

Board of Selectmen
November 19, 2014
Minutes

Members present: William Elovirta, Jeanne Pryor
Angela Hilton - absent

Others Present: Ed Gibson, Nina Weiler, Colleen O'Connor, Chris Bouchard, Dr. Robert Putnam-
CBRSD Superintendent, Ann Spadafora, Steve LaBelle, Mark Karlberg, Zachary
Greenspan, Jeff Piemont, Meredyth Babcock

7:02 PM Bill called the meeting to order. He advised that the meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and Guidelines for Becket Board of Selectmen Meetings.

Bill asked if anyone was recording the meeting. The Board of Selectmen is recording the meeting.

Steve LaBelle called the Finance Committee meeting to order.

The Chair led those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Robert Putman, CBRSD School Superintendent, addressed the Board. He is trying to get the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen's concerns regarding the school budget. He advised that the Excess & Deficiency account has dropped to approximately \$900,000.00. This account is there to try to keep assessments down. He asked the Board if they had any questions for him. Bill asked what was happening with Berkshire Trails School. Dr. Putnam explained that NESDEC (New England School Development Council) did a school use study on the current buildings which shows the capacity for students in each building and what it currently uses and found that Berkshire Trail, Kittredge and Becket Washington Elementary Schools are not at their capacities. The census information shows that school enrollment is down. The report also shows that consolidation of schools could save the district money. He explained the different options the district has regarding this. He also advised that there will be a school committee meeting on December 11th to discuss closing Berkshire Trails School. Meredyth Babcock spoke about the last school committee meeting and was disappointed that people were not allowed to speak. She suggested that the committee have something printed up about the financial issues prior to the meeting so people have an idea about why this is being discussed. She offered suggestions about the way they initiate the closing of schools. She also suggested that long term planning be done so that people know what to expect and are not caught off guard when issues come up. Ann Spadafora spoke about the decline of the population in Berkshire County and the reasons for the decline. She feels there should be discussions on how to attract people to Berkshire County. Dr. Putnam advised that the population from age 25 to 40 has been declining in Berkshire County. Dr. Putnam would like to speak with the Berkshire County Realtor Association to get feedback from them about attracting people to Berkshire County. He would like to ask six questions to the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee. The first question is: What are the strengths of our school system? Bill answered that he had three children that went through the school system and all of them received a good education and are leading productive lives. Meredyth Babcock stated that we live in a very unique environment. What are one or two key issues or challenges facing the school system? Ann Spadafora feels the budget is challenging and that the towns are strapped. Bill feels there should be better maintenance of the buildings in the school district. Are we heading in the right direction as a school system? What about our district must be maintained at all costs? Some answers included safety of students, quality of teachers, and maintenance of school buildings. What does the school district need most to work on? Long term planning and

Board of Selectmen
November 19, 2014
Minutes

moving students to different buildings while some schools are being renovated are what most people feel the district needs most to work on. What are the core values of our community? Some answers were commitment to learning and volunteers assisting with student activities. The Board thanked Dr. Putnam for coming to the meeting.

7:55 PM Steve LaBelle motioned to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting, Ann seconded. Motion passed.

Jeanne motioned to approve the Board of Selectmen minutes of November 5, 2014, Bill seconded. Motion passed.

Bill read the list of Winter 2014/2015 Road Closures. These roads do not have houses along the sections that are on this list. If the Board votes to close these roads, they will not be maintained from November 19, 2014 through May 1, 2015. Jeanne motioned to approve the Winter 2014/2015 Road Closures as presented, Bill seconded. Motion passed.

The Board reviewed the Change of Manager application from Mountain Grove Association for the annual all alcoholic club license. The change of manager request is to change the manager from Daniel Bruno to Roy Arnold. Bill motioned to approve the change of manager for Mountain Grove Association, Jeanne seconded. Motion passed.

The Board tabled the request from the Sherwood Forest Road Maintenance District for the Board to consider designating the Prudential Committee as "Special Municipal Employees".

The Board discussed the next steps that the town must take to participate in WiredWest's last mile project. Jeanne explained what has been done in the past and what will need to be done to participate in WiredWest's last mile project. Jeanne explained the three steps that need to be done which are: 1. The Board needs to pass a non-binding resolution expressing the town's intent to participate by December 31, 2014; 2. In the spring the town must authorize the issuance of a bond to cover the town's share of construction costs above the funds contributed by MBI that would require a two-thirds vote and; 3. 40% of households in the town must sign a conditional contract to take the service when it becomes available. Bill explained that if the Board votes to approve this resolution then it just means that the town will vote at a town meeting to authorize the issuance of a bond to cover the town's share of construction costs. Briefly discussed the costs that the residents will pay in order to have high speed internet service at their homes. Bill advised that the costs will depend on how many town residents decide to use the WiredWest network. Jeff Piemont explained why they had to go through all of these steps in order to get high speed internet to towns. Jeanne motioned to approve the non-binding resolution to show our intent to support the WiredWest last mile project, Bill seconded. Motion passed.

