

Town of Becket  
Joint Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
April 2, 2020  
6:00 p.m.  
Town Hall  
557 Main Street, Becket

**Attendees**

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

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

**Finance Committee via remote participation:** Dan Parnell, Mark Karlberg, Ann Spadafora, Chuck Garman, and Ron Defoe

These meeting minutes document solely the Board of Selectmen's votes.

- 1. The Board of Selectmen Chairperson will call the Board of Selectmen meeting to order. The Finance Committee Chairperson will call the Finance Committee Meeting to order.**

BE called the meeting to order at 6:08pm. He indicated that the BOS was recording the meeting and due to that the Finance Committee was participating remotely, all votes will be roll-call.

- 2. Administrator's input.**

BC provided a draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The Finance Committee and BOS agreed with BC's suggested format of the meeting as documented in Agenda Items 3 & 4.

- 3. FY21 Budget discussion and possible votes.**

CS stated that since the Annual Town Meeting was put off until June 6th, he would like for the Finance Committee and BOS to consider postponing the finalization of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant due to the unknown impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on property owners' ability to pay taxes, particularly retail/restaurant earners out of work who live paycheck to paycheck. CS stated that he wonders if it is premature to establish a proposed budget. BE pointed out that if circumstances change, the BOS does not have to authorize spending the full amount of funds voted on at the Annual Town Meeting. BE indicated that amendments may be made to lower the amounts on the floor of the Annual Town Meeting. It was the consensus to proceed with the ATM Warrant. BC suggested taking measures to prepare for the upcoming fiscal year, and he indicated that after the Warrant is posted, it is possible to postpone the Annual Town Meeting.

Per Dan Parnell's inquiry, BC clarified that April 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for the BOS to receive Citizens' petitions and that this date is not based on the number of days before the Annual Town Meeting.

ML moved to recommend Article 1 – Compensation (Board of Selectmen, Board of Health and Cemetery Commissioners). BE seconded. Roll call: William Elovirta – Yes, Michael Lavery – Yes, and Chris Swindlehurst – Yes. Motion carried 3-0.

ML moved to recommend Article 2 –Operating Budget. BE seconded. Roll call: William Elovirta – Yes, Michael Lavery – Yes, and Chris Swindlehurst – Yes. Motion carried 3-0.

BC fielded questions during discussion of Article 2 of the Operating Budget. Other points of discussion:

- Dan Parnell stated that because the Becket Arts Center \$10,000 appropriation (Item 184) is not going to be a recurring budgetary line item, it should be removed from the operating budget Article and have its own Warrant Article. BC will revise the ATM to list the Becket Arts Center as a separate article.
- BC will ask Town Counsel if Item 210 OPEB \$15,000 (Other Post-Employment Benefits) must be listed as a separate article since it is a new budgetary category.

The above vote for Article 2 included line items 184 and 210.

#### **4. The Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee will vote on their recommendations for the Town Meeting Warrant Articles.**

BC narrated and fielded questions on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles:

Article 3 Debt Service, Article 4 Capital Expenditures, Article 5 WRHS Debt Exclusion, Article 6 Transfer to the Stabilization Fund, Article 7 Acceptance of Chapter 90 Funds, Article 8 Ambulance Budget, Article 9 Ambulance Capital Expenditures, Article 10 Revolving Funds, Article 11 FY 2021 Community Preservation Authorization, Article 12 Use of Stabilization to Offset Debt Payments, Article 13 Payment of prior Year Bill, Article 14 Community Preservation Funding for the First Congregational Church, and Article 15 Community Preservation Funding for Affordable Housing,

During discussion CS suggested revisiting the necessity of Highway Truck #2 (\$255,000) listed under Article 4 Capital Expenditures. CS recommended receiving feedback from the Highway Superintendent's successor. BE agreed that the town should not automatically purchase the truck without further input. The BOS was amenable to Dan Parnell's suggestion for the BOS to hold discussion at a future meeting to generate a policy requiring that large purchases over a certain amount (to be specified) would require BOS and Finance Committee approval in addition to town meeting approval.

ML moved to recommend Articles 3 through 15. BE seconded. Roll call: William Elovirta – Yes, Michael Lavery – Yes, and Chris Swindlehurst – Yes. Motion carried 3-0.

The Finance Committee adjourned their meeting at 6:47PM. Dan Parnell, Mark Karlberg, Chuck Garman, and Ron Defoe left the meeting. Ann Spadafora remained.

ML moved to recommend Article 16 Bylaw Amendment to Change Board of Selectmen to Select Board and Article 17 Act for Special Legislation Regarding Name Board of Selectmen Change. BE seconded. Roll call: William Elovirta – Yes, Michael Lavery – Yes, and Chris Swindlehurst – Yes. Motion carried 3-0.

**5. Any Other business**

CS reiterated his concern about the impact of pandemic on the FY2021 budget.

**6. The Selectmen will adjourn their meeting. The Finance Committee members will adjourn their meeting.**

The Finance Committee had adjourned at 6:47pm.

ML moved to adjourn. BC seconded. Roll call: William Elovirta – Yes, Michael Lavery – Yes, and Chris Swindlehurst – Yes. Motion carried 3-0. At 6:49pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Beverly Gilbert, Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:

 / 

William Elovirta, Chairperson

Date Approved