

**Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen Meeting
August 7, 2019
7:00 p.m.
Town Hall
557 Main Street, Becket**

Attendees

Board of Selectmen: William Elovirta, *Chairperson*; Michael Lavery, *Vice Chairperson* and Chris Swindlehurst, *Clerk*

Staff: William Caldwell, *Town Administrator*; Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*; Police Chief Kristopher McDonough, Highway Superintendent Christopher Bouchard, Don Murray (Highway Department)

Others Present: MLP Manager Robert Gross, Bill Cavanaugh (North Becket Cemetery Commissioner), Chris Isner, Jessica Giarolo, Jan Elovirta, and Laurel Burgwardt (Board of Health)

1. Call to order

At 7:00 p.m., Bill called the meeting to order and announced that the BOS was recording the meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Bill led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Approval of Minutes

Michael moved to approve the minutes for the 4-12-18 and 7-24-19 meetings. Chris seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Highway Superintendent:

- **Chapter 90 Project Approval**
- **Complete Streets Grant Program**
- **Update Highway Department Equipment Operator Position Description (Revised Job Title: Equipment Operator / Truck Driver)**

Highway Superintendent Christopher Bouchard discussed the above mentioned items with the BOS.

Chapter 90 Project Approval: He indicated that this request under the State Aid Chapter 90 program was for full-depth reclamation with asphalt injection and fine grade and compaction of two sections of Yokum Pond Road. One section is 2,600' x 22.6' (starts about 500 feet from the County Road Intersection and it spans toward the second bridge) and the other section is 3,000' x 22.6' (starts Tyne Road at the bottom of the hill for approx. 3,000 square feet). Chris estimates the cost for this project at \$365,778.00. Chris indicated this project involves 11 culverts, and portions of the project will require road closings for several hours during specific days due to safety issues (road visibility, narrowness of the roads section). Michael moved to approve the Chapter 90 State Aid Reimbursable program request as submitted by the Highway Superintendent in order to enable repairs to two sections of Yokum Pond (2600' and 3,000'). Chris seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Bill E. advised that the County Highway Association will send a letter to be sent to the Governor and State Representatives, and Senators of Berkshire County Highway District to ask that the state will allocate a portion of the state's 1 billion dollar surplus toward Chapter 90. At tomorrow's Massachusetts Highway Association meeting, (Bill E. is the Treasurer and Chris Bouchard is the Vice President) the suggestion for Mass. Highway Dept. to advocate for additional Chapter 90 aid will be discussed.

Complete Streets Program: Chris recommended requesting the services of a consultant at a cost of \$35,000 (maximum funding under Tier 2 is up to \$50,000) to develop a Complete Street Project Prioritization Plan consistent with the Tier 2 Municipal requirements of the Complete Streets Funding Program. The consultant will review the town's roads (inventory) and present ten to fifteen viable projects (sharing of the road projects, widening of lanes, which the town may submit for the Tier 3 Construction Application (funding requests under this segment may be up to approximately \$400,000). Chris advised that because the town lacks public transportation, he is unsure whether any sidewalks projects will be suggested. He thinks intersection projects will not be suggested because the town does not have any high crash intersections. Michael moved to approve the town's Complete Street grant application to MassDOT to request \$35,000.00 funding of technical assistance (Tier 2 Prioritization Plan). Chris seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Update Highway Department Equipment Operator Position Description (Revised Job Title: Equipment Operator / Truck Driver): Chris Bouchard indicated that his requested changes more accurately reflects current operations (All operate equipment, and all drive trucks), and that the Highway Dept. will require that all of its employees will have hoisting (loading) licenses. He indicated that due to the small size of the town's Highway Department it is practical for all Highway Department employees to be able to perform the same duties and provide coverage when a worker is absent. Chris stated that from now on it would be sensible to have one position rather than two separate positions (Equipment Operator and Truck Driver).

Don Murray asked if everyone has the same position description, who will be in charge when the Highway Superintendent is not present. Chris B. indicated that each day he will assign the tasks to members of his department and he will take each person's skill-set into account.

