

**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**6:00pm, November 15, 2023**  
**Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket**

**Attendees**

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

**Planning Board:** Bob Ronzio, *Chair*; Alvin Blake, Ann Krawet and Howard Lerner

**Staff:** Katherine A. Warden, *Town Administrator*; Beverly Gilbert (BG), *Administrative Assistant*; Ed Pickert, Highway Superintendent; Sue Crossley, Planning Board Administrative Assistant

**Remote:** Robin Mathiesen, *Town Clerk*

**Others:** Michael Lavery, Thomas Salzer, Diana Mott, John Verity, Linda Salzer, Julie Craumer, Alvin Blake (Energy Committee Member), Henry Scarpo

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

BE called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. He indicated the SB was recording the meeting. Bob Ronzio called the Planning Board meeting to order.

- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**

BE led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- 3. Appointment – Planning Board Member to serve effective November 15, 2023, through the May 18, 2024 Annual Town Election. [There is a vacancy due to James Levy’s resignation from the Planning Board.] All candidates (in alphabetical order by last name) are invited to offer a brief statement.**

The first candidate to speak was **Mr. Michael Silvio Lavery**, 223 Silver Leaf Dr. After a brief introduction of himself, the Planning Board and Select Board asked Mr. Lavery a few questions. The second candidate to speak was **Ms. Diana Mott**, 3949 Jacob’s Ladder Rd. Ms. Mott gave the boards an overview of her qualifications and she was questioned by both boards. The third candidate to speak was **Mr. Thomas Salzer**, 218 Wells Rd. Mr. Salzer also introduced himself to the boards and answered their questions.

After the candidates fielded questions and discussion ceased, the Planning and Select Boards thanked all three candidates for their interest and for taking the time to come and speak with them. BG handed out a Candidate Ranking form to the members of both boards to complete and submit. After BG, Ms. Crossley, and KW tabulated and checked the rankings, the results were as follows: Michael Lavery – 1; Diana Mott – 6; Tom Salzer – 0

BE called for a roll call vote by the Select Board to appoint Ms. Mott to the Planning Board to fill the term vacated by Mr. James Levy until May 18, 2024. Motion was made by CS and seconded by JP.

The roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Elovirta – aye; Mr. Swindlehurst – aye; Mr. Piemont – aye

Mr. Ronzio called for a roll call vote by the Planning Board for Ms. Mott to be appointed to the Planning Board to fill the term vacated by Mr. James Levy until May 18, 2024. Ms. Krawet made the motion. Mr. Lerner seconded. The roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Alvin Blake – aye; Mr. Howard Lerner – aye; Ms. Ann Krawet – aye; Mr. Robert Ronzio – aye.

Ms. Diana Mott was unanimously appointed to the Planning Board until the Town Election, May 18, 2024, to fill the vacancy left by Mr. James Levy's resignation.

**4. The Planning Board will vote to adjourn.**

At 6:51pm, the Planning Board voted to adjourn the Planning Board meeting.

**5. Department Head Update – Highway Superintendent**

Ed Pickert, Highway Superintendent, provided an update to the SB and Town Administrator. Discussion topics included: roadwork (grading has been completed), status of winter equipment, extended warranties, winter roadway treatment methods, and staffing. The Highway Dept. is recruiting for an open position, Highway Dept. Equipment Operator/Truck Driver. The Select Board supports creating a part-time office assistant position so that Mr. Pickert may spend additional time on non-administrative duties. Discussion ensued about capital expenses for the FY2025 budget (York Rake & Flat Bed for Truck #7 \$25,000)

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

None

**7. Approval of the 11/1/2023 Minutes**

CS moved to approve the 11/1/2023 minutes. JP 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried unanimously.

**8. Town Administrator's Report**

KW provided the following update:

- All highway reimbursements (\$1.5 Million) have been received. The Town of Becket will not need a short-term note.
- Fire Truck financing: In January, we will seek to finance approximately \$380,416. Total cost was \$762,029.00. This includes the chassis that cost \$381,613.00. KW will discuss a lease option with the dealer (The Town will own it when the payments are completed). *These numbers are corrected from the previous SB meeting.*
- Capital Requests:  
Fire Dept.: Equipment for the new firetruck. KW requires a list of items needed, and the Fire Dept. should indicate which items they will transfer from the old truck onto the new truck. The Finance Committee is aware that outfitting the new truck will cost approximately between \$130,000 and \$150,000. During initial discussions about acquiring the Fire Truck and recommending it for Town Meeting vote, the Finance Committee had thought the town would receive a grant for some of the equipment. BE stated that outfitting a new fire truck after it has

been purchased is not an unusual practice and this does not contradict what occurred at the Town Meeting.

