

**Town of Becket  
Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
September 5, 2018  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall  
557 Main Street, Becket**

Attendees:

Board of Selectmen: William ("Bill") Elovirta, *Chair*; Michael Lavery, *Vice-Chair*  
Nicole Ledoux, *Clerk* – (Nicole entered the meeting at 7:09 p.m.)

Staff: Robert Markel, *Interim Town Administrator*  
Beverly Gilbert, *Recording Secretary*  
Christopher Bouchard, *Highway Superintendent*

Others: Chris Lynch (Matrix Design Group), Gale Labelle (Chairperson of the Board of Health), Julia Maynard and Jeanne Morano

**1. Call to order**

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. He indicated that the BOS was recording the meeting.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Bill led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Michael moved to approve the 08-15-18 meeting minutes. Bill seconded. Motion carried.

**4. Discussion with Highway Superintendent:**

- **Town of Dalton letter (and accident information dated 07-31-2018 re: Washington Mountain Road).** The Town of Dalton, in response to the Becket BOS's request, submitted accident history relating to Washington Mountain Road. The BOS at a prior meeting thought it would be prudent to review accident information before agreeing to the Town of Dalton's request to support a heavy vehicle exclusion on that road. The BOS and Highway Superintendent discussed the accident information. Nicole arrived during this discussion (7:09 p.m.). Chris offered his comments:

Washington Mountain Road is a very steep road. There were 22 accidents over a six year period (Some of the accidents were categorized: 9 icy road, 4 OUIs, flat tire, 3 involving 2 or more vehicles which appear related to passing during snowy conditions, 1 commercial truck accident). Chris recommended installing flashing lights, installing signage to warn drivers about the steep grade/speed, reviewing maintenance, and possibly changing the curb/slopes on portions of the road. Chris remarked that he has not seen the official commercial truck 2017 accident report. He questions if overloading or faulty equipment (brakes) contributed the 2018 truck accident.

Bill stated that state approval is required in order to institute a heavy vehicle exclusion on Washington Mountain Road. He does not believe the state would agree that the accident history would present sufficient justification to restrict vehicles on that road, particularly when considering that the state recently spent 10 million dollars on this road.

Bill stated that if trucks are prohibited from using Washington Mountain Road, an alternate route would be needed. The BOS (and Highway Superintendent) concluded that they continue to have reservations about supporting a heavy vehicle exclusion on Washington Road. Michael moved for Bob to contact the Dalton Board of Selectmen to request that representatives of Becket, Washington, and Dalton discuss this matter at a Dalton BOS meeting. Chris Bouchard would attend as well. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

- **MassDOT letter dated 08-14-18 and Bridge Inspection Report B-03-045 (03a) dated 05-15-18 - Quarry Rd/Cushman Brook.** Chris advised that no action is required at this time and the state has placed this bridge on an annual inspection schedule due to that the load limit has been reduced.
- **George Carter Road residents' letter received 8-27-18 concerning more frequent use and the condition of George Carter Road**  
Bill read letter received by the town on 08-27-18 from Bob Reiss indicating that global positioning systems are directing trucks to pass through George Carter Road as a short-cut and that the residents are concerned about increased and significant deterioration of the road due to augmented use of the road; the residents requested that the town provide more frequent care of the road or support a heavy vehicle ban. During discussion, Chris Bouchard indicated that Becket had received state money (Chapter 90) and FEMA funding for this road and he will research if banning heavy vehicle would be allowed. The BOS will send a letter to Mr. Reiss, representative of the George Carter Road residents, to respond that the Highway Superintendent is weighing alternatives.
- **Jeff Waite letter dated 8-27-18 announcing he will retire from his position in the Highway Department. His last date of work is on 09-14-18**  
In response to the above referenced letter, the BOS signed a letter of appreciation to Jeff Waite for his eighteen years (and two months) he served as Becket's Highway Department Truck Driver/ Equipment Operator.

