

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

Meeting Minutes for February 3, 2022

PRESENT:

Finance Committee (FC): Dan Parnell (DP); Ron DeFoe (RD); Chuck Garman (CG); Mark Karlberg (MK); Ann Spadafora (AS)
Town Administrator: William Caldwell (WC)
Absent: None
In Person Guests: Ray Ferrin (RF – Ambulance Director)
By phone: None

DP called meeting to order at 3:12 PM

AGENDA:

1. Meeting minutes

- a. Approve minutes January 6, 2021 FC meeting
 - i. Motion by CG to accept minutes as written, seconded by DP; Approved unanimously

2. TA update

- a. We will use the 2021 ARPA funds for Broadband but we are rethinking possibly using the 2022 funds on culvert upgrades
- b. BOS has tentatively approved sharing Becket police chief with Otis
 - i. We may apply for an Efficiency and Regionalization Grant for a chief's vehicle
- c. Engineering and approval of "Glamping" project at ex-Dream Away Lodge is progressing
- d. We are hoping for a partial or total reimbursement (or more) for the 2021 Leonhardt Road repair (ARPA)

3. Broadband update

- a. Meeting was held today concerning bonding options

4. Transfers

- a. None

5. Update on Short Term Rental Bylaw Subcommittee

- a. Currently on hold due to issues related to establishment of the subcommittee

6. Update on Wind Turbine Generation at Town Hall

- a. Energy Committee has submitted a large amount of information
- b. 2 different sized turbines are under consideration
- c. A study is required to evaluate feasibility
- d. We need to understand net metering issues/options

7. General budget discussion re expenses for FY 2023

- a. Ambulance Department
 - i. A combination of increased costs and higher level of service (advanced to paramedic) is resulting in a substantial FY2023 request increase
 - 1. Covid has resulted in ambulance industry staffing shortages which has led to wage increases to attract employees; Becket's wage scale is falling behind
 - 2. We likely need to go to a 48-hour work week (two 24 hour shifts) for paramedics to be competitive
 - ii. We had 301 Becket calls in 2021
 - iii. The squad vehicle is going to need replacement soon – WC is submitting a grant for a replacement vehicle and a cardiac monitor from FEMA covid funds
 - iv. We are hoping to eventually share ambulance services with Otis and/or Chester to reduce Becket's expenses

- b. Highway Department
 - i. We are also expecting a larger than normal increase in the Highway budget due to increased costs but also weather related issues/damage
 - c. We don't have CBRSD numbers yet (currently proposed @ 4.23%; with Becket's percent contribution about the same as FY2022) which we need to begin serious work on the FY23 budget
- 8. Discussion re Finance Committee submission to Annual Town Report**
- a. DP will issue revised version for approval
- 9. Any other business**
- a. We are continuing to look into shared water source for the Athenaeum, Mullen House and Arts Center in an effort to keep Athenaeum budget request to typical 2.5% increase
- 10. Adjourn meeting**
- a. CG moved to adjourn meeting at 4:30 PM; Seconded by DP; Approved unanimously

Next meeting: Thursday March 3, 2022 at time TBD

Respectfully Submitted by Ron DeFoe
Approved by Ann Spadafora, Vice-Chair

