



May 2019
Volume 1, Issue 8

THE BECKET BULLETIN

INFORMATION ON TOWN GOVERNMENT ISSUES
AND ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF BECKET

Becket News

Several important events are happening in Becket in the coming month. With winter changing to spring and spring to summer, May is an important month in Becket. On April 6, voters selected candidates at the Town Caucus to be placed on the ballot and those that wanted to take out election papers did so as well. The ballots for the Annual Election have been set. May 18, 2019 from 10:00am to 7:00pm will be the Town's Annual Election. Candidates for Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Planning Board, Cemetery Commissioner and Board of Health will be on the ballot. Additionally, the Annual Town Meeting will be held on May 11 at 7pm at the Becket Washington School.

The Annual Town Report, full Annual Town Meeting Warrant, the monthly newsletters and other valuable information can be found on the Town's website www.townofbecket.org.

Absentee ballots can be requested from the Town Clerk until May 17. Town Clerk Office hours are 8:30am-4:30pm Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The Town Clerk will also be in the office from 11:00am to 12:00pm on Friday May 17.

Download the complete newsletter from the Town website:
http://www.townofbecket.org/Public_Documents/index

—William J. Caldwell, Town Administrator

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

Inside this issue

- Selectmen's Column
- Becket Athenaeum Events
- Community Events, Reminders and Opportunities
- Historical Commission
- Parks and Recreation programs and more!

May Meetings (subject to change)

- 1st:** Board of Selectmen
- 1st:** Board of Health
- 2nd:** Finance Committee
- 4th:** Sherwood Greens Rd. District
- 7th:** Zoning Board of Appeals
- 8th:** Planning Board
- 11th:** Sherwood Forest Road District
- 11th:** Sherwood Forest Lake District
- 11th:** Annual Town Meeting
- 13th:** Broadband Ad Hoc Group
- 14th:** Historical Commission
- 15th:** Board of Selectmen
- 18th:** Annual Town Election
- 21st:** Energy Committee
- 25th:** Becket Woods Annual Meeting
- 28th:** Conservation Commission

THE SELECTMEN'S COLUMN

Welcome to May. Hopefully it will stop raining, dry out and turn into a delightful summer.

I urge all registered voters to attend the Annual Town Meeting on Saturday, May 11th at 7:00 P.M. to be held at the Becket-Washington School, 21 Maple St. Non-registered voters may attend the meeting and have in-put but may not vote.

On Saturday, May 18th the Annual Town Elections will take place at the Town Hall, 557 Main St., from 10:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Absentee ballots are available if you cannot appear in person.

The 2018 Annual Town report is available and they may be picked up at Town Hall, Post Office and local stores.

Beach and Transfer Station permits for 2019 are available and may be purchased at the Tax Collectors' Office - 8:30am-4:30pm Monday to Friday.

The Route 20 Spring, a long debated topic in Town, has been closed to public use in accordance with the mandated Consent Decree Order issued by the DEP. There is a five year window whereby a private entity could petition the DEP to reopen the spring.

The 2020 United States Census is near. It is very important to make sure everyone is counted. The Federal government distributes \$690 billion yearly through programs that use Census numbers in their formulas. The State allocates \$5.4 billion yearly using Census numbers, or \$780 per person. This totals \$380 million a year coming into Berkshire County each year based partially on Census numbers. The town will provide more Census info in future Bulletins.

Respectfully submitted,
William H. Elovirta, Chairman



Questions about Medicare?

Contact Becket SHINE:
413 623-8934 Ext. 141

Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone



**Free counseling by
a trained volunteer.**

Calling all

**CRAFTERS,
ARTISANS
& VENDORS**

Reserve space by June 1st
Treasure in the Trunk \$10
OR
Table \$20

Join us @ Washington Town Park
Saturday, July 13th

for the 4th Annual

**hilltown
brouhaha**

brought to you by
BWCP
Becket Washington
Community Partnership

Becket Washington Community Fair

To register visit: www.HilltownBrouhaha.org

BECKET MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

**MAY 27th, 10:30 AM
(Line-up 10:00 AM)**

**MEMORIAL DAY LINE-UP IS AT 10:00 AM &
PARADE BEGINS AT 10:30 AM
FROM THE NORTH BECKET CEMETERY**

**MEMORIAL SERVICE IS AT 11:00 AM
AT THE BALLOU PARK**

**MUSIC BY THE BECKET PRAISE TEAM
ALONG WITH BECKET AND WASHINGTON
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Special dates in May

Annual Town Meeting: May 11th at 7:00pm in the Becket Washington School

Annual Town Election: May 18th Polls open 10am-7pm at Town Hall

Reminder about Property Taxes

The 4th installment of real estate, personal property, and district taxes are due May 1st.

