

Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
6:00pm, March 4, 2020
Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

Attendees

Board of Selectmen: William Elovirta (BE), *Chairperson*; Michael Lavery (ML), *Vice Chairperson* and Chris Swindlehurst (CS), *Clerk*

Staff: William Caldwell (BC), *Town Administrator*; Beverly Gilbert (BG), *Administrative Assistant*; Christopher Bouchard, *Highway Superintendent*

Others Present: MLP Manager/Broadband Ad Hoc Group Member Bob Gross, Jeremy Dunn (Broadband Ad Hoc Group Member)
Henry Hagenah

1. Call to order

BE called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. He indicated that the BOS was recording the meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

BE led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. BOS to vote on possible Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21. (a) 6. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body; and MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21. (a) (1) To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

BE announced that the BOS will vote on a possible Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21. (a) 6. To consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property as the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. CS Moved to go into Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21. (a) 6. ML seconded. Roll call vote: William Elovirta – aye; Michael Lavery - aye; and Chris Swindlehurst – aye

At 6:06pm the BOS entered into Executive session.

At 6:21pm the BOS returned from Executive Session.

BE announced that the BOS will vote on possible Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21. (a) (1) To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. CS Moved to go into Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21. (a) (1). ML seconded. Roll call vote: William Elovirta – aye; Michael Lavery - aye; and Chris Swindlehurst – aye.

At 6:23pm the BOS entered into Executive session.

At 6:54pm, the BOS returned from Executive Session.

4. **BOS to review and possibly vote on Henry Hagenah's application to serve on the Conservation Commission (term: through 6/30/2020)**

Henry Hagenah introduced himself to the BOS. He indicated that he looks forward to learning about the Wetlands Protection Act and applying it in a balanced and impartial manner. CS moved to appoint Henry Hagenah to serve on the Conservation Commission through 6/30/2020. ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

5. **BOS discuss and potential vote on Transfer Station Fees and Possible changes**

The BOS discussed possible Transfer Station (TS) fees changes, and other changes to the TS facility. BC provided a handout of Highway Superintendent/Transfer Station Manager Chris Bouchard's recommendations for Transfer Station fees. Chris Bouchard will

Chris Bouchard has requested input from members of Baystate Roads regarding their insight and experiences with Compactors (owning vs. renting) and Scales. So far, responses have specified that renting compactors tends to be more economical due to high maintenance/electrical costs. CS indicated that if the Town owned its compactors, it could use any trucker it wanted and perhaps use the Pittsfield incinerator which is more cost-efficient. CS spent two hours at the TS, and he observed variability in the bag weights. CS stated that the Town of Washington places anything burnable into its compactor.

CS observed individuals tossing items in the incorrect bin. Chris Bouchard indicated that this may be remedied through education and training of his new attendants.

Chris Bouchard advised that if owned, the town would need to purchase three compactors. BE estimates the cost of purchasing three compactors at approximately \$60,000. BE stated that he thinks it is too late to make the change in the town's compactor operations for FY2021. CS stated that he does not want to see the town locked into a long-term (5-year) hauling contract. Chris Bouchard will arrange for a third party to conduct a traffic study in order to consider acquiring a drive-over scale. His contact at the Yarmouth Transfer Station indicated that at times, there is traffic backlog while residents await use of its scale. Chris Bouchard doubts the footprint of the TS will afford an efficient car flow. Chris Bouchard thinks that environmental concerns would likely preclude expansion of the Transfer Station.

ML moved to change the following Transfer Station fees effective July 1, 2020:

- Bulky waste - \$70.00 per cubic yard (8' pickup will be \$70.00, and a 6' pickup will be \$50.00. No minimum)
- Transfer Station permits - \$60.00 (increase from \$50.00)
- Transfer Station permits for Seniors over 65 years old - \$30.00 (increase from \$20.00)

CS seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The BOS is not changing bag sticker fees, and tabled tire fees.

