

Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen's Working Meeting
March 30, 2017, Time: 9:00 AM
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*
Ken Bilodeau, *Tax Collector*, Dave Shorey, *Building & Grounds*
Technician.

Others: Brian Johnson and Frank Bushey from edm, Michael Lavery

1. Call to order

Bill called the meeting to order at 9 a.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. The BOS was recording the meeting.

2. Discussion and possible vote on Town Hall HVAC Study

Brian Johnson and Frank Bushey from edm Architecture Design and Management firm located in Pittsfield, discussed and fielded questions regarding edm's Town Hall HVAC study with the BOS, Town Administrator and Building & Grounds Custodian. Ed indicated that the BOS were considering two out of six options (Option 3 New High Efficiency Gas Fire Furnaces with Cooling Coil, and Option 5 New High Efficiency Gas Fired Furnaces with Variable Refrigerant System Indoor Units) described in the edm's draft report dated 02/16/2017. Ed advised that although the cost of Option 5 is a little above the town's appropriation for this project, DOER may likely deem that HVAC Option 5, due to its energy efficiency, qualifies for the town's remaining \$19,000 DOER grant balance. Brian and Frank noted the distinguishing features, and appearances of options 3 and 5. Option 3 provides four thermostat zones in the building. During colder weather, the perimeter of the building, under Option 3, would be colder and this system would be less energy efficient than option 5 due to the lack of individual controls. Option 5 allows as many zones as desired for air conditioning (each room may have its own thermostat, and an air conditioning unit from the ceiling or on the wall. The hallways may have their own zones. The BOS agreed that it would not be necessary to have air conditioning units in the restrooms. Frank and Brian suggested that the BOS consider using an underground propane tank which would allow for closer proximity to the building, and would perform better due to insulation.

Jeanne moved to select HVAC Option 5 (New High Efficiency Gas Fired Furnaces with Variable Refrigerant System Indoor Units). Bill seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The next steps: edm will provide a comprehensive cost estimate and energy use report. edm will create bid documents. edm will research rebate programs (including Eversource). Ed will apply to DOER for the remaining \$19,000 funds.

3. Seasonal Liquor License Renewals for the following:

- **Berkshire Berries –All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store**
- **Becket Country Store –All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store**
- **Six Depot Ltd – All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant (3rd party vendor at Jacob’s Pillow)**
- **Berkshire Culinary GB, Inc. – All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant (3rd party vendor at Jacob’s Pillow)**

Beverly reported that all Seasonal Liquor license holders submitted the required paperwork, they are up to date with their taxes, and Building Dept. inspections. The Building Inspector had advised that his annual inspections for the premises for Six Depot and Berkshire Culinary will occur in June. Bev had sent Six Depot and Berkshire Culinary a letter indicating that their ability to operate is contingent upon passing the annual inspection (scheduled in June). Ed added that Jacob’s Pillow is renovating its restaurant facilities which will require a certificate of inspection. Six Depot and Berkshire Culinary will submit an application for renewal of their Common Victuallers license. Jeanne moved that the BOS renew Seasonal Liquor licenses for:

- Berkshire Berries –All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store
- Becket Country Store –All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store
- Six Depot Ltd – All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant
- Berkshire Culinary GB, Inc. – All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant

Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bill suggested that the BOS survey license fees (Selectmen) from other towns.

4. Discussion re: possible new bylaws: • Revolving Funds • License denials

Ed discussed possible new bylaws allowable through the Municipal Modernization law aimed at boosting fiscal efficiency:

- **Revolving Funds** – Currently the town must vote annually to establish its revolving funds. The town has three revolving funds: Gas, Plumbing and Electrical. The town may vote to create a bylaw to setup revolving funds. The warrant article for this would specify the fund, use and maximum dollar amount per fiscal year. If this was done, the town would not need to vote annually. The town would only need to vote to modify, create or delete a revolving fund. The BOS agreed that Ed will submit information of the revolving funds to town counsel in order for town counsel to draft the bylaw. As with any bylaws created, if passed at town meeting, the town would need to submit the bylaw to the Attorney General’s office for review and approval. Ed pointed out that until the town receives the AG’s approval, it would continue with the old method. The BOS liked the idea that this bylaw would eliminate at least one article at Annual Town Meetings.
- **License Denials** – Currently any property owner who is less than a year in arrears on taxes, fees, assessments, betterments, or other municipal charges, may qualify for a town license. The town may vote to modify its bylaw to shorten that period of time (quarter or semi-annually). This may help provide an incentive to pay taxes. Tax Collector Ken Bilodeau attended this portion of the meeting to field questions. He indicated that a change in the town’s bylaws relating to license denials would not impact his work. Ed stated that he recommended that the BOS consider changing to a quarterly system to help improve cash

