

**Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen's Meeting
April 15, 2015
7:00 PM
Town Hall,
557 Main Street, Becket**

Attendees:

Board of Selectmen: William "Bill" Elovirta, *Chairperson*; Angela Hilton, *Vice Chair*
Jeanne Pryor, *Clerk*

Staff: Ed Gibson, *Town Administrator*; Beverly Gilbert, *Recording Secretary*

Others: Colleen O'Connor, Bob Ronzio

Call to Order

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. 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. Beverly Gilbert for the Board of Selectmen, and Bob Ronzio were recording the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair led those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Angie moved to accept the April 1, 2015 minutes as written, Bill seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Bid Opening for Map 213, Lots 124 & 125

7:08 PM -- Ed announced that bids were due 4 p.m. today and this is the bid opening for two parcels the town owns in the Sherwood Greens Road District. The town received one bid in the amount of \$12,000 from the Sherwood Green Roads District: Bid 15-003. All required bid documents were submitted. The minimum bid requirement was \$12,000. Ed who serves as the Town's Chief Procurement Officer recommended accepting this bid and advised it is up to the Board of Selectmen to accept or reject the bid as they deem in the best interest of the town. Bill moved to accept the Sherwood Green Road District's bid of \$12,000 for the two lots in Sherwood Greens (Map 213, Lots 124 & 125). Angie seconded. Motion carried with Jeanne abstaining as she had recused herself from this agenda item. Ed will notify the bidder and arrange to close on the property. Under Mass General Laws, any proceeds from the sale of the property may not be placed in the general fund. Rather, it must be placed into a separate special fund for acquiring other property (including open space or other reasons). Ed will ensure this occurs.

After the vote, Jeanne inquired about how the minimum bid was determined-- Ed advised that he consulted with the attorney, discussed with some of the members of the Prudential Committee and reviewed the history returning back to the original offer 3 years ago.

Richie Pryor email dated 4/10/15 re: decision to not be reappointed to the Conservation Commission

Jeanne clarified that Richie did not resign but gave notice that when his term was completed, he did not want to be reappointed. Ed advised that as of July 1st, if no new members are appointed, the Conservation Commission will have two vacancies and the Conservation Commission is concerned about meeting its quorum (4). At the suggestion of Bill, the board will send a letter of appreciation to Richie Pryor for his many years of service.

Reports of the Fire Department, Dog Officer, Building Inspector & Police Department

The Board reviewed the above named reports. At Jeanne's inquiry, Bill will ask the dog officer if he has a micro-chip reader.

Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article – Drafts

- Planning Board – Small Wind Energy Systems (submitted by Planning Board)
 - Planning Board – Large Wind Energy Systems (submitted by Planning Board)
- Ed gave the board a summary and completed bylaw for each of the above. Bob Ronzio was available to answer questions. Bob indicated that there are no major changes to these bylaws (mostly housekeeping adjustments such as renumbering, re-paragraphing, consistent presentation). Jeanne moved to place the Small Wind and Large Wind Energy System bylaw Changes Articles on the Annual Town Meeting, seconded by Angie. Motion carried unanimously.

- Board of Selectmen - Sale of Property

Bill read the Proposed Article:

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sell, *at auction or through sealed bid sale, at their discretion*, a certain parcel of land located on Sir Galahad Drive, deeded to the Town of Becket by a deed recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 4666, Page 47, and shown on the Assessor's Map 217, Lot 64. The transfer shall be subject to the following conditions: (i) the purchaser shall share in the cost of maintaining and repairing the dam on Lancelot Lake; (ii) the purchaser shall comply with all restrictions regarding the dam on said parcel, including complying with any enforcement order and fines as may be required by the Office of Dam Safety of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and (iii) the parcel contains protected wetland areas and the purchaser shall comply with the Wetland Protection Act with regard to such resource areas; and (iv) such other terms, conditions and restrictions as the Board of Selectmen deems appropriate; or take any other action relative thereto.

