



December 7, 2018  
Volume 1, Issue 3

# THE BECKET BULLETIN

INFORMATION ON TOWN GOVERNMENT ISSUES  
AND ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF BECKET

## SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

The Becket Board of Selectmen have voted to call a Special Town Meeting for Tuesday, January 22, 2019. The Town Meeting will convene at 7:00 p.m. in the Becket Washington School at 12 Maple Street.

Articles for the STM will include an amendment to the Zoning Code to comply with solar voltaic installation standards under the Green Communities program. Thus far, under the Green Communities program, Becket's Municipal buildings have reduced energy consumption by more than 30%.

There is a Citizens' Petition to endorse funding for the Route 20 spring. The estimated cost is \$100,000 for a water purification system to bring the spring into compliance with a MASS DEP consent order.

Also, there will be an article to raise the salary of the Town Administrator. In 2018, the Town has made two attempts to hire an Administrator without success, due largely to the salary being offered.

These are important issues, and it is hoped that there will be a good turnout. of Becket residents.

For more news on Town Government issues and activities, download the complete newsletter from the Town website:

[http://www.townofbecket.org/Public\\_Documents/index](http://www.townofbecket.org/Public_Documents/index)

To subscribe to the Town of Becket meeting agendas and public notices, please visit: <http://townofbecket.org/subscriber>

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## **December Meetings** *(subject to change)*

- 1st** Sherwood Greens Rd. Dist.
- 5th:** Board of Selectmen  
Board of Health
- 6th:** Cemetery Commission  
Town Admin Screening Com
- 8th** S herwood Forest Rd. Dist.  
Sherwood Forest Lake Dist.
- 11th:** Historical Commission  
Board of Selectmen (work)  
Town Admin Screening Com
- 12th:** Finance Committee  
Planning Board
- 18th** Conservation Commission
- 19th** Board of Selectmen
- 20th:** Energy Committee

## THE SELECTMEN'S COLUMN

### **By William Elovirta, *Chair* — Board of Selectmen**

As I write this column there is no doubt that winter has arrived even though it is technically still fall. The continual rain this fall has taxed the ability of the highway crew to keep up with maintenance and storm damage of the gravel roads and the patching of paved roads before winter. And now they have to deal with early winter snow storms. Thankfully we have a dedicated crew.

We need to have a Special Town Meeting to address several matters, including the Route 20 Spring, Solar By-law amendment to bring us in compliance with our Green Communities designation, Broad-band funding and a request to increase the Town Administrator Salary. The Board of Selectmen voted to schedule the STM at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 22, 2019.

Our inability to hire a new Town Administrator appears to be caused by our low offered salary. In addition there is a shortage of Town Administrators in New England. Several well qualified candidates have been interested in Becket but not for the salary offered.

At the 2018 ATM, an article was passed to allow the Town to Lease space on the Johnson Rd. cell tower to increase our public safety and highway radio coverage. It is hoped that the complicated negotiations can be completed successfully. If the rental is out of our budget, we remain committed to improving our communications and will be considering building and owning a repeater on Town-owned land.

**I wish all of you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a healthy New Year.**

#### **Reminder about Property Taxes:**

The 2nd installment of property taxes was due on Nov. 2nd, and the 3rd installment of property taxes will be due on Feb. 1st.

#### **Building Inspector Winter Work Schedule:**

Monday through Thursday  
8:30 a.m. till 4:30 p.m.  
Closed on Friday effective  
Nov. 30th through Feb. 23rd.

#### **Town Hall & Transfer Station Closed:**

Tuesdays, Dec. 25th & 31st in observance of the Christmas, and New Year's holidays.

**Transfer Station will be  
open on Wednesdays,**

### **TOWN FINANCES**

The process of developing a budget for Fiscal 2020 (July 1, 2019 -June 30, 2020) is underway. The Town was given some good news by our health insurer that premiums will not be increased in the coming fiscal year.

Fiscal 2020 will see the Stabilization Fund (the Town's rainy day fund) increase to over \$1 million. Free Cash, which is used for small capital and one-time purchases, will exceed \$500,000. These reserve balances are considered very healthy by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

The tax rate for Fiscal 2019 is currently being set by the Department of Revenue and will be reflected in the 3rd quarter tax bills sent at the end of December. The new tax rate is expected to be \$11.07 per thousand of assessed value. This will represent an increase of \$51 for the average single family home valued at \$234,903.

All-in-all, the financial condition of the Town of Becket is sound, and Fiscal 2020 is expected to be a normal year.

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

The Town has contracted for the last series of projects under the Massachusetts Green Communities grant program. An old, oil fired heating unit at the Highway Garage failed last winter and was replaced with a new propane-based unit. A second oil-based heating unit at the Garage will be replaced this month using Green Communities monies. By January, all heating at the Garage will be propane based.

Also, through Green Communities funding,, six new windows and a door are being installed at the Highway Garage, and a large window is being replaced at Fire Station #2,.