Don stated that his understanding was that he was hired specifically as the town's primary equipment operator and he expressed concern that this modification to the position description will change what he had agreed to (being a Heavy Equipment Operator) when he accepted his position with the town. Bill Cavanaugh suggested that the town create a tier-oriented system so that employees will be more career oriented and have an opportunity to grow and such a system would provide incentives for employees to remain with the town and enhance morale. Michael suggested to Don that employees being ready to serve in multiple capabilities is prevalent amongst many industries (including the military) and this change does not reflect a slight to him. Discussion ensued about Bill Cavanaugh's idea. Bill E. suggested that Bill C. and Chris B. check the structure of other town Highway Departments.

Chris moved to accept the updated Highway Department Equipment Operator job description as proposed with the understanding that the Town Administrator and Highway Superintendent will research and report on how other Highway Departments are structured. Michael seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. BOS to discuss Police Chief's recommendation for Police Department Staffing

Police Chief McDonough described his staffing operations and his recommendation for the police department to appoint one of its reserve officer to temporary full-time (until completion of the next academy class). Kris pointed out that during his employment with the town, he has only lost one of his full-time Police Officers who accepted a police chief opportunity. Police Chief McDonough stated that many of his reserve officers leave the town's employ when offered a full-time position. Kris discussed the costs affiliated with recruiting, training and outfitting reserve officers; staffing challenges associated with relying on Reserve Officers, over time costs, and budgeting related to his proposal.

The consensus of the BOS was that they would like the Finance Committee to weigh in on the Police Chief's proposal. Due to scheduling conflicts, the BOS will not have a meeting on Sept. 18th and will meet on Sept. 4th and September 11th. The next Finance Committee meeting will occur on September 5th. Chris moved that in order to obtain feedback and additional information from the Finance Committee on this matter, the BOS will table further discussion and possible vote until September 11, 2019. Michael seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Board of Selectmen to vote on the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Paul Mikaniewicz Fire Chief effective August 7, 2019 through June 30, 2020

Bill moved to accept the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Paul Mikaniewicz Fire Chief effective August 7, 2019 through June 20, 2020. Chris seconded. Both Bill E. and Chris who are members of the Fire Department had contacted the State Ethics Commission for guidance re: possible conflict of interest relating to this matter. Both do not report directly to the Fire Chief and both do not have a way of achieving gain through this appointment. Chris and Bill E. both had submitted their disclosure forms with the Town Clerk. The Volunteer Fire Department Association had recommended appointing Mr. Mikaniewicz. Jan Elovirta inquired who will take charge in Mr. Mikaniewicz's absence. Bill C. replied that the next highest ranking officer will be in charge when the Fire Chief is not present. Motion carried unanimously.

Broadband Update

Bob will ask Bill Ennen to encourage Westfield Gas & Electric to arrange for additional assistance so that they may expedite providing information to the town. His update included:

- Status of Werden Road and Johnson Road fiber.
- OPM – none selected at this time
- Approximately 20 individuals attended the information sessions. Per Richard Furlong suggestion that there are fixed fees, the Broadband Ad Hoc group will analyze and suggest a fixed monthly rate to charge those who wish to have seasonal service.
- The Broadband Ad Hoc Group is reviewing if it is plausible to offer the option for communities or homeowners to dig their own trenches, and there would need to be an agreement, and if so what the cost savings/credit the town will offer.
- Bob sent letters to households on the Chester-Becket line. Bob has not heard any complaints.

7. Volunteer Fire Department May 2019 and June 2019 Reports

The BOS reviewed the above captioned reports. Bill E. requested reports from the Highway Department.

8. BOS's Comments and Announcements

Bill E. reported on a discussion with an Indian Lake resident who will research the possibility of obtaining a grant from the Stanton Foundation for creating and maintaining a dog park. Bill E. had conveyed to her that the Parks & Recreation are not interested in embarking on a dog park project and if she is able to secure funding, she may discuss this matter with the BOS.