Chris Bouchard will investigate tire disposal options. He will continue investigating owning vs. renting the town's compactor, and credit card machines. Chris Bouchard left the meeting at 7:10own

6. **Broadband Update and BOS to discuss and possibly vote on policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project**

MLP Manager/Broadband Ad Hoc Group member Bob Gross and Broadband Ad Hoc Group member Jeremy Dunn discussed policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project with the BOS and TA. Bob Gross provided a spreadsheet regarding subsidies, and a draft website update. Bob Gross started this discussion with the recommendation of the Broadband Ad Hoc Group for the

drop subsidy of the premises in underground areas (areas that have underground utilities). He indicated that the Broadband Ad Hoc Group's recommendation is to offer an equal subsidy based on the number of premises in each underground area so that the Town is consistent with what it is doing with the drops. Bob and Jeremy elaborated on and fielded questions on information listed on the spreadsheet.

Bob indicated that each group would have to pay additional costs over the subsidy to achieve Broadband, and there is no requirement for each "underground" group listed to participate in the Broadband project and take service. Jeremy and Bob explained that the groups must figure amongst themselves how they will pay regardless as to how many of their premises desire to participate. The agreement will be that the Town will build a network for them, and we would give them the subsidy based on the number of premises that could get serviced and they would have to pay any expense that exceeded the subsidy. For example, under this proposal, Becket Woods would receive the subsidy of approximately \$185,000 and they would have a cost of approximately \$26,000. The \$26,000 would have to be raised by those willing to participate. Jeremy explained that there will be a drop available for everyone in the group and it is the group's (not the Town's) responsibility to work out an equitable way to add premises who originally did not participate and later wish to sign up for service.

Bob Gross indicated that Becket Woods insisted upon language in its easement agreement (which is still being negotiated) regarding how a premise that did not originally contribute may sign up at a later date. Becket Woods will have the right to not allow that premise to be connected unless that premise makes a contribution of an amount determined by Becket Woods. Town Counsel has recommended that the Town agree to that. At any subsequent point, if someone were to request service who lives in Becket Woods, the Town would need to obtain approval from the Becket Woods Homeowners Association.

CS moved to accept the Broadband Ad Hoc Group's recommendation for the BOS to approve a Subsidy for the underground areas that will be \$250,000 less than what has been spent on Skyline Ridge and the subsidy will be determined in equal amounts by dividing the total amount of the subsidy by the number of premises impacted. ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Bob Gross discussed the points listed on a draft communication that the Broadband Ad Hoc Group would like to e-mail to approximately 1,150 individuals (e-mail addresses acquired from the Survey and the original WiredWest sign-ups). They would like to include a brief message with a link to BecketBroadband.org for this information in the next Becket Bulletin. Under the drop subsidy section of the communication, they will add a sentence that indicates that the physical connection cabling would follow the same routing to the premises as existing utilities. The BOS were amenable to this communication.

The Broadband Ad Hoc Group is not ready to provide a building sequence recommendation. They have discussed this matter with Westfield Gas & Electric which wants to build the backbone first up the main roads, and place cabinets on a pole in each of the FSAs to establish a preliminary infrastructure. Once this is done, the order or build may be determined. They are aware that the BOS wants to prioritize those without service and areas with a strong interest in acquiring service.

Bob Gross provided the status of midspan issues. The Broadband Ad Hoc Group had an encouraging conversation with Bill Ennen relating to midspan issues. Verizon, Westfield Gas & Electric, Sertex, Verizon, and Eversource, agreed to conduct a coordinated drive-through to address required mid-span corrections. The timing will be based on the sequencing of other towns and Verizon must first acquire all Becket make-ready licenses.