At Fire Station #1 on Washington Street, two old and inefficient oil-fired furnaces are being replaced with monies appropriated through the Town's capital program.

Lastly, while the Town has expended the entire Green Communities grant, a new grant round will be offered under G.C. beginning in February. The Town will apply for approximately \$240,000 to replace the heating system at Town Hall with either a propane based system or with air sourced heat pumps.

Once the Town Hall project is complete, there will be no need for fuel oil to heat the Town's major municipal buildings.

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SEARCH**

The Town Administrator Screening Committee is continuing to work with Bernard Lynch of Community Paradigm Associates to identify a permanent Town Administrator. Mr. Lynch has presented four more candidates who were interviewed by the Screening Committee on December 6. The Selectmen have scheduled a meeting for December 11 to interview finalists recommended by the Screening Committee.

This is the third attempt to hire a permanent Town Administrator this year. Good candidates were identified in the earlier rounds, but the Selectmen were unable to reach a salary agreement with the two prior finalists.

The goal of the Selectmen is to identify an Administrator who will live in Becket or a surrounding town and who will commit to serving the Town for an extended period.

**Robert T. Markel, Interim Town Administrator**

## **BECKET ATHENAEUM NEWS**

### **Pre-School STEAM at the Becket Athenaeum!**

Our 2018 STEAM program continues with Wendy Provencher working with local preschoolers in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math .

Did you ever think that some things are too hard to do at home with your kids? We will give you fun, easy, and not too messy ways to practice STEAM at home with your child/children. Join us for an hour of great fun! This is an opportunity to inspire your kids to engineer, create, design, explore, and build!

Tuesdays 1-2 pm at the Becket Athenaeum **FREE!**

Current Scheduled Dates: 12/11, 12/18.

The Central Berkshire Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

### **Evening Workshop:**

**Winter Table Centerpieces with floral designer, Edie King**

**Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

**6-8pm**

Join us for a fun, social evening while making your own take-home table centerpiece with fresh greens, ribbon, etc.

We will serve refreshments.

Preregistration is required for this FREE workshop.

Please contact us by noon, Tuesday, December 4th.

Email: [jodi@bwlibrary.org](mailto:jodi@bwlibrary.org) or call 623-5483

### **Kid's Movie Afternoon @ the Athenaeum**

**will be: A Dog's Purpose**

**Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>**

**2-4pm**

Popcorn & Beverages will be provided!

Bring your children, nieces & nephews, grandchildren, and/or neighbors to the Athenaeum's Kids' Movie Afternoon! Cozy up in our living area and enjoy a great movie on our large screen!

### **The Becket Athenaeum is LOOKING FOR TUTORS!**

The Athenaeum's ACE (after-school academic assistance) program (grades 2-8) is in need of a few more tutors! If you are looking for a way to volunteer in your community and improve the lives of our young ones here in Becket/Washington, please stop by to talk with Jodi, or email her at [jodi@bwlibrary.org](mailto:jodi@bwlibrary.org).

### **E-Books and other E-Materials Available with your library card!**

The library offers e-books, digital audiobooks, and video content! Our patrons have access to six different library network collections: CLAMS, C/W Mars, Minuteman, NOBLE, Old Colony, and SAILS.

Like regular library materials, electronic resources are checked out for a period of time and when they are due back, they simply leave your device and become available for the next interested patron. Also like other library materials, there are a limited number of digital copies of any given item at a time.

## COUNCIL ON AGING

Plans are being put in place for the Annual Christmas party for the Council on Aging members. We will not have potlucks during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of November and December due to the busyness of the holidays. Lunch continues at 11 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays with Bingo to follow. The lunches are from 11:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. followed by Bingo. Reservations for our lunches are required so that enough meals are ordered. You may sign-up to attend lunch by calling (413) 623-8934 extension 27. The deadline to sign-up for our Tuesday luncheon is on Friday. The deadline to sign-up for our Thursday lunch is on Tuesday. The cost for lunch is \$2.00 payable at the door.

Submitted by Joan Moylan, Director – Council on Aging

### REGULARLY SCHEDULED TOWN OF BECKET COMMITTEE AND BOARD MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Board of Health ..... 1st Wednesday, 5 p.m.  
Board of Selectmen:..... 1st and 3rd Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
Conservation Commission..... 4th Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.  
Energy Committee ..... 3rd Thursday, 9:30 a.m.  
Finance Committee ..... 1st or 2nd Wednesday, evening  
Historical Commission..... 2nd Tuesday, 3 p.m.  
Planning Board: ..... 2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m.  
Zoning Board of Appeals..... 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m. as needed

For the most updated schedule, please see the calendar section of the town website:  
[http://townofbecket.org/Public\\_Documents/BecketMA\\_Calendar/?formid=158](http://townofbecket.org/Public_Documents/BecketMA_Calendar/?formid=158)

## TOWN OF BECKET

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