

**TOWN OF BECKET
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
March 18, 2015
7:00 PM
Becket Town Hall,
557 Main Street, Becket**

Members present: William Elovirta, Angela Hilton
Jeanne Pryor (participated remotely due to her distance to the meeting)

Others Present: Ed Gibson, Nina Weiler, Beverly Gilbert
Bob Ronzio, Colleen O'Connor, Eva Birkette

Call to Order

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

Bill asked if anyone was recording the meeting. The Board of Selectmen, and Bob Ronzio are recording the meeting.

Bill explained that because Jeanne is attending the meeting remotely, roll call votes are required.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair led those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Angie moved to accept the Board of Selectmen minutes of March 4, 2015 as written, Bill seconded. Motion passed with roll call: Angie – aye, Jeanne – aye, Bill - aye

Becket Country Store to Begin Sale of Alcoholic Beverages on Sundays at 10am

Bill announced that the Becket County Store sent notification that in accordance with the new state law, they will sell alcoholic beverages starting 10 a.m. on Sundays. Under the new state law and notification issued by the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission, package stores do not need local permission to begin selling alcoholic beverages as early as 10 a.m. on Sundays (Noon used to be the earliest time allowed) but they must notify their local licensing authority about their change in hours.

Seasonal Liquor License Renewals for the Following: Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival – Seasonal All Alcoholic Restaurant License; Berkshire Berries – Seasonal All Alcoholic Package Store, Becket Country Store – Seasonal All Alcoholic Package Store

- Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival – All Alcoholic Common Victualer

The Board did not receive Jacob Pillow's license renewal form. Bev will contact Jacob's Pillow. The board will discuss at its next meeting if the license renewal form has been submitted.

Angie moved to renew the following Liquor Licenses, seconded by Bill:

- Berkshire Berries – Seasonal All Alcoholic Retail Package Goods Store
- KMS, Inc. d/b/a/ Becket County Store – Seasonal All Alcoholic Retail Package Goods Store

Motion passed with roll call: Angie – aye, Jeanne – aye, Bill - aye

Monthly Reports of the Building Inspector, Animal Control Officer, Police Dept., Citations Issued, Fire Dept.

The Board reviewed the above named reports.

Town Administrator Operating & Capital Budget Update

Ed provided an update on the operating & capital budget.

Since the last time he discussed the capital budget, he recommends adding a line item in the amount of \$16,539.96 for a Stryker Stretcher for the Ambulance department. He considered this line item after speaking to Ambulance Dept. Head Jim Kupernik. Ed explained he recommends replacing the stretcher this year because the stretcher we have is approximately ten or twelve years old (did not come new with the last ambulance) and would cost approx. \$9,500 to update to an appropriate working condition. During Ed's meeting with Jim, he had discussed various models including a fancier one that cost \$22,000. Jim will provide additional info. on the automatic stretcher. Ed advised that he will recommend replacing it under special articles this year.

Ed attended the March 12th meeting of the Central Berkshire School District Committee at which they voted to adopt the FY2016 School budget. The school budget is slightly reduced from the FY2015 budget due to available funds. The state changed the assessment formula. Becket's share of the assessment for the next fiscal year will be approximately \$97,000 more than it was for FY2015, about a 5% increase. He gave the Board copies of the CBRSD certification letter and budget presentation. The only major variable we have left in the FY2016 budget picture will be new Vocational Students for the next school year. We should not be seeing the existing number of vocational students for Becket decreased (due to their grade level in school) but will be a question of how many new students we will have additionally and which Vocational schools will they be requesting to attend.

The cost of the net operating assessment is \$1,914,640. This will be the correct amount as long as the Governor's budget stays as is and the legislature doesn't change the assessment formula. The town's assessment was not the highest percentage of increase, nor was it the lowest percentage of increase. Ed pointed out the volatile nature of the state's changing assessment formula: Two years ago Becket benefited from the assessment formula to the tune of \$100,000. The one area that is unknown at this time is vocational tuition and transportation. We will not lose any students for the upcoming year due to the grade levels unless they move out of town so at this point we do not know: how many students will apply for vocational school, which vocational schools they apply to. Ed anticipates receiving the figures by the end of March, for our April 1st Selectmen's meeting. Ed noted that at this point as far as the operating budget is concerned, barring any surprises, we are in decent shape. However, he does not anticipate any surprises. The large article for WiredWest may be between 3.5 and 3.9 million.

Bill announced there will be a joint Finance/Selectmen meeting on April 2nd at 6 p.m at which representatives from WiredWest will attend (they were not available to attend tomorrow night's Finance Committee Meeting).

