

FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Town of Becket  
557 Main Street  
Becket, MA 01223

**Meeting Minutes for November 3, 2022**

**PRESENT:**

Finance Committee (FC): Dan Parnell (DP); Ron DeFoe (RD); Chuck Garman (CG); Mark Karlberg (MK); Ann Spadafora (AS)  
Town Administrator: Kathe Warden (KW)  
Absent: None  
In Person Guests: None  
By phone: None

DP called meeting to order at 5:05 PM

**AGENDA:**

**1. Meeting minutes**

- a. Approve minutes September 1, 2022 FC meeting
  - i. Unavailable; will approve in December

**2. TA Update**

- a. Department spending is mostly good; the following are areas of concern
  - i. Police Department expenses are up due to Academy and vehicle expenses
  - ii. State is requiring that we have electronic fingerprinting system (\$19k cost; \$3,500 annual expense) for all arrested individuals. Chief McDonough trying to determine if we can share with other towns or use Berkshire County Sheriff resources
  - iii. Highway worker salaries need to be evaluated due to competitive issues with other towns and Massachusetts DOT. We will likely face similar issues with the Ambulance Department. These highway and EMS situations are becoming common for many towns. Regionalization may be at least part of the solution
    - 1. CG made a motion to support a \$2 hourly weekend shift differential for the Ambulance Department. Seconded by MK. Approved unanimously
    - 2. CG made a motion to support a 10% highway worker hourly wage increase to maintain our competitive position to other towns/DOT. Seconded by MK. Approved unanimously
- b. Dream Away Lodge plans to reopen in 2023 with new ownership; we also have two new eateries in town working on opening at previous sites of old BGS and Becket Country Store

**3. Broadband Update**

- a. Project is close to wrapping up
- b. Becket Woods issue (damaged underground cable due to construction error) will not be resolved until spring
- c. Overall ending budget should be very good

**4. Status of tax abatements**

- a. No update at this time

**5. Discuss possible "meals & lodging" tax**

- a. Al Blake and DP are working on a citizen's petition to be submitted to the Select Board
- b. There will likely be a focus on lodging tax initially; almost all towns have a 6% lodging tax
  - i. Per DOR, potential lodging tax revenue for Becket is projected to be \$90-100k annually for the Town of Becket at a 6% rate based on historic figures
- c. Select Board would determine where revenues would be allocated
- d. This proposal needs to be properly informed to our citizenry and businesses prior to ATM

**6. Update on potential for Perpetual Care/Stabilization Fund for cemeteries**

- a. We may need to look into an expansion of North Becket Cemetery

**7. Any other business**

a. None

**8. Adjourn meeting**

a. MK moved to adjourn meeting at 6:22 PM; Seconded by CG; Approved unanimously

**Next meeting:** Thursday December 1, 2022 at 3:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted by Ron DeFoe

Approved by Dan Parnell, Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Parnell", is written over a horizontal line.