623-8878
WASHINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 01223 F (413) 623-2116

Town Offices/Selectman

April 13, 2020

Important Information Regarding Your Tax Bill

Under “An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting From COVID-19,” Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, the Town of Washington has adopted a waiver of interest and penalties on certain municipal tax and other bills paid by June 30, 2020.

By voting unanimously to adopt Section 11 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020, the Select Board has elected to waive the payment of interest and other penalty for late payment of any excise, tax, betterment assessment or apportionment thereof, or other charge added to a tax for any payments **with a due date on or after March 10, 2020, where payment is made late but before June 30, 2020.**

This waiver of interest and penalty does not apply to bills with due dates before March 10, 2020, or if the bill is not paid by June 30.

NOTE: If the municipal offices are closed on the May 1, 2020, due date for tax payments or filing of exemption applications as a result of the outbreak of the 2019 novel coronavirus or the declaration of a state of emergency issued by the governor on March 10, 2020, the due dates for tax payments and applications for exemptions are not extended – they will be due on May 1, 2020, even if the municipal offices are closed. (See section 10(b) of the Act.)

*Payments can be made online or a check mailed. No cash payments. Our New **Real Estate & Personal Property** online inquiry and bill payment is available through the “online” link found on the town website **www.washington-ma.com** under the tax collector link. The online payment process offers many new improvements for obtaining all of your billing information. Online payments for **Motor Vehicle Excise** bills can only be made online until the original due date, after that a check must be mailed.*

Jim Huebner
Select Board Chair

Tricia Drugmand
Select Board Clerk

Dick Grillon
Select Board

Gina Campbell
Tax Collector

BECKET & WASHINGTON FOOD PANTRY

At the Becket Federated Church

3381 Main Street, Becket MA

Open 1st & 3rd Saturdays

9:00am-11:00am

FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE 413-841-1701

The Becket & Washington Food Pantry is open to all who need food assistance, it is primarily for people in Becket and Washington, but no one is turned away. It doesn't matter if you need it short term or long term, there is no 'proof of need' required. Its purpose is to ensure that no one in Becket & Washington (or the surrounding community) go hungry!

People can pick up their 'Shopping Bag' on the 1st & 3rd Saturdays from 9:00am-11:00am at the Becket Federated Church 3381 Main Street Becket, MA.

A typical shopping bag might include grocery items like pasta, rice, canned veggies, canned soups, canned fruit, peanut butter & jelly, bread, mayo, ketchup, pancake mix, toilet paper etc.; dairy items like sour cream, yogurt, eggs, cheese, goat cheese; meats like hamburger, chicken, and ham. We will also have pet food available for your dog and/or cat. If there are other items that we don't normally stock please tell us, and we will try to get them for you!

If you have run out of food between our normal open times or if you need the food delivered please call our EMERGENCY NUMBER 413-841-1701. If you just have questions or want to volunteer /donate please call Bill at 413-770-1897. The Becket & Washington Food Pantry will ramp up its services as the need arises. If you know of anyone who might need this service please pass along the information. No one is ever turned away; we just want to extend a helping hand!

Neighbor-to-Neighbor Fund

provides one-time emergency assistance for local residents who are in economic distress. The Fund makes small grants (generally around \$500) to help those with overdue utilities, medical bills, short-term housing costs and transportation problems.

For more information contact
Berkshire Community Action Council
Phone: 413-418-3683

Also from the COA

Seniors if you are unable to go out to get groceries or medicine please let the Council on Aging know we have volunteers to help call Rose at 413-394-0003.

Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election Postponed

Both the Annual Town Meeting and Annual Town Election have been postponed by four weeks.

The Annual Town Meeting (ATM) will now be held on **Wednesday, June 3, 2020** starting at 7:00 PM. The last day to register to vote at the ATM will be Wednesday, May 13th.

The Annual Town Election (ATE) will now be held on **Saturday, June 13, 2020** from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM. The last day to register vote at the ATE will be Wednesday, June 3rd.