CS initiated discussion about considering a capital expense item relating to the management of the Quad. Discussion included exploration of buying a trailer. CS suggested purchasing a pre-built shed to house the Quad at Fire Station 2. This would free up part of the bay where the Quad is currently located. BE suggested selling Fire Trucks 1 and 4.

Ambulance Dept.:

- a. Front line Ambulance \$431,000 – KW advised that there is a two-year wait after ordering, and the current ambulance is 5 years old.
  - b. Radio Upgrades \$15,415
  - c. Video Laryngoscope \$8,509
- Discussion included considering recommending a fly car that will be stored in a temperature controlled and lockable secured garage. This would allow the paramedics to operate at an advanced level if the Ambulance is not available.

Police Dept.: Cruiser \$16,000 - \$17,000 matching with a USDA grant

Town Hall & Pavilion Parking Lot: Full depth of reclamation, repaving, lines etc. \$130,000

- Budget Requests are due Dec 22
- Green Community Report due on November 30
- SAM (Systems for Awards Management) renewal due end of December. As part of qualifying for federal grants, the town must be registered in this program. Unfortunately, the renewal process is extremely onerous.
- Constellation has renewed Town accounts at \$0.12950 for three years. KW needs to ensure all Eversource accounts list Constellation as the energy supplier.
- Applying for the USDA grant to cover a new cruiser.
- Route 20 meeting with MassDOT. KW and participants from Lee, Chester, Huntington, and Russell attended this virtual MassDOT meeting. Construction on the Woronoco Bridge (I-90 over the Westfield River on the Montgomery-Russell line) will resume on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> for two years. MassDOT will post weight restrictions. Vehicles exceeding the posted restrictions will detour off I-90 onto Route 20 and 202/10. MassDOT estimates that at least fifteen tandem vehicles with loads over 40 tons will divert to Route 20 on a regular basis.
- Working with Highway Superintendent to discuss MassWorks projects for High St, County Rd, Yokum Pond Rd and Benton Hill culvert project.
- Police Association has submitted a FY2025 budget request.
- KW recommends for the SB to conduct a discussion re: Fire Department's staffing needs (full time Fire Chief/Fire personnel)
- The SB okayed KW's ideas to purchase holiday decorations for the Town Hall and to conduct a Winter Sock & Mitten Drive at Town Hall.
- Staff pay increases (COLA, incentive pay, longevity stipends) may be discussed at a future meeting: The SB may schedule a joint Finance Committee/Select Board meeting 6pm on Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>.
- KW will meet with the Washington Select Board to discuss Ambulance and Fire Dept. services.

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

- **Ambulance Department - October 2023**

The SB reviewed the above captioned report.

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

None

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

None

**12. Correspondence/announcements:**

- **2023.10.31 MassDOT District Highway Director – Project Eligibility Notification**  
**MassDOT Highway Division Project No. 613479**  
**Bridge Preservation, B-03-025 (ODA)**  
**High Street over the Westfield River, CSX RR, and Pleasant Street**  
**The Highway Division's Project Review Committee has approved the above project. MassDOT has begun project development. You may visit [www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-highway-project-information-projectinfo](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-highway-project-information-projectinfo) to monitor the progress of this project**
- **2023.11.01 Jewel Environmental Corporation re: Permanent Solution Statement Rpt,**  
**RTN 1-0021426 – 190 West @MM 16, Becket, MA**

The SB reviewed the above captioned.

**13. Energy Committee seeks direction about sending a letter to invite residents to participate in a community solar program.**

Energy Committee Members Julie Craumer and Al Blake discussed sending two Becket Energy Committee/Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC) mailings to residents in Becket's Environmental Justice neighborhoods re: 1) energy services available through BCAC or Mass Save, and 2) Community Solar opportunity through Sunwealth Community Solar. The BCAC will pay for the mailings. At the next SB meeting, the Energy Committee will provide draft letters for SB review.

**14. Select Board to review and sign payable warrants**


The SB reviewed and signed payable warrants.

**15. Select Board to adjourn the meeting.**

JP moved to adjourn. CS 2<sup>nd</sup>: Motion carried unanimously. At 8:38pm, BE adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beverly Gilbert, *Administrative Assistant*

Signed by:

 / December 6, 2023  
William H. Elovirta, *Chairperson*                      Date Approved

**Meeting documents:**

- Agenda
- 11/1/2023 meeting minutes
- Town Administrator's Update, Town of Becket Community Choice Power Supply Program handout
- Appointment Applications – Michael Lavery, Diana Mott, Thomas Salzer; Candidate Ranking Form
- Correspondence: listed Agenda Item 12
- City of Cambridge mailing dated 12/7/2023 regarding Community Solar Program
- Draft joint Berkshire Community Action Council / Energy Committee letter to Becket residents regarding programs, BCAC 2023 Income Guidelines to qualify for Fuel Assistance