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

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

Staff: Katherine A. Warden (KW), Town Administrator; Beverly Gilbert (BG), Administrative Assistant and Board of Assessors Member; Board of Assessors Members Jessica Perotti & Geri Walter; Robin Mathiesen, Town Clerk

Others: Daniel Osman (Dream Away Lodge), Daniel Giddings (Dream Away Lodge), Al Blake, Arthur Alpert Remote: Chris Isner, Patricia and Michael McEnererey , Nancy Chassman, A.J. Pietrantone (Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival)

1. **The Chairperson will call the Select Board meeting to order.**
   BE called the meeting to order at 7pm. He indicated that the SB is recording the meeting. BE stated that due to an accident involving a tree, Chris Swindlehurst (Select Board's Vice-Chair) is not able to attend tonight's meeting. Chris is coming along well but it is going to be a long haul.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
   BE led the Pledge of Allegiance and called a moment of silence in commemoration of Pearl Harbor Day.

3. **Board of Assessors Tax Classification Hearing - The Select Board will hold a Tax Classification hearing to determine the allocation of property tax levy among the four classes of real estate and personal property for Fiscal Year 2023**
   BE announced the above captioned agenda item and read the public hearing notice stating that the Select Board must make a determination on the factor to be used among the classes of real property, residential, open space, commercial and industrial, and of personal property for the Fiscal Year 2023 tax rate. BE commenced the public hearing at 7:06pm and introduced Harald Scheid, owner of Regional Resource Group, the town's contracted assessing company. Mr. Scheid indicated that Board of Assessor Members Geri Walter, Jessica Perotti and Beverly Gilbert are in attendance, and he presented during the public hearing.

   Mr. Scheid discussed the three components that are used to generate the tax bill: Assessments, tax levy (revenues the town will be raising), and tax rate. He provided a handout which lists calculations relating to setting the Town's tax rates. He specified that in accordance with Massachusetts Dept. of Revenue regulations, municipalities with a large commercial and industrial tax base often shift the tax burden to help maintain lower residential taxes. Mr. Scheid explained that given Becket's small commercial and industrial base, it would take a large shift of the tax burden from the residential class to the commercial and industrial class to yield a modest residential tax reduction. BE indicated that traditionally the SB has adopted a single rate.

   Harald stated the following:
   - The Town will raise $7,055,645 in property tax revenues. The tax levy has increased $673,589 above last year's levy of $6,381,956.

- New growth is derived from newly taxable properties like new construction, additions, subdivision, and personal property. New Growth was tabulated at $62,937.
- The estimated tax rate for FY2023 is $10.85
- The average value of a single family home increased from $275,300 (FY22) to $312,500 (FY23. The average tax will change from $2,973 to $3,391 ($418 difference).

BE asked if others wished to ask questions or comment. Harald fielded questions about camp, lakefront and Chapter 61 assessments.

BE moved that the Becket Select Board votes in accordance with MGL Chapter 40, Section 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2023 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.0, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0, pending approval of the town's annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. ML 2nd: Motion carried.

The hearing ended at 7:21pm.

Al Blake, who serves as a member of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee asked about the subdivision designation for the Jacob's Well property. Jessica Perotti advised in order to respond, the Assessing Department along with the town's contracting assessment vendor will need to research this matter.

4. Broadband Update and Select Board to discuss and possibly vote on policies and decisions relating to the Broadband Project

None

5. Board to consider Renewals of Annual Licenses:

- **Dreamaway Inc. (d/b/a Dream Away Lodge): All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Six Day Entertainment, and Sunday Entertainment**
- **M.D.A. Inc. (d/b/a Berkshire Berries): All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Wine & Malt Package Store, and Common Victuallers;**
- **Twin Oaks, LLC.: All Alcoholic Beverages Club, Common Victuallers, Six-Day Entertainment, and Automatic Amusement**
- **Sherwood Shoppe of Becket LLC: All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store, and Common Victuallers;**
- **Papa Bob's LLC: All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Common Victuallers, Six Day Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment, and Automatic Amusement;**
- **Becket General Store Inc. (d/b/a Becket General Store): All Alcoholic Beverages Package Store, All Alcoholic Beverages Restaurant, Six Day Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment, and Common Victuallers**
- **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival: Six Day Entertainment, Sunday Entertainment**

