

Board of Selectmen  
May 21, 2014  
Minutes

Members present: Jeanne Pryor, William Elovirta, Angela Hilton

Others Present: Ed Gibson, Nina Weiler, Colleen O'Connor, Beth VanNess, Robert Ronzio, Gale LaBelle, Roger Fleury, Mercedes Gallagher, Jeanne Morano, Julia Maynard

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. Bob Ronzio, Beth VanNess, Colleen O'Connor, Angela Hilton and the Board of Selectmen are recording the meeting.

The Board and members of the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jeanne advised that it has been a tradition by past Selectmen of rotating positions on the Board unless a member chose not to serve as chair. Jeanne motioned to elect Bill Elovirta as Chairman of the Board beginning at their next meeting, Angela seconded. Bill abstained. Motion passed. Bill motioned to elect Angela Hilton as Vice Chairman of the Board, Jeanne seconded. Angela abstained. Motion passed. Angela motioned to elect Jeanne Pryor as Clerk of the Board, Bill seconded. Jeanne abstained. Motion passed.

Mercedes Gallagher gave the Board a brief report from the Westfield River Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee. She gave the Board the 2013 Annual Report of the Wild and Scenic Westfield River Committee. She explained what the WRW&SAC has been doing and some of the workshops they have held and how much funding they have to spend toward keeping the Westfield River pristine. Mercedes asked the Board to come to her if they think of any project that would help improve the water quality of the Westfield River and she would see if funding was available for the project. The Board thanked Mercedes for coming in and sharing her information.

Roger Fleury addressed the Board regarding "Skill Touch" Automatic Amusement Device that he is asking the Board to allow in establishments in Becket. He had photos of what the devices look like and explained that these devices are based on skills not odds. He advised that the devices pay out so the establishment would need to create a bank so they can pay out to customers. Bill has some reservations about these devices. He advised that in past experiences there have been problems with these types of devices. The Board could decide whether or not they will allow the devices and if so, they could regulate how many devices they want in town. Mr. Fleury advised that the State said they are legal and is leaving it up to the cities and towns to regulate them. The Board needs to come up with policies and procedures and would like to table this until their next meeting.

Ed explained that there is property for sale on High Street that is currently in Chapter 61A. The Board of Selectmen has the right of first refusal on this property. Ed advised that the attorney is asking if the Board is interested in this property and if not, then he is asking that the Board sign a waiver. The Board looked at the map to see where this property is located. Bill motioned to give up the Right of First Refusal, Jeanne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

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Gale LaBelle, Board of Health Chair, addressed the Board regarding Board of Health fee increases. Gale advised that the fees were increased in 2013 but there is no evidence that there was a public hearing on the increases. The BOH scheduled a public hearing on the fee increases and some of the fees that were advertised were increased because some of the public at the public hearing felt they should be increased. She ran through the different inspections and the fees for these inspections. Briefly discussed rubbish haulers that come into Becket that do not have a license. Gale explained that it is very difficult to find all of these haulers to make sure they are licensed. A question came up regarding clothing and shoe drops and if they need to be permitted. Ed's only comment about the new fees was that there were four fees that increased from what was advertised at the public hearing. His reasoning was that if someone saw the proposed fee increases in the paper and saw that the fee increases would not affect them, then they may not come to the public hearing. He feels that the fees should not be more than what was advertised. Gale advised that the fees will be in effect starting today.

Ed advised that Kris McDonough will be at their first meeting in June to discuss the Berkshire County Law Enforcement Council Mutual Aid Agreement.

Jeanne advised that the Board had previously voted to come up with an alcohol and drug policy as soon as possible and to have town counsel look it over before the Board votes to approve it. She also advised that she has drafted an Alcohol and Drug Policy and would like the Board and Ed to read it over and make their adjustments and bring this to their next meeting so that the policy can be reviewed for changes and voted on. Angela referred to the draft and asked how soon would the highway superintendent be trained on alcohol and drug misuse symptoms and indicators used in making determinations for reasonable suspicion testing assuming this policy is approved. Bill advised that he would need to take the training as soon as it is available if he has not already taken the training. This will go on the next meeting agenda.

Bill motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of May 7, 2014, Angela seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The Board will hold off on approving the minutes of May 9<sup>th</sup> because Angela has some changes she would like to make but did not have time to do them before the meeting.

