

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

**Meeting Minutes for March 5, 2020**

**PRESENT:**

Finance Committee (FC): Ron DeFoe (RD); Ann Spadafora (AS); Chuck Garman (CG);  
Mark Karlberg (MK)  
Town Administrator: William Caldwell (WC)  
Highway Superintendent: Chris Bouchard  
Fire Chief: Paul Mikaniewicz  
Board of Selectman: William Elovirta (WE)

Meeting was called to order by AS at 5:30 PM. Dan Parnell was remotely participating due to geographical reasons. Since there was a member participating remotely all votes were roll call votes.

**AGENDA:**

- **Meeting minutes**
  - Approve minutes February 6, 2020 FC meeting
    - Accept minutes as written
    - Moved by CG and seconded by RD. Approved; AS – aye; CG - Aye; MK- abstain (was not present); RD – aye; DP-aye
- **Correspondence and Transfers**
  - None
- **Administrator's input**
  - Budget & Capital Acquisition Update for FY 2021
    - Highway Department
      - Requests are to replace trucks 1, 2 and 5
        - Priorities are 2, 1 and 5
        - Hoping for a trade value of \$40k on truck 2 (large plow truck); replacement would have a combination body (no need to install/remove sander)
      - Transfer station operation continues to be a challenge due to little/no market for recyclables
        - Keeping improper materials out of recycling will be critical to help control costs
    - Fire Department
      - NFPA and OSHA requirements are adding required safety procedures, inspections, physicals, etc.
      - BFD feels that a command vehicle would be beneficial to meet current needs
  - Tax/title
    - Working on a new letter
    - Have consumed available funds and will likely need transfer of funds

later this FY

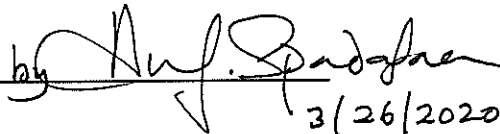
- Have increased 2021 tax/title budget from \$25k to \$35k
- Dilapidated properties
  - House on Benton Hill that should to be demolished this year if possible
  - This will require a transfer later this year (assuming we get a reasonable estimate)
- Budget
  - Working on COLA of 2.5%
    - Our town wages are falling behind competitive rates and we are having trouble hiring new employees
  - CBRSD request is only 0.5% increase
  - Increase in tax/title as we have over \$1 M in delinquent properties
  - Requested salary increases above COLA
    - Town Clerk (to match hourly rate of treasurer)
      - Current rate is in line with other towns
      - WC recommends we stay with COLA increase
    - Police Department
      - WC recommends 5% for full time officers to be in line with other towns to aid in officer retention (2.5% for Chief and part time officers)
      - Money will be required to modify the police station rooms in Town Hall (priority due to recent incident)
    - WC recommends Highway Superintendent increase be considered
    - Conservation Commission wants to increase Agent's pay with contribution from Wetlands Fund
      - Needs to be analyzed/evaluated
  - Becket Arts Center
    - FC recommends \$10 k for 2021 only as seed money (non-reoccurring)
    - FC intent is BAC will be self-sufficient (not require town operating contribution) from 2022 onward
  - Capital Budget Recommendations
    - Town Hall parking lot repaving
      - Seeking grant
    - Highway
      - Borrow for truck #2 replacement
      - Cover truck #1 replacement with free cash
      - Defer to 2021 truck #5 replacement
    - Ambulance

- Cardiac monitor will come from Ambulance Stabilization Fund
- Arts Center Painting
  - Proceed as requested (\$2,432)
- Athenaeum Repairs/Maintenance
  - Proceed as requested (\$7,500)
- Parks and Rec Maple Pavilion
  - Look at funding through Community Preservation
- Town Hall Maintenance (primarily flooring)
  - Proceed as requested (\$15k)
  - We should consider a new generator (in conjunction with Broadband rather than having 2)
- Fire Department
  - We should reassess after looking at current and 2021 operating budget
- **Broadband Project Update**
  - Hut is going well
  - Things are proceeding; no new news
- **Other business**
  - None
- **Adjourn meeting**

- MK moved to adjourn meeting at 7:35 PM. CG seconded. Approved AS – aye; CG- Aye; MK- aye; RD – aye; DP-aye

**Next meeting:** Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 5:30 PM followed by joint meeting with BOS April 2 at 6:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted by Ron DeFoe  
 Approved by Dan Parnell, Chair

  
 3/26/2020