

TOWN OF BECKET

Minutes Town Meeting ByLaw Review Committee 2/3/14 (APPROVED 4/7/14)

Members Present: Bruce Garlow (Chair), Ann Krawet, Jeanne Pryor

The meeting began at 1:12 p.m. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of 1/6/14 and the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee discussed a date to schedule a "Baby Town Meeting" a week and a half before the Annual Town Meeting and agreed on 4/30/14 as a proposed date. Ed Gibson is working on our request to have an email address (moderator@townofbecket.org) for the Moderator.

Bruce made two minor changes to the proposed amended town meeting bylaw following the public hearing. The first is a sentence stating that a motion to "take no action" requires a two-thirds vote, replacing a question to that effect in the last version. The second change involves the deputy moderator, where the language was changed to explain that there will need to be a charter change to create the position. Bruce will ask Nina to post the final draft on the website.

The Committee reviewed the Handbook **Glossary of Town Meeting and Municipal Finance Terms** and made changes to the following sections:

Bond -- A means to raise money through the issuance of debt, **usually a loan for a term of two years or more.**

Debt Exclusion -- An action taken by the town through a referendum vote to raise the funds necessary to pay debt service costs for a particular project from the property tax levy, but outside the limits under Proposition 2½. The amount is added to the levy limit for the life of the debt only and may increase the levy above the levy ceiling. Once the debt is paid off the authorization to exceed the levy limit ends. **[Bruce will add language about doing this at Annual Town Election.]**

Free Cash -- Remaining, unrestricted funds from operations of the previous fiscal year including unexpended free cash from the previous year, actual receipts in excess of revenue estimates and unspent amounts in budget line-items. **[DOR certification language will be added and Town Meeting votes.]**

General Fund—~~The fund used to account for most financial resources and activities governed by the normal town meeting appropriation process.~~

Motion—A spoken phrase or statement that puts an article before town meeting. **In Becket it is** usually by simply saying “I move.” It must be followed by a “second” by ~~another second~~ voter. **[Bruce may rewrite]**

Overlay -- (Overlay Reserve or Allowance for Abatements and Exemptions) An account established annually to fund anticipated property tax abatements, exemptions and uncollected taxes in that year. The overlay reserve is not established by the normal appropriation process, but rather is raised on the tax rate recapitulation sheet. **[Bruce to define "tax rate recapitulation sheet" in glossary or explain here.]**

Raise and Appropriate -- A phrase used to identify a funding source for an expenditure or expenditures which refers to money generated by the tax levy. ~~or other local receipt.~~

Revolving Fund -- Allows the town to raise revenues from a specific service and use those revenues without appropriation to support the service. For departmental revolving funds, MGL Ch. 44 §53E½ stipulates that each fund must be re-authorized each year at annual town meeting and that a limit on the total amount that may be spent from each fund must be established at that time. **[example, Ambulance Department]**

ADD Stabilization

Warrant -- A town meeting warrant is a document issued by the Board of Selectmen that establishes the agenda of ~~those~~ matters to be considered by a town meeting. Warrants must be posted in various locations in town seven days before an annual town meeting and fourteen days before a special town meeting.

The Committee was asked to think about other definitions that might be added to the Glossary.

Jeanne noted that Ed is trying to locate something similar to the PA systems which were looked at through on-line vendors and were used to develop the specs and budget figures Town meeting approved. He would rather find something similar or the same at a local company rather than purchasing on-line in case we need service on the equipment or help in setting it up so it functions correctly. It will be here for the May annual town meeting and may even be here in time for a Special Town Meeting in March.

The Committee discussed making a change to the proposed amended Town Meeting Bylaw as follows:

SECTION 12. The Moderator shall hold no other elective or appointive Town office except for serving on an ad hoc or special purpose committee **or as a non-voting member of any committee.**

The next meeting was scheduled for March 3, 2014, at 1:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne W. Pryor

List of documents discussed and/or distributed at meeting:

1. Town Meeting ByLaw Review Committee Minutes 1/6/14
2. Glossary of Town Meeting and Municipal Finance Terms