

SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES
7:00 PM, MAY 17, 2023
TOWN HALL, 557 MAIN ST. 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; Susan Crossley (SC)

Public Attendees: Jeremy Dunn, Robin Mathiesen and Art Alpert on Zoom.

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

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

2. Pledge of Allegiance:

BE leads the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Input:

Jeremy Dunn of the Broadband Ad Hoc Group speaks to the SB in regards to modifying the drop subsidy. The Broadband Ad Hoc Group recommends reducing the subsidy fromn \$2,000.00 to \$750.00 except for the unbuilt underground portion of Becket Woods that will not be able to be done until end of August or early September due to Sertex being unavailable to complete the work. Since this is not on this week's agenda the board will take this under advisement and will vote on the proposal at the next SB meeting on May 31st. Mr. Dunn also let the board know that WiredWest has sent out about 500 postcards to townspeople who have not yet signed up for service. CS asks who is not taking the service. Mr. Dunn states it is a mix of full-time and seasonal homeowners. The overall rate of sign- up is 76% with 67% taking service. BE asks what was the original projected rate of sign-up. Mr. Dunn explains in 2015 it was a low response of 35% but that it was figured once the network was built it would be an additional 20% and at 76% Becket has exceeded the projection. The board and Mr. Dunn also discuss the projected profitability of the network and what could be done with the profits. Mr. Dunn states the numbers will get certified this fall and the town will have a better idea of where the profitability of the broadband is at that time.

Art Alpert of the School Committee addresses the board on the Early Childhood Development at Becket, Washington, Kittredge and Craneville Schools being moved to Wahconah High School so that students from Berkshire Community College who are studying E.C.D. will be able to work with the students. Mr. Alpert also informs the board the track project at Wahconah is on time and will be completed by July 15th. Mr. Alpert speaks about the School Resource Officer for Becket Becket, Washington, and Nessacus Schools. The school committee has not approved anything because there needs to be community input. What was approved was for the Dalton Police Department to apply for the position. If the position comes into being, the school board then has 90 days to go to the Select Boards and communities to get their input and approval before the school committee can approve it. CS asks Mr. Alpert what the reason is for needing a Resource Officer, have there been problems. Mr. Alpert replies no, that it is a good way for the students to interact with a police officer in a non-threatening manner and to build a better relationship with the police. CS also asks about where the E.C.D. is being located. Mr. Alpert states it will be where the Occupational and Physical Therapy is now and that they will be moving into the exercise room. Mr. Alpert lets the board know

that 10 students from Becket will be graduating from Wahconah this year. KW asks Mr. Alpert if he can please provide the names to her. BE states that the SRO program could be very beneficial.

4. Discussion on Beach Permit Policy:

KW brings up that she has received interest from people who are current landowners in town but don't own a house in town and would like to be able to purchase beach permits. KW will update the policy with the board's suggestion of each house or undeveloped land would be able to have up to 2 permits. KW asks the board to vote on the changes. Motion is made to amend the Beach Permit Policy as of May 17, 2023 by ML and seconded by CS. All in favor motion passes unanimously.

BE brings up that there is no fee charged for the program run by the Parks and Recreation Committee in the summer, and what happens is they never know how many children will be there and if there was a fee they would be better able to allocate the staff and products needed. ML agrees a fee would be a good idea but, since the flyers have already gone out it might be too late for this year. BE makes the motion that next year serious consideration be given to charging a fee for the summer program run by the Parks and Recreation Committee. ML seconds, all in favor motion passes unanimously. KW will reach out to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

5. Discussion and potential vote in regards to disposal of mower and scrapping the 2011 Chevy 3500:

KW lets the board know the Highway Department might not dispose of the mower now. CS asks what is wrong with the 2011 Chevy 3500. KW tells the board it is rusted out, won't hold oil pressure and won't pass inspection. BE makes the motion to scrap the mower and the Chevy 3500.

Motion is then made to amend the motion stating scrap or sell the mower and the 2011 Chevy 3500 by CS and seconded by ML. BE calls for the vote all in favor motion passes unanimously.