The Broadband Ad Hoc Group continues working on easements. Jeff Piemont is tracking the status on the various easements. Their largest concerns involve Becket West Road (only one individual has responded to communication), and William Holmes Road where there are only four premises in that homeowners association that are involved with underground utilities and it is not known what method (underground, overhead) the homeowners association will select.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes

ML moved to approve the February 19, 2020 meeting minutes. CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

8. Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes total for this agenda item).

Jeremy Dunn suggested that in the interest of simplifying his visits to the Transfer Station he suggests that the town would increase the Transfer Station permit fees so that the permit fees would also include Bulky Waste fees. He stated that it would be easier to not have to think about bringing a check or having the Attendants measuring the bulky waste items.

Bob Gross inquired about the Transfer Station permitting rate for secondary vehicles. The BOS will address this at a future meeting.

9. BOS to review and consider voting to approve the following One-day Wine & Beer license applications:

- **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival/Ariana Massery**
Event: Dance Party; Dates: March 28, 2020, 7:00 p.m. till 12:00 p.m.; Location: Perles Family Studio, 358 George Carter Road
- **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival/Ariana Massery**
Event: Dance Party; Date: April 4, 2020, 7:00 p.m. till 12:00 p.m.; Location: Perles Family Studio, 358 George Carter Road

CS moved to approve Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival's one day wine & Beer license applications in conjunction with their dance parties scheduled on March 28 and April 4, 2020. ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

10. BOS to review Departmental Reports

- **Volunteer Fire Department January 2020 Report**
- **Others TBA**

The BOS reviewed the Fire Department's January 2020 Report

11. Discussion of draft Town Administrator Performance Evaluation Form

The BOS will switch to Richmond's Town Administration evaluation form. The staff and Town Administrator self-evaluation forms will remain the same. Evaluations are due to the Chairperson of the Board of Selectmen on March 20, 2020. The BOS will conduct its evaluation to Town Administrator Bill Caldwell on April 1, 2020.

12. BOS to vote on approval of Porchlight VNA Agreement for Fiscal Year 2021

ML moved to approve Porchlight VNA's Agreement for Fiscal Year 2020 (it was erroneously listed on the agenda as Fiscal Year 2021). CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0. Bill Caldwell explained that this is a housekeeping item. The Town has been using Porchlight's VNA services but there is no record of a signed agreement.

13. BOS to vote on the Constellation Energy Contract

CS moved to select a 36 month option (Price \$0.0895/kWh effective November 2020 through November 2023) for the Constellation Energy Supplier Contract. ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

14. BOS to vote to authorize TA to approve and sign municipal aggregation pricing contract.

CS moved to authorize the TA to approve and sign the municipal aggregation pricing contract. ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

15. BOS's Comments and Announcements

CS brought up possible changes and ideas relating to the Transfer Station to be considered:

- purchasing instead of renting compactors. Purchasing would allow Becket to select other haulers. Renting limits Becket to use the hauler owning the compactors. He would like Becket to have the option of using other incinerator facilities (such as Pittsfield's). Becket's current vendor brings burnable trash to the Lenoxdale facility.
- He reported that the Lenoxdale facility operator indicated that rodents gnawing on wires contributes to electrical problems of TS devices, and effective rodent control would reduce maintenance issues.
- looking into other options (perhaps City Tire) for tire disposal. BE indicated that cost is not the only factor. On paper it may seem more economical but workload of the staff (Some places limit the number of times that may be brought in per visit, some places require the Town's staff to stack the tires), and amount of time spent on difficult billing issues and practices, must be considered.

ML initiated discussion about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). BC indicated that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health is working closely with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide updated information to ambulance departments, hospitals and other public entities about the coronavirus outbreak.

