SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
7:00pm, November 2, 2022
Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

Attendees

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

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

Others: Vincent M. Vigilante, Cameron Mailman (TRC Companies)

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. **Pledge of Allegiance**
   BE led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **Continuation of Public Hearing In accordance with MGL Chapter 166, Section 22, regarding NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY DBA EVERSOURCE, AND VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC.'S JOINT petition dated August 12, 2022 to install ten mid-span jointly owned poles located on George Carter Road, Becket, MA for system reliability upgrades in the accompanying plan marked 10055361.**
   BE announced the above captioned, and commenced continuation of the Public Hearing from the Select Board's October 19, 2022 meeting. BE reported that the Highway Superintendent met with Eversource and is satisfied with modifications presented in the revised order with accompanying revised plan marked 10055361. Cameron Mailman confirmed to abutter Vincent Vigilante that the stake for one of the proposed poles that was of concern to him had been moved. There were no other comments. ML moved to approve NSTAR ELECTRIC COMPANY DBA EVERSOURCE, AND VERIZON NEW ENGLAND, INC.'S JOINT petition dated August 12, 2022 to install ten mid-span jointly owned poles located on George Carter Road, Becket, MA for system reliability upgrades in the accompanying plan marked 10055361 (updated 10/26/2022). CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Broadband Update and Select Board to discuss and possibly vote on policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project**
   Municipal Light Plant Manager had submitted the following update:
   1. We are starting the process of closing out the town's contract with the State. After reviewing the number of premises and drops with Westfield it has been determined that just over 70% of premises are or will be connected. This means we will be getting the maximum drop subsidy ($500 per premise) allowed by the state, $644,000. I will be working with Dan Parnell to do a final budget review after Westfield confirms some numbers with me. However, the project will come in under budget. We will also review the cash flow and make recommendation to you regarding the allocation of debt service between the MLP and town.
   2. Becket Woods has decided that it makes the most sense to finish the build after mud season. They plan to make a final decision on design shortly and expect it will be a combination of some underground repairs and installation of poles. Once we have that information, we will be able to determine what the costs will be.
   3. WiredWest will be voting tonight to approve a contract with Westfield. As a result, our contract with WiredWest and the new contract will expire at the same time. WiredWest is in the process of putting out an RFP to evaluate what options might exist if a change were

made. The AdHoc Group's feeling is that after WiredWest does its due diligence, we will be in a position to similarly evaluate if we want to stay with WiredWest or work directly with an Internet Service Provider/Network Operator, whether it is Westfield or a different provider. You should not infer that we want to make a change.

Bob Gross e-mailed that the State's Last Mile Liaison Bill Ennen wants the Select Board to sign a letter requesting drop subsidy funds. The SB reviewed the draft letter Bob Gross had attached to his e-mail. Bob anticipates getting numbers and information together so that the letter will be ready by early next week. The draft letter stated that the total request for this application is approximately $655,679. CS moved to authorize the Chairperson to sign a letter to Bill Ennen, Last Mile Liaison, to request drop subsidy funding after the MLP Manager finalizes the figures and information. ML 2nd. Motion carried unanimously.

5. **Approval of the October 19, 2022 Meeting Minutes**
ML moved to approve the October 19, 2022 Meeting minutes, CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

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

7. **Select Board to review and possibly approve the Sherwood Forest Road/Lake District Tax Bill Insert**
BG advised that the insert is for the Sherwood Forest Lake District only. ML moved to approve the Sherwood Forest Lake District Tax Bill Insert, CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

8. **Select Board to vote on the Tax Collector's recommendation to appoint Brian Bean Deputy Tax Collector effective November 7, 2022 through June 30, 2022**
BE stated that he had received questions regarding the Deputy Tax Collector position, including whether this position is required. KW indicated this position is required. During discussion, KW indicated that the average weekly pay based on the past three years is $34. The Deputy Tax Collector delivers service of warrants to premises for outstanding excise bills. The Deputy Tax Collector will receive $17 per bill for only those excise bills that are paid to the Town of Becket. When factoring in this information and the limited scope of this position, KW did not advertise this position, because she did not think it would be a prudent use of town funding. CS moved to accept the Tax Collector's recommendation to appoint Brian Bean Deputy Tax Collector effective November 7, 2022 through June 30, 2023. ML 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

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

None

10. **Town Administrator's Report**
KW provided the following update:
   - Fire at Greenwater Pond. CS who also serves as a member of the Becket Volunteer Fire Department expressed appreciation for the excellent response from neighboring communities (Otis, Monterey, Lee).
   - Police Dept. update: Cruiser (involved in an accident) waiting for report from MIIA. The State Dept. of Safety and Security issued a new Live Scan mandate that will require communities to electronically fingerprint anyone arrested. This will cost $19,000 plus the $3,500 yearly fee. Police Chief McDonough will discuss this with the Berkshire County Police Chiefs to see if other options are possible. Vocational Transportation. Starting November 21st, Dufour will take over the runs for the McCann and Taconic High Schools.

The town seeks a temporary driver to transport the students from November 8th through November 18th.

- Liquor License Process – The SB agreed that the town may streamline the process by requiring businesses to submit their license fees along with the renewal applications/documents.
- Green Community Report has been submitted
- Tomorrow, KW will attend the Berkshire County Managers Meeting.

11. Select Board's Comments and Announcements

ML registered for the Mass Trails Conference in Fitchburg. He looks forward to bringing back useful information.

ML inquired about the solar speed signs. KW reported the Highway Superintendent advised one company has listed $3,500 per sign, and he is awaiting another quote.

BE indicated that he has not yet had an opportunity to research street lighting.

12. Any other business to come before the Board

The SB signed a letter to inform a resident that in accordance with the recommendation of the town's insurance carrier, and to reduce the town's liability, residents are not permitted to rummage through and remove items from any of the dumpsters at the Transfer Station.

The SB agreed to hold the Photo Contest for the 2022 Annual Town Report Cover.

13. Correspondence/announcements:

- **2022.10.19 Planning Board Notice of Public Hearing scheduled on November 9, 2022 re: Special Permit application for 30 Washington Street (Map 206, Lot 39) to operate as a general store and restaurant.**
- **2022.10.24 Email from Mass Dept. of Revenue Division of Local Services re: Excess and Deficiency report for Central Berkshire Regional School District.**

The Select Board reviewed the above captioned.

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 7:35pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:

William H. Elovirta / *November 16, 2022*
William H. Elovirta, *Chair* Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- 2022.11.02 Select Board Agenda
- 2022.10.19 Select Board Meeting Minutes
- Correspondence as listed above - Agenda item 14
- Town Administrator's report
- Departmental Report(s) listed above Agenda item 10
- Agenda Item 3 – revised order and plan marked 10055361 for George Carter Road
- Letter to resident re: Transfer Station
- Tax Bill Insert for the Sherwood Forest Lake District
- MLP Manager Report, and draft letter