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

Attendees

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

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

Others: Remote: Al Blake

1. **The Chairperson will call the Select Board meeting to order.**
   BE called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. BE advised that the SB is recording the meeting.

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

3. **Approval of the 5/31/2023 Meeting Minutes**
   CS moved to approve the 5/31/2023 meeting minutes, JP 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per person, 20 minutes total for this agenda item)**
   Al Blake discussed his e-mail dated 6/7/2023 regarding Esau's Heel Trail:
   He expressed his appreciation to the Highway Dept. for cleaning the left entrance and their plans to add a gate. Based on a quote from Damien Rogers, he requested $1,800 town funding to chip and clear portions of the trail. Due to that Community Preservation Act funding cannot be used for maintenance, he asked if the town (possibly Parks & Recreation Committee) can maintain the trail or can the town recommend another source of funding. BE indicated that tomorrow BG will send him the name of a potential organization. Al stated that a state CPC representative had conveyed to him that current and future funding can be in jeopardy unless the land is dedicated park or conservation land, and their suggested remedy is to find the year the town took possession of the property, the ATM accepting said property, deed, purpose of the land, etc. if it is/was not dedicated to be park or conservation land and is instead classified as general municipal property then there is a problem: Solution: either classify whole property as park land and is under jurisdiction of Parks & Recreation or map out a portion that includes the trails and parking space and at an ATM to have it designated park land and the rest of the property classified as general municipal land. BE indicated that this item was not listed on the agenda and the SB would need to take this matter under advisement. Per CS' request, BG will provide meeting minutes that reference Esau's Heel Trail. Tomorrow CS will meet with Al at the trail.

5. **SB to vote to sign the Intermunicipal Agreement By and Between Town of Becket and Town of Otis for Shared Police Chief Services**
   KW informed the SB about changes to the agreement:

- Section 3. Budget – includes post retirement financial obligations
- Section 5. Term: The agreement shall terminate 60 days after the resignation or retirement of Chief McDonough.

The SB discussed OPEB (Other Post-Employment Benefits). The SB expressed an interest in learning more about this. The town has voted in Town Meeting for several years to allocate $15,000 per fiscal year for OPEB liability but the town has not funded an OPEB account. KW reported that she has discussed OPEB with the auditors and they will provide a list of financial institutions that offer OPEB investments.

CS moved for the SB to sign the Intermunicipal Agreement By and Between Town of Becket and Town of Otis for shared Police Chief Services. JP 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

6. SB to review and vote on approval of the Town Administrator's Appointments effective July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 unless otherwise specified

Name	Position
Raymond Ferrin	Ambulance Director & Emergency Management Director through 7/10/2023
Paul Greene	Building Inspector
Gary Danko	Assistant Building Inspector
Mark Levernoch	Plumbing/Gas Inspector
Brian Middleton	Assistant Plumbing/Gas Inspector
Dana Spring	Assistant Wiring Inspector
Trevor Clement	Wiring Inspector
Doug Mann	Veterans' Agent
William Mulholland	Veterans' Grave Officer
Matthew Virginia	Sgt. - Police Dept. through retiring 7/9/2023
Michael Hunt	Full-time Sgt. - Police Dept.
Nicole Miller	Full-Time Police Officer
Nicholas Beauchemin	Full-Time Police Officer
Charlene Auger	Full-Time Police Officer
Dominic Crupi	Full-time Police Officer
Nicole Miller	Animal Control Officer
Margaret McClellan	Town Accountant
Nicolas Pietroniro	Conservation Agent
Paul A. Mikaniewicz	Fire Chief

BE stated that he would like to vote on the above named positions and have separate discussions on the following positions: Matthew Virginia, Sgt. Police Dept. through 7/9/23; Paul Greene Building Inspector through 6/302024; and Paul Mikaniewicz, Fire Chief through 6/30/2024.

KW stated that she is amending her recommended expiration date for Ray Ferrin, Ambulance Director to July 31, 2023. At the next meeting she will recommend appointing Lisa Michaud (full-time Becket Ambulance Employee since 10/2019) Interim Ambulance Director to begin July 1, 2023 with the idea that a one month overlap of the Ambulance Director and Interim Ambulance Director will facilitate the transition of the Ambulance Department leadership.

CS moved to hold on the Building Inspector (Paul Greene), Fire Chief (Paul Mikaniewicz) and Sgt. Police (Matthew Virginia) appointments for discussion, and accept the other Town Administrator's recommended names/positions through June 30, 2024, except for the Ambulance Director's appointment which will expire July 31, 2023. JP 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

BE expressed concern about Zoning Enforcement. The SB will discuss the Zoning Enforcement Officer position on June 21, 2023 which is a separate position from the Building Inspector appointment. CS moved to accept the Town Administrator's recommendation to reappoint Paul Greene to serve as the Building Inspector effective through June 30, 2024.

