

**Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
7:00pm, September 2, 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

Others (remote participation): Amy Alpert, Tommie Hutto Blake, Adele Levine, Shelley Chanler, Barbara Craft Reiss

Others (in person): Gale Labelle, Board of Health Chairperson; Bob Ronzio, Board of Health Member; Bob Gross, MLP Manager

1. Call to order

BE called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

BE led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

MLP Manager Bob Gross provided an update on the Town's Broadband project:

The Town and Westfield Gas & Electric awaits data from the utility companies for residual make-ready work. Bill Ennen had advised that there were 337 residual issues (mostly mid-span related – not sure if they belong to Verizon or Eversource) and this matter is on Bill Ennen's list for tomorrow's meeting he has with the utility companies. Bob Gross stated that the Broadband Ad Hoc Group will take into account the remedial make-ready work and alter the build sequence in order to construct FSAs that may be quickly completed.

Sertex hopes to commence construction mid-October. Bob will meet with Sertex next week to discuss their interest in doing some of the underground construction work.

William Holmes Road, Becket Woods, Becket West, Family Court, Frederick Court and Parson's Way make-ready work is completed, underway or close to beginning.

Kent Lew, Town of Washington's MLP Manager, told Bob that he estimates that 2/3 of underground areas may be plowed and would likely not require trenching.

Bob will suggest for the Town to assume conservative estimates.

Bob stated that he thinks the Broadband Ad Hoc Group may suggest billing the customers for the estimated cost of their drops that exceed the Town's subsidy and then after the work

is completed the Town may invoice or credit the premises for the difference in the actual cost.

BE stated that he found the Broadband Ad Hoc's meeting he attended last week to be very informative.

4. Approval of the August 5, 2020 Meeting Minutes

ML moved to approve the August 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes. CS 2nd. Vote: unanimous.
ML moved to amend section 11 of the August 5, 2020 meeting minutes to correct the expiration date of the appointment term of the Election Workers through 8-14-2021.
CS 2nd. Vote: unanimous.

5. Gale Labelle, Chairperson of the Board of Health re: Public Health Update

Gale Labelle, Chairperson of the BOH discussed the following topics: flu vaccine (she is working on arranging flu clinics), Becket COVID-19 cases (none have been reported in the past eight weeks), on the Town website, she has posted a thank you to residents for wearing their masks, the BOH had 39 Title 5 inspections this month and 10 perc tests within the past two weeks, Becket Motel Septic has special requirements is still in process, the Becket Motel wants BOS recommendations on an information center/kiosk they would like to install on their property, Ron O'Connor from the Department of Public Health approached the BOH re: involvement and tracking on education pods (Gale had advised that the Becket BOH does not have the resources to manage education pods), she brought up that the Conservation Commission and Building inspector do not have jurisdiction over well repairs.

BE brought up that an individual had contacted members of the BOS to inquire about what the Town can do to clear animal feces off one of the beaches located within the Sherwood Forest Lake District. Gale clarified that this is not a BOH matter. Bob Ronzio, a Board of Health member and an official of the SFLD Prudential Committee indicated that the Sherwood Forest Lake District follows the Town's rules, and this will be brought up by the Prudential Committee.

6. Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes total for this agenda item).
There was no public input entertained under this agenda item.

7. BOS to consider and possibly vote on "NOT in Our Town" Pledge

Michael read a statement in support of the Board of Selectmen signing the "NOT in Our Town" Pledge. He affirmed that he not only believes in the message but he very much wants for the Town to take proactive measures to embrace diversity to promote a kinder and more inclusive community. CS stated that he supports signing the pledge. BE stated that he researched the BRIDGE organization and he does not have a problem signing the pledge as this reflects his beliefs and practices.

Bob Gross had mentioned that the Town approved a Compassionate Community Declaration. He inquired how the pledge differs from the declaration.

Tommie Hutto Blake described how the Compassionate Community Declaration, approved at the 2017 ATM, came to fruition, and explained why she supports the language contained in the pledge which she would like to see displayed in the Town Hall next to the framed

Compassionate Community Declaration. Tommie read an e-mail composed by Barbara Craft Reiss regarding a recent incident that had occurred in the Becket Estate community.