Daniel Osman, Owner of Dreamaway Lodge, agreed prior to operating, he will provide the Select Board with Certificates of Workers' Compensation and Liquor Liability insurance coverage. BE asked if Papa Bob's and Becket General Store's entertainment licenses included outdoor operation. BG responded that Papa Bob's footprint includes outdoors and Becket General Store does not. BG reported that Heather Anello, owner of Becket General Store, is aware that she will need to apply to modify her license if she wishes to conduct outdoor entertainment. ML moved to approve renewal of the above captioned licenses for Dreamway Inc.; M.D.A. Inc., Twin Oaks, LLC; Sherwood Shoppe; Papa Bob's LLC; Becket General Store, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival for operation during 2023. BE 2nd: Motion carried.

6. **Approval of the November 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes**
ML moved to approve the November 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes. BE 2nd: Motion carried.

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

8. **Continuation of Discussion re: Highway and Police Department Wages**
The SB reviewed the Highway Superintendent's recommendation and Police Chief's recommendation for wage increases in their departments. KW explained that because their pay rates are significantly lower than those offered in other Berkshire County communities/agencies, she supports approving the increases to retain our staff. She pointed out that we invest a great deal in our employees through recruiting, vetting, training, and certifications. KW indicated that she has been monitoring the town's budget vs. actual expenses and the town will have sufficient funding to cover the amended salary expenses and this will include inter-account transfers in May 2023. BE indicated that police reform mandates that all police officers receive the same police academy (no longer different tiers) regardless of part-time/full-time status: this contributes to higher police department expenses, and increased competition for attracting and keeping employees. ML moved to approve the Town Administrator, Highway Superintendent and Police Chief's recommended pay wages for Highway Department, and Police Department Employees (not including the Police Chief), effective January 7, 2023 through June 30, 2023. BE 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

9. **Select Board to review Departmental Reports**
   - **Building Inspector's November 2022**
   - **Others tba**

The SB reviewed the Building Inspector's November 2022 report. They remarked that they are pleased with Building Inspector Paul Greene's reporting format, and they appreciate that he promptly submits his reports at the beginning of each month.

10. **Town Administrator's Report**
KW reported on the following items:
   - Tax Title work will begin in January.
   - Complaints about unregistered vehicles
   - Werden Rd Bridge project is going out to bid by the end of the week.
   - Next Wednesday December 14 another flu clinic 1:30pm – 3:00pm

11. **Select Board's Comments and Announcements**
ML mentioned that Al Blake will apply for additional Community Preservation Funding to arrange for the Greenagers to cut a 2nd loop on Esau Heel's Trail, and to repair a section that puddles.

12. **Any other business to come before the Board**
BE reported that he attended the Open Space & Recreation Plan Advisory Committee's public forum on Monday, and the Open Space & Recreation Plan Advisory Committee discussed the issue of extending the Committee's term because they will not be finished with the Plan by the end of this year. ML moved to extend the Open Space & Recreation Plan Advisory Committee's term until the plan is complete, BE 2nd: Motion carried.

During discussion Al Blake initiated, KW agreed that to facilitate preventing ATV recreational access, she will arrange for the Highway Dept. to place boulders by the Fred Snow Road entrance of Esau Heel's trail, and eye hook holders and a lockable chain (with keys provided to public

safety departments: Ambulance, Fire) at the Route 20 entrance. Al and ML reported that in the springtime, there will be a ceremony to install a memorial bench for Bruce Garlow.

BE moved to inform the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission that the Select Board estimates 9,000 for the Town of Becket's temporary seasonal population as of 7-10-2023. ML 2nd: Motion carried.

13. Correspondence/announcements:

- **2022.11.22 NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, D.P.U. 22-BSF-C4 - Notice of Filing and Request for Comments**

The SB 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. BE 2nd: Motion carried. At 8:12pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:

_____ / *January 4, 2022*
William H. Elovirta, *Chair* Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- 2022.12.07 Select Board Agenda
- 2022.11.16 Select Board Meeting Minutes
- Correspondence as listed above - Agenda item13
- Town Administrator's report
- Departmental Report(s) listed above Agenda item 9
- Letter from the Ambulance Director, Highway Superintendent and Police Chief's suggested pay rates for their departments.
- Tax Classification Hearing Document
- License Renewals – spreadsheet listing document status/requirements