

Board of Selectmen
November 6, 2013
Minutes

Members present: Jeanne Pryor, Angela Hilton, William Elovirta

Others Present: Ed Gibson, Colleen O'Connor, Bob Ronzio, Chris Bouchard, John Ferry-WMECO, George Bruneau, Deborah Bruneau, Beverly Gillette, Johanna Cornock, Bob Hirsch

7:00 PM Jeanne called the meeting to order. She advised that the meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and Guidelines for Board of Selectmen Meetings.

Jeanne asked if anyone was recording the meeting. No one other than the Board of Selectmen is recording the meeting.

Pole Hearing on the proposed installation of one jointly owned pole on the north side of Hopkins Lane in order to remove a guide wire. John Ferry of WMECO advised that there was a tree guy that supported wires at the intersection of Hopkins Lane and Partridge Lane. The tree has died and they no longer use tree guys so that is why this pole installation needs to take place. Jeanne asked the highway superintendent if the proposed pole location was in a good location. He advised that there was no problem with the location. The Board had no issues with this pole installation. There was no public input regarding this proposed installation. Bill motioned to approve the jointly owned pole request from WMECO and Verizon, Angela seconded. All in favor.

The Board discussed the possible changes to the "Street Rules and Regulations" which govern the traffic flow at the intersection of County and Yokum Pond Roads. Jeanne asked Highway Superintendent, Chris Bouchard, what his recommendations for this intersection were. He explained that since County Road from Route 8 to Yokum Pond Road and Yokum Pond Road to Route 20 is a thru road, vehicles traveling East on County Road toward Route 8 should yield to traffic driving East on Yokum Pond Road and intersecting with County Road. Bill advised that after the road lines were painted he received a phone call from a resident who lives on County Road wanting to know why this was changed. Bill did some research and found that even though Yokum Pond Road has had the yield signs for over thirty years, things change and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control states that under the current conditions, the yield signs should be on County Road. Angela stated that she agrees with Chris' recommendations. Debbie Bruneau shared some incidents that happened to her while she was entering the intersection and how dangerous it is because people do not heed to the yield signs. She feels there should have been a public hearing before the lines were painted and the signs were changed. Mr. Hirsch would like a white line with the word "yield" painted on the road so it is more visible. Chris advised that you could not have a white line because that is only allowed where stop signs are located. The residents do not seem to want a stop sign put at the intersection but they would like the police to monitor vehicles speeding through this intersection. The residents would also like a "Use Directional Signal" sign placed on County Road right before the intersection so people traveling East on County Road can tell where the vehicles are going. Jeanne thanked the residents for coming and voicing their concerns about this intersection. She advised that the Board would take some time to look at all of the information before they make a decision about this intersection.

Jeanne motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of October 16, 2013, Angela seconded. Bill abstained from voting since he was absent for this meeting. Motion passed.

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The Board reviewed the "draft" Town of Becket Ambulance Write-Off Policy. Jeanne was hoping that this policy would be clearer and fairer for all parties. The Board made some edits to the policy as they went through it. Bill feels that under the Financial Hardship Determination section one item states "If the patient's financial hardship is such that no payment plan will work, then a complete waiver of the bill may be granted by the Town Administrator." Bill feels that at the end of this sentence it should read "with approval of the Board of Selectmen." The Board currently votes to waive false alarm fees that are assessed by the police department so he feels the Board should also have input on waivers for the ambulance fees. Bill also feels that under the Collections section, the sentence that reads "The Town Administrator, with the recommendation of the Ambulance Director, will make a determination that an account is to be written off as an uncollected account." should have "with approval of the Board of Selectmen" inserted at the end of the sentence. Jeanne advised that not many towns have the Board of Selectmen handle this anymore and feels that it should be a business decision not a political decision. Jeanne and Angela feel the Town Administrator should be the one to make decisions regarding the financial hardship determinations and the collections. Angela motioned to accept the Town of Becket Ambulance Write-Off Policy with the changes the Board just made, Jeanne seconded. Bill opposed. Motion passed.

