SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
7:00pm, February 16, 2022
Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

Attendees

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

Staff: William Caldwell (BC), *Town Administrator*; Beverly Gilbert (BG), *Administrative Assistant;* Police Chief Kristopher McDonough, Police Officer Daniel McClellan

Others via remote participation: MLP Manager Bob Gross, Shaw Israel Izikson (Editor of the 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**
   MLP Manager Bob Gross provided the following update:
   - Sertex indicated that they have run all of the fiber in the town and they are completing splicing in Fiber Services Areas (FSAs) 6 and 7, and they are likely to pull out of the construction portion of this project within the next week or two. They will return to FSAs 3 and 10 where Eversource must do some work.
   - Whip City Fiber (WCF) has been signing up premises for installs in FSA 4.
   - Dan Parnell and Bob have reviewed the budget which is in very good shape. Drop costs are less costly than planned. The only item over budget is Police Detail (other towns have experienced the same).
   - Bob discussed the drop true-up invoicing policy. After completion of the drop, the owner is required to pay the remaining portion invoiced within 30 days. Sometimes there is glitch and WCF hooks up a premise before the owner pays the overage billed. Bob advised that one premise was disconnected because the owner did not respond to communications requesting payment owed.
   - Bob is hopeful that the project will continue to be ahead of schedule and construction of Becket Woods will start in the springtime.
   - Bob fielded questions about the take-rate. The break-even had been estimated at 50 percent. The take-rate (includes premises already connected and those who have signed-up) is approximately 63 percent. Sherwood Forest and Shaw Pond take-rates are higher than originally estimated.

4. **Approval of the February, 2 Meeting Minutes**
   ML moved to approve the February 2, 2022 minutes. CS 2nd. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes total for this agenda item).**
   None.

6. **SB to vote on Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Daniel McClellan Probationary Full-time Police Officer with pay increased to $26.19 per hour, effective February 20, 2022 through June 30, 2022**
The SB reviewed Police Chief McDonough's letter to support promoting Daniel McClellan to full-time status. Police Chief McDonough indicated that Police Officer McClellan, who has a BA in Criminal Justice, has been doing an excellent job, and is a good fit to fill recently retired Police Officer Eckman's spot. BC conveyed his confidence in Police Chief's McDonough's recommendation. Police Chief McDonough advised that Police Officer McClellan will remain on probationary status until he graduates from the Police Academy (possibly through the summer/fall, pending openings to attend).

ML moved to accept the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Daniel McClellan Probationary Full-time Police Officer with pay increased to $26.19 per hour effective February 20, 2022 through June 30, 2022. CS 2nd: Motion carried 3-0.

7. **Vote re: Intermunicipal Agreement By and Between the Town of Becket and Town of Otis – Shared Police Chief Services**
CS conveyed Otis is on board with the agreement for the period starting March 7, 2022 through June 60, 2022. BE moved to sign the Intermunicipal Agreement By and Between the Town of Becket and Town of Otis – Shared Police Chief Services. CS 2nd: Motion carried 3-0.

8. **Announce the winning bid for the Highway Dept. Truck borrowing**
BC announced the bid for a loan to replace Highway Department truck number 5 (Ford 550) in the amount of $132,000.00 was awarded to Adams Community Bank. The interest rate for this note is 1.5 percent.

9. **Select Board to review Departmental Reports**
   - **TBA**

The SB did not receive any departmental reports for tonight's meeting.

10. **Town Administrator's Report**
BC provided an update of several items that he has been working on:
   - MVP – Master Plan w/Climate resilience focus next year
   - MassWorks
     McNerney Rd
   - USDA Grant – Covid health funds
   - USDA Grant – Cruiser
   - AFG Grant
   - ARPA funds – BC suggested that due to complex federal reporting requirements, it might be best to designate all ARPA funds (504k) toward Broadband and Town Meeting may vote to repurpose Unibank Broadband loans toward road repair/maintenance.
   - Budget and Capital
     School numbers – awaiting figures from the school district.
   - 2442 Main Street
     DHCD approval to sell
   - Shared Services agreement
     Police Chief - Otis
   - Highway truck capital expense – Due to lower inventory levels/rising costs/significant waits (approximately 2 years plus), BC will discuss with the Fin Com the idea of placing a highway truck on the ATM to lock in the price. Financing would not have to occur before receiving the truck.

- Free Cash 508k
- Fire Dept. Grant – applied (to replace Fire Engine 4): Grant award announcements may not be known until Fall
- BC awaits information on accessing Disaster Funds for Leonhardt Road repairs.
- Ambulance Retained earnings 17k, increased calls to other towns

11. Select Board's Comments and Announcements

CS expressed his misgivings about the Ambulance Department submitting a grant request for purchase of a cruiser.

12. Any other business to come before the Board

CS inquired about Cemetery mowing. BC advised the Highway Department will handle bids (contractors need to furnish their own equipment). CS will invite Damien Rogers to submit a bid to the town.

Bill Girard, Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer, submitted notification that he will retire and his last day will be March 31, 2022. Mr. Girard specified that it has been over two years since his last attempt to retire, and he does not regret having spent that time working for the Town of Becket. ML suggested sending a letter of appreciation to Bill Girard.

BC gave the BC the MIIA Health Benefits Insurance Renewal Monthly Contribution Rates Proposal 7/1/2022 through 6/30/2023. Health Insurance premiums will increase 1.72 %. Dental insurance premiums will decrease 2.58%.

BG passed along that Al Blake called about the Select Board's re-appointment process. He had suggested it might be more democratic to post upcoming openings rather than automatically offering re-appointment to the individuals currently serving in their positions. BG was not certain whether Mr. Blake was referring to all or only the Associate/Alternate positions. The consensus of the SB is it is not easy to find volunteers and unless a board/committee chairperson reports that a member is disruptive or not fulfilling their responsibilities, they will continue to offer re-appointment to incumbents before posting the positions.

BC mentioned that longtime Highway Department employee Bert Goodermote tendered notification that he will retire in July.

13. Correspondence:

- **2022.02.02 Berkshire Regional Planning Commission - Berkshire County has been designated as an Economic Development District by the Economic Development Administration.**

The SB reviewed the above captioned letter.

14. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants

The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.

15. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting

ML moved to adjourn, CS 2nd. Motion carried unanimously. At 7:43pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:

_____ / *March 2, 2022*
William H. Elovirta, *Chair* Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- 2022.02.16 Select Board Agenda
- Agenda Item 4. 2022.02.02 Select Board Minutes
- Agenda Item 6. Police Chief's letter of recommendation, Amended payrate approval form
- Agenda Item 7. Intermunicipal Agreement By and Between the Town of Becket and Town of Otis – Shared Police Chief Services
- Agenda Item 10. Town Administrator's report dated 02/16/2022
- Agenda Item 11 Building Inspector's letter of resignation, MIIA Health Insurance Rate Proposal 7-1-2022 through 6-30-2023, BG's e-mail conveying Al Blake's suggestion for the SB to post upcoming appointments that will expire June 30th
- Agenda Item 13. Correspondence as listed