

**Town of Becket
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
7:00 p.m., December 18, 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*;

Others Present: MLP Manager Bob Gross, Pat Mullins (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Community and Economic Development Program Manager), Gwen Cariddi (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Housing Specialist), Amy Alpert, Greg Chetel, Dan Parnell, and Jeremy Dunn

1. Call to order

Bill E. called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He indicated that the BOS was recording the meeting.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Bill E. led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Greg Chetel, Treasurer of the Becket Woods Community Association, to discuss issues that have arisen in Becket Woods relative to the development of the Town's Broadband Network

Greg Chetel, Treasurer of the Becket Woods Community Association, provided an update and discussed issues affecting Becket Woods regarding the installation of the Broadband Network within its multifaceted community. Becket Woods has areas with underground utilities, areas with above ground utilities, and areas that may be developed. He indicated Becket Woods' intention to work with the town on the next steps to realize broadband in Becket Woods. He discussed the points outlined in Becket Woods' letter dated Dec. 8, 2019. In order to facilitate funding and construction activities required for Make Ready work within Becket Woods, it was agreed that Becket Woods will arrange for its attorney to draft an agreement between Becket Woods and the Town of Becket

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

MLP Manager Bob Gross indicated that the Broadband Ad Hoc Group unanimously recommends for Becket to use WiredWest as its Broadband Operator with Westfield Gas & Electric as its provider. WiredWest offers more competitive seasonal rates. He indicated that as part of the WiredWest cooperative, each town, regardless of its population, receives one vote. The initial contract would be for three years. Rather than voting on a this decision tonight, the BOS accepted the Broadband Ad Hoc Group's offer to arrange a BOS meeting with Jim Drawe, Executive Director of

WiredWest, to go over summary and a more detailed explanation of this recommendation. The BOS suggested meeting at 6:00 p.m. on January 8th.

Other areas of discussion included backhaul connectivity, Westfield Gas & Electric has awarded the construction contract to Certex contingent that they use another subcontractor, easements, survey responses collected to date (90 percent showing highest interest), assigning FSA priority levels (to be factored from a neighborhood's current availability of any mode of internet, design of the system and what would be a logical progression, and the greatest interest and sign-up rates), budgeting and developing subsidies.

5. Patricia Mullins from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to address the BOS re: FY20 CDBG Grant application.

Pat Mullins, from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission conveyed that Becket's HUD Municipal Low/Moderate Income Percentage score moved from 10 to 7. Communities with higher scores have a better chance of obtaining CDBG funding. To increase Becket's likelihood to receive additional CDBG funding, she recommends that Becket apply with other communities that have a superior competitive position with respect to their low/moderate income ratio. She is searching for other communities (possibly Dalton or Sheffield may be the lead community) that may be a good fit for Becket. The lead community is assigned fiscal responsibility and processes the financial paperwork. She indicated that although currently DHCD is not assigning a higher rating to towns providing some of its own funding, she recommends doing so to aid the scope of projects. Michael moved for the Board of Selectmen to sign a memorandum of understanding letter to the BRPC to proceed with a FY20 Regional Community Development Block Grant application. Chris seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

6. BOS to vote on approving the Dual Stream Recycling contract between the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection, Town of Becket, and WM Recycle America, LLC

Bill C. discussed his handout highlighting changes to the Town's recycling contracts. Currently there are no other viable options. The costs have increased and this will be addressed during the Fiscal Year 2021 budget preparations. Michael moved for the BOS to sign a five-year Dual Stream Recycling contract between the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection, Town of Becket, and WM Recycle America, LLC. Bill seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

7. BOS to discuss and possibly vote on appoint members to the Citizen Advisory Committee.

The BOS tabled this agenda item until the January 8th meeting.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Michael moved to approve the December 4, 2019 meeting minutes. Chris seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

9. **Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes total for this agenda item).**
None.

10. **Update on Recruitments: Board of Health/ZBA Clerk, Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer**

Bill C. provided an update of the above captioned recruitments. The Board of Health/ZBA Clerk job posting will close next Friday and he anticipates advertising the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer position after the holidays. He has contacted other area communities to explore and consider if it may be practical to share the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer position with another municipality.

11. **BOS to review Departmental Reports**

- **Volunteer Fire Department (Aug., Sept., Oct. 2019)**
- **TBA**

The BOS reviewed the Volunteer Fire Department's Report as well as the Animal Control Officer's November 2019 report. The BOS indicated that they would like clarification as to whether the Animal Control Officer's report also includes statistics for July, August, September and October.

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

Michael moved to use Selectmen's expenses to provide a holiday luncheon for the Town Employees. Chris seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Bill C. indicated that he will split the expenses for the luncheon with the Board of Selectmen.

