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

Meeting Minutes for November 7, 2019

PRESENT:

Finance Committee (FC): Dan Parnell (DP); Ron DeFoe (RD); Ann Spadafora (AS); Chuck Garman (CG), Mark Karlberg (MK)
Town Administrator: William Caldwell (WC)
Board of Selectman: William Elovirta (WE)

Meeting was called to order by DP at 5:40 PM

AGENDA:

1. **Meeting minutes**
    a. Approve minutes October 5, 2019 FC meeting
        i. Accept minutes as written
        ii. Moved by CG and seconded by AS. Approved by CG, AS and RD (DP abstained as not present at September 5 meeting; MK had not arrived at time of vote)
2. **Correspondence and Transfers**
    a. None
3. **Administrator's input**
    a. Tax Title & Tax Possession going forward plan
        i. We will be sending letters to properties in Tax Title to hopefully get some people out of it before the process moves forward
    b. Auction results
        i. 36 properties were on the auction block. 34 were auctioned. 23 sold. Assuming everyone closes, the Town should receive about $118,000
    c. OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits) Discussion
        i. We have a $4.5 M liability
        ii. Exterior Agency (PARS) has come onboard to evaluate our commitment and assist in developing a plan
    d. Free Cash Certification
        i. Not yet complete
    e. Other
        i. Assessor retirement
            1. We have an assessor retiring and it is proposed we create a new position (Assessor Clerk)
            2. We have a job description and will need to decide a pay rate (same as Clerk of Committees)
            3. Motion made to accept creation of Assessor Clerk. Moved by DP. Seconded by CG. Approved unanimously
        ii. Becket Arts Center
            1. BAC Board is asking for $25k annually to support a full time executive director and an additional $5k for building upkeep
            2. WE cautioned that we potentially have major expenditures looming on the future (new Wahconah HS, Fire Department daytime staffing, etc.)
            3. Concerns were voiced about potential replication of other programs in town (i.e. Athenaeum) that currently do not enjoy high participation
            4. FC is concerned about costs to insulate and heat the Art Center building
            5. FC is tentative about the current amount of the request and questioned if there could be synergy with the Athenaeum
            6. FC proposes a December meeting with BAC Board and BOS
4. **Broadband Project Update**
    a. Currently bidding the construction phase
    b. Hut will be at Town Hall in the bay in the pavilion

c. We need a seasonal rate which is available if we work through Wired West (we believe seasonal rates are imperative, at least to start)
d. We should have more reimbursements from the state to help with drop costs. Our goal is to cover the drop costs for about 96% of residences
e. We investigated using Holyoke to do the build, but their timing was no better than Westfield and costs were higher
f. The build rollout will be prioritized based on results of the survey of residents who intend to sign up for initial service

5. **Continue Review of Financial Policies**
   a. Motion to accept. Moved by MK. Seconded by RD. Approved unanimously
6. **2021 Capital Requests**
   a. Requests due tomorrow (11/8/19)
   b. At this time, we're not expecting anything major or out of the ordinary
7. **Other business**
   a. We are expecting a substantial increase in MRF tipping fees for recyclables from the Transfer Station
8. **Adjourn meeting**
   a. CG moved to adjourn meeting at 7:03 PM. DP seconded. Approved unanimously

Next meeting: Next meeting is joint with BOS and BAC on Wednesday, December 4, 2019 at 6:00 PM with regular FinCom Meeting immediately following

Respectfully Submitted by Ron DeFoe
Approved by Dan Parnell, Chair