

**Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen's Meeting
December 21, 2016
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall
557 Main Street, Becket**

Attendees:

Board of Selectmen: William Elovirta, *Chairperson*; Jeanne Pryor, *Vice Chairperson*;
Nicole Ledoux, *Clerk*

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

Others: Pat Mullens of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and Ginger Conner

Call to Order

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He stated 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 for the Board of Selectmen indicated that she was recording the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Chairperson led those attending in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board to review minutes of previous meeting(s)

Jeanne moved to approve the 11/16/2016 minutes with corrections on page 3:

...will contact the Quarry (**Williams Stone Company**). Jeanne will notify some residents on Johnson Road.

Fire Station #1: Allegrone (~~William Stone Company~~) has completed the masonry repairs...

Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Jeanne moved to approve the 11/22/2016 working meeting minutes. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Pat Mullens of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission - Presentation on the Dept. Housing Community Development Grant

Patricia Mullens of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) gave a presentation and offered assistance to the town in submitting a Dept. Housing Community Development Block Grant at no cost to the Town of Becket. Pat stated that BRPC's agreement to assist the town with the grant application stipulates that the Town approves an allowable stipend of \$6,000 to reimburse BRPC for applications costs if the Town is selected as a recipient of the grant. If the grant application is successful, BRPC would be named and continue as the Grant Administrator charged with the implementation of the grant. She indicated that the application process has been streamlined and she described the scoring process. Pat thinks Becket would qualify for the grant

due to that it was ranked among the top 14 municipalities in Massachusetts with 50% of all households falling into the low to moderate income range. One of the changes to the DHCD application rating system is that collaborating with other towns will not improve a town's chance to receive the grant. Due to time constraints and the additional coordination entailed, Pat does not recommend that Becket work with another town.

The Town of Becket will focus on housing rehabilitation. Pat advised that \$800,000 is the maximum amount that may be awarded to a single community. The award includes the actual project, grant delivery and administrative expenses. There are specific guidelines for spending the money and the percentages allowed for grant delivery and administrative expenses. Pat believes it would be within reason for the town to request approximately \$30,000 each for 20 units of housing rehabilitation. She indicated that public procurement notifications and bid packages will be submitted to pre-qualified vendors. Pat advised that due to the limited season to install septic systems in our region, towns must be very well organized when funding is for septic systems. The grant is effective 7/1/2017 and ends 18 months later. Historically, approximately 75 percent of those receiving funds apply for at least one extension. Pat anticipates that future grant cycles will change to a two year period.

Pat discussed that towns may elevate their application standing by agreeing to provide matching funds. Towns with a higher matching fund dollar amount will be regarded more favorably. The town may use matching funds from its betterment (income from past CDBG housing rehabilitation programs), and community preservation act accounts. The amount that the town may list for matching funds will be determined. Ed estimates that the town may use approximately \$30,000 from the CPA for matching funds. Bill pointed out that the designation of CPA funds occurs at the Annual Town meetings, and the town traditionally votes in favor of the Community Preservation Commission's recommendations. Bill suggested that the BOS may ask the Community Preservation Commission if it would be amenable to earmarking funds for housing rehabilitation in conjunction with the CDBG grant. Pat offered to attend a meeting with the CPC. Ed will check the balance in the town's betterment (income from past CDBG housing rehabilitation programs) account.

Pat advised that the town does not need to re-submit or re-do its community development strategy which is on-file with the DHCD.

Pat clarified that this grant program is not geared for emergency rehabilitation.

Pat indicated that BRPC may assign an in-house design engineering for the town's rehabilitation project. The cost of the in-house engineering would be at a more competitive rate than if the town contracted an independent engineering firm.

Jeanne moved to submit the FY17 Community Development Block Grant Application for housing rehabilitation as outlined by Pat Mullens. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The BOS indicated its interest to proceed. Pat will begin working on the application. She will establish a waiting list, obtain photos of properties, and coordinate a public hearing with the BOS. BOS thanked Pat for her presence at tonight's meeting.

Discussion re: SunWatt Energy LLC's proposal to lease or purchase Town-owned land to develop a 5 MW

Solar Installation

Ginger Conner advised that SunWatt Energy LLC is using her realty services to consider several properties, including a town-owned parcel (30-40 acres of 65 acres on Jacobs Ladder Road) to develop a 5 MW Solar Installation. She asked the BOS if they have any interest in selling or leasing property located on Jacobs Ladder Road to SunWatt Energy LLC who would pay the town a percentage of the solar power profits. She is aware that the town may consider the possibility of building town buildings/facilities on this parcel. She offered to invite SunWatt to a BOS meeting.

Bill indicated that he is not against selling this property and he wants to consider a few things:

- If the town sold/leased the land to SunWatt, could the remaining land house a Fire Station, Highway Garage, Transfer Station, and the Ambulance garage?
- What portions of the parcel are buildable?
- What portions of the parcel would the town keep?
- Did SunWatt contact Eversource? Bill stated that the Becket Energy Committee had discussed issues with tying solar to the existing Eversource system. Ed added that Eversource is at its solar capacity, and it is extremely costly to expand the system. Ginger stated that SunWatt is willing to pay for new lines.
- Bill stated that the Planning Board would need to be consulted for a project of this scope which will involve a significant amount of clear-cutting.