**5. Gale Labelle, Chairperson of the Board of Health, re: State Bulletin concerning West Nile Virus**

On 8-30-18 Gale posted a bulletin on the town website to encourage the public to take measures to reduce exposure to mosquitoes (cover up with clothing, deet insect repellent, eliminate standing water) because West Nile Virus has been detected in a small sample of Becket mosquitoes. It was clarified that the town did not approve spending funds on the Berkshire County Mosquito Control Program (Pittsfield). However, this vote would not preclude private communities from arranging and paying for such services on their own. Gale stated that she will not offer an opinion if spraying should be done or not. Gale discussed other matters:

- She indicated that the BOH has submitted its recommendation that the state include the 242 Wells Road property in the Attorney General's Receivership Program.
- In response to a recent Board of Health inspection of the Council on Aging kitchen and Town Hall lower level restrooms, Bob Markel will meet with the Director of the Council on Aging, and he and the town's Buildings and Grounds Custodian will develop a plan to address the BOH's recommendations for more extensive cleaning and disinfecting specified in its inspection report. The plan may include contracting a professional cleaning services to tackle jobs beyond routine maintenance.
- Bob reported that he spoke to Housatonic Basin on August 29<sup>th</sup> and they have submitted a plan for the Route 20 Spring for DEP review and approval.

**6. Vocational Education Transportation Agreements between the Town of Becket and Town of Washington**

Until this year the towns of Washington and Becket had verbal agreements for shared vocational transportation services. The Selectmen for both towns had agreed that although the arrangements will remain the same, the towns should have written agreements. Michael moved to approve agreements between Town of Becket and the Town of Washington in conjunction with vocational education transportation services to McCann Technical School, and Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School for the school year 2018-19. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**7. BOS to discuss and possibly vote on Town Counsel's recommended changes to the Code of Conduct Policy**

Nicole moved to adopt town counsel's recommended changes to the Code of Conduct Policy, and a notification of receipt for those refusing sign the acknowledgment section of the policy. Nicole seconded. Motion carried unanimously. It was agreed that the Code of Conduct will be distributed to: Town Employees, the Chairs of the Committees/Board to distribute amongst members, and the Town Treasurer (new hire packets).

**8. BOS to review and possibly vote on the following appointment applications to serve on the Becket Cultural Council (term 09-05-18 through 06-30-21):**

- **Judith Cromwell**
- **Jennifer Avery**

After reviewing their appointment applications, Michael moved to appoint Judith Cromwell and Jennifer Avery to the Cultural Council for terms beginning 09-05-18 through 06-30-21. Nicole. Motion carried unanimously.

**9. Planning Board Notice dated 08-29-2018 re: Notification of Public Hearing on October 10, 2018 for a small-scale solar photovoltaic installation**

The BOS acknowledged receipt of the above captioned notification.

**10. Broadband Update**

Bob Markel indicated that there was a Selectmen's working meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss broadband funding options. Bob reported on a conference call with the Department of Revenue (DOR). The DOR advised that Becket will require town meeting approval to borrow funding to cover any short-falls. The town meeting article must specify the entire amount that is required for the project with the proviso that any reimbursement from the state would reduce the amount of borrowing. Bob Markel indicated that although the state seems committed to honoring its promise for support, there is never a lead-pipe guarantee. Bob anticipates that this vote would occur at the Annual Town Meeting. Bill indicated that the August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting included representatives from Matrix and a Selectmen member from the Town of Petersham who provided positive feedback about their experience with Matrix which is contracted to install their broadband. Bill indicated that the town may consider using Matrix. Westfield Gas & Electric conducted the town's pole surveys and then submitted the pole applications to Verizon and Eversource. The town awaits Verizon and Eversource's responses to the town's pole applications to see if they agree with the information put forth from Westfield Gas & Electric. It is anticipated that the town will not see Verizon and Eversource's make ready costs of the poles for six or seven months. The town will weigh its options (town-owned/built by Westfield Gas & Electric vs. Matrix built and owned) relating to the build once more information and costs are known.

It is not known whether the town will end up using WiredWest to manage the internet system.