The Board reviewed the monthly reports of the Animal Control Officer, Police Department and Citations Issued. Ed advised that he spoke with the police chief and the police chief is recommending that a detail officer is present during the Customer Appreciation event that will be held at the Becket General Store. Jeanne advised that she is working on a draft for a one-day liquor license policy.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements: Bill is concerned about the catch basin by the post office. There is a barrel by this catch basin but he is afraid someone will drive their vehicle into the ditch. He spoke with someone who works for the State and it is the state's responsibility to repair the catch basins along the state highway. Jeanne motioned to have Ed write a letter to MassDOT and sign it, Bill seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Bill reminded the Board that the Memorial Day Parade was on Monday and the Board should be at the North Becket Cemetery by 10:00 a.m. if they plan on walking in the parade.

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Angela stated that it came to her attention that after the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting Jeanne asked George Fuller to ask her to withdraw her open meeting law complaint. Jeanne advised that she did no such thing. Angela stated that she would have George come to the next meeting.

Jeanne advised that she and Chris Bouchard attended an Interpreting Bridge Inspection Reports meeting and learned that the town may have two or three bridges that may cost the town money to repair.

Town Administrator's report: Ed advised that the equipment for the water filtration system which the DEP required to be installed at the Mullen House to service it and the Becket Arts Center will be delivered tomorrow morning. He will meet with the plumber and electrician and the engineering company on site and will begin the installation process.

Ed advised that the new pressure tank and filter have been ordered and should be installed at Fire Station 2/Ambulance Garage within the next two weeks.

Ed advised that Tighe and Bond have completed the grant application for the Urban Development Grant which would look at the feasibility of a public water supply in town and will be submitting that application this week.

Ed advised that the Department of Local Services is offering a pilot program called TAP (Taxpayer Assistance Program) for up to fifteen communities which would assist communities in setting their tax rate in November rather than in December. He would like the Board's approval to utilize this Pilot program starting with the upcoming fiscal year tax rate setting process. Bill motioned to give the Town Administrator approval to enter into this Pilot program, Jeanne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ed advised that he has three and one half vacation days which he was unable to use due to his schedule during his first contract year. He would like the Board's permission to carry over the three and one half days of vacation. Jeanne motioned to allow the Town Administrator to carry over the three and one half vacation days to fiscal year 15, Bill seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ed advised that he and Chris Bouchard attended a Hazard Mitigation Grant meeting in Lee yesterday. They found that this particular grant process seems to focus on projects which are already planned and maybe even designed already. He will be attending the next meeting of the Berkshire Stat group on Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup>.

Public Input: Bob Ronzio asked if the town sets its tax rate in November does this affect the districts. Ed advised that it does not affect the districts.

Any other business: Angela asked if the Animal Control Officer was allowed to go to another town to pick up a dog. Ed advised that he gave the ACO permission to pick up a dog in Westfield because the owner surrendered his dog to a shelter in Westfield instead of surrendering the dog in Becket like he should have.

Nina advised that Laurel Burgwardt from the Board of Health would like to know if the Selectmen would be interested in having a specialist from the Attorney General's office come before the Board to discuss

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abandoned houses and vacant properties. Jeanne asked if she could get some information regarding this. Nina will check to see if she could get more information on this.

Reviewed correspondence.

Jeanne read the Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by Angela Hilton against Jeanne and Bill. She advised that the complaint form did not have the section filled out as to what action Angela wanted the public body to take in response to her complaint. She also read her response to the OMLC and Bill read his response to this OMLC. Jeanne asked Angela what she wanted the public body to do about this complaint. Angela stated that she still believes that Jeanne and Bill had conversation with each other prior to the meeting on May 9<sup>th</sup>. Jeanne advised that Angela would need to present evidence and facts to support her claim. Angela advised that she would be sending this information to the Attorney General's office. Jeanne motioned that the Board take no remedial action in response to the Open Meeting Law Complaint and that they send their responses to the Attorney General's Office, Bill seconded. Angela abstained. Motion passed.

8:30 PM Bill motioned to adjourn, Angela seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Reviewed payroll/expense warrants.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nina Weiler, Secretary

  
William H. Elovirta, Chairman

Documents discussed at meeting:

- Right of First Refusal paperwork for Property located on High Street
- Board of Health Fee Increases
- Monthly reports of the Animal Control Officer, Police Department and Citations Issued
- Open Meeting Law Complaint and Responses from Jeanne Pryor and William Elovirta