

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

7:00pm, July 21, 2021

Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

Attendees

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

Staff: William Caldwell (BC), *Town Administrator*; Beverly Gilbert (BG), *Administrative Assistant*; Sergeant Matthew Virginia; Ed Pickert, *Highway Superintendent*

Others: Bob Gross, *MLP Manager*; Frank Murphy

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 Select Board to discuss and possibly vote on policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project

MLP Manager Bob Gross discussed the following:

- The Broadband Ad Hoc Group added a sentence to the Determination of the Drop Subsidy Amount Policy to clarify that there is one subsidy per tax parcel.
- Easements (private property) are required only when digging across a property (not for aerial purposes)
- Sertex tested FSA 01 (northern part of the town), and service is anticipated to be turned on next week.
- Bob explained the project update available on the website. It is not possible for the status to be provided for separate premises nor on a daily basis due to intricacies.
- Bob indicated that they are aggressively promoting underground signups and crews want to complete as much underground work as possible before wintertime, especially in FSA 5.
- WiredWest is starting to invoice premises that have service.

Bob asked if another member may be added to the Energy Committee: they are hoping CS will agree to become their chairperson. The SB are amenable to adding a second alternate member position to the Energy Committee, with the idea that one of the full members would switch to an alternate member position.

Bob indicated that the Energy Committee / Broadband Ad Hoc Group scheduled a joint informational session for September 11th.

4. Approval of the July 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes

ML moved to approve the July 7, 2021 minutes, CS 2nd: Vote: 3-0.

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

None.

6. SB to discuss/vote on Town Administrator's recommended appointment: Frank Murphy, Probationary Part-time Reserve Police Officer, effective 7/21/2021 through 6/30/2022

Sergeant Matt Virginia spoke in support of hiring Frank Murphy to work in the Police Department. He indicated that staffing is needed to replace other part-time police officers who left Becket to accept full-time positions. Mr. Murphy fielded questions and discussed his experience. Mr. Murphy currently works as a part-time officer in West Stockbridge. ML moved to approve the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Frank Murphy Probationary Part-time Reserve Police Officer, effective 7/21/2021 through 6/30/2022. CS 2nd. Vote: 3-0.

7. **SB to discuss/vote on reappointment: Gale Labelle, Planning Board Associate Member, effective 7/1/2021 through 6/30/2022**
CS moved to reappoint Gale Labelle Planning Board Associate Member effective 7/1/2021 through 6/30/2022. ML 2nd. Vote: 3-0.

8. **Select Board to review Departmental Reports**

♦ tba

The SB reviewed reports: Animal Control Officer (June 2021), Volunteer Fire Dept. (Jan 2021 through June 2021), and Police Departments (January 2021 through June 2021). BE stated that Becket Animal Inspector Madelaine Elovirta had required four dogs to be quarantined due to report of dog bites.

9. **Town Administrator's Report**

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

- Complete Streets – Tier 2 - prioritization plan
- ADA Grant: Final report submitted, reimbursement approved
- Benton Hill – Preliminary plans draft complete to DER
 - Final reimbursement submitted
 - Final Design grant approved (75K)
 - Will work with BETA for final design (maybe it will be an MVP project)
- Working on fiber connection to TH – maybe splicing this week
- Received ARPA funds
 - Received Town funds, state waiting on guidance for county funds
- Grow Boys – working with Town Counsel on the final draft (Tanglewood Circle)
- YMCA – invited Chiefs and me for lunch - goodwill
- Not awarded an MVP grant for this year
- 2442 Main Street – near completion
- Eversource – new program on Street light conversion
- A resident recommended holding a public safety appreciation day sometime before summer ends

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

BE requested an updated list of Committee and Board members from BG.

CS reported that Al Blake requested for the SB to recruit ZBA members.

ML reported that Adele Levine would like to see the monthly Becket Bulletin e-mail newsletter resumed. Due to that there has been less town news since COVID-19 began, the SB agrees that BC may continue sending newsletters/updates when there are items to report rather than on a scheduled basis.

BE brought up the Sept. meeting schedule. Due to that Yom Kippur is on September 15th, the Select Board will meet on September 1st and 22nd.