Chris will attend the Massachusetts Municipal Association Annual Meeting.

Chris initiated discussion about building a town-owned wind turbine. Bill C. will contact the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer and the Clerk to the Planning Board to inquire about the process to pursue this endeavor. Chris suggested considering purchase of land in another municipality that allows wind turbines if Becket's zoning continues to preclude this option.

Bill E. indicated that the Planning Board had discussed but does not agree with the Selectmen's recommendation about revisiting the town's zoning bylaw that prohibits Connex boxes and Steel storage units.

Chris reported that the Energy Committee does not favor replacing the Town Hall's heating system with a propane based HVAC system. The Energy Committee favors switching to high efficiency heat pumps. Based on that the past bid (rejected) for a high efficiency heat pump system exceeded the budgeted amount, the BOS remains concerned about funding a new HVAC system for the Town Hall and the Selectmen discussed possible cost effective options to heat and cool the Town Hall building.

13. Town Administrator's Report

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

- OPEB
 - Hope to put on next agenda with vote
- Working with UMASS Boston on part 2 – forecasting. Should be getting final product once tax rate is approved by DOR.
- Tax Title auction – will send letter to all owners in TT. Sending letter to TT Attorney
- Trails grant – working on application
- Broadband Hut – construction underway
- HVAC/Generator @ Town Hall
 - Article 21 of 2015 ATM approved \$120,000 to be borrowed
 - Town has ~\$40,000
 - Will work with engineer and Chris S.
- Bid opening for Broadband Construction
 - WGE vetting bidders
- MIIA Grant – \$6100 for speed trailer, worksite safety.
- Telematics Grant – received contract
- Medicare/Medicaid reporting for ambulance
 - Becket randomly selected
- FY2019 state budget close-out
 - Ch90 - \$20 million
- Town Hall to close 12:30 on 12/24/19

Bill E. brought up auctioning surplus vehicles: Chris indicated that the Fire Department is eager to use proceeds to purchase a battery operated jaws of life.

Bill E. initiated discussion about approaching Jacob Pillow and Marian Missionaries of Devine Mercy re: PILOT agreements with the Town. Michael reported that according to Randy Johnson, Marian Missionaries wants to consider creating a PILOT after it completes its five million dollar construction project. Bill C. indicated that Jacob's Pillow has increased its PILOT from \$5,000 to \$6,000. Jacob's Pillow has made arrangements Becket Ambulance detail coverage. It is Bill C.'s understanding that the Becket Police Chief will approach Jacob's Pillow to discuss Police Department detail needs and arrangements.

14. Any other business to come before the Board

Bill E. moved to approve the Highway Superintendent's recommendation to increase Christopher Isner's (Truck Driver/Equipment Operator) hourly payrate to \$23.02 effective 12-15-19 for successfully completing his first ninety days as specified in his contract. Michael seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Correspondence:

- **11-19-2019 Planning Board Notice of Public Hearing re: Special Application submitted by Spencer Romano to operate a Tier 3 Cultivation**

and manufacturing of marijuana establishment at 0 Jacob's Ladder Road (Map 213 Lot 16)

- MelansonHeath letter dated 11-25-2019 re: audit of financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2018
- Sheriff Bowler letter dated 12-4-2019 with enclosed Agreement for Emergency Communication Services between the Town of Becket and the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office Emergency Communication Center covering the period July 1, 2019 through June 20, 2020. The State 911 Department requires formal written agreements with the cities and towns that the Communications Center

The BOS reviewed the above listed correspondence.

16. BOS to adjourn the Meeting

Michael moved to adjourn. Chris seconded. At 9:06 p.m. Bill E. moved to adjourn.

Date Approved: 1-8-2020

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Secretary



William Elovirta, *Chairperson*

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- BC Sheriff 12-4-2019 Agreement for FY20 Emergency Communication Services
- Becket Woods letter dated 12-8-19
- BOS Meeting Minutes 12-04-19
- DEP WM Recycle America LLC Contract
- Fire Chief's Aug. Sep. Oct. 2019 monthly reports
- ACO November 2019 report
- Highway Superintendent's notice that Truck Driver C. Isner passed probationary period - per contract should receive an increase in pay .PDF
- MelansonHeath 11-25-19 re fy18 audit
- MLP Manager document Re Becket Broadband - budget
- Planning Board Public Hearing Notice 1-8-19 re: Special Permit Application - Spencer Romano
- TA report 12-18-2019
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission – FY20 CDBG Application Intentions (signed by the BOS)
- HUD Municipal Low/Moderate Income Percentage Scores