

**Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen's Meeting
March 22, 2019
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall
557 Main Street, Becket**

Attendees

Board of Selectmen: William Elovirta, *Chairperson*; Michael Lavery, *Vice Chairperson*

Staff: William Caldwell, *Town Administrator*

Others: Bob Gross, Chris Swindlehurst, Al Blake, Henry Scarpo, Diana Mott, Madelaine Elovirta, Maria Wallington, Karen Avalle, Rita Furlong, Andrea Wadsworth, Tommie Hutto Blake

Call to order

Bill E. called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He indicated that the BOS was recording the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance

Bill led the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

Michael moved to approve the minutes for the 3-15-19 working meeting and the March 3-6-19 regular session meeting. Bill seconded. Motion carried.

BOS to review and possibly vote on Karen Avalle's appointment application to serve on the Board of Assessors (term through 6/30/2020)

The BOS and Town Administrator commented on Ms. Avalle's work experience which includes that she had served as an Assessor for the Town of Becket and she has a great deal of other assessing-related employment history. Michael moved to appoint Karen Avalle to the Board of Assessors with a term through 6/30/20. Bill seconded. Motion carried.

Board of Assessors' letter dated 03-05-19 re: release from Overlay to Overlay Surplus listing totaling \$35,000.

Bill E. read the Board of Assessor's letter communicating their votes to release \$35,000 from Overlay to Overlay surplus.

Parks & Recreation Committee to address the BOS on Parks & Recreation Items

Madelaine Elovirta and Rita Furlong, members of the Parks & Recreation Committee, discussed the Parks & Recreation Committee's document outlining ideas relating to maintaining and repairing the Becket Beach, and improving the town's North Becket Park/21 Maple Street area.

It was decided that:

- The Parks & Recreation Committee will contact the Conservation Commission regarding the idea to install a jetty to prevent the sand from collecting into the wetlands. The BOS suggested

contacting Co-Conservation Agent Stacy Parsons who had been involved with addressing the Town's Beach issues in the past.

- Bill E. will draft a letter to the Directors of Camp Greylock to inquire about the possibility of the town purchasing the parking lot area at the Beach in the future.
- The BOS agreed that the Highway Department may repair areas of the Town Beach as their schedule allows.
- The BOS will add an ATM Warrant Article to help pay for the repair of the North Becket Village/Maple Street parking lot area. The Parks & Recreation Committee members encourage the Town to employ these enhancements to help foster additional visits and community events.
- Bill E. will draft a letter to Mr. Ray Robert to inquire about if he would have an interest in selling his land located adjacent to the North Becket Village Park to the Town.

Broadband Update and possible votes relating to Make-Ready (applications, expenses, and reimbursements)

Bob Gross brought up that the BOS will need to consider how the town will address recouping costs (what percentage will the town subsidize) for the replacement of inadequate poles on private property. He provided an update re: make-ready for Becket Wood Road Maintenance. The Broadband Ad Hoc Group would like to meet with the Board of Selectmen and Becket Woods to discuss Becket Woods' make-ready costs vs. the Town's subsidy of the make-ready costs. The figures would be based on an estimate and subject to change. Bill E. advised that Kris McDonough had indicated that he will contact Jeremy Dunn to discuss police detail. Short-term borrowing rules must be clarified. Al Blake suggested that the Broadband Ad Hoc Group may wish to have an informational table at the Becket Washington Brouhaha.

Possible vote and signing of an agreement between Becket and Comcast to provide broadband service to several residents who reside on the Chester border

Bob Gross indicated that Comcast is reviewing the agreement that Becket's Town Counsel prepared.

Household Hazardous Waste Program

Bill Caldwell indicated that the Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District no longer exists and he recommends that the town budgets up to \$3,200 (cost may be lower, depending on the number of towns that participate) for household hazardous waste collection during fiscal year 2020. Michael made a motion to join the Southern Berkshire Household Hazardous Waste Collaborative to provide hazardous waste collection days during fiscal year 2020. Bill seconded. Motion carried.

Town Administrator Personnel Update – Town Accountant

Bill Caldwell indicated that this matter is appearing on this agenda in response to the Town Clerk's open meeting law complaint. Bill C. stated that 11 days after he started working for the Town of Becket, the Town Accountant had left. He relayed that information to Bill E. and Michael and he asked for background relating to this position. Bill E. stated that Michael and he were in the Town Hall to sign documents requiring the Town Clerk's seal. Bill E. stated that no decisions occurred when Michael, Bill Elovirta and Bill Caldwell were in Bill C.'s office. Bill C. indicated that personnel matters fall under his jurisdiction. On March 15th, the BOS had a working meeting to discuss this complaint and voted to authorize the Town Administrator to send the Attorney General's Office a letter of response. Michael made a motion to specify that the Board of

Selectmen did not deliberate and did not take any votes when talking to the Town Administrator on that particular day. Bill seconded. Motion carried.

Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Discussion

- The Central Berkshire Regional School District Assessment increased 8.1% (additional \$172,000).
- Health insurance went down 3%.
- Bill C. is recommending 2% COLAs.
- Debt went up significantly because the town is trying to pay off the new rescue mini-pumper and the ambulance vehicle in two years. This will raise the bond payments for the next two years and after that we will have no town debt: The Town anticipates it will take on a bond for the high speed internet project after the vehicles are paid.
- The Finance Committee requests for the BOS to provide a projected tax rate and recommendation. The Finance Committee is recommending using between \$175,000 and \$196,000 from stabilization to help maintain the town's tax rate and minimize increases.
- The Board of Selectmen will invite the Finance to attend a meeting on April 10th at 6 p.m.

Board of Selectmen's Comments and Announcements

Michael brought up the possibility of scheduling a Baby Town Meeting/Candidates Night. The BOS tabled this discussion for the next meeting, and agreed that the BOS would consider scheduling this event for a date after the Annual Town Meeting Warrant is finalized.

Michael discussed Community Room Use policy. Bill C. indicated that when the Council on Aging has special events on a Friday, the room may not be used during the weekend because the Building & Grounds Technician is not scheduled to clean the Town Hall on weekends. Michael indicated that the Cub Scouts have extensive set-up for their annual derby event. This year they were only able to access the Community Room on a Monday. Next year, so that set up will prove easier, they will submit a request earlier in the year to ensure they will have weekend access to the Community Room.

Town Administrator's Report

Bill C. reported and discussed the following items:

- Green Communities competitive Grant (looking into a separate system for the Broadband equipment in the server room)
- DEP Route 20 Springs – talked to DEP (inactivity vs. declassification)
- Collins Center at UMASS Boston is working on Budget presentation for the ATM. After the ATM, the BOS may consider if it is worthwhile to obtain the Government Financial Officers Association Certification
- Town Building Upgrades
- Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Annual Caucus and CBRSD Election on April 6
- April Becket Bulletin Items
- Tax title property in Indian Lakes – Bill C. to find out if we have to place an article on the Annual Town Meeting to appropriate money to pay dues
- Bill C. will attend Procurement certification training next week

- Ambulance Dept.

Public Input

Chris Swindlehurst offered that if the BOS organized a HVAC Committee, he would be available to volunteer in this capacity.

Bill C. fielded questions regarding the Route 20 Spring.

Any other business to come before the Board

Michael brought up Building Inspector Bill Girard's letter asking for a 5% raise. The BOS discussed this letter and asked Bill C. to conduct a building inspector's salary survey within the Berkshire County Managers' Group. This will be discussed at the joint Finance Committee/BOS meeting on April 10th.

Correspondence

- **Zoning Board of Appeals Notice of Public Hearing dated 03-5-19 re: 30 Washington Street, to seek relief from Zoning Bylaws to construct an external staircase, an extension to eave on the front of the building, and an exit door leading to a ground level deck for customer dining.**
- **Copy of Town Clerk letter dated 03-05-19 addressed to the Becket Democratic Town Committee requesting recommendations of individuals to consider serving as Election Workers**
- **Copy of Town of Cummington Board of Selectmen's letter to the CBRSD Superintendent stating that in light that Cummington is withdrawing from the CBRSD, Cummington objects to participating in the Waconah Regional High School building vote, and Cummington requests that the district consider taking measures described in the letter that would preclude Cummington from financial obligations relating to this capital project.**
- **Housatonic Valley Association thank you letter dated 03-14-19 to acknowledge receipt of Town of Becket check in the amount of \$25 awarded through funding through the MA Cultural Council to be used for River Ecology field trips for the Wahconah Regional H.S. science classes.**
- **Treasurer of the Central Berkshire Regional School District (CBRSD) letter dated 03-15-19 to certify that on March 14, 2019, the CBRSD Committee voted Becket's proportionate share of the capital and operating budget for the school district (Net Capital Assessment \$117,806; Net Transportation Assessment \$60,109; and Net Operating Assessment \$2,248,047). Becket's total assessment is \$2,425,962)**
The BOS reviewed the above listed correspondence.

BOS to review and sign payable warrants

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.

BOS to adjourn the Meeting

Michael moved to adjourn. Bill seconded. Motion carried. At 8:34 p.m., Bill adjourned the meeting.

Date Approved 4-17-19

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*



William Elovirta, *Chairperson*

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- Town Administrator's Report
- KP Law letter dated 03-25-19 to Office of the Attorney General re: open meeting law complaint from George Roberts dated March 6, 2019
- Document from the Parks & Recreation Committee with photographs relating to the Becket Beach and the North Becket Park/21 Maple Street.
- Correspondence as listed above
- Board of Assessors letter dated 03-05-19 re: votes to release Overlay to Overlay Surplus
- Highway Dept. e-mail dated 03-15-19 re: Future of Household Hazardous Waste Committee
- William Girard letter dated 03-19-19 re: FY20 Rate of Pay for the Building Inspector
- Information re: Community Room Use policy