Select Board Meeting Minutes
7:00pm, December 2, 2020
Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

Attendees
Select Board (SB): William Elovirta (BE), *Chairperson*; Chris Swindlehurst (CS), *Clerk*
Remote Participation: Michael Lavery (ML), *Vice Chairperson*

Staff: William Caldwell (BC), *Town Administrator*; Beverly Gilbert (BG), Administrative Assistant

Others (remote participation): Mary Stucklen, Conservation Agent; Shelby Macri, Country Journal

1. **Call to order**
   BE called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He indicated that the SB was recording the meeting.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
   BE led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **Broadband Update and BOS to discuss and possibly vote on policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project**
   BC read MLP Manager Bob Gross's update:
   1. Construction has started on FSA02 (Tyne Road, Family Court & Plumb Road) as planned.
   2. At the Dec. 8th kick-off (private due to social distancing) ceremony, we expect Senator Hinds, Representative Pignatelli, Bill Ennen, Westfield Gas & Electric and Sertex. Videographer hired by Sertex.
   3. Westfield (Whip City Fiber) website will probably go live Thursday. Emails will be sent to the Broadband email list and town's Mailchimp subscribers. Residents will be encouraged to sign up, which must be done online.

4. **Approval of the November 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes**
   ML moved to approve the November 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes. CS 2nd: unanimous.

5. **Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes total for this agenda item).**
   There were no public input items.

6. **Board to consider Renewals of Annual Licenses:**
   - **Dreamaway Inc. (d/b/a Dream Away Lodge): All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Common Victuallers, Six Day Entertainment, and Sunday Entertainment**
   - **M.D.A. Inc. (d/b/a Berkshire Berries): All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Wine & Malt Package Store, and a Common Victuallers;**
   - **Mountain Grove Association Inc.: All Alcoholic Beverages Club, Common Victuallers, Six-Day Entertainment, and Automatic Amusement**

- **<u>Sherwood Shoppe of Becket LLC</u>: All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store, and Common Victuallers;**
- **<u>Papa Bob's LLC</u>: All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Common Victuallers, Six Day Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment, and Automatic Amusement;**
- **<u>Becket General Store Inc. (d/b/a Becket General Store)</u>: All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store, All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Six Day Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment, and Common Victuallers**

<u>BE moved to approve the above captioned (he read the list out loud) annual license renewals. CS 2nd: unanimous.</u>

7. **Select Board to review Departmental Reports**
   - **Police Chief's Report dated 12/01/2020**

   The SB reviewed the Police Chief's report dated 12/01/2020.

8. **Town Administrator's Report**

   BE provided an update of several items that he has been working on:
   - Truck 1 Highway – January delivery
   - Broadband Hut – build-out complete. Generator, electricity, equipment
   - Green Communities – HVAC/Insulation 12/16-18 two fire Stations , insulation may be different
   - DER Grant – BETA engineering. Kickoff meeting this week with BETA/DER
   - Tomorrow Finance will review FY2022 capital requests
   - Budget requests are out. End of year due date.
   - Broadband construction started 11/30, private kickoff Tuesday 12/8 – discussed under agenda item 3.
   - Highway Superintendent is obtaining paving pricing options
   - TH hours: if we move into green, yellow, red, close to public.
     - Town Hall is scheduled to be closed to the public 12/21-1/1 due to increased gatherings – county is still grey. [Note: Although not changed during the meeting, due to an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases throughout Berkshire County, Town Hall is closed to the public (appointment only) effective December 5, 2020.]
   - Guardrails and Bollards @Town Hall and Yokum Pond Road Dec. 10/11
   - Special meeting needed for Tax Classification. The SB discussed their availability for next week.

9. **Select Board's Comments and Announcements**

   CS initiated discussion about returnable cans and bottles brought to the Transfer Station. ML indicated that the Boy Scouts are no longer collecting returnables. CS is interested in exploring placement of returnables machines at the Transfer Station with the idea that the proceeds may be donated to the Food Pantry. CS will obtain information from a company that provides Deposit Bottle and Can recycling machines and report on how such a program may work.

