

**Town of Becket**  
**Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes**  
**6:30 p.m., February 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 (BG), *Administrative Assistant*;

**Broadband Ad Hoc Group:** MLP Manager Bob Gross, Jeremy Dunn, Jeff Piemont, Dan Parnell

**Others Present:** Pat Mullins (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Community and Economic Development Program Manager), Gwen Cariddi (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Housing Specialist), Guy McKay, Ann Krawet

**1. Call to order**

BE called the meeting to order at 6:33pm and indicated that the BOS is recording the meeting.

**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 led the discussion on the Broadband Ad Hoc Group's update and policy recommendations. Items discussed included:

- Handouts: FSA locations, Becket Broadband Budget, Summary of Becket Broadband Survey Responses, budgetary only underground area costs, MLP fee projections
- Drops to premises. Dan Parnell discussed the Broadband Ad Hoc Group's recommendation for the town to provide a \$2,500 per premise drop subsidy.
- Surveys: the Town has received 890 surveys (approximately 50 percent of all premises)
- The Broadband Ad Hoc Group discussed the build sequence. They learned that there is more flexibility relating to FSA build order. Partial FSA builds are possible. Each FSA does not necessary have to be completed before building premises in other FSAs. The Broadband Ad Hoc Group will meet with Joe Parda of Westfield Gas & Electric to learn more about realistic options and they will present recommendations to the BOS. ML will assist the Broadband Ad Hoc Group with using google earth maps to plot premise response data for further analysis. The BOS would like to see a focus on areas that currently lack good service.
- Rates structures – possibilities include residential, large commercial (areas that redistribute service such as camps, hotels), and "in between" (people to there to use wife such as stores, cafés).

- Underground areas – The Broadband Ad Hoc Group recommends being as generous as possible with providing a subsidy to provide incentive for owners to sign up their premises. The Broadband Ad Hoc Group will offer options for subsidies at a future meeting. Options may include offering the same subsidy across the board or may be calculated based on mileage.
- Monthly service options and costs: The Broadband Ad Hoc Group will provide a price listing at an upcoming BOS meeting. Options will include Broadband (25 megabits per second), Broadband (1,000 megabits per second), digital phone service (alone or with one of the Broadband plans)
- MLP Manager provided the status of midspan issues. Verizon, Westfield Gas & Electric, Sertex, Verizon, and Eversource, agreed to conduct a coordinated drive-through to address required mid-span corrections. The timing will be based on the sequencing of other towns and Verizon must first acquire all Becket make-ready licenses.
- Jeremy reported that he saw Phoenix Technologies in town moving the middle mile fiber. The town has approximately 20 miles of middle mile fiber that will be moved around so that it will not be in the way of the high speed fiber project.
- The Broadband Ad Hoc Group will provide additional policy recommendation options.

#### **Votes:**

**Drop subsidy:** ML moved to accept the Broadband Ad Hoc Group's recommendation to provide up to a \$2,500 drop subsidy per premise. CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0. The Broadband Ad Hoc Group had explained that they regard the subsidy as a way for the town to facilitate the removal of barriers (such as high costs) to promote a higher take-rate.

**MLP monthly fee:** ML moved to accept the Broadband Ad Hoc Group's recommendation to set the MLP monthly fee at \$9.00 per premise. CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0. The MLP fee will be used to create a reserve for maintenance and other costs affiliated with owning the system. The MLP fee may also be used to help the town pay the debt or to subsidy drops. The BOS may access and may modify the MLP fee on an annual basis.

*The Broadband Ad Hoc Group left the meeting at 8:05pm.*

#### **4. BOS discussion and possibly vote on Guy A. McKay's appointment application to serve on the Agricultural Commission through June 30, 2020.**

Guy McKay discussed his interest in serving on the Agricultural Commission. He described his organic farming experience, and indicated that he hopes to promote farming and be a resource to other farmers. CS moved to appoint Guy McKay to serve on the Agricultural Commission effective 2/5/2020 through 6/30/2020. ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

#### **5. BOS to vote on Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint John Savery to serve as an Assistant Electrical Inspector through June 30, 2020**

ML moved to approve the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint John Savery to serve as an Assistant Electrical Inspector effective 2/5/2020 through 6/30/2020. BE seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

**6. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

ML moved to approve the 1/22/2020 meeting minutes. CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