Tommie urged the BOS to sign the pledge she read as she thinks this is a step to empower Berkshire County to combat ignorance driven hate and promote civility and kindness. The BOS noticed that the pledge Tommie read contained different wording from the “NOT in Our Town” pledge. Tommie stated that although the essence is the same, the pledge she recommends is designed to include the entire county. She will provide a copy of the pledge to the BOS. In order for the BOS to review the wording of the pledge, the BOS tabled voting to approve the pledge for the September 16th meeting. Tommie thanked the BOS for allowing this conversation to occur.

8. BOS to review Departmental Reports

- TBA

The BOS reviewed the Highway Superintendent’s August 31, 2020 report.

9. BOS’s Comments and Announcements

ML’s items: 1) BC will talk to the Manager of the Transfer Station re: the Transfer Station employee’s suggestion to use a clear tarp so that the cardboard and paper recyclables will not get wet from the rain. 2) CS reported that he is scheduled to take care of a dead elm tree at the Becket Athenaeum.

CS’s items: 1) He noticed the gas line was buried at the Fire Station. 2) In response to a resident’s inquiry, BC will contact Town Counsel to find out whether an excise tax relief option for active and reserve military personnel requires Town Meeting vote.

10. Town Administrator’s Report

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

- Ambulance Garage – concrete cutting 9/10, 9/11, Highway Dept. to cut apron , concreted pour 9/14-16 – concrete pad
- Town Hall HVAC – nearly complete
- HL Fuel – propane tanks – September 18 for the Town Hall
- Raymaakers – complete on Family Court, moving to Frederick Court - progress
- Highway – Truck 1 ordered with a sander instead of with a crew cab. CS suggested scheduling a working meeting at the Highway Garage to view and discuss equipment.
- Police- cruiser nearly complete
- Broadband Hut – working on finishing construction
- Green Communities Competitive Grant – awarded for heat pumps and insulation at 2 Fire Stations.
- PD construction nearing completion
- Waiting on price for paving parking extension.
- Easement complete for athenaeum septic work – waiting for White Wolf’s submissions
- TH reopening: The BOS agreed to reopen the Town Hall to the public from 10am till 2pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays, starting October 6th.
- BC announced that the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration has scheduled a grant award ceremony at the North Becket Park Maple Street in

Becket at 11am, on September 14th. CS will bring a small generator. BC anticipates DER will award funding for a culvert on Benton Hill Road.

11. Any other business to come before the Board

BE moved to appoint Geri Walter to the Board of Assessors effective 7-24-2020 through 6-30-2021. CS 2nd: Vote: 3 unanimous. BC had explained that this was a “housekeeping” item. Geri had agreed to continue serving on the Board of Assessors but had tendered a copy of her letter resigning from the BOA to Berkshire County Retirement to satisfy pension requirements calling for a one-pay period separation with the Town.

After acknowledging Katherine Warden’s letter of resignation from the Zoning Board of Appeals (Associate Member), the BOS signed a letter to thank her for her service to the Town (resignation effective Sept. 2, 2020). The Selectmen received a communication from Victoria Bleier, Chairperson of the ZBA, and they will convey they support her ideas for recruitment.

The BOS agreed to hold a Cover Photo contest for the 2020 Annual Town Report.

12. Correspondence:

- TBA

The BOS had no correspondence for tonight’s meeting.

13. BOS to review and sign payable warrants.

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.

14. BOS to adjourn the Meeting

CS moved to adjourn, ML 2nd: unanimous. BE adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Gilbert, Administrative Assistant

Signed by:



William Elovirta, Chairperson

/ 9-16-2020

Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- ◆ 2020.8.19 Meeting Minutes & 2020.08.05 Amended Meeting Minutes
- ◆ 2020.9.2 Town Administrator’s Report
- ◆ 2020.08.31 Highway Superintendent’s Report
- ◆ NOT IN OUR TOWN Pledge
- ◆ 2020.8.6 letter of resignation (ZBA) from Katherine Warden
- ◆ 2020.9.2 letter of appreciation to Katherine Warden
- ◆ 2020.9.2 e-mail from Victoria Bleier re: recruitment of additional members for the ZBA