   CS indicated that the Energy Committee is interested in generating an RFP for placement of a small wind turbine (15 kilowatt, 120 ft. high) on the Town Hall property and they are hoping this may be considered for a capital item presented at the

2021 Annual Town Meeting. They are estimating the cost at $150,000 with a 15 year payback period. The turbine would tie-into the Town Hall's, Highway Garage's and Fire Stations' electricity. Purchase of a wind turbine (capital item) would require Town Meeting approval. ML stated that it is his understanding that noise and setback studies must be conducted. BC will contact Eversource to inquire about the town's energy use and how much could be transferred over.

ML is attending a meeting 9am till 11am on 12/11/2020 with the Greenagers Group to learn more about the potential for the town to use this program that employs teens as an economical way to create hiking trails within Becket. ML indicated that Community Preservation Funds may be used for outdoor projects and town responses to the CPC survey indicated that residents favor use of CPC funds toward recreation.

10. Any other business to come before the Board

The SB and BC discussed with Conservation Agent Mary Stucklen her letter to the SB dated 11/30/2020 re: the Commonwealth's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Program and her request to receive part of her salary while she is on maternity leave. PFML is funded through a Massachusetts tax, and is separate from both the federally mandated benefits offered by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and from leave benefits that may be offered by employers. Mary was under the impression that she would qualify for PFML benefits and she very recently learned that the Town of Becket did not opt into the program. BC indicated that Municipalities are exempt: participating in PFML requires TM approval. The SB and BC explained that although the town does not have benefits for employees on leave under the U.S. Dept. of Labor Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), benefitted employees (town employees who work at least 20 hours per week on average throughout the year) may use their bank of personal and vacation time while they are out on FMLA. Mary encouraged the SB to consider taking measures to opt into PFML as she believes the cost is small for this worthwhile program. The SB directed BC to research and discuss the PFML with the Finance Committee.

ML moved to approve the FY2022 Select Board budget as BE presented (level funded and stipends will receive same COLA as determined for other town employees). CS 2nd: unanimous.

BE relayed to BC's attention a call he receive from a retired town employee re: insurance bills.

BE received a letter from the Police Association reporting (with receipts) on the 2019 Children's Holiday Party and requesting that the town will once again donate $500.00 appropriated at the May 2020 ATM toward the 2020 Children's Holiday Event which, due to the pandemic, will be a "Drive-by" rather than a party. BE moved that the SB will approve the $500.00 donation appropriated at the 2020 ATM toward the Children's Holiday event. CS 2nd: unanimous. The SB signed a letter of appreciation to Police Officer Nicole Miller and the Becket Police Association for their efforts in conjunction with the Children's Holiday endeavors.

Per BE's inquiry, BC indicated that he is obtaining quotes to survey the Town Beach property.

11. Correspondence:

- **2020.11.30 Historical Commission re: Historical Facts section of the Town of Becket website**

The SB acknowledged the Historical Commission's letter expressing appreciation of BG's assistance with the construction of the Historical Commission's Historical Facts Section of the town website.

12. BOS to review and sign payable warrants.

The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.

13. BOS to adjourn the Meeting

CS moved to adjourn, ML 2nd: unanimous. BE adjourned the meeting at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Administrative Assistant

Signed by:

/ *December 16, 2020*

William Elovirta, *Chairperson* Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- 2020.11.18 Meeting Minutes
- 2020.12.02 Town Administrator's Report
- Departmental Reports (Agenda Item 7)
- Correspondence (Agenda Item 11)
- 2020.11.23 letter from Police Officer Nicole Miller, Police Association re: Children's 2019 Holiday Party
- Select Board letters of appreciation to Police Officer Nicole Miller/Police Association
- License Renewal checklist of mandatory documents received
- 2020.11.30 letter from Conservation Agent Mary Stucklen re: Paid Family Medical Leave and request for 50% average bi-weekly salary during maternity leave
- Mass.gov Paid Family and Medical Leave-PFML Fact Sheet