Ed advised that Attorney Elizabeth Goodman (representing the Lake District) drafted the above and he has forwarded it to Town Counsel for review. Ed is not certain if the italicized words (*at auction or through sealed bid sale, at their discretion*) are necessary. Bob Ronzio discussed with the board. In 2010, Peter Piper donated this land to the town. Bob advised that this sale

will allow the Lake District to work on the dam. At the recommendation of Ed who stated he doesn't think the town needs the liability of the property near the dam, Jeanne moved to add the above listed article (Map 217, Lot 64) on the ATM warrant. Angie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

At tomorrow's working meeting Ed will present a similar Article for another parcel (Map 217, Lot 63, formerly owned by Toms) the Lake District has shown interest. Ed met with the Christine the Treasurer, Liz the Assessor and Bill the Building Inspector to discuss and determine the status & value of the land and property. After Bill and Liz conducted a site inspection this week, because the building is seriously dilapidated, Liz reduced the value to \$29,000. The Lake District is willing to take care of the dilapidated house with a faulty well and a faulty septic system. The town has a lien on this property – owed about \$14,000 in taxes. Bob indicated this property is located amongst wetlands & the engineers determined the property is in terrible shape – The town attempted to board it up but it continues to attract vandals. According to the Treasurer, the town foreclosed in the last year and it is officially the town's. Ed recommended that the board allow this article to go on the warrant subject to town counsel's amendments or edits. The town will not have to spend money tearing down this home, decommissioning the well/septic and addressing the dam's liability. Ed advised because this property is under \$35,000 an RFP is not required. Ed will draft an article for Lot 63 to present at tomorrow's working meeting.

- Board of Selectmen - Zoning ByLaw Amendment /Zoning Enforcement
Ed says this article falls into the zoning bylaw category: Bill indicated he had given a copy to the Planning board and he received positive response. At Jeanne's recommendation, the board will continue working on this article and present at a special town meeting. The board would like to see the bylaw changed the last sentence from "The Zoning Enforcement Officer shall act on request for enforcement of this Zoning By-Law as provided in G.L.c. 40A, S7. Such requests shall be submitted in writing" to "Such enforcement shall be done by observation of violations by the Zoning Enforcement Officer or by verbal or written communication to the Zoning Enforcement Officer." At Jeanne's suggestion, Ed will forward to Town Counsel for review.
- MBI – to be discussed tomorrow's working meeting.

Below is a list of several bylaws the board briefly discussed:

- Board of Selectmen - Vacant Property ByLaw
The board will discuss at tomorrow's meeting – Jeanne emailed suggested revisions.
- Town Clerk – for the Town Clerk to be an appointed position rather than an elected position. If passed at a town meeting, it would require a ballot vote at a town election.
- Dog Control Bylaw
- Well

Because of the complexity involved with reviewing and creating bylaws, Jeanne recommended that the board advertise for applicants to the recently approved Bylaw Review Committee.

MIIA Health Insurance Recommendation

Ed advised that there is approximately a 7.34% increase in health insurance premiums over last year and he recommends that the town accept MIIA Health Insurance programs for active employees (not retired). The plan runs June 1st through June 30th. For retired employees he recommends an alternate program under the Medex and Dental High programs, In September Ed will present a recommendation to the board for an alternative Medex program for retired employees which he thinks will save retirees and the town money. In January 2016, he will approach the board to present new programs MIIA offers to active employees and then the information may be shared with employees. GIC increased about 10%. MIIA increased health benefit plans 9% (a little below the average for health insurance programs.) Jeanne moved to accept the monthly contribution rates proposal for MIIA Health Benefits Trust effective fiscal year 2016 for MIIA, seconded by Bill. Motion carried unanimously

SFRD Voting List Legal Opinion

Ed reported that Town Clerk George Roberts requested a legal opinion from town counsel regarding the voter list for Sherwood Forest Road Maintenance District. He asked whether certain Becket property owners are eligible to vote in District Elections, and whether the Board of Selectmen's Policy for Sherwood Forest Road Maintenance District Voter List is legally binding upon the Registrar of Voters. The focus of this matter is for the status of residents living on property adjacent to Wells Road. Based on Attorney Joel Bard (Kopelman & Paige) opinion dated April 3, 2015, Jeanne voted to rescind the Board's Policy for Sherwood Forest Road Maintenance District Voter List approved by the Board of Selectmen on November 7, 2014; seconded by Angie. Motion carried unanimously. Jeanne asked that the board send notification of this vote to the Town Clerk and the SFRMD Prudential Committee Chair.

CPA Petition

Ed confirmed with Town Counsel that if this petition is approved at ATM, it is the Board of Selectmen's decision to submit this to ballot. A passing ballot vote is required to rescind the town's Community Preservation Act.

