

**Select Board Meeting Minutes**  
**7:00pm, January 6, 2021**  
**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*  
Remote Participation: George Roberts, *Town Clerk*

**Others (remote participation):** 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 Select Board to discuss and possibly vote on policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project**

BC advised that the Broadband Ad Hoc Group is working on drafting policies. He indicated that FSA2's strand has been installed and is getting ready for the fiber, and the construction crew is ready to install the strand on FSA1.

**4. Approval of the December 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

ML moved to approve the 12/16/2020 meeting minutes: CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: unanimous.

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

There was no public input at tonight's meeting.

**6. Board to discuss and potentially vote on 2020 dog license fees**

Town Clerk George Roberts discussed his e-mail dated Jan. 4th with the Select Board and Town Administrator. George described his dog licensing process, and how COVID-19 election related burdens placed upon his office during 2020 substantially increased his workload. He stated that it was his intention to catch up on processing dog licenses fees. However, after considering that depositing the checks may result in bank bounce fees issued to the payees (and the town issues fees for returned checks), George determined that it would be in the best interest of town residents if he were to waive the 2020 dog license fees. George apologized to the Select Board and agreed to ask for assistance should he find himself in a similar situation. The Select Board suggested for George to submit turnovers more

frequently. George indicated that he has recorded rabies certificates. George stated that he will process dog license applications when they arrive and he will submit his turnovers in an increased schedule.

He mentioned that he will write void on the checks he received during 2020 and maintain them in his file. He advised that upon request he is willing to refund those who paid through cash or money order, and mail back voided checks.

George will communicate about this matter in his 2020 Annual Report.

BE asked George if he recommends increasing the Town Clerk's hours of operation and George declined.

CS stated that due to complications presented by the demands of the election and COVID-19 and in order to avoid bounce check and town fees to those who applied for dog licenses, he moves to waive 2020 dog license fees, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>. Vote: 2 in favor. Motion carried with BE opposed on the basis that he does not support suspending town fees.

## **7. Select Board to review Departmental Reports**

### **♦ Tba**

The Select Board reviewed the Highway Superintendent's report (Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 through Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021).

BC advised that the Police Chief will submit his report after he receives statistics from the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office. BC had requested the Animal Control Officer's report from the Police Chief.

## **8. Town Administrator's Report**

BC provided an update of several items that he has been working on:

- Broadband Hut – build-out complete. Generator (program), electricity, equipment. BC advised the town will obtain additional equipment, and awaits fiber materials.
- Green Communities – HVAC (complete for both Fire Houses). The insulation has been completed for Fire Station 1.
- DER (Division of Ecological Restoration) culvert Grant – BETA engineering study is needed for Benton Hill Road
- Finance Committee to review capital requests (see below)
- Budget requests are out. End of year due date.
- Working with Building Insp. on next house demo – Wells Rd. Asbestos abatement
- Annual Reports
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) – The federal government has not renewed this Act (to pay people up to 80 hours if they have to quarantine). He asked

the Select Board to let him know if they wish for the town to take its own action on this.

- Vaccine – It was the SB's and BC's consensus to encourage and facilitate but not mandate town employees to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.
- Vacation Carryover – The Select Board agreed that BC may carry-forward his unused vacation days (seven days).
- MMA Conference – BC will attend virtually.
- Complete Streets Program
- Meredyth Babcock is working on the MVP Action Grant

**Capital Requests:**

Department	Item	Estimated Cost
Parks and Rec	Pavilion - Maple St	\$ 20,000.00
Historical Commission	Ballou Park Retaining Wall	\$ 100,000.00
Highway	Truck #5	\$ 132,000.00 (Upgrade from 3500 to F550)
Ambulance	Squad Vehicle Replacement	\$ 47,000.00
Fire	Command Vehicle	\$ 60,000.00
Fire	Fire Hose	\$ 25,000.00
Fire	Portable Radios	\$ 15,000.00
Fire	SCBA	\$ 40,000.00
Police	None	
Town Hall	HVAC/Reno Account	\$ 15,000.00
Town Hall	TH Pavilion Expansion	\$ 20,000.00
Town Hall	DER Culvert Grant (Town exp.)	\$ 14,200.00

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


BE asked BC to determine whether the town has any roads that qualify for TIPS.

ML reported on his meeting with the Greenagers Group at a potential site for a trail known as the town-owned Jacobs Well property. ML mentioned that motorized vehicles will not be permitted on this proposed trail but bicycles will be allowed. He will apply for Community Preservation Funding for this project.

CS inquired about the reasoning for the demolition scheduled to occur on Wells Road. BC advised that it has been deemed a health and safety issue.

CS inquired about the 2021 Green Communities application. BC recommends applying for funding to convert the street lights to LEDs. CS remains interested in the possibility of a town-owned small wind turbine. The Energy Committee had mentioned they will inquire about this prospect with the Planning Board. BC cautioned that the town may wish to take a more conservative approach to debt

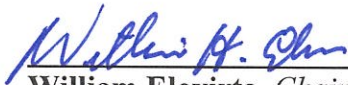
during FY22 due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 impacts on state funding to municipalities.

10. **Any other business to come before the Board**
11. **Correspondence:** 
  - ◆ **2020.12.23 Becket Arts Center's letter to the Finance Committee to request funding for Fiscal Year 2022**  
The Select Board reviewed the above captioned correspondence.
12. **Select Board to review and sign payable warrants.**  
The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.
13. **Select Board to adjourn the Meeting**  
CS moved to adjourn, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>: unanimous. BE adjourned the meeting at 8:02pm.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Beverly Gilbert, Administrative Assistant*

**Signed by:**









**William Elovirta, Chairperson**

/ January 20, 2021

Date Approved

**Documents discussed at this meeting:**

-  2020.01.06 Town Administrator's Report
-  2020.12.16 Select Board Minutes
-  Correspondence (See agenda item 11)
-  Highway Superintendent's Report 12-1-2020 through 1-1-2021
-  2020.01.04 Town Clerk's e-mail re: Dog License Fees
-  2021.01.05 Michael Lavery's e-mail re: response on Trail with attachment: draft map