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

Ann Krawet suggested for the Board of Selectmen to institute a Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion on Wade Inn Road (where it intersects with Route 20). She regards this as a dangerous intersection. The BOS explained that a Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion from a municipal way must be authorized by MassDOT if a town accepts state funding on that road (Wade Inn Road fits into that category). The Selectmen indicated that MassDOT, as part of its evaluation to ascertain if the heavy commercial vehicle is justified, will review if there is community support (residents on the street, town where the street is located, adjacent municipalities), and an engineering study is conducted. Ann Krawet indicated that she will gather signatures on a petition. Ann inquired if the Selectmen would post a sign stating "No thru Trucks at the request of the Board of Selectmen". The BOS expressed its reluctance to post this sign because the town is not able to enforce this request, and the sign may lead to misunderstandings (that the town should take action for those not complying with the request) followed by complaints. The Selectmen will consider submitting a written statement to MassDOT to request that it conducts a study to judge if a Heavy Commercial Vehicle Exclusion on Wade Inn Road is warranted after it receives a petition.

**8. Discussion and possible vote for intergovernmental agreement between Dalton, Sheffield, Stockbridge, and Becket for a Fiscal Year 2020 CDBG application**

Pat Mullins (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Community and Economic Development Program Manager), presented herself and Gwen Cariddi (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Housing Specialist). Pat Mullins discussed the Inter-local CDBG agreement for a Fiscal Year 2020 CDBG application. She explained that the agreement outlines the responsibilities of each of the towns with the lead community Dalton shouldering the lion's portion. Pat indicated this grant is to assist approximately 23 housing units across all 4 towns. Dalton, in recognition of its lead community responsibilities, will receive 30 percent of the housing rehabilitation funds. The remaining funds will be divided equally among Becket, Stockbridge and Sheffield. Because Sheffield is not utilizing ADA Planning services affiliated with this grant, it will receive one additional housing rehabilitation project. Pat indicated that towns receiving at least \$750,000 in federal funds in a calendar year will generally trigger a full audit. The Selectmen indicated that Becket already conducts an annual audit. Pat Mullins announced that there will be a public hearing in Dalton on 2/10/2020, and another voluntary public hearing for South County residents in Sheffield on 2/18/2020. Pat anticipates other towns will sign the agreement (Dalton on 2/10/2020, Sheffield on 2/18/2020 & Stockbridge on 2/13/2020).

ML moved for the Town of Becket to enter into an agreement between the Towns of Dalton (lead town), Sheffield and Stockbridge for cooperation in the fiscal year

2020 Community Development Block Grant for Housing Rehabilitation and ADA Planning activities. CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0

9. **BOS to vote on the Town of Becket's intention to participate in the Southern Berkshire Household Hazardous Waste Program during Fiscal Year 2021**  
CS moved to participate in the Southern Berkshire Household Hazardous Waste programming during FY2021 (assuming all current members remain enrolled, Becket's assessment will be \$1,930.51). ML seconded. Motion carried 3-0.
10. **Discussion of Mass. Department of Environmental Protection's letter dated January 20, 2020 re: Disaster Debris Management**  
BC advised that the above captioned letter should have been listed under correspondence (agenda item 15) and that the Highway Superintendent is addressing this matter.
11. **BOS to review Departmental Reports**
  - **Ambulance Dept. – November/December 2019 -**
  - **Others TBA – police department – entire year stats.**Along with the above mentioned Ambulance Department report, the BOS reviewed the Police Department's report with attached 2019 stats.
12. **BOS's Comments and Announcements**  
In order to have an opportunity to check in with our new Fire Chief who started this fiscal year, the Town Administrator will invite Fire Chief Paul Mikaniewicz to attend the next Selectmen's meeting.

The BOS favored CS's suggestion to invite Department Heads (not necessarily all at the same time) to attend BOS meetings periodically, perhaps quarterly. BC will invite the Highway Superintendent to attend the February 19<sup>th</sup> meeting at 6:30pm: CS would like to discuss Transfer Station matters including the possibility of installing a scale, costs of the scale, layout of the facility, renting vs. owning a new compactor, electrical planning, staffing, costs for permits/bag stickers, and appearance/size of bag stickers. CS stated that scales promote more consistent and reliable fees for those bringing in bulky waste. CS will e-mail quotes for scales and compactors.