The Board reviewed the "draft" memo regarding Handling of Departmental Receipts. Jeanne advised that the Board of Selectmen approved this policy back in May of 2006 but she does not believe it has been followed. She wants to make sure anyone responsible for handling departmental receipts is aware of this policy so she wants to reissue it and have anyone receiving this policy sign a receipt that they have received it. Bill was concerned about item 6 which states: "Any customer making payment for town goods or services must be given a receipt for their payment." He advised that it would be difficult for the transfer station attendants to hand out receipts to everyone who pays a one dollar bag fee. Briefly discussed ways to solve this issue. Ed recommends that this go out as a letter to each individual instead of a memo. Bill motioned to have the Town Administrator send a letter to anyone involved in turning in cash and reiterating the Town of Becket Handling of Departmental Receipts issued on May 3, 2006, Angela seconded. All in favor.

Jeanne presented a town meeting budget calendar showing responsibilities and due dates. She advised that the budget calendar follows the town's bylaws and also includes a due date for petitioned articles. Bill recommended that the January date that all boards, officers and committees need to have their budgets in by is in bold print. Bill motioned to approve the 2014 Town Meeting Budget Calendar, Angela seconded. All in favor. Ed will send the calendar to all boards, officers and committees along with a strongly worded letter so everyone will know what needs to be submitted and when it needs to be submitted by.

The Board reviewed the Variance Application from the Zoning Board of Appeals to construct a 2 car garage within 10' from side setback and 15' from front setback on property located at 186 Greenwater Drive. Ed feels it is important for the Board to comment on variances and pay close attention to them because it is important that the ZBA does not make setbacks any more non-conforming than they already are. There were questions about this property and also about the abutting property. The Board has twenty days from receipt of this notice to respond to the ZBA. The application was received on October 25, 2013. This cannot wait until the next scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting on November 20, 2013. The Board would like to have a working meeting on November 13, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. to get their responses completed to send to the ZBA.

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The Board reviewed the application for a Site Plan review from the ZBA for maintenance garage/shop/office space at YMCA Camp located at 748 Hamilton Road. Bill asked if the camp should have started construction on this if they have not gone through the Site Plan review process. Ed will check with the building inspector tomorrow and the Board can act on this at the working meeting on November 13th.

The Board reviewed the letter of resignation from Robert Gorden from the Historical Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Community Preservation Commission and Town Meeting Bylaw Review Committee. The Board will table this until the working meeting on November 13th.

Angela asked why the parking ban was on the agenda when they took this up at their last meeting. Ed advised that it was not on the agenda for the last meeting and even though they did this under other business, he thought they should vote on it again as an agenda item. Bill motioned that the Winter Parking Ban from November 15, 2013 through April 15, 2014 from 11:00 p.m. through 7:00 a.m. be enacted, Angela seconded. All in favor.

Briefly discussed closing the town hall on November 29, 2013. Most employees are taking their floating holiday on this day. Ed is recommending that the Selectmen rescind the floating holiday and just make the day after Thanksgiving a holiday for the employees. Bill motioned that the town hall close on Friday, November 29, 2013, Angela seconded. All in favor.

The Board reviewed the monthly reports of the Ambulance Department and Animal Control Officer. The Board had no comments on the reports.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements: Angela advised that there are posters up for a contest for a new town seal. The Board previously spoke about what would be involved if the town changed its town seal. The Board was not in favor of this. Briefly discussed the issue with the town seal contest. Bill motioned that the Board of Selectmen are not in favor of changing the town seal as proposed by the 250th Anniversary Committee, Angela seconded. All in favor.

Jeanne thanked the fire department for their quick response to a fire on Long Bow Lane East.

Jeanne advised that she attended an ADA Training Seminar and brought back some information and gave it to Ed if anyone wanted to look at it. She also attended the BRPC Zoning for Formula Businesses Meeting and found it to be very informative.

Jeanne advised that she received a complaint about the truck that overturned on Johnson Road.

Town Administrator's Report: Ed advised that Overhead Door came out to the Ambulance Garage and replaced the bottom door seal. This appears to have fixed the issue of air and water getting into the garage from under the door. The safety mechanisms and one broken window on the door were replaced at the same time. While Overhead Door was there, David Shorey had them check the two units in the Fire Garage. These units are getting old and work intermittently. Overhead Door is going to try to find some replacement parts for these doors but due to the age the two units may have to be replaced.

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Ed advised that the revaluation work has been completed by the Assessors Department and all of the information has been sent to the Department of Revenue in Boston. If the Assessors hear from DOR and all goes well they have a week of required public disclosure for the new valuations. The tax classification hearing has been scheduled for November 20th so that at least can be taken care of, since that is just to determine whether to have a single or split tax rate even if the values are not approved at that point.