Absentee and Early Voting Ballots for Annual Town Election

Absentee and Early Voting Ballots for the Annual Town Election will be available starting Monday, April 20, 2020. If you will not be able to vote in person on election day (absentee) or would prefer to vote early (currently only available by mail) please email me for an absentee or early voting application and I will send it to you. Once I receive the completed application, I will send you the applicable ballot when it is available.

A note from our Fire Chief

Open Burning ended on May 1.

HOUSE NUMBERS-Massachusetts General Laws C. 148, S. 59- numbers should be at least 4 inches, reflective and visible from the street, if attached to the house some illumination on the number helps. If posted at the end of the driveway they need to be visible from both directions and on the same side of the street as the driveway. Any questions about numbering or other fire related questions you can call the Fire Chief at 413-623-2185.

If you call 911 for an emergency remember to inform dispatch of any COVID19 health related information to keep first responders safe. Thank you and stay healthy and safe.

Becket Athenaeum

info@bwlibrary.org 623.5483

*Yoga For Everyone w Emily Robinson, RYT-200
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9-10am on facebook live
facebook.com/BecketAthenaeumLibrary/Live
gentle, mindful, inclusive. For all ages and abilities. Kripalu inspired.

*Virtual Tutoring available for Becket & Washington during this mandatory school closure. Tutoring via Skype and/or Zoom.

Also helping groups of kids learn to play board games using Skype and/or Zoom. Email Jodi:
jodi@bwlibrary.org

ONGOING

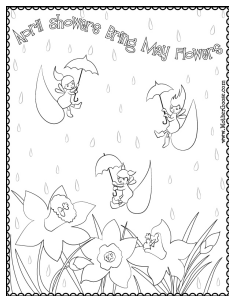
COA - All classes & pot luck dinners are temporarily cancelled.

Becket - Free Lunch Program

Postponed

Becket Federated Church Parish House

Dinners Cancelled until the coronavirus passes.



Washington Tracks
Town Hall
8 Summit Hill Rd.
Washington, MA 01223

www.washington-ma.com

Realtor & Notary

Lisa Peltier
500 S. Washington State Rd.
413.822.1257
Keller Williams Realty
LisaPeltier413@gmail.com

Mark F. Roos, broker Associate ABR

The Kinderhook Group
413.822.6143
markfr909@gmail.com
Helping buyers and sellers achieve their dreams"

Pinnacle Painting Company

578 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
413.623.8737
Over 35 years experience Painting, wall covering &
light carpentry

Your Way Computer

Frank Kennedy
1153 Washington Mt. Road
Washington, MA 01223
Call: 623.5180 / Fax: 623.2018
E-Mail: carolandfranksr@carolandfrank.com
By appointment only

Support Our Local Businesses

Justice of the Peace

Dorothy Filanowska
413.446.6921 justicedora@gmail.com
<http://www.justicedora.com>

Horace Mann Insurance Agency

Po Box 772 Becket Ma. 01223.
Phone 413.623.2112
Fax 413.623.5551
Provide all Personal Lines of Insurance
Provide Financial and retirement products too

Summit Hill Campground

34 Old Middlefield Rd.
Washington, Ma. 01223
413.623.5761
Great Family Camping
Tents,R.V.s Motor Homes
Full Hook Ups
Pet Friendly
Seasonals Welcomed
Events scheduled May through Sept

Hilltowns Veterinary Clinic

Dr. Sharon Lynch, MVB
133 South Washington State Rd
Washington, MA 01223
413.623.5329
www.hilltownsvetclinic.com

**Becket General Store -
TEMPORARILY CLOSED**

Heather Anello
3235 Main Street
Becket, MA 01223
413.623.6026
becketgeneralstore.com
fb 3235 main street

Email your TRACKS info by the **25th of the month** to get in to next
month's issue to Lisa at: **mrsabeski@mac.com**
Please put TRACKS in the subject line.