Grader Surplus Equipment Disposal

Ed reported that the Town of West Stockbridge is interested in purchasing the town's grader for \$35,000. Ed has discussed the grader with West Stockbridge's Town Administrator Mark Weber who believes it would meet their needs. West Stockbridge has a different roadway situation from the Town of Becket. West Stockbridge uses a grader for only a few weeks every year on about 10 miles of gravel roads (Becket has an excess of 30 road miles). Rather than going through the efforts involved with auction, Ed recommends selling the grader for \$35,000 to West Stockbridge, the amount provided by the trade-in company (Schmidt). Chris has worked with their highway superintendent who is aware of the history and condition of the grader.

Bill pointed out that because the grader is 21 years old, the town paid \$175,000 for it, the new one cost \$350,000, and the town will get back approx. 10% of what a new one would cost (good percentage), he favors selling the old grader to West Stockbridge. Angie stated that we spent \$60,000 in repairs last year -- Ed pointed out that is one of the reasons it has \$35,000 in value remaining. Jeanne said she thought we should get some money for it. Ed advised that in order to

sell the Grader to West Stockbridge, in accordance with Mass Procurement Law, the board must declare such as surplus equipment.

Jeanne moved to declare the grader as surplus and to sell it to West Stockbridge for \$35,000. Bill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Operating & Capital Budget Update

Ed reviewed and discussed the line items of the operating and capital budgets with the board.

Capital plan

Ed's Recommendation for capital items either through expense or debt as warrant articles for the ATM:

Replace the fire escapes at Town Hall \$6,575 expensed - both ends are badly in need of repairs.

Ed advised the town needs to replace the roof. The board discussed two roofing options, one of which will go before ATM (debt):

1. **\$123,600 roof with metal and snow guards and design.** Concerns includes expense, the Buildings & Grounds Technician advised the snow guards would make it more difficult to rake snow, and aesthetics (not in keeping with the New England style architecture of the Town Hall). Advantages are that it has more insulation and will last longer (100 years)
2. **\$85,500: Replacement of shingled Town Hall Roof (includes design & construction).** will bid to last 50 years, more in keeping with New England style of the Town Hall, less expensive than the metal roof, easier to remove snow Ed advised the town can add insulation to the attic at any time.

Angie moved place an article on the ATM asking the town to borrow \$85,500 for replacement of the roof shingles, seconded by Jeanne. Motion carried unanimously.

Replace & Upgrade Furnaces & Heating System & possibly air in the Town Hall \$120,000 (debt):

This will incorporate a DOER originally for the air conditioning alone. The Town may use this grant to replace and upgrade furnaces & heating system too and it would make a huge difference in energy usage. The town has four 22 year old oil fired furnaces which are not well matched to the building or the duct work (important to remove the oil tank which is next to the well). Ed would work with DOER; find what their grants will cover, what their incentives are. This would cover having someone look at those numbers and come up with one or two alternatives which would also tell us how much energy we would save. We would then make a decision and use the design and go out to bid to install the new system. We would find out if we would go with propane, or electric (today's electrical systems are super-efficient). If the town converts to electric, we will need to upgrade the electrical system a little bit.

Fire Station #1 (Washington Street) replace windows with energy efficient double pane – \$15,000 (expense)

Fire Dept - 2 thermal imaging cameras \$15,000 (expense) The Fire Dept obtained a new quote -- originally the quote was \$25,000 for both cameras.

Ambulance Dept - Stryker stretcher \$16,539.96 (expense) current one needs \$9,000 to repair. Old one is over 12 years old.

Highway Dept – \$240,000 Dump Truck 4X4 plow and sander (debt) The Highway Department requested a loader and a dump truck. Ed's recommendation is to move forward with the Dump Truck (Chris Bouchard's number one priority) and consider the loader next year

Total Capital Plan Bonding number approx.: \$443,000

Total Capital Plan Expense \$53,114.96

Operating budget: Ed discussed the operating budget with the board.

Town Meeting is a new expense – \$3,500 costs of mailing the Annual Town Meeting Warrant (postage, printing, etc.)

Selectmen's salaries will remain at \$6,000. The Board of Selectmen declined 2% COLA for their salaries.

Town Administrator's salary – to be discussed tomorrow (pre-evaluation)

Gravel and Stone – from \$16,000 to \$32,000: The Highway Superintendent had advised that the town has not been purchasing enough gravel and stone to maintain the roads. Over the next couple of years, his intent was to increase the amount.

Part and supplies Parts up from \$18,540 to \$28,074 – increase due to additional work to keep loader another year – if we keep the loader we would have to spend approx. \$12,000 for repairs

Moth account – After discussion, despite that this account has not been used in years, because statute requires having this account to pay for moth control treatments, Ed will add \$1 back into this account to keep it open should the need arise to transfer money. Bill inquired if it's possible to have a joint Tree and Moth account. Ed to find out.