Ed advised that the Town's Other Post Employment Benefits actuarial valuation as of June 30, 2012 completed through the Berkshire Region Group Purchasing Program has been completed and was received this afternoon.

Ed advised that he received a notice of non-compliance from the DEP for the Route 20 Spring due to total coliform detections count on October 24th. As per DEP requirements, he posted the proper notice at the Spring on October 28th. Said notice was to remain for seven days. In addition, the town's testing company, Housatonic Basin disinfected the distribution pipe with a 12.5% chlorine solution and scrubbed the pipe with a long bottle brush, as the issue was believed to be caused by a buildup in the pipe rather than contaminated ground water. Housatonic Basin also took the required five follow up samples in the month of October as per DEP requirements.

Ed advised that George Roberts has volunteered his services to serve as an alternate on the ZBA. The Board of Selectmen will be receiving a letter of interest from him in time to act at the next regularly scheduled meeting on November 20, 2013.

Ed advised that he would be attending the Finance Committee meeting tomorrow evening and the Berkshire Managers meeting on Tuesday, November 12th along with MIIA training for their new Agility membership orientation webinar that same afternoon. He will be attending a JLMC Mediation session in Southbridge on Wednesday, November 13th. He is also planning on attending a Police Training exercise at the Becket Washington School on Thursday, November 14th and he will be facilitating the Energy Committee Meeting on Thursday, November 21st at 10:00 a.m.

Public Input: Chris Bouchard asked the Board if they legally close the roads that are not maintained in the winter. Bill advised that they usually put up signs that say the road is not maintained in the winter. Chris advised that he will come to the meeting on November 20th with a list of roads that are not maintained during the winter. If the Board votes to legally close these roads then the town is not required to pull anybody out if they get stuck on these roads that are closed. Briefly discussed the incident that took place on Johnson Road with the truck that overturned. Chris advised that you cannot restrict trucks from traveling on Johnson Road because the town has received Chapter 90 money to work on this road and the road is wide enough for two cars traveling in opposite directions to pass each other. He feels a police presence might help to slow trucks down on this road. Jeanne expressed safety concerns about truck traffic on that road. Chris suggested that some signs could be put up advising that pedestrians walk on the road.

Bob Ronzio gave the Board an article that appeared in the newspaper on October 3, 1974 regarding trailers in Sherwood Forest. He advised that some of these trailers that were placed on these properties forty years ago are still on these properties. Mr. Ronzio believes most of these trailers probably never received a variance that would allow them to be on the properties and they need to be torn down.

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Any other business: Ed presented Angela with a "Birthday" cupcake and the Board proceeded to sing Happy Birthday to her.

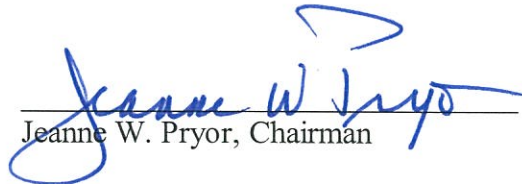
Reviewed correspondence.

Bill motioned to give Ed the authority to enter into negotiations for extending the lease for the Becket Arts Center, Angela seconded. All in favor.

9:10 PM Jeanne motioned to adjourn, Angela seconded. All in favor.

Reviewed payroll/expense warrants.

Respectfully submitted,
Nina Weiler, Secretary


Jeanne W. Pryor, Chairman

Documents discussed at meeting:

- Letters and emails regarding traffic flow at the intersection of County and Yokum Pond Roads.
- "Draft" Town of Becket Ambulance Write-Off Policy
- "Draft" Memo regarding Handling of Departmental Receipts
- "Draft" Town Meeting Budget Calendar
- Variance Application from the Zoning Board of Appeals to construct a 2 car garage on property located at 186 Greenwater Drive
- Application for a Site Plan review from the Zoning Board of Appeals for maintenance garage/shop/office space at YMCA Camp located at 748 Hamilton Road
- Letter of resignation from Robert Gorden from the Historical Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Community Preservation Committee and Town Meeting Bylaw Review Committee
- Monthly reports of the Ambulance Department and Animal Control Commission
- Newspaper article regarding Sherwood Forest Trailers dated Oct. 3, 1974