Jeanne remembers this parcel was looked at for affordable/senior housing when she was on the Housing Committee. The committee chose not to use this parcel because of wetlands, wildlife habitat and an unsafe entrance/exit due to that it is located on a curved part of the road

Ginger stated that the benefits of this project include that it will be great to have solar, we do not have anything like this business in the town, the town will make money by selling the property and the town will receive income from the solar operations. Ginger indicated that her client would pay for a survey.

Bill advised that sale of property requires town meeting approval. Ginger indicated that this company is not in a hurry. She stated that if interested, she would provide an offer with comparable property sales to justify how she arrived at the dollar amount. Bill indicated that if the BOS is interested, he would want to have a public hearing. Jeanne stated that before taking action, the proposal should be discussed with the Becket Energy Committee. The BOS indicated that it is interested in exploring Ginger's proposal. The BOS asked Ed to investigate this parcel with the Conservation Commission and Building Inspector. Ginger provided a draft letter of intent. The BOS will take this matter under advisement.

Selectmen to consider Police Chief's notification that Officer Chad Heath will successfully complete his probationary period on 12/31/2016, with the recommendation that the BOS appoint him Reserve Officer with a pay increase to \$17.89 per hour effective 1/1/2017 through 6/30/2017
Chief McDonough provided notification that Chad Heath is about to complete his probationary period on the Police force. At the recommendation of Police Chief McDonough, Nicole moved to approve the Town Administrative appointment of Chad Heath to Police Department Reserve Officer with a pay increase to \$17.89 per hour effective 1/1/2017 through 6/30/2017. Bill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Update Town Secretary's Job Description due to Public Records Access Officer Addition

A discussion ensued about the Town Secretary's position description, and compensation. On 12/15/2016, the BOS appointed the Town Secretary Beverly Gilbert the Records Access Officer (RAO) for records other than Town Clerk specific records effective 1/1/2017. Ed added the RAO function to the Town Secretary's position description and recommended that based on the added duties and level of responsibility that an RAO entails, he recommended increasing Beverly Gilbert's annual compensation by \$3,000 (\$20.17 per hour) starting January 1st. Ed indicated that since there are six months remaining in the fiscal year, he would seek a \$1,500 Transfer from the Reserve Fund from the Finance Committee for the salary increase. Ed stated that he would also like to recommend that in mid-February, the BOS review the remainder of Beverly's job description for any further updates and a change of title to Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator before the budget process is finalized. Bill moved to increase the Town Secretary Beverly Gilbert's rate of pay to \$20.17 per hour in light of the additional duties she will take on as a RAO, commencing January 1, 2017. Jeanne seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Monthly or Quarterly Reports: Porchlight VNA, Animal Control Officer, Volunteer Fire Dept., Ambulance Dept. and others TBA

The BOS reviewed Porchlight VNA's quarterly report and the monthly reports for the Animal Control Officer, Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Department. Jeanne conveyed that the Bylaw Review committee wanted to provide a copy of the Animal Control Officer section of the draft Animal Control Bylaw. Ed indicated that he will revisit the entire Ambulance Department Employee policy of which Jeanne requested a copy.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements

Jeanne noted that she had received an e-mail from a resident expressing a concern that the town take a stand to protect all of its citizens against any discrimination. She wanted the other BOS members to be aware of this communication. Ed indicated that he responded to that resident.

Town Administrator's Report

Bonny Rigg Hill Road Culvert Replacement 12/21/2016 update: The foundation and first of the two walls for the base of the culvert has been poured. The contractor will now place the rip rap and gravel up against one side of that wall. The next step will be for them to remove some of the pile sheeting from this side of the brook and then dig out the other side of the diverting pipe (Algerie Road side) pile drive the sheeting on that side and then they will pour the second foundation and wall. Their new target date for completion is January 31st. Ed indicated that over the weekend one of the two propane heaters used to dry the foundations and walls was stolen.

Route 20 Spring: The town is now in a Total Coliform Rule (RTCR) Level 2 Assessment evaluation for the Becket Route 20 Spring by the DEP. Level 2 Assessments occur when two or more months within a twelve month period where multiple detection of total coliform bacteria occur. The town had a detection of total coliform bacteria at the Route 20 Spring in December 2015, February 2016, March 2016, September 2016 and December 2016. The town is required to provide an action plan to resolve this matter. Options include: 1) adding a storage/treatment to this water supply which Ed does not think is a desirable solution, 2) close the spring by pulling the pipe out of the hill and closing off the access from Route 20, 3) Ed has asked Housatonic

Basin if it is possible to video scan the small diameter pipe in order to assess whether the coliform could be coming from a rusted or deteriorated pipe or from rodents which may have entered the pipe. If this is the case, it may be possible to replace the pipe (if the cost is reasonable). This may be challenging because there are no records to the original source of the spring or the length of the pipe or if the pipe is straight or has any turns or elbows. The BOS stated the town may ask the Town of Chester if they are interested in helping. Ed stated that the town may argue that the town has maintained the spring for the past 50 – 75 years and now it can be considered common property.

