

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, the Annual Town Meeting was called on May 10, 2008, 7:15 p.m. at Becket Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by the Moderator. There were 91 voters present and a total of 99 people attended the meeting. Town Officials Present: Bruce Garlow, Moderator; William Cavanaugh, John Murray, and Doug Walter, Selectmen; Jeremy Dunn, Michael Falk, Amy Fyden and Ann Spadafora, Finance Committee Members; Jeanne Pryor, Town Clerk; Richard Furlong, Town Administrator; and Sally Bell, Town Counsel.

The Moderator opened the meeting stating the rules to be followed. He asked for a showing of hands of non-registered voters and welcomed them, indicating that they could address the meeting but could not vote. Town Clerk, Jeanne Pryor, read the call of the meeting and officer's return of service and the Moderator noted the warrant as having been duly posted. The Moderator stated that, following the Annual Meeting and the voting on all articles, there will be a presentation on the Community Preservation Act which is scheduled to be on the Town Election ballot on May 17 and an update on plans for the new Highway Department facility.

Mr. Michael Falk, Chair of the Finance Committee was introduced for a brief presentation of the town finances. He reported that all of the recommendations on the warrant that the Finance Committee has made have been endorsed by the Selectmen and the Town Administrator. We have presented a balanced budget and have not reduced town services and it has only resulted in an average property tax increase of about 3%. Given that the Commonwealth is looking at a \$1 billion deficit for the fiscal year ending this June and next year looks more difficult, the Finance Committee has been cautious as they approached this year's budget and as such there were more than \$200,000 of requests that were declined. The FY 2009 budget is \$236,000 greater than FY 2008. There are two expense categories that make up 94% of the \$236,000. The first is the Central Berkshire Regional School District's operating budget which represents 70% of the increase and the special articles in aggregate represent about 25%. The Town Stabilization Account will be \$269,000 if the appropriation to be voted today passes. The CBRSD operating budget submitted is an increase of only 3% but because the Department of Education has a formula by which each town gets a minimum net contribution requirement, that 3% is going to cost our town 8.74% this year. Mr. Falk explained the recommendations to have two town financial positions, Tax Collector and Treasurer, be changed from elected to appointed positions, noting that DOR recommended this and that it would allow the town the ability to look at candidates in the future that do not live in Becket. He addressed the repair and renovation needs of Wahconah Regional High School, which opened in 1961, noting that CBRSD would not be getting funding under the School Building Authority. The CBRSD recommendation for a capital expenditure of \$1.4 million is to modernize the building infrastructure over the next 2-5 years and correct all identified deficiencies. Becket's share is 11%. This 20 year bond will cost, if you have a house assessed at \$300,000, \$9.00 in the fiscal year 2010. This request will also be on the May 17 town election ballot and must be passed by the voters of the CBRSD's seven towns. Mr. Falk noted the preliminary design for the new facility for Highway and Police Departments which was funded through the Stabilization Account. The Board of Selectmen heard this week from the Mass Highway Engineering Department about the McNerney Road bridge that the design and engineering work is almost done and they are ready to move forward. If it is properly awarded by the end of their fiscal year, October 2008, the cost of the project has been appropriated and it will not cost the Town of Becket any money. The new bridge could open as early as the fall of 2009. Mr. Falk gave an update on high speed internet noting that Verizon is working on wiring the towns that are not served or are underserved and the Verizon project should be completed by March 1, 2009. More information is available by contacting Ellen Cummings at Verizon.