flow. It was agreed that Ed will discuss this potential revision to the town's bylaw with Town Counsel. The BOS asked Ed to clarify which town permits/licenses are impacted by this.

5. Broadband and Pole Survey – MBI Update:

Ed reported on a telephone conference he had last Friday with Bill Ennen, Ed Donnelly and Todd Corcoran from MBI. At Thursday night's meeting, with Ed's recommendation, the BOS voted to have the BOS Chairman sign the broadband pole survey document to authorize MBI to arrange to conduct a Broadband Pole survey. MBI would likely contract OSMOS for the pole survey. During the telephone conference, MBI suggested that Becket, if planning to use Westfield Gas & Electric for design work and overlooking construction (as many towns in the area are doing), may wish to reconsider its original position and switch to contracting Westfield Gas & Electric for the pole survey. Westfield Gas & Electric would be well-versed in data specific to the neighboring towns, which would help with the pole survey in Becket and the information compiled during the pole survey would be extremely useful and facilitate a more fluid transition to the next phases of this project. Ed indicated that he and the Broadband Ad Hoc Committee agree that it would be a good idea for the BOS to rescind its vote from Thursday night. Jeanne moved that the town withdraw its request for MBI to arrange for the Broadband pole survey. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bill reported that he had received a letter from Peter Larkin of MBI pertaining to MBI's 2nd round of Request for proposals that included a proposal from Charter amending its original proposal to include Becket with other communities. Charter's proposal is to build a cable network. MBI would try to negotiate with Charter to request that its proposal drop the severability clause specifying that if any of the towns that sign up drop out, Charter will cancel the agreement. Comcast also submitted a proposal (for other towns) to build a cable network, and had agreed to remove its severability clause.

A discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of accepting Charter's proposal to build a cable network in the Town of Becket:

Charter would accept funding from the state and would not charge the town to build the cable network.

Cable companies are for-profit entities and it is not certain what would happen after the (fifteen year) license expires. It is unlikely a cable company would focus its resources in a sparsely populated area (which Becket most certainly is) when it comes to investing in upgrades (and maintenance) to grow with the needs of the people and businesses.

The proposed system will be powered electrically and would not work during electrical outages. The signal would need to be amplified.

The design of the system (longer co-axial cables) would likely lend itself to signal degradation particularly during power outages or higher levels of usage.

Charter is offering a \$14.99 per month internet package for low income families or to families with children in the school system.

The town would not control nor operate nor own the system.

Jeanne stated that fiber optic has more speed, the town voted to have a fiber optic network, and Charter's product (cable) is not a comparable product.

It was noted that the TV package was dropped from the Broadband project. Charter offers a TV package. Jeanne pointed out that Charter does not provide access to Massachusetts channels.

Bill said that now there is an option to spend or not spend 3.8 million dollars, he thinks Charter's proposal should be considered.

Jeanne reported that the Town of Great Barrington has cable and because cable does not support the needs of its businesses, they are looking to switch to Broadband.

Michael Lavery pointed out that with fiber you can stream television shows.

6. Approval of Minutes

No minutes were presented for approval.

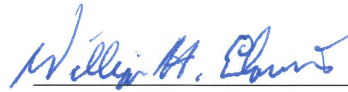
7. Any other business to come before the Board

Per Jeanne's inquiry, Ed indicated that he awaits Town Counsel's review of the draft Street Acceptance Policy.

8. Motion to adjourn the meeting

Jeanne moved to adjourn. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Bill adjourned the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Secretary



William Elovirta, Chairperson

Documents discussed at this meeting:

KP Law Info. re: Revolving Funds and License Denials Acts
edm draft HVAC Replacement Study dated 2/16/2017

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