SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
7:00pm, May 05, 2021
Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

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

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

Others: Bob Ronzio, Planning Board Chair **Remote participation**: Terri Hayden, Dean Lagrotteria, Shelby Macri (Country Journal), Meredyth Babcock, Amy Perlmutter, Kirsten Miller, Marc Schultz, Michael Rhein & Michael Thomas: both from Crystal Pond Homeowners Association

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. **Board to discuss and possibly vote on Crystal Pond road closure options.**
   Michael Rhein, President of the Crystal Pond Homeowners Association, explained Crystal Pond's road closure request. Years ago, the town authorized Crystal Pond to close Big Bass Lane from through traffic at the intersection of Wade Inn Road annually. Crystal Pond has been using a chain connected to two barrels to close the road and Crystal Pond furnished chain cutters to the public safety departments. To date they have expended 2/3 of their 2021 budgeted funding allotted for road repair. Mr. Rhein pointed out that Crystal Pond's privately maintained roads are unpaved. Because some of the drivers have knocked over the barrels with their trucks to get through and in order to reduce damage to their roads, Crystal Pond would like permission to substitute the barrels with two Jersey Barriers (to connect the chain) at the intersection at Wade Inn and Big Bass Lane year-round. When funding becomes available, Crystal Pond would like permission to replace the Jersey Barrier/chain system with a swinging lockable metal gate. BC indicated that the Police and Ambulance Departments are amenable to this request. Before voting on this matter, the SB wants to receive comment from the Fire Department and Planning Board and they agree with Bob Ronzio's suggestion that approval of this request would be contingent upon Crystal Pond's creating a hammerhead turnaround on Big Bass Lane. Bob Ronzio will place this matter on the Planning Board's agenda. ML moved for the SB to table this matter for May 19, 2021: CS 2nd: unanimous.

4. **Broadband Update and Select Board to discuss and possibly vote on policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project**
   Municipal Light Plant Manager Bob Gross had submitted the following written update to the SB:

1. Construction is moving along. The first FSA, 02, has been tested by the contractor. Westfield is in the process of confirming that it can be turned over to the town and does not expect any problems.
2. We expect FSA02 to be turned over to the town next Monday/Tuesday.
3. Whip City Fiber will begin scheduling the beta testers and have them connected the end of next week or the following week.
4. Working on connecting Town Hall to the network ahead of schedule since it is next door.
5. A pod will be used by TriWire and we will determine the location shortly. It will possibly be next to the shed behind town hall.
6. Expect to receive one last check from a homeowner this week and can then arrange for the utility poles to be installed on William Holmes Road and Becket West Road.
7. Still waiting to arrange to get a flagger to do the CSX work.
8. Homeowner at 240 High Street is arranging to have a utility pole removed and run the network and his drop underground. Any extra costs are his responsibility.
9. The billing process, handled by Whip City Fiber, can be confusing. We are writing up an explanation of the process to minimize confusion.
10. The network design includes the town connecting its fiber with both Washington and Otis. The details are being worked out.
11. Becket Woods is in the process of finalizing the second phase of its project and should know shortly when the work will start.

5. Approval of the 4/21/21 Meeting Minutes

ML moved to approve the 4/21/21 minutes, CS 2nd: unanimous.

6. Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes total for this agenda item).

None.

7. To discuss and potential vote re: whether to opt-out of the mosquito control spraying program conducted by SRMCB under MGL Chapter 252 Section 2A through calendar year 2021, and listen to public comments.

BE read BC's e-mail message regarding BC's conversation with Attorney Joel Bard (Town Counsel) regarding mosquito spraying:

> "He will have something more formal in the coming days but is having difficulty finding the court case that better makes a determination. His current opinion is that the Town can vote remain opted-out of a spraying district, however, that does not stop a private owner whether it is one's house or a district from choosing to spray.
>
> We have the two articles from previous ATMs in 2010 and 2012 that had us opt out and also refuse to rejoin.
>
> Essentially, with a vote to opt-out there will be no change in how things currently operate."

The SB received comments at tonight's meeting:

- The SB agreed with Dean Lagrotteria's request for the Town to look into whether Sherwood Greens has the legal authority to join the Berkshire County Mosquito Control Project. He questions whether paying for Mosquito Control falls under the powers granted to SG under legislation.
- ML spoke as a resident of Sherwood Greens to convey he favors opting out. ML referenced the July 12, 2016 Meeting minutes of the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board (SRB) which shows discussion and the SRB's vote to allow Sherwood Greens to join the Berkshire County Mosquito Control Project. He would like this to be forwarded to Town Counsel.
- Meredyth Babcock favors banning spraying throughout the town. Scientific documentation supports that spray travels, its toxins cannot be contained and endangers the environment.
- Amy Perlmutter supports opting out due to environmental concerns. She had provided information to the SB about the opt out process. She will test the PFAS levels in her well: ML will send her information on the free water testing program.
- The SB fielded Marc Shultz's questions re: opt out and its process (which is for spraying only and requires submitting a plan for alternative mosquito control along with the application by May 15, 2021). Marc Shultz indicated that the Sherwood Greens Road District Prudential Committee is concerned about the safety of the community and protecting the environment.
- At the Select Board's April 21, 2021 meeting, ML relayed that the Board of Health voted to prohibit Mosquito control spraying due concern about PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl substances).