Vocational Tuition from \$195,000 FY15 to \$167,560 FY16 – It will be down a little this year even though Becket will have additional students.

School Transportation from \$95,000 FY15 to \$75,000 FY16

Police Department Salaries \$253,114.21– reflects 2% COLA, two additional patrols (to provide the Police Chief additional administrative time in the office, and quarry patrol). Included in this figure is a pay increase of \$1,650 for the Police Chief to help make the salary more competitive. The Police Chief had pointed out that he is the lowest paid full-time Police Chief in the surrounding communities. Hinsdale recently hired a new police chief who doesn't have anyone or very few working under him for \$60,000.

Fire Chief Stipend – Currently there is a \$550 stipend for Volunteer Firefighters approved in 2007 or 2008. When it was approved, the idea was to give the volunteers \$550 in their pocket, not subject to withholding or taxes. However, by law it falls into the category that it does. Therefore, the fire department requested that the stipend be increased to \$700 for those who attend 50% calls and 50% trainings (in-pocket would be close to \$550). Angie stated that she is fine with doing this but then thinks they should not receive free dump stickers because the intention behind the dump stickers was that they were receiving such because they weren't getting paid. Now that they are getting paid, she doesn't think dump stickers are necessary. Moreover, no one else in town receives free dump stickers. Bill thinks the free dump sticker policy was approved at a town meeting and it might require town meeting approval to remove this policy. Ed will research.

Dry hydrants – no funding request is needed this year because of grants and this year's carry over.

Emergency Management Training – Ed will encourage as many people (Firefighters, Police, and Ambulance) as possible to attend trainings FY16

Mental Health Services – For about 3 or 4 years, nothing has been expended so Ed recommended \$0.

Arts Center submitted four requests for articles

- 1) ADA Lift \$7,000 (They have 20,000 donations – applied for grant but did not get selected – will try next year -- \$7,000 balance (under special articles)
- 2) \$900 movie night – screen & popcorn maker
- 3) \$800 Assistant for Children's summer daytime program
- 4) A little over \$2,000 for repairs for the building

Ed would recommend 1) or 4)

Children's Holiday Party – Ed stated that if the board agrees, he does not recommend placing this on the budget because this never had been intended to be an annual expense (only a one-time expense to help this organization get started and then they could raise their own funds), did not receive any requests from them this year and, after last year's party the key to the town hall was not returned and they never paid the \$50 bill for replacement of the key. Ed would like to send this organization another invoice with a letter saying if payment or key is not returned, they will not be permitted to use the building ever again. Bill said originally the Fire and Police Department and possibly another source gave them money and they were told to save some as seed money for the following years. Bill mentioned there was never any accounting or communication for the funding.

Special Articles

Stabilization Fund – The Board agreed on earmarking at least \$400,000 of the free cash to go back into the stabilization to replenish a good portion of the \$500,000 for the BRD settlement. Currently the stabilization balance is \$162,633.65.

Becket Ambulance Dept. Expenses –Jim originally had requested level funding. Ed suggested an increase from \$26,700 to \$28,000 –the ambulance is getting older and more costly to repair. On the flip side of these two, last year we used \$89,000 as the offset of receipts to the enterprise fund and the balance was funded by taxation. This year Ed thinks the town will have funds from DOR. He will recommend \$99,000 utilization of receipts to reduce taxation for this upcoming year.

Free cash was \$484,200 – we haven't expended anything. We will put \$400,000 for stabilization. We will request \$83,587.45 for the snow and Ice Deficit and request approx. \$435 for previous year's bills. Ed will address the remaining ice deficit of \$31,000.

Crystal Pond Home Owners Dues - Owe approx. \$13,023.06 and Ed didn't put it in last year. This has not been paid in the past years. Because it is essentially swampland, the town is not able to make use of this property. If there is a court order, the town would be required to pay this. Ed thinks that because it is likely to be shot down at town meeting, he recommends taking this off and the money could be utilized in another place.

