

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

**Staff via Zoom:** William Girard, Building Inspector / Zoning Enforcement Officer

**Others:** Health Agent Charlie J. Kaniecki, Charlie D. Kaniecki, Paul Greene, Daniel Lavery

**Other via Zoom:** Shaw Israel Izikson - Editor of the Country Journal, June Wolfe – Housing Director of Construct Inc., Barbara Wacholder, Janet Stander, Kathy Dickinson, Laurie Thomas, Robin (last name not listed), Dean Lagrotteria, Unknown Individual, Al Blake, David (last name not listed), Linda (last name not listed)

**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 read the MLP Manager Bob Gross' update:

1. Project is on schedule. The next FSA07, part of Sherwood Forest, should be released by Sertex to Westfield 3/30. Two weeks later we can start scheduling installs.
2. We adopted a policy to distinguish between residential and business service. The sole criterion is the subscriber's intent to distribute their bandwidth. Since we are promoting the service to everyone with no data caps, we did not consider usage.
3. I am working with Bill Ennen and expect to complete the reimbursement from the State for allowable MakeReady expenses. The State has been very generous in this matter. The drop subsidy (\$500/premise up to 70% of the town's premises) will be dealt with next fiscal year.
4. Waiting on Eversource to schedule the last phase of the work in Becket Woods.
5. We were surprised to hear from Joe Parda, project manager, that his contract with Westfield, as of now, is not being renewed and will end the end of the month. I will call Westfield to see if we can keep him on our project until it is complete. According to Joe, Tom Broderick, whom we have worked with a lot, is to take over his role and he is very knowledgeable and easy to work with. Will keep you posted.

**4. SB to discuss and potentially vote on Town Administrator's recommendation for the Building Inspector / Zoning Enforcement Officer**

BC advised that Bill Girard who is Becket's Building Inspector / Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO), and he reviewed applications and interviewed several candidates for the Building Inspector / ZEO position. BC advised it is their recommendation to appoint Paul Greene who has Massachusetts Building Code Enforcement Certification and works as a part-time Building Inspector / ZEO in Sheffield, Hinsdale, Washington, and Sandisfield and as the Assistant Building Inspector in Stockbridge and West Stockbridge. Mr. Greene proposed that he would spend four hours a week in the Becket Town Hall Office, work remotely and conduct inspections as needed. He indicated that this method of operating has worked very well for his other towns. BC indicated that Bill Girard has

been operating in this fashion and it has served the town's needs. Mr. Greene fielded the SB's questions. He believes he has sufficient time to cover the Town of Becket and he employs a secretary to assist him with communications and various paperwork. Mr. Greene indicated that he is available by mobile phone. As for addressing zoning violations, when he receives a complaint, his objective is to avoid the courtroom: he first tries to resolve the matter with the property owner and complainant. Mr. Greene requires a \$37,000 annual salary without benefits nor mileage. April 1<sup>st</sup> through April 10<sup>th</sup>, Assistant Building Inspector Gary Danko will cover for him while he is away for a previously scheduled vacation. He stated that while he is out of town, he will check his messages and he will need coverage for inspections. Mr. Greene stated that the SB may elect to end his services if they determine this method is not in the town's best interest. CS moved to accept the Town Administrator's recommendation to appoint Paul Greene Building Inspector / Zoning Enforcement Officer starting March 25, 2021 through June 30, 2022, ML seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**5. Wylie Goodman, M.R.P., Senior Planner – Economic Development of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), to discuss BRPC's upcoming update to its five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report.**

Wylie Goodman gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning process, "an ongoing regional economic development effort focused on identifying regional economic goals and priorities, identifying strategies for and facilitating implementation, and measuring progress in the region. The result of this ongoing planning process is the development of a 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region and accompanying annual progress reports, which are sent to the Economic Development Administration (EDA), in order to maintain the region's eligibility for EDA investments." Wylie concluded the presentation by asking the SB to provide a response to four questions relating to weaknesses/opportunities facing the town, economic resiliency (town), recovery-related concerns for town/county and potential solutions to a list of concerns. She will forward these questions to BC and is hoping the SB will submit the answers within a month.