ML moved to opt-out of the mosquito control spraying program conducted by SRMCB under M.G.L. c. 252 § 2A through calendar year 2021 and submit the application with alternative methods of control for the Town of Becket. CS 2nd: unanimous.

8. BOS to approve the award of Assessing Services contract to Regional Resource Group pending negotiation.

BC advised that the town received one response for the Assessing Services Contract Request for Proposal. Per BC's recommendation, ML moved to award Regional Resources Group the contract for Assessing Services pending negotiations. CS 2nd: unanimous.

9. Select Board to review Departmental Reports

- **TBA**

The SB reviewed the Highway Department's April 2021 Report and the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office Call Analysis through March 2021 (Police Chief).

10. Town Administrator's Report

Below is an update of several items that BC has been working on:

- Complete Streets – Tier 2 - prioritization plan – BC anticipates receiving the list of projects/pricing from the engineers. Complete Streets will not cover projects along Route 8.
- ADA Grant – will be going through all town buildings
- Lease with Camp Greylock – draft received
- American Recovery Act – BC awaits guidance from the state
    - 502k to Becket in direct and county funds
    - Will see what is required
- Grow Boys – Tanglewood Circle – HCA. BC sent draft. No response yet
- Vacation carryover – 7 days? – Due to COVID-19, the SB agreed to allow employees to carryover 7 vacation days.
- Werden Rd Culvert Grant – received an extension until 12/22
- BE and BC will attend tomorrow's Mass Highway Annual Meeting, West Boylston, MA
- Library – BC indicated that the library budget listed on the ATM Warrant should have been $248 higher. BC will provide a letter to the library indicating that the town supports a 2.5 percent increase in the library's budget.
- Town Hall reopening – The SB agreed that effective 7/6/2021, Town Hall will return to full-time hours (Monday through Friday – 8:30am till 4:30pm) and Meetings for Town of Becket Committees/Boards may occur in person. The SB agreed that effective 8/1/2021, outside groups (Road/Lake Districts, Homeowners Associations) may use the Town Hall meeting rooms. In the future, the SB will discuss remote attendance of town board/committee meetings.
- Andrus – received a quote. Need to get two more 32K for generator 60kw
- 44 Pleasant Street (apothecary): Owner looking to donate to town or will be given a raze order. Because the Building Inspector intends to issue a raze order due to the building's dilapidated condition, the SB Members are not interested in acquiring this property. BC will advise the Historical Commission.
- ATM – 5/8 at BW School
- ATE – 5/15 12-4 Community Room – voting reduced hours

11. Select Board's Comments and Announcements

CS inquired about the Road Assessment Study and stated that his preference is to fix one or fewer roads rather than fix small sections of many roads.

CS recommends investigating purchase of speed feedback signs to move around in various locations in town including Werden, Quarry and Algerie Roads.

ML advised on the status of the Esau Trail Grant application. Conservation Commission conducted a site visit: RDA is not required.

BE inquired about Memorial Day. BC advised due to COVID-19, Bill Mulholland will arrange for a ceremony only.

12. Any other business to come before the Board

BE moved to approve the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Trevor Clemons Assistant Electrical Inspector effective 5/5/2021 through 6/30/2022: ML 2nd: unanimous.

The SB signed a letter of appreciation to David Weiler who retired from the USPS. For the past thirty years, David was the Postal Carrier for the Becket-Washington community.

13. Correspondence:

- **tba**

The SB did not have correspondence items at tonight's meeting.

14. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants.

The Select Board reviewed and signed payable warrants.

15. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting

CS moved to adjourn: ML 2nd: unanimous. BE adjourned the meeting at 8:27pm

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Administrative Assistant

Signed by:

William A. Elovirta / *May 19, 2021*

William Elovirta, *Chairperson* Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- Agenda Item 4: 2021.05.05 e-mail MLP Manager's update
- Agenda Item 5: 2021.04.21 Select Board Minutes
- Agenda Item 7: July 12, 2016 Meeting minutes of the State Reclamation and Mosquito Control Board
- Agenda Item 7: 2021.04.21 Dr. Joan Boccino e-mail re: mosquito spraying
- Agenda Item 7: 2021.04.08 e-mail from Michael Lavery re Mosquito Control opt-out of spraying; e-mail Re Becket MA mosquito control opt out (Sent by Fran Fortino ffortino79@gmail.com); 2021.09.18 SB Minutes - page 2 Mosquito discussion section. application-for-municipality-opt-out-of-srmcb-spraying
- Agenda Item 7: 2021-04-30 e-mail Amy Perlmutter Re Opt out of state mosquito spraying in Becket; 2021-04-13 e-mail Kirsten Miller; 2021.05.03 e-mail Mary Stucklen, Becket Conservation Agent; ATM Minutes (May 8, 2010 and May 12, 2012) sections re: Mosquito Control
- Agenda Item 12: SB Letter of Appreciation to David Weiler re: retirement from USPS
- Agenda Item 9: Highway Department's April 2021 Report; Berkshire County Sheriff's Office Call Analysis through March 2021 (Police Chief).
- Agenda Item 10: 2021.05.21 Town Administrator's Report