The following articles were voted on:

Article 1: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money as may be needed to defray the expenses of the Town for the ensuing fiscal year and to fix the salaries and compensation of all elective officials as provided by Section 108 of Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws as set forth below in the attached line items:

Majority Vote Required					
TOWN of BECKET		BUDGET	BUDGET	BUDGET	Percent
FY. 2009		APPROVED	REQUESTED	RECOMMENDED	Increase
		FY. 2008	FY. 2009	FY. 2009	
GENERAL GOVERNMENT					
1	TOWN COUNSEL	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	0.00%
2	LEGAL EXPENSE	\$8,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$3,500.00	-56.25%
3	AUDIT	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00	0.00%
4	MODERATOR	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	0.00%
5	MODERATOR EXP.	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	0.00%
6	SELECTMEN'S SALARIES	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	0.00%
7	SELECTMEN'S EXPENSES	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	0.00%
	\$1500.00 per selectman				
8	ADVERTISING	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	0.00%
9	TOWN SECRETARY	\$37,895.00	\$40,090.00	\$39,750.00	4.90%

10	TOWN ADMIN. SALARY	\$45,526.00	\$47,074.00	\$47,074.00	3.40%
11	TOWN ADMIN. EXPENSE	\$1,000.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	20.00%
12	FINANCE COMMITTEE	\$2,450.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	-59.18%
13	ASSESSORS SALARIES	\$101,990.00	\$107,245.00	\$107,000.00	4.91%
14	ASSESSORS EXPENSE	\$13,400.00	\$12,700.00	\$12,700.00	-5.22%
15	TOWN TREASURER SALARY	\$32,172.00	\$33,459.00	\$33,459.00	4.00%
16	TOWN TREASURER EXP.	\$4,150.00	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00	32.53%
17	TAX TITLE	\$22,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00	-31.82%
18	TAX COLLECTOR SALARY	\$44,115.00	\$46,300.00	\$46,300.00	4.95%
19	TAX COLLECTOR EXPENSE	\$6,275.00	\$6,185.00	\$6,185.00	-1.43%
20	ASSIST. TAX COLLECTOR	\$15,500.00	\$16,000.00	\$16,000.00	3.23%
21	TOWN CLERK SALARY	\$23,844.00	\$24,753.00	\$24,753.00	3.81%
22	TOWN CLERK EXPENSE	\$2,370.00	\$4,010.00	\$4,010.00	69.20%
23	ELECTION-REGISTRATION	\$8,019.00	\$10,265.00	\$10,265.00	28.01%
24	CONSERVATION COMM.	\$7,000.00	\$7,427.00	\$7,427.00	6.10%
25	PLANNING BOARD EXPENSE	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	0.00%
	Pay Chairman at \$13.45 hour				
26	REGIONAL PLAN COM.	\$1,089.00	\$1,116.00	\$1,116.00	2.48%
27	BOARD of APPEALS	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00	0.00%
28	RESERVE FUND	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	0.00%
	SUBTOTAL GEN. GOVT.	\$424,645.00	\$431,174.00	\$430,089.00	1.28%
	HIGHWAY				
29	GENERAL MAINTENANCE	\$261,000.00	\$252,240.00	\$252,240.00	-3.36%
30	VACATION & HOLIDAYS	\$33,070.00	\$31,283.00	\$31,283.00	-5.40%
31	MACHINERY ACCOUNT	\$44,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$40,000.00	-9.09%
32	RECONST. of GRAVEL ROADS	\$62,500.00	\$64,000.00	\$62,000.00	-0.80%
33	FUEL ACCOUNT	\$55,000.00	\$73,216.00	\$73,216.00	33.12%
34	WINTER ROADS	\$160,000.00	\$196,882.00	\$170,000.00	6.25%
35	CEMETERIES	\$10,700.00	\$10,700.00	\$10,700.00	0.00%
	Pay Commissioners \$13.45 Hr.				
36	FORESTRY	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	0.00%
37	MOTH ACCOUNT	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	0.00%