Snow and ice deficit – the town still has approx. \$31,000 which needs to be paid off. Ed recommends 2 more town meeting articles:

- 1) To Transfer \$11,000 from health insurance account into the winter accounts
- 2) To Transfer \$20,000 from legal expenses (BRD) account into the winter accounts

Old Prior year bills: Four from Dicksons \$23.49, \$104.09, \$126.45 \$91.07 and three from Galls \$8.99, \$58.47, \$21.99

Bonding items: Town Hall Roof, Heating & A/C System, WiredWest & Dump Truck

Household Hazardous Waste

Bill moved for the Board to sign a letter (to the Household Hazardous Waste Steering Committee) stating the town's intention to participate in the Annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program for the Fiscal Year 2016, seconded by Angie. Motion carried unanimously.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcement

Angie inquired how the Police Department handles OUIs (Operating Under the Influence). Bill advised that the policy is that the police officer will contact the State Police Barracks in Lee and then drive the suspect there for testing. It takes 20 minutes for the special machine to warm up and it is approximately 20 minutes to drive from Becket. The machines must be recalibrated in Boston every 3 months. The solution for the machine must be replaced monthly. There are very strict guidelines for administering the test (for instance, if someone burps, the police must wait 10 minutes before testing the individual). Because of the maintenance, special training involved, expense, and relatively low number of people driving OUI, the Becket Police Dept will continue using the Lee Police Barracks.

Town Administrator's report.

The House Ways & Means Budget Committee released the budget this afternoon. They will give Becket \$5 more than Governor's budget. The House Ways & Means budget is \$100 million dollars less than the governor's budget but it's kinder to town, cities and school departments.

The Board of Selectmen's working meeting is 11:15 a.m. tomorrow.

Joint Finance / Board of Selectmen meeting is 5 p.m. tomorrow.

Demolition Funds: There is \$13,420 available for demolitions in the FY 15 Budget. The town received bids to demolish 4 properties:

- 8 Lovers Lane \$9,450
- 8 Mystic Isle Lane \$5,950
- 76 Kyle Lane \$5,950
- 458 Brooker Hill Road \$9,450

Ed recommends demolishing 8 Mystic Isle, 76 Kyle Lane and either 8 Lovers Lane or 458 Brooker Hill Road this fiscal year and the remaining building in July. Ed's recommendation to the board is to ask the Finance Committee for a transfer from the reserve fund in the amount \$7,930 into the demolition fund.

Reserve Fund Status – Currently the balance is \$35,422.24. In December, the town paid \$14,000 for paid vacation/sick & personal time to a retired employee. In addition to the \$7,930 for demolition, Ed would like to ask the finance committee to transfer \$7,347.38 from the reserve from the Tax collect salary account and the rest of it departmental transfers from the Town Secretary account to cover the balance from the \$14,000 paid in December. That will leave the town with approx. \$20,000 in the reserve account.

RFP for a vendor for Tax Assessing Services is out and due back May 6th. It's an RFP with two separate sealed proposals. One is a technical proposal and one is a price proposal. The technical proposals will be opened at the May 6th meeting. The price proposals will remained sealed (Bev will keep them.) The evaluating committee (Board of Assessors Liz and Geri and Ed) will review the technical proposals. Normally Ed would keep the price proposal but because he is an evaluator, this is not permitted. Once the evaluators score the proposals, the price proposals may be opened. They will see if the highest rated one also has the most competitive price bid. If satisfied with the pricing and technical proposals, the committee may elect to interview the bidder. Ed anticipates making a recommendation to the Board at its May 20th meeting.

Public Input.

At the recommendation of Bob Ronzio Ed will check with Bill if the properties slated for demolition are owned by bank. The town can force banks to take care of demolition.

Colleen O'Connor expressed concern about wells and septic systems in the North Becket Village.

Review Correspondence.

- Massachusetts Dept. of Transportation letter dated 4/1/15 re: \$36,507 Winter Recovery Assistance Program
- Massachusetts State Lottery Commission letter dated 4/10/15 re: Lottery's intention to install a KENO Monitor at the Becket Country Store
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Governor Baker & Lieutenant Governor Polito letter dated 4/9/15 certifying Town of Becket's Chapter 90 apportionment for Fiscal Year 2016 is \$242,898.

Selectmen to adjourn meeting.

Angie moved to adjourned, seconded by Jeanne. Motion carried unanimously. Bill adjourned the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Secretary



William H. Elovirta, Chairman

Documents Discussed at this meeting:

Map 213, Lots 124 & 125 Bid document15-003

Email Richie Pryor

Reports of the Fire Department, Dog Officer, Building Inspector & Police Department

Planning Board Draft Bylaw - Small Wind Energy Systems

Planning Board Draft Bylaw Large Wind Energy Systems

Planning Board Summary for Small Wind and Large Wind Energy Systems

Draft Zoning ByLaw Amendment /Zoning Enforcement

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