

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
7:00pm, August 31, 2022
Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

Attendees

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

Staff: Katherine A. Warden (KW), Town Administrator; Beverly Gilbert (BG), *Administrative Assistant*;
Robin Mathiesen, Town Clerk

Others: Al Blake (Planning Board Member), Dan Parnell (Finance Committee Chair),
Greg Boino (CBRSD Director of Finance and Operations), Leslie Blake Davis (CBRSD Superintendent),
Barbara Craft Reiss (School Committee Chair – Becket Rep.), Steven Reiss, Art Alpert (School
Committee – Becket Rep.)

Others remote: Ray & Eileen Jensen

1. The Chairperson will call the Select Board meeting to order.

BE called the meeting to order at 7:00pm and indicated that the SB is recording the meeting.

2. SB to discuss the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee's August 25, 2022 vote to add rebuilding the Wahconah Regional School Track at a cost not to exceed \$900,000.00 to the scope of the existing building project. The aforementioned vote included that the School Committee will notify all seven towns in the district that in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, each town may have a special town meeting to vote on this project, and any town not conducting a special town meeting within the 60 day period, will implicitly vote in favor of this project. The SB may vote to schedule a Special Town Meeting.

CBRSD Superintendent Leslie Blake Davis, Director of Finance and Operations Greg Boino, and School Committee Members Art Albert and Barbara Craft Reiss spoke in support of adding replacement of the track to the scope of the building project, and responded to questions and comments. Superintendent Leslie Blake Davis indicated that the track, donated to the school district was last resurfaced via a donation in 2002. She indicated that over time the rubber surface erodes, and tracks generally have a 30-year shelf-life. She indicated that she has been the superintendent for two years and although she does not have the history of the track's maintenance, moving forward they will follow a maintenance schedule.

Ms. Blake Davis explained the building committee took a financially conservative approach and because they did not deem the track essential, they did not include it as part of the project. She advised that currently, the building project is estimated to be \$2,000,000.00 in the black. The school representatives provided reasons to support replacing the track:

- If not replaced, it will become a safety issue
- It is a community resource
- During special events, it brings the community together.
- All the sports teams, including Unified sports teams, use the track
- Contractors have the equipment on site and have been a resource to assist with figuring out the approach for repair
- It is a hardship for parents/students/community members to travel outside the community to use a track
- It is beneficial for the community to host events

Mr. Boino discussed costs. He estimates that adding the replacement of the track to the scope of the building project will increase Becket's annual cost by \$5,274.00. [Annual cost of the building project with track replacement: \$169,220; Annual cost of the building project without track replacement: \$163,946]

ML inquired about the potential for using non-plastic materials and staying away from polyurethane (created from fossil fuels) materials for the track. Due to that more environmentally friendly materials are significantly more expensive, they will not be used.

Tommie Hutto Blake had sent a letter to the Select Board to recommend that the SB schedule a special town meeting to vote on this matter.

Becket Finance Committee Chairperson Dan Parnell asked that the district provide maintenance data/information/costs of its buildings/resources for budget discussions. Ms. Blake Davis indicated that the district has maintenance schedules/tracking for its facilities and oftentimes uses rural aid that the state distributes in October for some of its capital projects. She indicated that the district tries to reduce capital items when possible. Mr. Parnell indicated that costs to sustain the track should be a regular part of maintenance items. Earlier during discussion BE remarked on the importance of regular maintenance so that buildings/equipment do not need to be replaced as often.

Miscellaneous items brought up included:

- The district may raise funds to replace the bleachers. They would like to keep expenses to the towns at a minimum.
- Currently, the school committee is not recommending asking its member towns to also pay for converting lighting at sporting fields to LEDs due to the high expense. Unlike the track, they do not consider the LEDs a safety issue.
- They confirmed that Wahconah H.S.'s roof has solar panels.
- Ballot vote would not be needed if approved at a STM.

Town Clerk Robin Mathiesen indicated that she is available to attend a special town meeting 7pm on October 1, 2022. CS moved to hold a Special Town Meeting on October 1, 2022 to vote on approving funding to add reconstruction of the track at Wahconah Regional High School to the scope of the school building project, pending the availability of a moderator. ML 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

3. Any other business to come before the Board Any Other Business

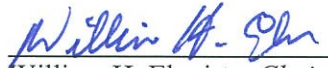
The Select Board agreed to list their meetings on the Becket Federated Church's 2023 calendar.

KW advised that Ed Pickert, Highway Superintendent/Transfer Station Manager, received a letter from Casella, the company that newly acquired Lenox Valley Waste. Effective immediately, Casella increased their rates for mattress and box spring disposal to \$125.00 per piece. The town's contract with Lenox Valley transferred to Casella. The SB expressed concern about the lack of competition for trash hauling services. To receive ideas for the future, BE will talk to the Town of Granville which manages its own trash disposal. ML moved to raise the disposal cost of mattresses and box springs to \$125.00 per piece, effective September 2, 2022. CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously. CS asked KW to contact the KW will reach out to the Northern Solid Waste Management District in case they know of other options.

4. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting

ML moved to adjourn, CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously. At 7:49pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Signed by:



William H. Elovirta, *Chair*

/ September 7, 2022

Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- ✦ 2022.08.31 Select Board Agenda
- ✦ 2022.08.31 E-mail from Tommie Hutto Blake re: support of conducting a STM for the track at the High School
- ✦ 2022.08.25 E-mail from Michael Lavery re: Wahconah Track Reconstruction Presentation with attached Power Point document