

FINANCE COMMITTEE
Joint meeting with the
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town of Becket
557 Main Street
Becket, MA 01223

Meeting Minutes for April 2, 2015

Call to Order: Finance Committee 6:05 PM

PRESENT:

Finance Committee (FC): Steve LaBelle (SL); Ann Spadafora (AS); Maria Wallington (MW); Mark Karlberg (MK)

Board of Selectmen (B of S): Bill Elovirta (BE); Angela Hilton (AH);

Town Administrator: Ed Gibson (EG)

Public:

GUESTS: Jeremy Dunn (Becket Wired West delegate), Jeff Piemont (Becket alternate delegate to Wired West), Joe Markarian, (Franklin Regional Counsel of Governments consultant), Jim Drawe (treasurer for Wired West)

ABSENT: Jeanne Pryor (JP) present via phone and Dan Parnell (DP) present via phone

AGENDA:

Joint meeting with B of S called to order when AH arrived at 6:25 pm. Any B of S votes and any FC votes will be by voice roll call.

1. Meet with B of S and Representatives of Wired West

a. Joe Markarian discussed costs and tax consequences.

- i. 35 calendar days are required for an election vote for debt exclusion.
- ii. Cost figured on number of homes and distances involved.
- iii. Becket's projected obligation is currently \$3,810,000 as a 'not to exceed' number.
- iv. Impact of bonding and financial decisions was laid out for several variables.
- v. Impact on monthly and annual taxes was shown in a table.

b. Jim Drawe discussed the development of the financial numbers and operations

- i. No economies of scale built into estimates for the town.
- ii. Estimate includes development of two accesses to town
- iii. Estimate includes all houses wanting service which may not be needed
- iv. State money to individual participating towns may increase if fewer towns join network.
- v. Recommend placing on town meeting warrant to authorize bonding and an election question for debt exclusion
- vi. Modeling suggests the 'profits' will cover the town's debt service at a 40% take rate.

2. Discuss and vote on article for Annual Town Meeting re "Last mile" broadband service

- a. Wired West and MBI suggested wording for town meeting warrant and election question for debt exclusion.
- b. B or S voted on the question for the ballot question :
"Shall the Town of Becket be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds to be issued in order to fund the Town's share of the costs of construction, installation and start-up of a regional broadband network, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto, such project to be carried out by the Town's Municipal Light Plant." subject to town counsel agreement. Motion made by BE and seconded by JP. Voice vote: AH yes, JP yes, BE yes.
- c. B of S will work on town warrant for approval of bonding at their working meeting.

3. Review and possible vote to recommend capital and operating budget for FY 2016 and articles for Annual Town Meeting warrant.

- a. Vocation costs are now in with decreased tuition and decreased transportation costs.

- b. Snow and ice costs still adjusting. EG working on plan for payment trying to reserve free cash for the stabilization fund. Remaining deficit is \$100,409.35 with some bills to come in.
 - c. Capital plan set except for seeing if the heating system can use grants for some of it this year.
 - d. Still trying to trim operating budget.
 - e. Unpaid bills from prior years will need town warrant action to pay them.
 - f. Recommending 2% cola increase.
4. BE moved to meet April 16 at 5:00 PM with the finance committee. Seconded by AH. Voice vote: AH yes, JP yes, BE yes.
 5. AH moved adjourn B of S. Seconded by BE. AH yes, JP yes, BE yes.

Finance Committee continued:

6. **Review and approve minutes for March 19, 2015 meeting**
 - a. Approval of March 19, 2015 minutes moved by AS and seconded by MW. Voice vote: MW yes, AS yes, SL yes, MK abstained, DP abstained.
7. **Correspondence and transfers**
 - a. No transfers or correspondence.
8. **Town Administrator's input**

Bids for demolition of four properties came back at \$27,350. We budgeted \$13,420 which will cover two houses. EG may come back for transfer to do a third house.
9. **Department Budget for FY 2016**
 - a. See 3 above.
10. **Any other business**
 - a. Informational meeting for public April 12 with Wired West in town hall
 - b. April 10 meeting with bond counsel and Wired West for B of S and Fin Com 4-6 at town hall.

Next meeting: April 16 joint with B of S to finalize budget.

Adjourn: MK moved to adjourn. AP seconded. Voice vote: MK yes, MW yes, AS yes, SL yes, DP abstained. Adjourned at 9:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted by Maria Wallington

Approved by Steve LaBelle, Chair

