

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**7:00pm, September 6, 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:** Ron Fairchild, Art Alpert – Central Berkshire Regional School Committee Member

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

BE called the meeting to order at 7:01pm. He indicated that the SB was recording the meeting.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

BE led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Highway Superintendent's recommendation to hire Michael Butler for Town Mechanic**

KW spoke in support of the Highway Superintendent's recommendation to hire Michael Butler for Town Mechanic. She indicated Mr. Butler is willing to obtain a Class B Commercial Driver's License and Hoisting Engineer License and the Highway Superintendent will oversee him while he is plowing during the first snow storms. CS moved to accept the Town Administrator's recommendation to hire Michael Butler for Town Mechanic, JP 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously.

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

Art Alpert, Central Berkshire Regional School Committee Member, provided a school district update. He stated that last week the School Committee approved the Code of Conduct for the Middle and High Schools. The Code of Conduct focuses on consistent responsibility & consequences, as well as awareness as to how behaviors impact others (and themselves). The goal is to reduce suspensions. Mr. Alpert indicated that in October, through a grant, the district will provide YONDR mobile phone storage pouches to every student. During the school day, all students will not have access to their mobile phones. Mr. Alpert also indicated that the district's attorney is reviewing the regional agreement.

**5. Select Board to review and vote on One-Day Wine & Beer Permit Application**

- **Applicant:** Becket Arts Center
- **Event:** Fundraiser for Becket Arts Center
- **Time/Date:** 1pm till 4pm on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023
- **Location:** 7 Brooker Hill Rd, Becket

CS moved to issue a One-Day Wine & Beer permit to Becket Arts Center for their October 1, 2023 fundraising event, with the stipulation that the permit will not be released until they provide all

required documents (liquor liability insurance certificate, and updated TIPS certificate). JP 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously.

**6. Approval of the 8/16/2023 Meeting Minutes**

CS moved to approve the 8/16/2023 meeting minutes. JP 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously.

**7. Discussion of Street Acceptance Procedures**

For long term planning, the SB agreed that it would be in the town's best interest to put in place a process for accepting streets. On October 4, 2023, the SB will discuss and potentially modify the draft 2015 street acceptance procedures. The SB will forward an updated draft to Town Counsel. The SB question whether a street acceptance policy and accepting streets require Town Meeting vote vs. SB vote.

**8. Select Board to review Departmental Reports**

The SB reviewed the Building Inspector's July 2023, and Ambulance Department's July 2023 reports.

**9. Town Administrator's Report**

KW provided the following update:

- Esau's Trail – KW awaits the update from Town Counsel. KW sent three emails and reached out to a different attorney who asked to see what she had sent but she heard nothing back.
- Highway Dept. Truck financing. The truck arrived early so we needed to put it out to be financed. KW opted for a shorter loan period due to the high interest rates. Paperwork will be ready tomorrow for SB's signature. The SB and KW discussed financing options, including borrowing from the stabilization fund.
- The project for wiring of the new data cable for Town Hall has started.
- Town of Washington has approached KW about entering into a contract for ambulance service. KW met with Max Koivisto, Co-Ambulance Director, and will compile different fee scenarios for the October 4<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting. JP brought up the need for fair compensation to the Town of Becket for services provided. BE brought up that the Fire Department Protection contract between the towns of Becket and Washington will end June 30, 2024, and will need to be renegotiated.
- Tax Collector report – The SB indicated they would like to see a quarterly Tax Collector's report if prep is not onerous.
- KW discussed organizing a joint meeting of the following committees/officials: Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Board of Health, Town Clerk and Building Inspector to facilitate coordination and communication of town services for new or potential residents as it relates to building/zoning. The SB are interested in participating.
- Lightning Rod project: KW awaits a quote and she found a grant option that might cover most, if not all the costs.
- The MMA Legislative Breakfast will occur in the Town Hall Community Room on Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>, 8am till 10:30am.
- Tomorrow 1pm, the SB will conduct a site visit on McNerney Road with Eurovia dba North East Paving to discuss concerns regarding this project.

#### **10. Select Board's Comments and Announcements**

BE indicated that the Parks & Recreation Committee contracted Wilkinson to install the roof on the Center Town Park Pavilion

CS brought up road maintenance and mentioned Chester contracts White Wolf for grading. CS mentioned that water is running across a rut in the middle of Surriner Road. During discussion of road maintenance, KW mentioned that next week Gill Engineering will come to Becket to provide an estimate for replacement of the Benton Hill Road culvert.

BE inquired about the speed feedback sign on Route 8 near Shaw Pond. KW indicated that RIBCO will deliver posts that were missing from the initial order. Once they arrive, the Highway Dept., with MassDOT present, will install it.

The SB were amenable to BE's suggestion to install security cameras (they would feed into the Police Station) in the Town Hall common areas.

#### **11. Any other business to come before the Board**

BG brought up the need to fill the vacant Cemetery Commissioner position. The SB indicated the KW may work with the Cemetery Commissioners to create a position description for recruitment. KW stated that she will suggest for the Cemetery Commission to explore restructuring their responsibilities. The Town has three Cemeteries (North Becket, West Becket, and Center Cemetery). Currently each Cemetery Commissioner manages one Cemetery. KW recommends for the commission to consider for all three Commissioners to manage all of the cemeteries together so that they can cover for each other and help to balance the workload because some of the cemeteries are more "active" than others.

The Berkshire Mobile Farmers Market, Becket Town Hall Pavilion, pilot program begins next week (Thursdays, 11:30 am - 2:00 pm Weekly Sept. 14 - Nov. 16).

#### **12. Correspondence/announcements:**

- **2023.08.29 , Jewel Environmental Corporation Permanent Solution Statement Report, RTN 1-0021682 re: 190 West @ Mile Marker 16.1 in Becket, MA – available through the Western Regional Office of the MA Dept. of Environmental Protection**
- **Others tba**

In addition to the above communication, the SB received the following:

- **2023.08.30 Congratulatory letter from Lieutenant Governor for completing Third Community Compact Best Practices Grant.**

#### **13. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants**

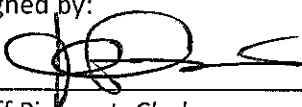
The SB reviewed and signed the payable warrants.

#### **14. Select Board to adjourn the Meeting**

JP moved to adjourn the meeting, CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously. At 8:46pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:

 / September 20, 2023  
Jeff Piemont, *Clerk* Date Approved

**Meeting documents:**

- Agenda
- Town Administrator's Report,
- August 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- Departmental reports - listed agenda item 8
- Correspondence- listed agenda item 12
- Draft 11/23/2015 Street Acceptance Procedures
- 2023.09.01 e-mail from Warren Tischler regarding Stoney Brook Road with attached Deed to the Road
- Becket Arts Center Wine & Beer Application