

**Town of Becket  
Board of Selectmen Meeting  
6:00 p.m., Sept. 11, 2019  
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*

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

**Others Present:** Joseph Fish (Dalton)

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

1. **Call to order**  
Bill called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He indicated that the BOS was recording the meeting.
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**  
Bill led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **The Chairperson will announce a moment of silence to remember the 18th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack on American soil.**  
Bill E. asked those present to remain standing for a moment of silence to remember 18 years ago on September 11, 2001 when this country was attacked by terrorists. This vicious attack claimed the lives of 8 EMT Paramedics, 60 Police Officers, 343 Firefighters, and 2,997 Civilians.
4. **Approval of Minutes**  
Michael moved to approve the meeting minutes for the March 21, 2018 and September 4, 2019 meetings. Bill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **BOS and Finance Committee to discuss and possibly vote on Financial Policies.**  
The BOS and Finance Committee discussed the Town's financial policies. Bill C. indicated that a Town's financial policy practices impacts its bond ratings and it is important for the Town to have a financial policies document. Towns with higher bond ratings are eligible for lower interest rates on their loans. The Finance Committee and BOS discussed a document entitled Financial Reserves Policy (draft January 2019). This document describes the stabilization fund as having 3 components:
  - #1: unrestricted for unforeseen and extraordinary events – target 7% of the Annual Operating Budget;
  - #2 & #3: excess Stabilization Funding over the maximum 7% in component #1 will be used for capital purchase and funding for asphalt road repair to supplement Chapter 90 monies or matching grant scenarios as approved at Town meetings.Dan indicated that the policy puts into the writing the Town's current practices and objectives. The Finance Committee and BOS spoke favorably about the Financial Reserves Policy. Bill C.

will replace the Financial Reserves in the draft Financial Policies Manual (June/July 2019). The BOS will review and vote on accepting the finalized Financial Policies Manual on 10-2-19. The Finance Committee members will vote on this matter at their next meeting.

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

The BOS reviewed MLP Manager Bob Gross' Broadband Update. Chuck Garman and Dan Parnell, members of the Broadband Ad Hoc Group, discussed several areas of Bob's report with the BOS, and Bill C.:

The Broadband equipment hut will likely be in the Town Hall. A generator will be needed. Chris suggested for the Broadband Ad Hoc Group to ask Westfield Gas & Electric if there are special requirements for the equipment's generator. The HVAC decision for the Town Hall will impact the determination for the generator. Discussion ensued about possible funding options (ATM, paying generator through Broadband expenses), complex driveway preparation costs and subsidies. After estimates are formulated, the Broadband Ad Hoc Group will provide recommendations for a subsidy structure. The Broadband Ad Hoc Group wishes to treat everyone fairly and provide incentives to encourage sign-ups.

**7. Discuss and approve Solar IFB/RFP for Town Hall**

The BOS agreed for Bill C. to re-try an invitation for bid/request for proposals for Solar at the Town Hall. Bill will research if the town is required to go through COMMBUYS.

**8. Departmental Reports**

**• Police Dept. Report dated 9-1-19**

The BOS reviewed the above captioned departmental report. The report includes a letter describing the K-9 Unit's success with a recent 1,000 bag heroin drug bust in Lee. Bill C. advised that the Police Department picked up the new cruiser. The Police Department is able to make use of the old cruiser (including for details).

**9. BOS's Comments and Announcements**

Chris: He would like the town to explore having a windmill to generate income and toward that end, he suggested considering purchasing property in a town that allows windmills (such as Otis).

Chris reported a complaint that the Transfer Station stairs by the recycling bin are not sturdy.

Chris: The Fire Chief specified that he would like a town vehicle for inspections. Chris will discuss this matter further at a VFD meeting. Discussion ensued about costs (insurance, outfitting it with lights/radios), where the vehicle should be garaged, and that perhaps the VFD may purchase a vehicle through funding acquired by selling its rescue #4 no longer in use.

Michael: Followed up on his request for brush trimming at the Maple Street Bridge (mentioned at the 9-4-19 meeting).

Chris and Bill E: They do not agree that the sign at the library (Laurel Burgwardt had mentioned at the 9-4-19 meeting) blocks the view of cars. Bill C. will ask the Highway Superintendent to provide his input.

Bill E.: It was agreed that the BOS will send a letter to the Planning Board to ask for discussion to reconsider the zoning bylaw that prohibits storage containers (commonly called pods) on properties. This section of the zoning bylaws is not enforced, and many residents (including several members of the BOS) think the containers are useful, less inclined to attract rodents than wooden sheds, and would not detract from neighborhood values if placed appropriately (conform to zoning setbacks) on properties.

