

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**7:00pm, March 2, 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*;

**Others via remote participation:** Shaw Israel Izikson - Editor of the Country Journal, June Wolfe – Housing Director of Construct Inc., John Verity, Adrienne Metcalf, Meredyth Babcock, Lei-Anne Ellis, David Johnson – Conservation Commission Chairperson, Dean Lagrotteria, Laurie Friedman, Gale Labelle – Board of Health Chairperson, Bob Ronzio – Board of Health Vice Chairperson, Kathy Dickenson, John Lambert

**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**

ML provided the following update: For a couple of weeks, Whip City Fiber has been receiving applications and hookup appointments for Fiber Service Area (FSA) 4: ML's home was connected today. Becket Woods is resolving conduit issues with Eversource. While this is occurring Sertex has gone to other towns and will return to Becket Woods. Whip City Fiber is inspecting FSAs 6 & 7 and anticipates beginning installations.

**4. June Wolfe, Housing Director, Construct Inc. to discuss the 50 Dawn Drive Receivership**

June Wolfe, Housing Director of Construct, Inc., reported on the progress of Becket's first soon to be affordable housing unit located at 2442 Main Street. The sale by lottery of this three-bedroom house is for \$250,000: lottery applications are due 4/1/2022. Ms. Wolfe explained that the pandemic had caused significant delays with repairs/construction/state approvals.

The Court appointed Construct, Inc. to assume receivership of 50 Dawn Drive, located on a 0.28 acre parcel. June Wolfe described potential state and federal funding sources. This will not include Community Preservation Funding since the application deadline has passed. She also discussed Construct Inc.'s assessment/proposal for creating an affordable housing unit at 50 Dawn Drive. For safety purposes, the premise must be demolished. Construct, Inc. proposes replacement with a modular home. Due to the trapezoid-like shape of the land, there is sufficient minimum distance to replace the septic and well. Construct, Inc. estimates this affordable housing project will cost \$400,000. She asked if the SB would agree to submit a grant for funding penned by her with assistance from BC. June Wolfe indicated that this project will not cost the town any money.

CS stated he favors applying for the grant because it will save the town the cost of demolition, the project will not cost the town any money, and he thinks it is important to increase the town's affordable housing inventory.

CS moved that the Town of Becket will apply for grants for Construct, Inc. to create an Affordable Housing Unit in Becket at 50 Dawn Drive, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>.

During discussion, Conservation Commission Chairperson Dave Johnson expressed concern about a nearby stream and a failing culvert, BE pointed out that Dawn Drive is a private road (not eligible for ARPA/state/town funds) and ML stated he has misgivings about the small parcel size. Ms. Wolfe advised there is not sufficient time (application is due March 22, 2022) to modify the proposed project and apply for grant funding for another area in Becket.

Motion failed: with CS in favor and BE and ML opposed.

**5. Approval of the February 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

ML moved to approve the February 16, 2022 minutes. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried unanimously.

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

Gale Labelle, Chairperson of the Board of Health, explained at tonight's Board of Health meeting she learned about the State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) Program which enables groups of cities and towns to share resources to enhance local public health effectiveness. Through this program, the Berkshire Public Health Alliance (Berkshire Regional Planning Commission) will develop a more efficient system of online permitting and inspection scheduling among its 24 participating municipalities. Ms. Labelle asked the SB to write a letter of support and she explained the deadline to apply for this program is prior to the SB's March 16, 2022 meeting. BE moved that the BOH will provide additional information and BC, on behalf of the SB, will write a letter of support for the SAPHE related program grant, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously.

**7. SB to review appointment application and possibly vote on appointing John Verity to the Conservation Commission effective 3/2/2022 through 6/30/2022**

The SB reviewed John Verity's appointment application to serve on the Conservation Commission and John Verity introduced himself to the SB. ML stated that in light of John Verity's letter to the editor (2/23/2022 Berkshire Eagle) expressing that he vehemently opposes TetraHydra's proposed marijuana production facility on Quarry Road in Becket, if appointed to the Conservation Commission, ML would want Dave Johnson, the Chairperson of the Conservation Commission, to be aware of this and ask Mr. Verity to recuse himself from any discussions/votes related to this matter. Dave Johnson and John Verity agreed with ML. Dave Johnson spoke in support of appointing John Verity due to his understanding of the environment, his background in engineering and based in his discussions with him, he thinks John Verity will complement the Conservation Commission team and honor the wetlands protection act in a user-friendly manner.

CS moved to appoint John Verity to the Conservation Commission effective March 2, 2022 through June 30, 2022. ML 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried 3-0.

**8. SB to acknowledge resignation and retirement notifications:**

- **George Roberts' resignation as Town Clerk and member of the Conservation Commission effective March 13, 2022.**
- **Albert Goodermote's retirement from the Highway Department effective July 8, 2022**

ML moved to accept George Roberts' resignation as Town Clerk and member of the Conservation Commission effective March 13, 2022. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried 3-0. The Board signed a letter of appreciation to Mr. Roberts. ML moved to accept Albert Goodermote's retirement from the Highway Department effective July 8, 2022. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried unanimously. The SB signed a letter of appreciation to Albert Goodermote.