Bill brought up that a resident had suggested using cable rather than broadband. The BOS agreed with Michael that this would not be of particular benefit for the town since the town would still have to wire for cable.

**11. Town Administrator Recruitment Update**

Beverly provided an update on the Town Administrator Recruitment. The Town Administrator Screening Committee met with Bernie Lynch and Sharon Flaherty of Community Paradigm Associates, LLC on Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>. To date, 14 individuals applied. Bernie will schedule interviews (the TASC was interested in interviewing 7). The TASC will meet again on Thursday, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. to develop interview questions, and interviews will be scheduled on Tuesday, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>, and possibly again on Friday, Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>.

**12. Route 20 Spring Update**

This was discussed under agenda item number 5.

**13. Discussion of potential Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles**

Possible STM articles include: whether or not to fund a Route 20 Spring project, and an Amendment to the town's Solar Photovoltaic Installation Zoning bylaw. Broadband and Open container (Marijuana) bylaws would not be ready until the Annual Town Meeting.

**14. Transfer Station Policy**

Beverly and Michael Lavery will draft a Transfer Station policy document that includes other portions already adopted. The policy will add a section that puts into the writing the town's practice regarding permit issuance:

Transfer Station permits are issued to owners/renters of buildings assessed as businesses and/or dwellings. Transfer Station permits will not be issued to owners/renters of a vacant land parcel unless a building permit for construction of a buildings with a business or dwelling use code has been issued for that specific vacant land parcel.

**Departmental Reports – Fire Department (July 2018), Ambulance Department (July and August 2018)**

The BOS reviewed the above mentioned reports.

**15. Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements**

Michael initiated discussion about the new Police Department K-9. There were a couple of initial cruiser related problems (retro-fitting and faulty air conditioning unit). However, the training and transition are going well.

Bill reported that he spoke with the Police Chief, who stated a Police Officer will be present at 9 a.m. at the September 4<sup>th</sup> Primary after noticing an absence of the town's Town Constables. The Selectmen stated that it is the Town Clerk's responsibility to arrange for a Constable to cover elections. Constable Michael Hunt was not able to attend due to K-9 training. Constable Nicole Miller was working in Washington where she serves as their Police Chief. They articulated that Town Constables are obligated to fulfill their duties to the town and attending elections falls under that category.

Bill indicated that Rita Furlong reported her concern that the Police Chief allowed an overflow of cars from the Quarry's parking lot to park in adjacent no-street parking areas. She indicated that

this had caused overcrowding which likely contributed to vandalism at the top of the trail in the Quarry. The BOS stated that the Police Department is supposed to enforce the town's parking regulations. Bob Markel will discuss this matter with the Becket Police Chief.

Michael fielded questions about MailChimp which will be offered as a communication mechanism to the next Town Administrator. The town will be able to collect demographics on new subscribers.

#### 16. Town Administrator's Report

- Bob will obtain quotes from a company to determine costs to do a special cleaning of the Town Hall Building twice a year.
- 21 Maple Street: The building has been demolished. The site is cleaned except for the tree which has been taken down and chopped into sections. The Highway Department will remove the limbs and logs.
- North Becket Village: Bob toured the North Becket Village with Bill Elovirta to discuss a plan for a variety of improvements. After that, Bob toured the Village with Dave Shorey and Chris Bouchard to view various items that warrant attention including weed removal on sidewalks and around guard rails, a wooden fence on the west side of the park that needs repair, chain-linked fences surrounding the park and the new lot created by demolishing the house. They also conducted a site visit on a potential parcel that may be used for Highway Department storage. Bob reported that he had recommended to Chris Bouchard that he find resources to improve the bridge (which is in poor condition), so that if the town acquires that parcel, the DPW trucks may cross the bridge to access the storage area.
- Metropolitan Planning Organization Representative Selection. Lee Town Hall, September 11 at 5:30 p.m. – Bill indicated that the town is not eligible for programs under MPO since the Town has no federal designated roads.
- Training on sexual harassment/hostile work environment by KP-Law. Atty. Deborah Ecker conducted the training on August 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Energy Issues:
  - a. Consultant: DOER Municipal Energy Technical Grant: awaiting response on the application submitted.
  - b. Kyle Houser from Eversource will conduct the Town Hall energy audit. Bob awaits for Mr. Houser to schedule a date.
- In early October, Valley Communications will install and program twenty-one new telephones (funds were appropriated at the May 2017 ATM). During this topic, Michael inquired about the Johnson Road repeater project. Bill indicated that the cell tower is near completion and although funding that the Berkshire County Sheriff Department had last year expired, they have requested funding through this year's program.
- Jacob's Pillow property has now been re-assessed. Bob Gross and I met with the Director to discuss increasing the PILOT payment on August 29. Also discussed a community solar project.
- Community Compact Program: ClearGov will demonstrate their database application at the Finance Committee's September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. ClearGov's database may provide information about budgets, spending patterns, and how they compare to with patterns of other communities. Users of this program may choose the town(s) for comparisons of particular areas of spending (For example, how much does Westin or Dalton spend on Parks & Recreation). Comparisons may be generated for per capita as well for gross spending. How much does it cost for a particular town to build sidewalk per square foot or to pave a road per square mile). You may compare services and select the communities