ML initiated discussion about creating a commercial zone in Becket as a mechanism to promote economic development. Wylie indicated that the SB may reach out to Tom Matusko or other BRPC planners who work on Master Plans. Wylie stated that as more individuals work (remotely) from home, it is important to consider zoning (possibly hybrid models) that will not discourage home-based commercial ventures.

**6. Approval of the March 2, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

ML moved to accept the minutes for the March 2, 2022 meeting. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously.

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

Laurie Thomas, President of the Indian Lakes Homeowners Association, advised that her community was offended by an elected official's remarks they regard as dismissive, divisive and labelling which were directed toward 2<sup>nd</sup> homeowners at the March 9, 2022 Planning Board Meeting. Moreover, they were distressed by the "us (Becket residents) vs. them (2<sup>nd</sup> homeowners)" vibe and on behalf of Indian Lakes, she stated that the 2<sup>nd</sup> homeowners are most certainly a contributing part of the Becket Community. During discussion, BE asked Laurie to not name the public official because that person would have the right to be notified in advance of a discussion. BE advised that the SB has no jurisdiction over the Planning Board and the mechanism to remove an elected official involves recall. Laurie advised that Indian Lakes does not wish to take action that could divide the town. Rather, it is their hope that this can begin a conversation to bring the community together. All three SB members affirmed their appreciation and support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> homeowner community. ML brought up

that the SB had signed the NOT in Our County (Stop Hate Together) Multicultural Bridge pledge. The SB directed BC to draft a letter to the Planning Board to facilitate awareness that will bring about using language that fosters inclusion. The SB will review the letter on April 6<sup>th</sup>.

Al Blake stated that he enjoyed Wylie Goodman's presentation (agenda item 5) and he hopes the SB would try to have the topic of creation of a Commercial Zone (part of master plan) on an agenda in the near future.

**8. SB to revisit discussion and potential vote re: 50 Dawn Drive, a property in Receivership**

Special Health Agent Charlie Kaniecki and June Wolfe provided information and fielded questions about the 50 Dawn Drive property and receivership program.

BE moved to reconsider the vote of March 2, 2022 regarding 50 Dawn Drive, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried unanimously. CS moved that the Chairperson will write a letter of support of Construct, Inc. applying for an Affordable Housing Grant for 50 Dawn Drive, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried unanimously. June Wolf will e-mail BC a sample letter.

**9. Possible SB nomination of Madelaine Elovirta to continue as the Inspector of Animals (Appointment period 5/1/22 through 4/30 2023)**

ML moved to nominate Madelaine Elovirta to continue as the Inspector of Animals effective 5/1/2022 through 4/30/2023. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried with BE recusing himself from discussion and votes due to that Madelaine is his wife.

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

**Building inspector – do not know where others are – not a lot going on**

• **TBA**

The SB reviewed the Building Inspector's February 2022 report.

**11. Town Administrator's Report**

Here is an update of several items that I have 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  
~504k – broadband  
Recommends using all for broadband, repurpose borrowing for roads.
- Budget and Capital  
Staffing – 2.5%, 4.5% ambulance
- Pre-qualification – Carter/Brooker Hill Ch 90  
Approved. Will move forward with advertising
- EMD position – Kris McDonough has advised that due to that his time will be split between Otis and Becket, he will soon resign this position in order for the town to appoint another individual to serve as EMD.

- Interim Town Clerk/caucus update. BC will meet with Allison Mikaniewicz on Saturday, 3/19/2022, her first day. The SB directed BC to ask Town Counsel for language for an ATM Warrant article to eliminate the caucus.
- TA resignation and search committee  
BE read BC's letter of resignation into the record. The SB agreed to hold an executive session next week for contract negotiations with a potential candidate to serve as Interim Town Administrator. The SB will create a Town Administrator Search/Screening Committee. The SB agreed to try recruitment without use of an Executive Search firm. BC will arrange to advertise the position next week. BE moved to accept William Caldwell's resignation, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously. The SB members all wished BC good luck.
- The SB will have a joint meeting with the Finance Committee at 6pm on April 6, 2022 to discuss/vote on the budget and ATM Warrant. BC will arrange to mail a post card to announce the ATM.

