

**Town of Becket  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
7:00pm, August 5, 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, Administrative Assistant; Kristopher McDonough, Police Chief; Ray Ferrin, Ambulance Director; Paul Mikaniewicz, Fire Chief

**Others (remote participation):** Rita Furlong, Tom Neiman, Ken Smith, Ann Smith  
**(in person):** Gail Kusek

**1. Call to order**

BE called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

BE led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. BOS to discuss the Becket Quarry with Ken Smith, President of the Becket Land Trust**

Due to safety concerns at the Becket Quarry and its neighborhood, BE invited Ken Smith, President of the Becket Land Trust ("BLT"), to meet with the BOS, Police Chief, Fire Chief and Ambulance Director. Discussion included the following topics:

- Speeding on Quarry Road
- Cliff jumping, swimming, scuba diving in the Quarry – Draining water from the Quarry is not an option (Conservation Commission had advised the BLT that it will not allow interference with the water's ecosystem that has developed over the past 50 years).
- Illegal Parking
- Many "no parking" signs have been removed – The Police Dept. cannot ticket without signs. **The BOS will arrange to replace signs along Quarry Road in accordance with their vote (2016).**
- Parking fines – Parking fines are \$10.00. The Quarry Parking lot fee is \$10.00. Town Meeting vote is required to change and delineate areas for parking fines and to establish tow away zones. **In order to provide incentive to prevent illegal parking on the neighboring roads, the BOS is amenable to placing an article on a Town Meeting Warrant to increase fines and to possibly add tow-away zones.**
- Towing cars – The BLT has not enforced its sign stating that trespassing cars parked beyond allowable hours will be towed at the owner's expense. The BLT will consider calling towing companies.
- Accessibility of public safety vehicles & the parking lot – Ray Ferrin recommended that the Becket Land Trust review the design of the parking lot in order to designate space for public safety vehicles. Ray stated that on July 24<sup>th</sup>, the Ambulance Department could not enter the locked parking lot when it responded to a call.
- Vehicles locked into the parking lot after closing – The Police Department has the key to the gate to the parking lot. Police Department resources have been used to unlock the gate.

- Access road (catch 22 situation): The BLT has taken measures to render the road to the summit of the Quarry less passable to discourage trespassing vehicles. However, this limits options for emergency services vehicles.
- Overcrowding at the Quarry – significant increase in 2020 attendance due to COVID
- Littering in the Quarry and around the neighborhood
- Intimidating behavior to neighbors, Quarry employees, and public service employees
- Intoxication
- Police Presence – Ken Smith asked Chief McDonough to assign officers to patrol the neighboring roads and to arrange for Police Department presence around the Quarry for a few weeks to break patterns of negative behavior. He suggested that this may be a moneymaking venture for the town. Police Chief McDonough responded that the reality is that the Police Department has extremely limited staffing, and the amount of revenue the town receives from moving violation fines/parking fines is not substantial. Police Chief McDonough stated that it is not Police Department protocol to station officers at private property. He suggested increasing the cost to park at the Quarry, and limiting the number of guests. ML suggested that the BLT may consider hiring police detail in light of additional revenue from increased parking lot income.
- Trespassing and entering without permission from the Gatekeeper
- Insolent behavior toward public fire department and other public safety workers.
- Property damage (including the gate)
- Parking Lot Attendant – Gail Kusek, the Quarry's Parking Lot Attendant, asked if the Police Department could send an officer to check in with her during closing times.
- Fire Chief Mikaniewicz reported that the crowd would not move out of the way of public safety officials during a recent emergency. He suggested instituting financially related consequences and requiring those entering the Quarry property to sign a document acknowledging that they will be responsible for the cost of the resources diverted from the public safety departments related to their presence on the property.
- Internet videos glorify cliff jumping/swimming/drinking alcoholic beverages at the Quarry.

