

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
7:00pm, February 27, 2023
Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket

Attendees

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

Remote: Michael Lavery (ML), *Clerk*

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

Others: Jeff Wilkinson, Isla May Bell, Damian Rogers **Remote:** Barbara Craft Reiss, Al Blake

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

BE called the meeting to order at 7pm. He indicated the SB is 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

None

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

Damian Rogers (D's Hauling), who is contracted by the town to maintain the N. Becket Cemetery, had heard that Bill Cavanaugh, N. Becket Cemetery Commissioner, had passed away. Damian inquire about changes to N. Becket Cemetery operations. KW advised there will be a Cemetery Commissioners meeting on Friday.

Barbara Craft Reiss, Becket Member of the Central Berkshire Regional School Committee, described the CBRSD's Strategic Plan. In the next few weeks, she anticipates providing an updated copy to the SB. She reported on the Governor and Lieutenant Governor's bill that included additional ESSER funds (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund). She explained standardized test results support that COVID caused many students to fall behind with their studies, and it may take a while for students to catch up. ESSER funding may be expended for services to help close the COVID learning gap.

5. Select Board to discuss/vote on 2023 Beach Permit Fee

KW, Parks & Committee Member Eila Bell, and the SB discussed 2023 Beach Permit fees. Eila indicated that the Parks & Recreation Committee had suggested increasing Beach Permit Fees (from \$5 per permit to \$15 for the 1st permit and \$5 for the 2nd permit) to help pay for its maintenance costs (lifeguard, Gate Attendant, Sand, etc.). KW reported that she had surveyed several towns in the area. Becket's beach fees was the lowest. ML moved to set the cost for 2023 beach permits: \$10.00 for the 1st beach permit and \$10.00 for the 2nd beach permit. CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

6. Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee's request for Select Board Comment/possible questions concerning the Open Space Recreation Plan Seven Year Action Plan.

Jeff Wilkinson, Member of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee, had asked that the SB provide comments/questions concerning the Open Space Recreation Plan Seven Year Action Section. BE stated that he thinks the town has ample open space and expressed concern about removing additional properties from the tax roll. The SB tabled this item until the March 22, 2023 meeting.

7. Cultural Council's request for \$5,500 matching funds for FY2024

KW discussed the Cultural Council's request for \$5,500 matching funds (Mass Cultural Council gave the town \$5,500) for FY2024 on the basis that the Cultural Council's applications for funding amounts exceed the state's funding. This year the Cultural Council was only able to grant 31% of the requests. Several other local towns that encounter the same dilemma have been providing matching funds to their Cultural Councils. The Cultural Council thinks additional programming in Becket would be worthwhile. KW indicated that this may be funded through free cash. The SB indicated that at this stage of the FY2024 budget development, they are reluctant to make this commitment. They will review this request when the budget is further along in the process.

8. Select Board to authorize Town Administrator to enter into an agreement for Municipal Aggregation

KW explained that Colonial Power Group, the town's municipal aggregation consulting firm, will obtain quotes from electrical suppliers. Due to the daily fluctuation of commodities, it will be necessary for a town representative to promptly act on a recommended contract. BE moved to authorize the Town Administrator to enter into an agreement for Municipal Aggregation, CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

9. Review Draft Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)

The SB will discuss the above captioned on March 22, 2023. KW will contact Ray Ferrin, the Town's Emergency Management Director, and they will arrange to schedule a MEMA table top preparedness scenario events session at the Town Hall.

10. Select Board to vote on writing a letter in support of Construct Inc.'s Community Preservation application to request funding for the Receivership Affordable Housing Project located at 50 Dawn Drive, Becket

CS moved for the SB to sign a letter in support of Construct Inc.'s Community Preservation application to request funding for the Receivership Affordable Housing Project located at 50 Dawn Drive, Becket, ML 2nd: Motion carried unanimously. During discussion, KW pointed out that the Community Preservation Act requires allocating a portion of its funds for Affordable Housing.

11. Approval of the February 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes

BE moved to approve the February 8, 2023 minutes, CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

12. Annual Town Report

The SB submitted their 2022 Annual Town Report.

13. Select Board to review Departmental Reports

- **Building Inspector's January 2023 Report**
- **Others – tba**

The SB reviewed the following January 2023 departmental reports: Building Inspector (January 2023), Animal Control (January 2023), Police, Ambulance, and Highway

14. Town Administrator's Report

KW provided the following update:

- Tomorrow she has a meeting with Town Counsel to discuss the topic of contracts for the Police Chief and the Highway Superintendent as it may relate to the Town Charter
- Budget is nearly complete. Awaiting the School and Vocational numbers.
- Working on the permit for Route 8 Shaw Pond area for the pedestrian speed signs. The MassDOT vendor is charging \$5,000 each for the speed feedback trailer sign. KW will explore less expensive options.

- BE moved to decline Philomena Pappa's offer to donate, to the Town of Becket, her property located at 157 Friar Tuck Drive, ML 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.
- McNERNEY Road is out to bid, mandatory pre-bid meeting is scheduled at Town Hall at 1pm on March 7th. Bid opening is 3pm on March 22.
- KW will talk to the Fire Chief regarding the stipend listing on the Fire Department's FY2024 budget request.
- The SB was amenable to KW's idea for the Town Clerk and the Building Inspector to swap offices. This would provide much needed additional space for the Town Clerk. KW will measure the offices and their storage areas.

15. Select Board's Comments and Announcements

None

16. Any other business to come before the Board

ML brought up: Friends of Bruce Garlow (longtime Becket resident who served on the 250th Becket Anniversary Committee, and as Town Moderator), purchased a memorial bench and have organized an installation ceremony for placement on the Esau's Heel Trail on Monday, April 3, 2023 at 2pm (rain date April 4th). The SB is invited to attend and say a few words about Bruce. BE agreed to speak at this event. ML mentioned that Al Blake asked him to arrange to borrow the town's wood chipper to spruce up the trail. KW indicated that due to safety concerns and to avoid liability, residents may not use Highway Department equipment.

17. Correspondence/announcements

- **2023.02.10 received Notification to Abutters: Mountain Grove Association filed a notice of intent with the Conservation Commission on 2/10/2023 to seek permission to replenish the beach sand on Mountain Grove Association community beach on the western side of Shaw Pond.**

The SB reviewed the above captioned.

18. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants

The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.

19. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting

ML moved to adjourn, CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously. At 8:43pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:



William H. Elovirta, *Chair*

/ March 8, 2023

Date Approved

Documents discussed at this meeting:

- ✚ 2023.02.27 Select Board Agenda
- ✚ 2023.02.08 Select Board Meeting Minutes
- ✚ Correspondence as listed above - Agenda item 17
- ✚ Town Administrator's report
- ✚ Departmental Report(s) listed above Agenda item 13
- ✚ 2023.02.07 Select Board letter to the Community Preservation Committee re: support of Construct Inc.'s grant application
- ✚ Open Space Recreation Plan Advisory Committee: - Section 9 of the Draft Plan: Seven Year Action Plan
- ✚ 2022 Select Board Annual Report
- ✚ 2022.01.22 letter to the SB from the Becket Cultural Council to request matching funding