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

ML discussed installing kiosk signs at the Esau Heel's trail. BC will arrange for the town to remove a tree. BE brought up changing the direction of the road signs at this trail so that they will be more visible from cars travelling in both directions on Route 20. He suggested posting other signs back-to-back with use of a 4' x 4'. ML mentioned there will be a grand opening event during the spring.

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

None.

## 14. **Correspondence:**

- **2022.02.28 e-mail from Michael Lavery re: Duet Pesticide Application within the Town of Becket**
- **2022.03.03 Planning Board Notice of public hearing scheduled on April 13, 2022 re: Special Permit Application submitted by Hit the Road RV, LLC c/o Lunch Scrimo to re-establish a glamping facility at 1342 County Road, Assessors' Map/Lots: 401/3 and 4.**
- **2022.02.17 MassDOT notification to certify that pending final passage of the bond authorization, letter to certify Chapter 90 apportionment for Fiscal Year 2023 is \$234,215.00.**
- **2022.03.09 Received Citizens' Petition for Warrant Article re: Resolution in Support of the Fair Share Amendment**

The SB discussed ML's e-mail regarding Duet Pesticide Application within the Town of Becket. ML provided copies of the BOH's August 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 2021 meeting minutes, both which contain discussions related to this matter. BC awaits Town Counsel's opinion. ML moved to send a letter to the Board of Health stating that the Select Board reaffirms the Board of Health's decision rendered on August 11, 2021 to not allow DUET to resume mosquito spraying, CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously. Dean Lagrotteria stated that he supports the SB's motion which honors the voters' wishes.

ML indicated that Tommie Hutto Blake had wanted to discuss the Citizen's Petition with the SB. BE clarified that if the Town Clerk certifies that at least ten signatures are registered voters, the Citizen's Petition will appear as an article on the ATM Warrant.

The SB commented on a petition circulating in the community to nix Hit the Road RV, LLC's (c/o Lunch Scrimo) special permit application's proposal to establish a glamping facility at 1342 County Road, Assessors' Map/Lots: 401/3 and 4. The consensus of the SB

relating to this Special Permit Application is that before forming an opinion, they would like the applicant to have a fair chance to present the facts and be heard. BE referenced Mark Hanford's letter to the editor (Berkshire Eagle 3/16/2022) challenging the list of the grievances outlined in the petition. This included, "On any given summer night, the Dream Away would have more than 75 cars or more on the property. The campground will be no worse."

**15. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants**

The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.

**16. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting**

CS moved to adjourn, ML 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously. At 8:38pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

**Signed by:**












William H. Elovirta, *Chair*

/ April 6, 2022

Date Approved

**Documents discussed at this meeting:**

-  2022.03.16 Select Board Agenda
-  Agenda Item 3. 2022.03.16 MLP Manager's Broadband email update
-  Agenda Item 4. Amended Payrate – Building Inspector (new hire)
-  Agenda Item 5 BRPC Presentation handout
-  Agenda Item 6. 2022.03.02 Select Board Minutes
-  Agenda Item 9. 2022.03.07 Letter from Dept. of Agricultural Resources – Division of Animal Health re: Nomination of Inspector of Animals
-  Agenda Item 10. Building Inspector's February 2022 report.
-  Agenda Item 11. 2022.03.16 Town Administrator's report, Bill Caldwell's letter of resignation, FY 2023 Operating Budget (proposed), Capital Request listing (proposed)
-  Agenda Item 14. Correspondence as listed plus Board of Health Minutes for the August 4<sup>th</sup> and August 11, 2021 Meetings