Motion is made to leave it to the discretion of the Highway Superintendent to either scrap or sell the mower and the 2011 Chevy 3500 by BE and seconded by CS. BE calls for a vote all in favor the motion passes unanimously.

6. Approval of the minutes:

April 19, 2023

May 3, 2023

May 4, 2023

CS makes the motion to approve all the minutes ML seconds BE calls for the vote. All in favor motion passes unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

7. Departmental Reports:

Animal Control –Board goes over February, March and April

Building Inspector – Board goes over the report

ML asks for the Fire and Police reports to be sent, KW will ask them again.

8. Town Administrator report:

KW reports she attended Ray Ferrin's graduation from the Commonwealth of Mass. Professional Emergency Manager training.

KW lets the board know that Conservation Agent Nicholas Pietroniro will not be taking a leave of absence.

KW will meet with Mass Audubon and Silvio O Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge on going forward with the purchase of 110 acre tract off of Maple St. since they now have the funding to do a title search and purchase. They have asked for permission to examine the property again. Select Board has approved and KW will sent them a letter giving them permission.

KW also wanted to thank everyone who had a part in the budget and warrant process.

KW lets the board know still waiting for a start date for McNerney Rd. job but it still looks like mid-July.

KW has a meeting Friday morning with the contractor for the Werden Rd. project to firm up a start date.

KW will have updated expenditure report tomorrow. There is a surplus and there are some projects that need to be accomplished such as gutters on the Fire Station. CS suggests a new roof also be considered. BE suggests the antennae needs to be attached and blocked off on the Fire Station. CS states there are some cinder blocks that need repair.

The ambulance garage walk in door is rotting due to water, Ray Ferrin is checking on the Fire Station door to see if that is also rotting.

BE asks what the status of the generators for the Highway Dept. and Station 2. KW states town can't do both for \$50,000.00. Station 2 will be about \$35,000.00. CS asks what size they are proposing. KW will get back to him on that. BE asks how much will we need to put in for the Highway Department's. KW states it will probably be another \$50,000.00. BE says he was under the impression both generators were on order. KW states nothing has been done. Discussion is held on the sizes needs for both locations. BE states he thinks this should be a priority going forward. KW will follow up.

MassDOT is providing bike passage signage for town installation in municipally owned roadways. MassDOT will fund the cost and delivery of the signs. The town is responsible for installation and maintenance. Highway Superintendent has assigned which streets he feels they should go on. CS would like to add Werden Rd. KW will follow up.

9. Select Board's Comments and Announcements:

ML tells the board it has been a pleasure working with the board for the last 6 years. Special thanks to Beverly Gilbert and Bill Elovirta being so steadfast in the last 6 years through all that went on.

BE thanks ML and states it was a pleasure working with him.

CS says it was a pleasure and a privilege to work with ML.

CS asks about the heat pumps KW will follow up.

CS asks now that we have established the Stabilization fund for the roads can we pursue any additional projects. KW states looking at a bunch of them. CS brings up chip sealing on some of the roads. KW states the Highway Superintendent is looking into it.

KW lets the board know they have gotten through the permitting process for the 2 signs at Shaw Pond and are just waiting for the approval.

BE asks about the entrance to Wells Rd and Route 20 where the ice builds up. KW states she has followed up and that the engineering report will be done in a couple of weeks at which point they will come back to the town with a solution.

KW is meeting with Paul Mark, Smitty Pignatelli and the Town Administrator of Otis on June 12th to discuss the regional ambulance.

BE brings up the Route 8 pub re-opening wants to know if the license has been transferred and has the BOH, Fire Dept. and Building Inspector signed off on everything. KW will follow up.

10. Any other business to come before the board:

No other business to discuss.

11. Correspondence:

BE will read the email from Barbara Craft-Reiss regarding the School Resource Officer

12. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants:

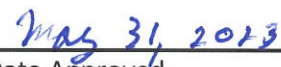
Board signed the payable warrants

13. Adjournment:

CS makes the motion to adjourn. ML seconds. All in favor BE declares meeting adjourned at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan A. Crossley, Planning Board Administrative Assistant


William H. Elovirta, Chair


Date Approved