#### **10. Town Administrator's Report**

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

- FY2018 Audit – OPEB (other post-employment benefits – retirees) valuation is complete – The town has a \$4.5 million liability. Discussion ensued with Dan Parnell and Chuck Garman. Bill C. will request and provide a copy of the analysis to Dan: if the evaluation does not make sense, the town should question and request an adjustment if warranted. However, the town must make plans to address the OPEB liability and determine an amount to put aside each year to whittle it down. A full liability valuation is provided every other year. Currently the town's OPEB is unfunded. OPEB liability impacts a municipality's bond rating.
- Working with UMASS Boston on part 2 – forecasting
- Tax title auction – October 26, noon at Town Hall – information on Sullivan and Sullivan website
- Charging stations – Eversource/Maverick connections/commissioning
- TH Kitchen renovation – cabinet installation done, waiting on counters
- Highway position – Chris Isner – starts on 24th
- EMT position – Lisa Michaud
- Telematics grant – grant app approved
- MMA Legislative breakfast 9/20/19 in Community Room, RSVP to Beverly
- Solar on next week's agenda
- Reuse grant – will use to buy container if eligible – grant administrator to look into that dep grant administrator
- HVAC/Generator @ Town Hall
  - Article 21 of 2015 ATM approved \$120,000 to be borrowed
  - Town has ~\$40,000
  - Connections to broadband – HUT in server room needs generator and cooling
  - Question for counsel – can this be rolled into broadband authorization?
  - What can/will broadband absorb, if anything?
- Mass HR Conference (Thurs/Fri)
- Bill C. will discuss Assessors Staffing at the next Selectmen's meeting.

Chris moved to approve amendment of Ambulance Department Employee Lisa Michard's payrate to \$23.00 per hour effective 10-1-19. Michael seconded. Discussion: Lisa Michard is a Paramedic and an EMT Training Officer. Motion carried unanimously.

**11. Public Input**

None

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

Bill: Barbara Wacholder sent an e-mail to the Board of Selectmen stating that due to state term limits, effective today, she is resigning from the Cultural Council. The Selectmen will sign a letter of appreciation to her at their next meeting.

**13. Discussion of Public Input and Review and possible vote to modify the Town of Becket Guidelines for Board of Selectmen Meetings**

After discussing the Town of Becket guidelines for Board of Selectmen Meetings, the BOS agreed to the following changes in bold font:

- Individuals will be allowed up to **three** minutes (changed from five minutes).
- If a topic appears to require more than **three** minutes (changed from five minutes), at the discretion of the Chair, the matter will be placed on an upcoming Board of Selectmen meeting agenda.
- **Up to twenty minutes will be allotted for the Public Input portion of the meeting.**
- ...All comments and questions must be directed to the Chair of the Board of Selectmen **per MGL Chapter 30A, Section 20(g).**

The BOS agree that the Chairperson will determine placement of the Public Input agenda item. When possible, the Public Comment will appear earlier on the agenda: as a courtesy town officials and specially scheduled guests will be moved to earlier spots on the agenda.

**14. Board of Selectmen to review and sign letter to Rep. Pignatelli and Sen. Hinds re: Coalition to Oppose an Algeria Road interchange's Request for communication with the MassDOT Interchange Study Committee**

Bill E. reported that Mr. Abrams had agreed that since he recently has had positive communication with the MassDOT Interchange Study Committee, it is no longer necessary for the BOS to send letters to Rep. Pignatelli and Sen. Hinds.

Bill E. passed along Cassandra Gascon of the I-90 Interchange Committee's e-mail message regarding upcoming meetings scheduled on 10-2-19 (Lenox) and 10-10-19 (Blandford); and the public comment process. Cassandra indicated that the I-90 Working Group will discuss opposition to the Algeria Road interchange.

**15. Correspondence:**

- 9-3-19 Planning Board Notice of 10-16-19 Public Hearing re: Construction of Addition into the side setback areas to square off the house at 34 Western Avenue
- 9-5-19 Dept. of Environmental Protection re: Becket Arts Center Public Water Supply 1022033 – approval granted for certification of 4-log inactivation of a chlorine disinfection treatment system to be installed.

The BOS reviewed the above listed correspondence.

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

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.

**17. BOS to adjourn the Meeting**

Michael moved to adjourn. Chris seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Bill adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Date Approved 10-2-19

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

  
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William Elovirta, *Chairperson*

**Documents discussed at this meeting:**

- 09-01-2019 Police Department Report
- 09-11-2019 Town Administrator's report
- 09-11-2019 BOS meeting Broadband Update
- Becket financial Reserves Policy draft Jan 2019
- BOS Meeting minutes 09-04-19
- BOS Meeting minutes 03-21-19
- BOS Meeting Guidelines
- DEP letter dated 09-05-19 re: BAC approval
- Financial Policies Manual
- IFB Solar Fall 2019
- Larry Abrams e-mail 09-07-19 Revised Strategy
- Michael Lavery's Suggested wording change for the public input section
- Planning Board Notice re: 10-16-19 Public Hearing - addition - 34 Western Ave