16. Town Administrator's Report

BC provided an update of several items that he has been working on:

- Broadband Hut – construction progressing
- Acquiring a generator to service the Broadband Hut and Becket Town Hall. Arrangements could be made for Broadband to pay its portion of the electricity to the Town.
- HVAC @ Town Hall
- Budget:
 - COLA and other salary adjustments
 - .5% CBRSD
 - New WRHS
- RFP for Assessing Service – getting input from assessors will advertise soon
 - Assessor's proposal
- Green Communities competitive grant
 - HVAC, Station 1 envelope - A propane-based Town Hall heating is not eligible for the Green Communities Grant
- Getting easement for septic in village for Athenaeum/BAC/MH
- USDA Grant – order of conditions (hybrid cruiser). BC will auction off old canine cruiser and use another cruiser for Broadband Detail duty
- Affordable Housing Grant
- CDBG rollover - ~\$12,000 to new app contingencies – becket projects
 - CDBG – 4 Towns: Dalton, Becket, Sheffield, Stockbridge

- ADA study
- Budget update – Rate of Pay for Assessing Clerk, Police Department Personnel, and Highway Superintendent and a 2.5 % COLA will be discussed with the Finance Committee. The Police Chief had requested a 5% increase for his officers to encourage them to remain in Becket and not get poached from other towns.
The Finance Committee Meeting is scheduled on March 5th
- Attended Berkshire Managers Meeting – Berkshire Education task force is trying to revitalize.
- Constellation – discussed earlier during this meeting
- Aggregation – discussed earlier during this meeting
- EV chargers – payment set up
- Still investigating:
 - Land combination 21 Maple and Park – various statutes to see if possible – land use question
 - Marion Brothers will submit a FY2021 PILOT payment
 - BOS name change to Select Board– ATM article for special legislation
- BE reported on the School Committee meeting he attended. At that meeting discussion ensued about the capital voting process.
- BE advised that FY2021 Health Benefit rates will increase 4.25 percent, and dental benefits rates will decrease 5.48 percent.
- Becket Arts Center submitted a FY2021 revised proposal to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen.

17. Any other business to come before the Board

CS moved for the BOS to sign a letter of support for the application filed by Construct, Inc. requesting funding for the Becket Receivership Affordable Housing Project. ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Town Report: The BOS approved the format/wording of the Annual Town Report inside and outside covers. The BOS had no changes to the Town Official listing. The BOS stated that despite that Mark Hanford continues as a member of the Volunteer Fire Department, they would like to acknowledge Mark Hanford in the Retirement section (with a photo) since he had retired as Fire Chief. Beverly inquired about including black and white photos of new vehicles/equipment acquired during 2019.

18. Correspondence:

- **Town of Dalton letter dated 2-3-2020 to School Committee Chair to voice objection to School Committee 7-25-2019 approved motion with suggested motion wording to remedy**
- **FEMA letter dated 2-19-2020 re: Final Westfield Watershed Discovery Report**

The BOS reviewed the above captioned correspondence.

19. BOS to review and sign payable warrants.

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.

20. BOS to adjourn the Meeting

ML moved to adjourn. CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0. At 8:50pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Secretary

Signed by:



William Movirta, Chairperson

/ 3-18-2020

Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- Any other business - Elected and other Officials.doc
- Any other business memo - re Town Report_03042020134210.PDF
- BOS Agenda 2020March4
- BOS Meeting draft minutes 2020Feb19
- Broadband terms-and-conditions-draft communication listing
- Broadband Ad Hoc Group - Spreadsheet Underground-subsidy-options-3Mar2020
- BOS letter to CPC in support of Construct Inc.'s application for Affordable Housing
- Correspondence as listed above
- Henry Hagenah's Appointment Application & resume to serve on the Conservation Commission
- Highway Dept. position descriptions
- HVAC summaries for the Town Hall & Fire Stations
- Jacobs pillow wine & beer applications for March 28 & April 4 dance parties.
- MIIA Health Ins rates FY 2021
- Porchlight agreement FY2020
- TA Evaluation Documents
- Town Administrator's Report 03-04-2020
- VFD January 2020 Report
- Constellation energy supply rates
- BAC Proposal for \$10,000 request
- Highway Superintendent - Transfer Station fees