Town Hall Construction Projects Update (roof): The contractor who is performing the roof replacement project at the Town Hall is concerned that the ground may be too frozen to perform the drainage work this season. The contractor will inform Ed by the beginning of next week. The BOS and Ed expressed their disappointment with this delay which may have been avoided if the drainage work had been done after Election Day.

Town Hall Construction Projects Update (ADA): The contractor for the ADA upgrades at the Town Hall ordered the ADA compliant handrails for the front of the building and will install them when they are manufactured, and the contractor will reset one loose granite stone located at the front entrance. The contractor ordered and will install the door and automatic door openers for the front and back entrances once they are delivered.

Special Legislation Borrowing Exclusion Vote: Our Special Legislation from the Governor's Office has been reviewed by the Joint Committee on Election Laws. They are going to poll their members to see if there are any objections to release the legislation out of the Committee and onto the House and the Senate for Votes. As of 3 p.m. today the special legislation moved out to the Joint Committee by a unanimous vote. The next step will be for it to move through the House Ways and Means Committee and to the floor of the House for a vote. Ed will contact State Representative Smitty Pignatelli to ask him to keep an eye on this for the town.

Voluntary Workplace Safety Inspections: Ed advised that the state is developing laws that will subject municipalities to laws similar to Occupational Safety Health Administration's regulations. Jon Lifvergren was here at our request to inspect the Town Hall on a voluntary basis for the State's Occupational Safety and Health program. He has now inspected the Highway Garage, the Town Hall and the Transfer Station. He will send us his findings in a report. He found some minor items that should be addressed here in the Town Hall such as adding a ground fault circuit breaker to the electrical line that the COA steam table plugs into, replacing the extension cord which powers the outside sump pump in the oil tank manhole with a permanent circuit. His main concern is in securing the Police Department with an electric latch door so people can be buzzed in, and placing bullet proof glass in the widow of the Police Station. Jon will also send the town some draft templates to develop an emergency response plans for the Town Hall.

Meetings: None

Public Input

None

Any other business to come before the Board

Per Bill's follow-up, Ed confirmed that he will write a letter to Smitty Pignatelli re: MassPike and talk to the Building Inspector about the Historical Commission's request to receive notification about scheduled demolitions for buildings over 75 years old. Ed indicated that he is checking if the building department permitting software has the capability to flag structures over 75 years old.

Ed advised that the Historical Commission visited 21 Maple Street and one of the members asked if the Historical Commission may have the home. Ed indicated that in accordance with the specific Annual Town meeting vote, 21 Maple Street must be raised. Ed will develop plans (including costs for the FY18 budget) for the demolition of 21 Maple Street which will include the disposal of asbestos siding. Jeanne asked if the BOS must give this property to the Parks & Recreation Committee. Ed advised that the Parks & Recreation Committee has no ownership of town properties. Bill indicated that he envisions that the property will become a parking area and the town will make fence adjustments for better entrance to the North Becket Park.

Ed indicated that the Berkshire Taconic Foundation is awarding the Fire Dept. a \$4,000 grant to purchase a portable stage for town events.

Ed gave the BOS letters for their signature:

- To Sergeant Portieri – letter to acknowledge his resignation and thank him for his service to the town
- To Nicole Miller to thank her for her efforts and outstanding volunteer service relating to the Children's Holiday Party
- Warrant letter to direct Albert Goodermote, Animal Control Officer, to find unlicensed dogs in town

Review Correspondence: TBA

None

Board of Selectmen to adjourn the meeting.

Jeanne moved to adjourn. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Bill adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Reviewed Payroll/Expense Warrants.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Secretary



William Elovirta, Chairperson

Documents discussed at this meeting:

Town Administrator's Report

BOS letters:

- To Sergeant Portieri – letter of appreciation for his service to the town.
- To Nicole Miller to thank her for her efforts and outstanding volunteer service relating to the Children's Holiday Party.

- Warrant letter to direct Albert Goodermote, Animal Control Officer, to find unlicensed dogs in town.

Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission correspondence dated 12/21/2016 and contract re: FY17 CDBG Grant Application, HUD Municipal Low/Moderate income Percentage for Municipalities
Ginger Conner submitted documents: Non-Binding Purchase Option Term Sheet, Talking Points for Becket Solar, and draft letter of Intent

Memo from Chief McDonough dated 12/14/2016 re: Chad Heath completing probationary period and is eligible for an increase in pay.

Town Secretary Job Description Update and Town Administrator's email dated 12/20/2016

Porchlight VNA Quarterly Report 07/1/2016 – 09/30/2016

Animal Control Officer Monthly Report 11/30/2016

Becket Volunteer Fire Department Reports for October and November 2016

Report of the Highway Department dated 12/19/2016

Ambulance Department November 2016 report