Town Hall Closed

Monday, May 27, 2019 in observance of Memorial Day

Westfield River Wild and Scenic and Center Pond Project

May 26th 10 - 2 pm. Center

Pond Weed Project "Lets Pull together" identify and remove invasive plants using your hands & feet with Laurie Rock and Jo Smith from Action Sports and Travel.

**Register to receive all the details, meeting locations and updates*

June 18th 6pm to 8pm

Evening presentation with Jim Straub of Mass. Lakes and Ponds DCR. Join your friends and neighbors as we learn to identify invasive aquatic plants.

Learn new strategies to keep them out of our beautiful lakes and ponds.

Town Hall Becket MA. *(Registration helpful but not mandatory)*

Mark your calendars and sign up for upcoming

Center Pond Weed Project trainings and events

email:volunteer@wildscenicwestfieldriver.org or call 413 623-2070

Historical Commission News

The Historical Commission has recently organized its Becket artifacts and photos on display throughout Town Hall. Many of the artifacts depict Becket's business past including manufacturing impacted by the Flood of 1927. The flood destroyed the primary industrial establishments in North Becket Village: the Berkshire and Becket Silk Mill, the Ballou Grist Mill, and the W.D. Ballou Basket Works.

Some Artifacts include:

Silk thread - This quality thread was used for sewing, embroidering and crocheting. The thriving industry employed over 80 people. The Berkshire and Becket Silk Company built a second mill in 1890 astride Yokum Brook. One week after the flood swept away the brick building, the remaining wooden frame of the silk mill was destroyed by fire. Today the ruins of the silk mill foundation remain on the east side of Rt. 8, south of Ballou Park.

Baskets - Native white ash timber, and later canvas, was used to make baskets of all sizes. The upper Ballou basket shop was destroyed in 1927. The M. E. Ballou & Sons lower basket factory barely survived the flood allowing production to continue there until 1956. Pat Tobin, a manager at the factory, also worked in his own basket shop in the old Higley Apothecary. Among the display is a long-handled collection basket used at St. Matthew's Church and an original M.E. Ballou and Son Price List #35, from the year 1935.

Wooden coat hanger receipts - In 1820 two new mills opened near McNerney Road. The area was named Dish Hollow for the mills which turned wooden bowls. Other mills followed including the C. E. Lyman Sawmill, maker of wooden coat hangers, which was washed away in the flood. Stone remains of the mill foundation are still visible today along RT. 8 near McNerney Road. The Lyman Sawmill receipts for wood hangers are from February & September 1912.

Railroad station photos - In 1842, after the Western Railroad expanded from Springfield to Albany, the first of Becket's two railroad stations was built on Depot Street. The second station, built in the early 1900s, was closed in 1952 to passengers and to mail and freight in 1955.

Tissue paper roll - The Golden Fleece Co., Inc., located on Bancroft Road, East Becket from 1946 to 1968, produced facial tissues and novelty paper products. Located on the site of the former Bulkley, Dunton Co. (circa 1857- 1913), the mill was operated by five different companies. In 1946, after the factory switched from steam to electric power, it operated 24 hours a day and employed about 60 people, before being destroyed by fire on April 30, 1990.

School photos - By the 1840s there were ten schools located throughout the town. Photos include:

- Becket Consolidated School, Maple Street, site of the old Claflin Hotel in North Becket, built in 1939, addition in 1980.
- Seminary Hall, Brooker Hill Road, North Becket, 1855 – 1940; built at a cost of almost \$4,000, now the Becket Arts Center.
- East Becket School, on present day Wade Inn Road across from Captain Whitney Road, East Becket, closed in 1939.
- North Becket School, southwest corner of County Road and Route 8, closed in 1939; destroyed by fire in 2016.
- Becket Center School, District 1, Y.M.C.A. Road, Becket Center; used as a school from 1876 to 1918.
- Becket Washington School, Maple Street, former site of the Becket Consolidated School; present day.

Signature quilt - Handmade Ballou quilt displaying the names of Becket residents and friends of Gertrude Smith Ballou. It is believed the quilt may have been a gift for either Gertrude's 25th birthday in 1895 or for the anniversary of her marriage to J. C. Ballou.

Boston Post Cane – tradition started in 1909 by publisher of the Boston Post who wanted New England towns to present their oldest citizen with the gold headed cane until their death, when it would pass to the next oldest citizen.

Large artifacts

Dewey portraits painted in 1801 and the two-sided Dewey Tavern **sign** dated 1776.

Captain Whitney bell – band on bell reads "E. Force; N. York; 1836"

Scale and weights – instruments used by the sealer of weights & measures to ensure local consumers received a fair deal.

Mullen House Educational Center's Quarry Museum - in North Becket Village has additional Becket artifacts, baskets and granite displays, open on Saturdays from 11:00-3:00 PM, June 15 to September 7, or call 623-5146 to make an appointment.

New members are always welcome on the Historical Commission.

Please help us preserve Becket's history.