you wish to compare yourself to. The Mass. Dept. of Revenue has sanctioned this program and will fund this program through the Community Compact program.

- The town's Wi-Fi system needs to be replaced or repaired. It is over five years old. Currently Wi-Fi is not available in all areas of the town hall (such as the Berkshire meeting room, downstairs level). The town's IT Consultant John Shannon will review the town's Wi-Fi. Replacement will cost approximately \$1,000.
- Auction of Town Properties: Town Treasurer Christine Bleau awaits for the auction firm to schedule the auction.
- Upcoming meetings: Energy Committee Informational Session will occur on Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup> (Bob will give a report on the Green Communities Program in Becket), Finance Committee will occur on September 12<sup>th</sup>, and due to that Beverly and Bill have scheduling conflicts, the BOS will meet on September 26<sup>th</sup> instead of on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

**17. Public Input**

There was no public input at tonight's meeting.

**18. Any other business to come before the Board**

No other business was discussed under this agenda item.

**19. Correspondence:**

- **08-08-18, Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission notice of hearing scheduled on 11-14-18 re: KMS INC., DBA Becket Country Store to determine whether violation of MGL Chapter 10, Section 33, 961 CMR 2:20 (1). This matter regards the sale of Lottery tickets.**
- **08-14-18 Mass. Dept. of Environmental Protection, Enforcement Order 00004152 (Boil Water) re: Becket Arts Center**

The BOS reviewed the above captioned correspondence.


**20. BOS to review and sign payable warrants**

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.

**21. BOS to adjourn the meeting**

Michael moved to adjourn. Nicole seconded. At 9:06 p.m., Bill adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

  
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William Elovirta, *Chairperson*

Date Approved: Oct. 7, 2018

**Documents discussed at the meeting:**

- Town of Dalton letter dated 07-31-18 and accident information for Washington Mountain Road.
- Letter from Bob Reiss (on behalf of residents of George Carter Road) re: concerns about George Carter Road.
- MassDOT letter dated 08-14-18 and Bridge Inspection Report B-03-045 (03a) dated 05-15-18 - Quarry Rd/Cushman Brook.
- Jeff Waite letter dated 8-27-18 announcing he will retire from his position in the Highway Department. His last date of work is on 09-14-18
- BOS letter of Appreciation for Jeff Waite
- Appointment Applications
- Becket Board of Health Advisory re: Mosquitoes
- Agreement for Shared Vocational Transportation Services between the Town of Becket and the Town of Washington
- Code of Conduct with Town Counsel's suggested revisions
- Planning Board Notice dated 08-29-2018 re: Notification of Public Hearing on October 10, 2018 for a small-scale solar photovoltaic installation
- Departmental Reports – Fire Department (July 2018), Ambulance Department (July and August 2018)
- Town Administrator's Report dated September 5, 2018 with PILOT information pertaining to Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Inc.
- Correspondence as listed above