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

BC advised that next week Pike and Westfield Gas & Electric will complete the ride-out to determine make-ready related remediation. Portions of the remediation may be performed in conjunction with the drops. The beginning of construction is getting closer. BC reported on the progress of the Broadband Hut (power, underground conduits to connect fiber to the Town Hall, propane).

**5. BOS to discuss and possibly vote to approve and sign a Bond Anticipation Note to fund the Broadband Project**

The BOS announced that Piper Sandler & Co., won the bid for the \$2,200,000.00 (this amount includes \$600,000 renewal from the prior note) Bond Anticipation Note to fund the Broadband Project. The interest rate is 1.250 percent. BC indicated that to reduce the interest rate, Piper Sandler & Co. is giving the Town the \$10,406.00 premium.

**6. Approval of the July 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

CS moved to approve the July 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes. ML 2<sup>nd</sup>: unanimous.

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

None

**8. Chief McDonough to discuss Police Department Staffing**

Chief McDonough informed the BOS that full-time Police Officer Eckman is on medical leave for an unknown period due to an on-duty injury. When possible, the part-time Reserve Police Officers have been covering his shifts: otherwise the full-time Officers are required to cover the shifts and this creates overtime pay which may lead to exceeding the Police Department's budget. Based on the challenges and costs involved with hiring, training, outfitting, and retaining Part-time Reserve Officers, Chief McDonough recommends that the BOS consider hiring additional full-time Police Officers.

Police Department Report

- From January 1<sup>st</sup> till June 30<sup>th</sup> (the remaining figures are not yet finalized by the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department) the Becket Police Department has had 2,222 calls, 77 criminal offenses and 101 citations
- June 424 calls, May 421 Calls, & April 307 calls

BE remarked that when he was the Becket Police Chief, the department received 2,800 or 2,900 calls for twelve months.

**9. BOS to discuss the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission's 7-21-2020**

**Advisory Re: On-Premises Licensees Selling Mixed Drinks for Off-Premises Consumption. Possible vote to order additional requirements.**

The BOS reviewed the above captioned advisory. The consensus was to not order additional requirements.

**10. BOS to dissolve the Highway Superintendent Screening (aka Highway Superintendent Hiring/Search) Committee**

ML moved to dissolve the Highway Superintendent Screening (aka Highway Superintendent Hiring/Search) Committee. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: unanimous. The BOS signed letters of appreciation to members of the committee: Katherine Warden, Bert Goodermote, Curt Wilton and Ron Defoe. BC had written and gave BE a letter to thank him for serving on the committee.

**11. Board of Selectmen to review Town Clerk's letter dated 7-2-2019 (correction: date of letter is 7-21-2020): BOS to vote on Election Worker reappointments from 8-15-20 through 8-14-21. Names are listed below:**

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Charles Francis (D)     | • Adrienne Metcalf (U)    |
| • Meredyth Babcock (D)    | • Jerome Schwartzbach (U) |
| • Julia Kay-Grace (D)     | • Charles Garman (U)      |
| • Ann Krawet (D)          | • Priscilla McEwen (U)    |
| • Adel Levine (D)         | • Alvin Blake (U)         |
| • Barbara Craft Reiss (D) | • Ruth Rosenthal (U)      |
| • Steven Reiss (D)        | • Patricia Clemons (D) *  |
| • Gale LaBelle (R)        | • Thomas Henry Rock (R)   |
| • Steven LaBelle (R)      | • Dennis J. Mahoney (R)   |

- Paula Bergeron (D)
- Susan M. Purser (D)
- Vernice D. Cowell (D)
- Susan A. Crossley (D)
- Lynn D. Howard (D)
- Torcusio Ramos dos Santos (D)

- Flora M. Whiffen (U)
- Timothy F. Hickey (U)
- James Peter Levy (U)

*\* no longer a resident of Becket, but an enrolled voter in the Commonwealth*

ML moved to approve the Town Clerk's recommendations (listed above) for Election Worker re-appointments effective 8-15-2020 through 8-14-2020: CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: unanimous.