ML inquired about the status of the Telematics Grant. BC indicated that the contract is in process.

ML initiated discussion on how the town may list a non-binding referendum on a voting ballot. BC will research and report on this process.

The BOS were pleased that the Town received positive publicity in a Berkshire Eagle article re: the Town Hall's new Electric Vehicle charging stations. BE pointed out that although the article indicated that the town is on the hook \$1,000 per year for the stations, the town charges a modest user fee to recoup its electrical costs. BC will confirm that ChargePoint has commenced.

**13. Town Administrator's Report**

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

- Charging Stations Publicity Event will occur on February 12<sup>th</sup> at 11a.m.
- Trails grant – submitted
- Broadband Hut – construction progressing
- HVAC @ Town Hall – an Eversource Engineer looked at the Town Hall, Fire station 1 and Fire Station 2 to provide ideas relating to the potential use heats pumps in combination with propane. Discussed propane tank location for Town Hall and Emergency Generator.
- MVP/HMP – moving forward
- Budget – 1<sup>st</sup> draft to Finance Thursday
- Building Inspector – Bill will stay on, mix between working at home and in office
- CBRSD – assessment figures (February)
- Debt Exclude new building?
  - Ballot and TM vote required
- RFP for Assessing Service – getting input from Assessors will advertise soon
- CDBG – 4 Towns: Dalton, Becket, Sheffield, Stockbridge – discussed earlier in the meeting
- Green Communities competitive grant – Fire Station 1 Envelope
- Town Report
- Housing Grant – \$92,500. Construction underway
- Getting easement for septic in village for Athenaeum/BAC/MH
- USDA Grant – The Board discussed the benefits of this grant and acknowledged the need to fund the contribution from the Town as 25% portion of the grant. This will be added to future budget discussions and capital budget. Town Administrator will move forward with the USDA Community Facilities Non Construction Grant for a new police cruiser.

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

Rob Gorden, who had served as a member of the Historical Commission, has passed away.

The BOS approved the design of the Annual Town Report Cover and e-mails to thank those who entered their photographs in the contest.

ML moved to approve an increase in Tyler Chrystal's hourly payrate to \$23.01 effective February 3, 2020. BE seconded. Motion carried 3-0. The reason for this payrate amendment is that the Highway Superintendent specified that Mr. Crystal obtained his CDL Class B license.

**15. Correspondence:**

- **1-21-2020 MassDOT Chapt. 90 request 50726 approval - 2020-001 Yokum Pond Road Resurfacing sections**
- **Mass. Department of Environmental Protection - Becket Transfer Station Third Party Inspection Report dated 1-15-2020**

The BOS reviewed the above captioned correspondence.

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

The BOS reviewed and signed payable warrants.

**17. BOS to adjourn the Meeting**

ML moved to adjourn. CS seconded. Motion carried 3-0. BE adjourned the meeting at 9:00pm.

Date approved W. Feb 19, 2020

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Gilbert, Secretary

William Elovirta  
William Elovirta, Chairperson

**Documents discussed at this meeting:**

- Town Administrator's Report
- Appointment Application submitted 1-23-2020 - Guy A. McKay - Agricultural Commission
- BOS Agenda 2020Feb05
- BOS Meeting draft minutes 2020Jan22
- captions and thank you notes for Town Report contestants
- DEP 1-28-2020 re disaster debris management letter
- DEP Transfer station inspection Report
- e-mail Pat Mullins & transmittal CDBG draft agreement FW Inter-local Agreement
- FY21 HHW assessment e-mail message
- Highway Superintendent's notification re increase T. Chrystal's hourly pay
- Mass DOT chapter 90 request 50726 approval - 2020-001 Yokum Pond Road Resurfacing sections
- Nov-Dec 2019 Ambulance monthly report
- Police Department Report:
  1. PD - Craig Jones resignation last day 1-24-2020
  2. PD 1-1-2020 report
  3. PD call analysis 2019
  4. PD citations 2019
  5. PD detail offense listing 2019
  6. PD offense listing 2019
- Tyler Chrystal amended payrate form
- Broadband Handouts: FSA locations, Becket Broadband Budget, Summary of Becket Broadband Survey Responses, budgetary only underground area costs, MLP fee projections