BE inquired about the recommended end date (July 9, 2023) for Matthew Virginia, Sgt. – Police Department. KW advised that Matthew Virginia is retiring and she understands after satisfying the required break in service, she will recommend appointing him as a part-time Police Officer. To facilitate the transition, she is recommending overlapping Michael Hunt and him until July 9th. CS moved to reappoint Matthew Virginia to serve as Sgt. For the Police Department through July 9, 2023. JP 2nd: Motion carried unanimously.

BE expressed that he has concerns about reappointing the Fire Chief. KW stated that she thinks it is in the best interest of the town given that she is recruiting for a new Ambulance Director, to take more time to examine restructuring the Fire and Ambulance Departments (consider changing to a full-time Fire Chief, or a joint Fire Chief/Ambulance Director Position). KW wants to continue the momentum of exploring the viability of sharing a joint Ambulance Department with the Town of Otis. It was agreed that KW and the SB will meet with the Fire Department to discuss concerns. CS moved to reappoint Paul Mikaniewicz to serve as Fire Chief through June 30, 2024, JP 2nd: Motion carried with BE opposed.

Per CS's recommendation, KW will schedule department heads to regularly attend SB meetings on a rotating basis.

7. Select Board to review Departmental Reports

- **tba**

  None

8. Town Administrator's Report

KW offered the following update:

- On June 21st, she will recommend for the SB to appoint Lisa Michaud to serve as the Interim Ambulance Director while we recruit for a new Ambulance Director.
- KW received an inquiry about consuming alcoholic beverages on town-owned property (does not involve selling liquor). She asked if a one-day wine & beer permit is required if it is on town-owned property: Fire Department Pavilion, Town Hall Pavilion, Town Hall meeting rooms,

Ballfield, Becket Arts Center. Consumption of liquor is not allowed on the Town Beach. KW will ask Town Counsel for an opinion.

- Werden Road and McNerney Road projects will begin on July 10th. KW sent letters to residents on those roads, and on Pill Drive. Tomorrow, the website will post an announcement. MassDOT will provide a two message boards. One will be placed on the Route 8/McNerney Intersection, and the other will be placed on the Route 20/Werden Road Intersection. There may be another one placed on in Dalton at the bottom section of McNerney Road. KW will notify Jacob's Pillow, Berkshire County Dispatch, and the Ambulance, Fire, Police Departments.
- Textmygov. is in the final stages for setup with June 25th for the estimated launch date.
- The auditors will spend two more days in Town Hall later this month, and anticipate providing the final report by September 1st.
- KW asked if the SB would consider starting the regular meetings at 6:30pm but abandoned the idea after hearing that it conflicted with a SB member's schedule.
- KW provided expenditure reports as of June 1st. CS brought up paying for the Town Hall Pavilion extension and whether Broadband had agreed to pay for this. The Pavilion needs a new roof and a paint job. KW will ask the MLP Manager for $25,000. BE will contact a contractor. KW advised utility expenditures will increase after she processes Grasshopper Solar Energy Invoices.

9. Select Board's Comments and Announcements

None

10. Any other business to come before the Board

The SB directed BG to respond to Lauren Gaherty from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission about addressing the state comments/potential revisions to the Open Space & Recreation Plan: The Select Board has not disbanded the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee. The members are still active (even after June 30th) until the Select Board disbands the committee. The Select Board would like the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee to review and provide recommendations and edits to address comments for the Select Board to approve.

BG reported she received a communication from Amy Perlmutter expressing interest in drafting a Dark Sky Bylaw to present to the Bylaw Review Committee. The SB agreed for BG to advertise for three Bylaw Review Committee Members to reactivate this Committee.

11. Correspondence/announcements:

- **2023.05.31 e-mail to Town Administrator from Diane Sturtevant, Becket's Tax Title Consultant, re: Title Update**

The SB reviewed the above captioned.

12. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants

The SB signed the payable warrants.

13. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting

JP moved to adjourn the meeting, CS 2nd: Motion carried unanimously. At 8:33pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:

_____ / *June 21, 2023*
William H. Elovirta, *Chair* Date Approved

Meeting documents:

- Agenda
- May 31, 2023 Meeting minutes
- Intermunicipal Agreement By and Between Town of Becket and Town of Otis – Shared Police Chief Services
- Police Chief's memo to Town Administrator dated 5/30/23 re: Officer Reappointments for Fiscal Year 2024
- Town Administrator's Report
- All expenditure Report 7/1/2022 through 6/7/2023
- Correspondence – listed under agenda item 11
- 2023.06.07 Alvin Blake e-mail re: Esau's Trail update
- 2023.06.05 Amy Perlmutter e-mail re: Dark Sky bylaw
- 2023.05.22 Lauren Gaherty, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission e-mail regarding Open Space and Recreation Plan