## 12. BOS to review Departmental Reports (TBA)

The BOS reviewed the Building Inspector's report (activity June through July 2020). Chief McDonough provided a report for the Police Department under agenda item 8.

## 13. BOS's Comments and Announcements

ML stated that at the next Selectmen's meeting, he will bring materials (Williamstown's Diversity Committee Mission Statement, Great Barrington's Bridge Program Statement that ML had signed as a public official), and he would like to discuss how Becket may promote diversity and inclusiveness. ML suggested that the BOS may wish to consider creating a Diversity Committee. Based on an informal survey, ML knows several residents who would be interested in serving on a Diversity Committee. BE mentioned that the Town had approved its Compassionate Community Declaration.

BE reported that MEMA is offering reimbursements to municipalities that incurred costs for damages related to yesterday's high winds storm (Isaias). BC will submit an application to MEMA.

## 14. Town Administrator's Report

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

- Yokum Pond Rd - grinding and injection has been completed, paving was originally scheduled for Friday but moved to Monday or Tuesday due to the large rainfall amount.
- Ambulance Garage – Will begin after Town Hall work is completed
- Town Hall HVAC - nearly complete
- Raymakers -Broadband trench, propane lines trench
- HL Fuel company - propane tanks and lines
- Mt. Everett -septic work and a guardrail will be placed at the Town Hall
- Working on 2019 audit
- Trails Grant –denied. BC awaits news about the Green Communities grant.
- Highway – ML moved to approve BC's recommendation for Albert Goodermote to remain the Highway Department's foreman and for him to continue earning \$1.50 per hour additional rate of pay to compensate him for his extra responsibilities. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: unanimous. During discussion BC specified that the Highway Superintendent had indicated during a meeting with BC that he favors Albert Goodermote continuing on as the working foreman. BC indicated to the BOS that agrees this is a good idea. BC indicated that the Highway Department divides into groups each morning. Moreover, he indicated that Mr. Goodermote has done a fine job over the past four months and his help was instrumental in maintaining the Highway Department's productivity during the

Highway Superintendent's vacancy. BE stipulated that he does not want the Highway Superintendent to become an exclusively administrative position and that he is expected to also work in the field.

- Highway - Getting specs for truck 1 and 2 replacement

**15. Any other business to come before the Board**

None

**16. Correspondence:**

- ♦ 7-20-2020 Jewel Environmental Corporation re: intentions to file a Permanent Solution Statement Report (RTN 1-0021069 – 190W at Mile Marker 14.9 in Becket, MA) with the Department of Environmental Protection.
- ♦ 07-31-2020 Zoning Board of Appeals Notice of Public Hearing scheduled on 9-8-2020 to review a Special Permit application submitted by Joel Marcus & Carol Davis to seek relief from Section 3.4.5 of the Zoning Bylaws, to encroach on property lines set back at 19 Switter Lane (Assessors Map 203, Lot 22).

The BOS reviewed the above listed correspondence.

**17. BOS to review and sign payable warrants.**

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.


**18. BOS to adjourn the Meeting**

ML moved to adjourn, CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: unanimous. BE adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Beverly Gilbert, Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:



William Elovirta, Chairperson

8-19-2020

Date Approved

**Documents discussed at this meeting:**

- 2020.07.15 Meeting Minutes
- Town Clerk's letter dated 7-2-2020 re: Election Worker Reappointments
- BOS Letters of appreciation to the Highway Superintendent Screening Committee Members
- Building Inspector Report (activity June through July 2020)
- Town Administrator's Report
- 2020.07.21 ABCC Advisory re on premises licensees selling mixed drinks for off-premises consumption
- Correspondence - listed under Item 15
- 2020.08.04 Unibank Fiscal Advisory Services Inc. Municipal Note Sale Information