Town Administrator's Recommendation to Add ATM Article re: Transfer & Ownership of Map 217, Lot 64 for Purpose of Sale and Disposal of Property to the Board of Selectmen for the Purpose of Sherwood Forest Lake District Dam Repair. Discussion & Possible Vote

Ed advised that negotiations will be done during Executive Session. Bob Ronzio and the Lake District's attorney Elizabeth Goodman contacted Ed about the possibility of purchasing from the town Map 217, Lot 64. It was donated to the town May 2010 from Peter Piper. There are no back taxes on it. The property's current assessed valuation is \$3,200. It's located at the toe of the dam which is the next dam that the Lake District is planning to repair. Ed recommends selling that parcel to the Lake District – it's integral to their dam and repairs. He does not think the town needs the responsibility for that property and by selling it to them it will be in the hands of the individuals that will be responsible for the dam and the future repairs. He feels it's appropriate for the Lake District to be the rightful owners. Ed wanted to check the Board of Selectmen's interest re: placing it on an ATM article to transfer control of the parcel into the Board of Selectmen's hands so it can be sold. If the board gives the green light, Ed will ask Town Counsel to draft an appropriate ATM warrant article. Bill asked who owned lot 66 and 65. Bob Ronzio advised the district owns them. Bob advised that a survey on the lots determined because of wetlands, the lots are useless for building. It was mentioned that 63 is in the control of the treasurer (wetland low value) with a dilapidated house. Bill motioned to accept the Town Administrator's recommendation to add ATM Article re: transfer & ownership of map 217, lot 64 for the purpose of sale and disposal of property to the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of Sherwood Forest Lake District dam repair, seconded by Angie. Motion passed with roll call: Angie – aye, Jeanne – aye, Bill – aye

Bob Ronzio said to make it easier he will ask Elizabeth Goodman to send Ed the language for the Annual Town Meeting warrant article.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements

Bill:

- At his suggestion, Bev will order two of the new editions of the Selectmen's Handbook (for Bill and Angie – Jeanne will download via computer.)
- Indicated that it's performance appraisal time for the Town Administrator and Department Heads and directed the Town Administrator's office to distribute appraisal forms due back in time for discussion at the April 15th meeting.
- The State House news reported that the Lieutenant Governor announced that the administration will look into (not a promise) providing pot hole money to towns again this year. Last year the town received approx. \$36,000.

Jeanne:

- Jeanne – Inquired if there had been outreach to businesses relating to WiredWest. Ed advised Jeremy Dunn is doing outreach and he is not sure if Jeremy has approached business.

Town Administrator's Report.

- Budget Overview – There will be an increase in the town's assessment for the CBRSD in the upcoming FY16. Right now there are no new students. The budget will be completed once vocational tuition and transportation pieces are added.
- MBI Broadband – The mailing from MBI concerning the prospect of broadband connectivity in Becket has been delivered to Becket households. Our link on the Town website for information and link directly to the MBI sign up page should be up and running by March 19th. The Board thanked Nina who has made this possible by diligently working on this with Virtual Town Hall to get everything set in place.
- Highway Department Grader – John Deere Grader for the Highway Dept. was delivered on March 16th. The plows for the grader will be delivered separately from a different shipper.
- Energy Committee – The Energy Committee will be meeting tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. One of the agenda items they will take up will be for a Resolution for a potential Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article for divestiture in fossil fuel oil investments. He attached a copy of the Draft Resolution they will discuss. They know if they pass the resolution there are two avenues to bring this to Annual Town Meeting. 1) Since they are an advisory board to the Board of Selectmen, they can ask the Board of Selectmen to place on the ATM warrant or 2) 10 signatures from resident voters' petition to place.
- MMA Legislative Breakfast – He attended with Bill Elovirta on March 13th in New Marlborough. The meeting was worthwhile as it was well attended and very informative. Discussion had ensued re: budgets, regional schools and chapter 90 funds.
- Meetings – Tomorrow he will attend the Energy Committee & Finance Committee.

Public Input

Colleen O'Connor expressed that she opposes approving an Annual Town Warrant Article allowing the town to fine vacant properties.

Review Correspondence.

1. Letter dated 3/9/15 from Massachusetts Broadband Institute with enclosures: a) Last Mile Overview (3/1/2015) and b) Draft of Article, Motion & Ballot Question to authorize broadband project
2. North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership invitation to 5/9/15 Mass. Open Space Conference at Overlook Middle School, Ashburnham, MA
3. Letter dated 3/6/15 from Kopelman and Paige, P.C. re: Town of Becket Building Inspector v. Robert Houghtlin, Berkshire Housing Court No. 12H79CV001205 with enclosures: a) Building Inspector's Notice of Dismissal, and b) with a Certificate of Service

At 7:34 p.m. Angie moved to adjourn, Bill seconded. Motion passed with roll call: Angie – aye, Jeanne – aye, Bill - aye

Reviewed Payroll/Expense Warrants.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Secretary



William H. Elovirta, Chairman

Documents discussed at meeting:

- Draft Capital Plan Five Year Report
- Draft Town of Becket Financial Summary FY2015 Budget
- Energy Committee of Becket's Draft Resolution on the Climate Crisis
- Central Berkshire Regional School District letter dated March 12, 2015 re: the Town of Becket's Assessments for FY 2016 with enclosure of 1) FY2016 Final Budget dated March 12, 2015, and 2) FY2016 Operating and Capital Assessment (Certify March 12, 2015)