

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

Meeting Minutes for March 3, 2022

PRESENT:

Finance Committee (FC): Ron DeFoe (RD); Chuck Garman (CG); Ann Spadafora (AS)
Town Administrator: William Caldwell (WC)
Absent: Mark Karlberg (MK)
In Person Guests: William Elovirta (WE)
By phone: Dan Parnell (DP)

AS called meeting to order at 3:37 PM

AGENDA:

1. Meeting minutes

- a. Approve minutes February 3, 2022 FC meeting
 - i. Motion by CG to accept minutes as written, seconded by AS; Roll call vote: DP-aye; AS – aye; CG – aye; RD – aye; Approved unanimously

2. TA update

- a. We are interviewing 2 candidates for Building Inspector
- b. The Dream Away glamping project information is now on the town website
 - i. We would like to understand the future potential financial impacts on the Town of Becket
 - 1. Real estate taxes
 - 2. Room/Meal tax potential (new town laws would be required)
 - 3. Employment
 - 4. Services required (Ambulance, Police, etc.)

3. Broadband update

- a. Doing aerial drops only at this time (ground frozen)
- b. FSA04 has been released
- c. Budget is looking good; we are figuring out bonding
- d. Current sign up rate is about 63%

4. Transfers

- a. None

5. Updates on Mullen House/Athenaeum Well Project

- a. Still working through the approval process with the state

6. Update on Wind Turbine Generation at Town Hall

- a. Price for system has increased to \$210 k
- b. No grants are currently available
- c. Payback currently stands at 17 years
- d. CG questioned if we understand the long term maintenance liability (current warranty is only 5 years) on an expected life of 50 years
- e. We would hope the grant situation might improve in the near future, but under current situation payback is very long
 - i. CG moved that we remove the turbine from the 2023 capital plan. Seconded by AS. Roll call vote: DP-aye; AS – aye; CG – aye; RD – aye; Approved unanimously

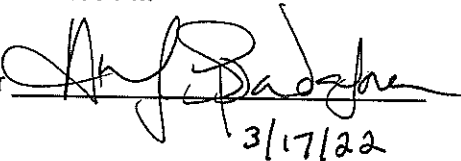
7. General budget discussion re expenses/capital for FY 2023

- a. School budget number is still tentative but appears to be about 5% increase due to higher number of Becket students
 - i. We are level funding vocational tuition/transport for now
- b. Transfer Station labor is up 11.8% due to a bookkeeping issue with FY2022 budgeting

- c. Library currently in at 3.9% increase (2.5% state mandate to keep accreditation). We are still trying to get this back to 2.5% through utility savings (shared water w/ Mullen House)
 - d. We will see a reduction in costs of Police Department due to sharing of chief with Otis. Even with a pay increase we will save about \$30k annually and our chief will be receiving a more competitive salary. Shared chief begins March 7
 - e. Ambulance is up 9.8% due to increase in costs of supplies and improved service level (Paramedic). Sharing of ambulance services with another town could be a potential future savings
 - f. We should hear in the next few months about grants for fire engine. WC will invite Fire Chief to next FC meeting
 - g. WE indicated Arts Center heating system will likely have BOS support. The FC is also generally in support of the project at this time
 - h. The build time for large highway trucks is currently running 2-3 years. We probably should put one on the 2022 ATM Warrant to get a truck in the queue. We don't pay until delivery. WC will add this to the capital project list
- 8. Any other business**
- a. None
- 9. Adjourn meeting**
- a. CG moved to adjourn meeting at 4:53 PM; Seconded by AS; Roll call vote: DP-aye; AS – aye; CG – aye; RD – aye; Approved unanimously

Next meeting: Thursday March 17, 2022 at 2:00 PM

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



3/17/22