11. Any other business to come before the Board

Highway Superintendent Ed Pickert stated that due to recent storms, there is significant damage to approximately 1,500 feet (85 percent) of Leonhardt Road (near Fred Snow Road), including underground infrastructure (no longer viable). Ed reported that Steve Garrity from LB Construction conducted a site visit and estimates it will cost \$175,000 to restore the road. He will provide a written estimate with specs, materials, and labor by the end of the week. Thanks to the Highway Crew, although in very rough shape (two cars going in opposite directions cannot pass each other), the road is now drivable. Approximately \$8,000 in materials was used on the road. Discussion ensued re: funding/expenses and repair (temporary vs. longer term repair, highway crew vs. outsourced, paving the road). BC reported that although MEMA acknowledged serious damage commenced, it will not provide monetary relief to the TOB.

Ed does not recommend doing a temporary fix. He thinks it may lead to more serious problems. Ed explained that he recommends outsourcing restoration of Leonhardt Road because the Highway Dept. would not be able to tend to any of its other responsibilities if it took on this project.

The expense for the repair for Leonhardt Road would cause the Highway Department to exceed its budget. The SB will need to schedule a Special Town Meeting.

The Highway Superintendent will discuss this matter with Conservation Commission (Is there a generic/blanket culvert agreement for road/emergencies?). The regular procurement process would cause substantial delays for rebuilding the road, and it would not be built until after the winter. BC will contact Town Counsel to inquire about emergency procurement (5 or 6 homes are impacted, the road is a very steep grade). BC will write to the State Representative and Senator to request authorization of state storm relief funding for town use to rebuild Leonhardt. Ed will seek opinions from other potential contractors.

The SB discussed 2021.07.15 letter from Pamela Tatge, Executive & Artistic Director of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, request for town to co-sponsor two performances in Becket with a contribution of \$500.00. CS moved to contribute \$450 from the Select Board's expense account to Jacob's Pillow to co-sponsor the Becket Events, ML 2nd: Motion carried with BE opposed.

12. Correspondence:

- ◆ 6-24-21 Secretary of the Interior Notification that the Dept. of the Interior issued a \$310 Payment in Lieu of Taxes to Becket for Federal Lands in Becket administered by Agencies within its department.
- ◆ 2021.07.06 Dept. of Environmental Protection - copy of Enforcement order 00011668 issued to Roy Turner Trucking for Diesel Fuel Release on Interstate 90 Westbound
- ◆ 2021.07.14, Office of the Governor notification Becket has been awarded a grant of \$75,165 towards final engineering and permitting to replace the culvert on Benton Hill Road as part of the Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistant Grant

The SB the above listed communications.

13. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants.

The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.

14. Executive Session under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (2) To conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Employment Agreement effective January 28, 2022 between Town of Becket and Town Administrator William Caldwell); The Chair shall

publicly announce whether the open session will reconvene at the conclusion of the executive session

CS moved to enter into Executive Session MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a) (2) To conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Employment Agreement effective January 28, 2022 between Town of Becket and Town Administrator William Caldwell), ML 2nd. Roll call vote: BE aye, ML aye and CS aye. BE announce that the SB will not return to open meeting at the conclusion of the executive session. At 8:01pm, the SB went into executive session.

15. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting

At the conclusion of the executive session, ML moved to adjourn, CS 2nd: Vote: 3-0. BE adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, Administrative Assistant

Signed by:


_____/ August 4., 2021
William H. Elovirta, Chairperson Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- 📅 2021.07.21 Select Board Agenda
- 📅 Agenda Item 4. Select Board Minutes – July 7, 2021 meeting
- 📅 Agenda Item 6. 2021.07.14 - Police Chief's recommendation for appointment - Frank Murphy
- 📅 Agenda Item 7. RE Follow-up Planning Board appointments (Gale LaBelle appointment)
- 📅 Agenda Item 8: Animal Control Officer's June 2021 Report; Police Department's Report through June 30, 2021; Becket Fire Department monthly reports Jan-Jun 2021
- 📅 Agenda Item 9. Town Administrator's Report
- 📅 Agenda Item 11. 2021.07.15 letter from Pamela Tatge, Executive & Artistic Director of Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, request for town to so-sponsor two performances in Becket with a contribution of \$500.00
- 📅 Agenda Item 12 Correspondence – listed above