9. Town Administrator's Report

Bill C. provided an update of several items that he has been working on:

- FY2018 Audit – OPEB portion complete and sent to actuaries. Finishing up final items
- Working with UMASS Boston on part 2 – forecasting
- Solar Vendor proposal – cost to purchase \$107,000, payback \$7,900/year not a lot of payback on it may be put back on RFP or IFB.
- Town of Becket Financial Policies
 - Joint meeting to start @ 6pm 9/11
- Tax title auction – getting fees, dates from auctioneers
- TH Parking lot – near completion. He thanked Don Murray for his work on this project.
- Charging stations to be installed in the coming weeks
- TH Kitchen renovation – scheduling time to complete
- Highway position posted
- EMT position – reviewing candidates
- Walking Trail - \$10,000
- Swap Shop at the Transfer Station – can be done. Will need to purchase container, install lights, limit what can be donated, policy for it becoming trash.
- Weighing Vehicles in/out of transfer station and charging based on weight
 - \$8,000 – 10x10 scale
 - \$14,000 – 24' scale
 - Does not include technology, installation
- Possibility of getting credit card payments at Transfer station
- Pole Barn at Highway garage - \$110,000
- 21 Maple Street trees cut
- Telematics grant has been submitted
- MIIA grant for work zone safety
- ADA Grant – planning self-evaluation, part of housing grant
- The Town is hosting an MMA Legislative breakfast on 9-20

10. Public Input

Don Murray reiterated concerns he has with his employment at the Highway Department. The Selectmen confirmed that they are interested in researching the structure of other Highway Departments. Bill Cavanaugh reiterated his concerns relating to the direction of the Highway Department. During discussion, Bill E. did not allow discussion relating specifically to the Highway Superintendent who was no longer present. Bill E. clarified that

employees have the right to be notified and allowed discussion relating to their performance (or complaints) under executive session.

Bill Cavanaugh stated that with Bill Caldwell facilitating, he is now pleased with his dealings with the Highway Department.

Laurel conveyed that Board of Health permits are required for tight tanks septic systems.

11. Any other business to come before the Board

None.

12. Correspondence

- **6-22-2019 Town of Cummington Selectmen letter to CBRSD Superintendent to voice their objection to the voting process with respect to districtwide votes that approved funding for Construction of the new High School**
- **Becket Planning Board Notice of Public Hearing scheduled on 9-11-19 to review a Special Permit application re: 128 YMCA Road for a non-conforming garage within the buffer zone (setback area)**
- **7-29-19 Central Berkshire Regional School Committee Chairperson notification of the 7-25-19 CBRSD School Committee approved votes (language submitted for two motions) relating to district debt and Wahconah H.S. Building Project**
- **Resignation: Stephen Parkington, Part-time Reserve Police Officer effective July 24, 2019**

The BOS reviewed the above listed correspondence.

13. BOS to review and sign payable warrants

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.

14. BOS to adjourn the Meeting

Michael moved to adjourn. Chris seconded. At 8:34 p.m., Bill E. adjourned the meeting.

Date of Approval

8-21-2019

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*



William Elovirta, *Chairperson*

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- 072519 Police Chief letter re additional full-time police officer for patrol
- 8-7-19 Chapt. 90 Yokum Pond Rd - punch list, request, prelim estimate
- CBRSD 7-29-19 re 7-25-19 school com votes
- complete streets tier 2
- current Position Description Highway Equipment Operator
- draft revised Position Description Highway Equipment Operator - Truck Driver

- Paul Mikaniewicz - 7-25-19 application letter for Fire Chief position
- Planning Board PH scheduled 9-11-19 Margaret Esposito re 128 YMCA Road Special Application 9-11-19
- Stephen Parkington - resignation from Police Dept. effective 7-24-2019
- Town of Cummington 7-22-19 re object to CBRSD voting process.
- VFD May & June 2019 Reports
- Town Administrator's Report
- 7-24-19 meeting minutes
- 4-12-18 meeting minutes