The Board tabled the Assessor Department update to their next meeting.

The Board reviewed the Tax Collector's job description. The Board is fine with the changes to the Tax Collector's job description. They will approve it at the next meeting.

Board of Selectmen
November 19, 2014
Minutes

The Board reviewed the monthly reports of the Building Inspector, Fire Department, Police Department and Citations Issued.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements: None.

Town Administrator's report: Ed advised that the new Highway Department grader is now between the dealer and the snow plow dealer. The grader had been shipped to New York to have the snow plows added to it however with the snowstorms in the Buffalo area the grader was brought back to the equipment dealer until the weather clears.

Ed advised that the financial information for FY 2015 is now completely entered into the Department of Revenue Gateway database system and we are waiting in DOR's queue to finalize our tax rate. At this time he is still predicting that the FY 2015 tax rate will be around \$10.45 per thousand whereas our preliminary budgetary estimate was at \$10.54. He will notify the Board of Selectmen as soon as the final paperwork has been approved by the Department of Revenue.

Ed advised that John Barry from Barry Architects was here and will be re-working the preliminary design for the front entranceway of Town Hall taking into account the Selectmen's comments concerning the first preliminary design. The ADA handicapped access ramp will be able to fit on the left side of the front entrance as opposed to the right of the entranceway as he originally proposed. He will edit the design and estimates to also take into effect the changes which will need to be incorporated into the vestibules and their doors to make them ADA compliant as well.

Ed advised that he will be attending the Energy Committee meeting tomorrow morning along with a Small Town Administrator's meeting tomorrow afternoon in Lee. He would also be attending the Conservation Commission meeting tomorrow when they act on the Ballou Park proposed work.

Public Input: Colleen O'Connor expressed her satisfaction with the new paint and carpets at town hall but she was concerned about the well being too close to the underground oil tank. Bill advised her that they are looking into the possibility of upgrading the heating and cooling system at town hall. They may decide to go to propane gas instead of oil in which case the oil tanks would be removed.

Chris Bouchard advised that the Board will have to re-sign the contract for the Hazard Mitigation Grant for Bonny Rigg Hill Road Culvert Replacement because he is estimating that the permitting will go ten months. This contract will go until October of 2016. Bill motioned to sign the Hazard Mitigation Grant contract for the culvert replacement on Bonny Rigg Hill Road, Jeanne seconded. Motion passed.

Chris Bouchard advised that the Ground Speed Controllers are installed in the three trucks and are functioning.

Any other business: The Board signed the Policy for Sherwood Forest Road Maintenance District Voter List that they approved at their last meeting.

Board of Selectmen
November 19, 2014
Minutes

Briefly discussed applying for a CDBG grant for housing rehabilitation. Ed will look into the possibility of administering the grant himself. If it turns out to be a large undertaking he will have BRPC administer the grant.

Jeanne inquired about posting the bylaws and whether Ed heard from Kopelman & Paige about this. He advised that he will check with them again about this.

Bill advised that he drafted a letter from the Board to Kathy Hayn thanking her for her service to the town and wishing her a great retirement. He needs to check on a few things before he finalizes the letter. The Board can come in and sign this letter once it is completed.

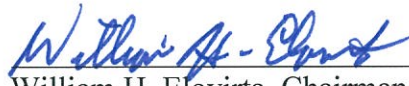
Reviewed correspondence.

8:42 PM Jeanne motioned to go into Executive Session under MGL c. 30A, section 21 (a) (6) to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property with respect to the Becket Arts Center Lease, Bill seconded. Roll call vote: Jeanne-aye, Bill-aye.

The Board of Selectmen will not reconvene after the Executive Session.

Reviewed payroll/expense warrants.

Respectfully submitted,
Nina Weiler, Secretary



William H. Elovirta, Chairman

Documents discussed at meeting:

- Winter 2014/2015 Road Closures
- Change of Manager application from Mountain Grove Association for the annual all alcoholic club license
- Non Binding Resolution in Support of WiredWest Cooperative
- Tax Collector Job Description
- Monthly reports of the Building Inspector, Fire Department, Police Department and Citations Issued
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Contract Bonny Rigg Hill Road Culvert Replacement