**9. SB to vote on accepting MGL Chapter 258, Section 13 re: Indemnity of Municipal Officers**

BC stated that it is his understanding that the Town of Becket never adopted the above captioned that would indemnify individuals acting in their official capacities on behalf of the Town of Becket. After consulting with Town Counsel, he recommends for the SB to accept MGL Chapter 268, Section 13. CS moved to accept MGL Chapter 258, Section 13 re: Indemnity of Municipal Officers. ML 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried 3-0.

**10. SB to review and possibly approve the Open Space & Recreation Plan Advisory Committee's Tax Stuffer**

CS moved to approve the Open Space & Recreation Plan Advisory Committee's Tax stuffer with the waterfall picture (Meredyth Babcock indicated the waterfall is located at the border of Becket and Middlefield), ML 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried 3-0.

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

• **TBA**

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

**12. 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
  - Mid - March
- USDA Grant – Cruiser
- AFG Grant
  - Awards before May usually
- ARPA funds – to be discussed with the Finance Committee
  - ~504k – broadband
  - Recommend using all for broadband, repurpose borrowing for roads.
- Budget and Capital
  - Staffing – 2.5%, 4.5% ambulance
  - School numbers
- 2442 Main Street
  - DHCD approval to sell
- 50 Dawn Drive – Construct Inc. appointed as receiver
- Shared Services agreement
  - Police Chief - Otis approved begins 3/7
- Pre-qualification – Carter/Brooker Hill Ch 90 – moving forward paperwork for McNerney Road
- EMD position – Due to that Kris McDonough will be serving Otis and Becket, Kris McDonough had suggested for the SB to consider appointing another person in lieu of Kris to serve as the town's EMD.
- The SB agreed to have Zoom/in person attendance at its future meetings.

- Town counsel – cancelling caucus not an option.
- Interim Town Clerk: BC advised Allison Mikaniewicz, Town Clerk for the Town of Washington, is interested in serving as the Interim Town Clerk. She has a full-time job and is available to have office hours in Becket Town Hall, 10am till 2pm, on Saturdays and she will review e-mails/phone messages during the week. ML moved to appoint Allison Mikaniewicz Interim Town Clerk effective March 14, 2022 through May 31, 2022 with a payrate of \$30.00 per hour. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously. At a future meeting, BC will discuss asking the SB to consider an Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article to change the Town Clerk position from elected to appointed. Based on the outcome, he will generate a recruitment posting.

### **13. Select Board's Comments and Announcements**

BE agreed to ML's request to place his e-mail dated February 28, 2022 re: Duet Pesticide applications in Sherwood Greens Road Improvement and Maintenance District on the March 16, 2022 agenda. ML discussed this matter at tonight's BOH meeting. BC will ask Town Counsel to provide an opinion as to whether the town has authority to prohibit the District's participation in the Berkshire County Mosquito Control Program.

CS stated that he was embarrassed that Construct, Inc. was turned-away at tonight's meeting after the town had asked for Construct's help and in response efforts were made for Construct, Inc. to assume receivership of 50 Dawn Drive. He hopes before inviting an entity to take on a receivership, the town boards/officials involved with the process will have reached consensus.

### **14. Any other business to come before the Board**

The SB signed a letter of appreciation to Bill Girard, Building Inspector, who had tendered his resignation which the SB acknowledged on February 16, 2022. At the March 16, 2022 meeting, BC will present his recommendation re: filling this vacancy.

BG relayed Al Blake's e-mail message regarding the Select Board's vote that occurred on February 2, 2022: Mr. Blake clarified that it had been the Open Space & Recreation Committee's request to also seek its seventh member from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The SB agreed that in addition to seeking a seventh member of the Open Space & Recreation Committee from the Parks & Recreation Committee or Conservation Commission, it may also search for its seventh member from the Zoning Board of Appeals before other residents may apply for this position.

### **15. Correspondence:**

- **2/5/2022 Eversource letter re: 2022 Rights of Way Vegetation Management, with encs: Environmental Monitor Notice, 2022 Yearly Operational Plan Maps, 45 Day YOP Public Notice and Review and Comment Period Document**
- **2022.02.05 Eversource letter: re: 2022 Herbicide application along the power line rights-of way that pass through Becket/ Public water supply is not located near the rights-of-way being treated**

The SB reviewed the above captioned letters.

### **16. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants**

The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.

### **17. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting**

CS moved to adjourn, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously. At 8:20pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

**Signed by:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_/ March 16, 2022  
William H. Elovirta, *Chair*                      Date Approved

**Documents discussed at this meeting:**

- ✦ 2022.03.012 Select Board Agenda
- ✦ Agenda Item 5. 2022.02.02 Select Board Minutes
- ✦ Agenda Item 6. Police Chief's letter of recommendation, Amended payrate approval form
- ✦ Agenda Item 7. John Verity's appointment application to serve on the Conservation Commission
- ✦ Agenda Item 8. George Roberts – letter of resignation, Albert Gootermote – notice of retirement, SB letter of appreciation to George Roberts, SB letter of appreciation to Albert Goodermote
- ✦ Agenda Item 10. Open Space & Recreation Plan Advisory Committee's Tax Stuffer
- ✦ Agenda Item 11. 2022.03.02 Town Administrator's report
- ✦ Agenda Item 14. SB letter of appreciation to Bill Girard, Building Inspector, who had tendered his resignation; Amended payrate form for new hire Interim Town Clerk – Allison Mikaniewicz, E-mail form Al Blake re Open Space & Recreation Recruitment
- ✦ Agenda Item 15. Correspondence as listed