— Sandra L. Jarvis, Chair, Becket Historical Commission

Becket Athenaeum News

STEAM Group Activities for Pre-schoolers with Wendy Provencher



Join Wendy Provencher for our final STEAM group activity hour of this school year! This is an opportunity to inspire your kids to engineer, create, design, explore, and build!

Tuesday, May 14
1-2pm at the Becket Athenaeum
FREE!

The program does not meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month or during school holidays.

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

Mobile Device E-Book and E-Audio apps: OverDrive and Libby



The Becket Athenaeum 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.

To get started, go to www.becketathenaeum.org and follow the instructions, or:

If you're new to e-books and need help, bring your device with you to the library and we'll help you get set up to take advantage of our vast collection!

IMPORTANT To proceed, you will need to know your library card number and password associated with your account. The password is set to the last four digits of your library card number unless you have changed it when accessing our [catalog on MassCat](#). If you don't know your card number or are having issues, [contact us](#).

Athenaeum BOOK CLUB

All are welcome to join us at the Athenaeum on ***Tuesday, May 7th at 1:30pm***, we will discuss Barkskins (parts I-VI) by Annie Proulx.

We meet at 1:30pm on the first Tuesday of the month to discuss the book over tea/coffee and make our next selection.

Regular attendance is anywhere between 6 and 16 people. We generally wrap up by 2:45 or 3pm. We read fiction and non-fiction.



2019 Becket Summer Parks Program July 1-August 15

Free program at the Becket Center Park Monday -Thursday 10-3 Ages 6-12

Crafts, sports, lunch, swimming, fun, fun, fun!

Call town hall for early registration 623-8934 and then fill out forms on your first day at camp. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and a warm sweat-shirt. On beach day bring a towel and wear a swimsuit.

No camp on July 4th. Parents/guardians will be required to sign their child/children in and out daily. Please drop off and pick up at 10 and 3 precisely.



Free swimming lessons for everyone. July 2-August 17

Our goal is to teach everyone young and old to swim. Register at the beach at 10:00 on the week of July 1-5. Lessons will start the following week at the time the lifeguard assigns. Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. You are welcome to attend both the park program and swim lessons. Parents must transport. All vehicles must have a 2019 \$5.00 beach sticker.

Questions: Call Becket town Hall 623-8934 x100 or Rita Furlong 623-5146

Programs sponsored by the Becket Parks and Recreation Committee.



Zoning Board of Appeals Seeks New Members

The Zoning Board of Appeals is searching for two new members. This Board meets as needed on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm at Becket Town Hall. The Zoning Board of Appeals reviews land use issues that pertain to Becket zoning ordinance. In 2018, the Board met three times. If you would like more information, please contact Jessica at zba@townofbecket.org



Becket Launches New Fiscal Transparency Center and Budgeting Platform
Becket partners with ClearGov to Bring Clarity to Local Government Finances

Becket, MA (May 1, 2019) - The Town of Becket announced today that it has partnered with ClearGov, a leading provider of transparency, budgeting and forecasting solutions for local governments.

This new transparency center will allow residents to see visual breakdowns of Becket's finances, as well as insights into the Town's demographics and population. To access Becket's ClearGov profile, click on the Town Administrator's link their web-site.

Becket is part of a growing movement of Massachusetts municipalities that are taking transparency to a new level on the ClearGov platform, which also showcases basic profiles of every municipality in the country.

Town Administrator William Caldwell notes "this is an excellent tool to help both the Town staff, committees and the public have a inside look at the financial workings of the Town."

ClearGov sources publicly available financial data on municipalities to create easy-to-understand transparency dashboards for thousands of municipalities across the United States, which are made available to the public for free. Municipalities can choose to upgrade and enhance their publicly available transparency site with more robust information and provide context through commentary on the figures.

"We are excited to partner with the Town of Becket to enhance their transparency efforts and increase engagement with residents." said Chris Bullock, CEO of ClearGov. "Residents should be proud of the leadership position Becket has taken with this project and technology."

Visit Becket's website: http://www.townofbecket.org/Public_Documents/index

Visit Becket's ClearGov site: <https://www.cleargov.com/massachusetts/berkshire/town/becket>

About ClearGov

ClearGov is building a community of transparent, data-driven, modern governments. ClearGov drives this mission by offering a suite of SaaS solutions for towns, cities, schools and other municipal entities that includes transparency, benchmarking, budgeting and forecasting solutions. ClearGov's award-winning platform is utilized by hundreds of communities across twenty different states.

Press Contacts:

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Becket, MA 01223
(413) 623-8934x113

Jena Skivington
ClearGov
(585) 507-5733
jena@cleargov.com

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Call 413 623-8934 ext. 141

**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 Tuesday, 4:00pm
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

TOWN OF BECKET

**557 Main Street
Becket, MA 01223**

Phone: (413) 623-8934