38	TREE ACCOUNT	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	0.00%
	SUBTOTAL HIGHWAYS	\$634,670.00	\$676,721.00	\$647,839.00	2.07%
	EDUCATION				
39	SCHOOL OPERATING	\$1,888,619.00	\$2,053,631.00	\$2,053,631.00	8.74%
40	SCHOOL CAPITAL	\$43,463.00	\$27,112.00	\$27,112.00	-37.62%
41	VOCATIONAL TUITION	\$98,000.00	\$94,100.00	\$94,100.00	-3.98%
42	VOCATIONAL TRANSPORT.	\$52,420.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	-42.77%
	SUBTOTAL EDUCATION	\$2,082,502.00	\$2,204,843.00	\$2,204,843.00	5.87%
	PROTECT. PERSON & PROP				
43	POLICE DEPT. SALARIES	\$156,500.00	\$196,800.00	\$164,100.00	4.86%
44	POLICE DEPT. EXPENSE	\$15,750.00	\$15,750.00	\$15,750.00	0.00%
45	HARBOR MASTER	\$960.00	\$990.00	\$990.00	3.13%
46	OUT REACH PROGRAM	\$1,500.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00	0.00%
47	CONSTABLE EXPENSE	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	0.00%
48	FIRE CHIEF SALARY	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,600.00	0.00%
49	FIRE DEPT. EXPENSES	\$17,500.00	\$25,000.00	\$24,000.00	37.14%
50	FIRE CALL STIPEND	\$14,000.00	\$6,600.00	\$6,600.00	-52.86%
51	BUILDING INSP. SALARY	\$43,414.00	\$45,117.00	\$45,117.00	3.92%
52	BUILDING & CODE INSP. EXP	\$3,760.00	\$3,775.00	\$3,775.00	0.40%
53	DEMOLITION FUND	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-100.00%
54	PUBLIC SAFETY INSPECTIONS	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00	\$12,000.00	-14.29%
55	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	\$50.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	1900.00%
56	DOG OFFICER SALARIES	\$10,400.00	\$10,400.00	\$10,400.00	0.00%
57	DOG OFFICER EXPENSES	\$1,500.00	\$1,900.00	\$1,900.00	26.67%
	TOTAL PERSON & PROP.	\$283,734.00	\$327,232.00	\$291,032.00	2.57%
	HEALTH & SANITATION				
58	BECKET AMB. SALARIES	\$150,000.00	\$160,000.00	\$155,000.00	3.33%
59	BECKET AMB. DEPT. EXP.	\$15,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$17,000.00	13.33%
60	E911 COMMUNICATION	\$8,497.00	\$8,837.00	\$8,837.00	4.00%
61	INSPECTOR of ANIMALS	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$250.00	0.00%
62	TRANSFER STATION	\$92,500.00	\$95,852.00	\$95,852.00	3.62%
63	SOUTH BERK. SOLID WASTE	\$5,880.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	2.04%
64	BOARD of HEALTH SALARIES	\$13,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$11,000.00	-15.38%
	Pay Members at 13.45 Hr.				
65	BOARD of HEALTH EXPENSES	\$5,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	40.00%
66	LEE VISITING NURSE	\$4,725.00	\$4,725.00	\$4,725.00	0.00%
67	MENTAL HEALTH CENTER	\$515.00	\$541.00	\$541.00	5.05%
68	VETERNS AGENT SALARY	\$1,728.00	\$1,768.00	\$1,768.00	2.31%
69	VETERNS AGENT EXPENSE	\$200.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	-25.00%
70	VETERANS BENEFITS	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	0.00%
	TOTAL HEALTH & SANIT.	\$298,295.00	\$316,123.00	\$309,123.00	3.63%

UNCLASSIFIED EXPENSES					
71	ACCOUNTING SERVICES	\$18,500.00	\$17,500.00	\$17,500.00	-5.41%
72	GENERAL INSURANCE	\$74,000.00	\$65,000.00	\$65,000.00	-12.16%
73	MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS	\$43,000.00	\$47,000.00	\$47,000.00	9.30%
74	MUNICIPAL UTILITIES	\$53,000.00	\$57,000.00	\$57,000.00	7.55%
75	STREET LIGHTS	\$6,800.00	\$7,320.00	\$7,320.00	7.65%
76	TOWN REPORTS	\$3,000.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	50.00%
77	POSTAGE	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00	\$14,000.00	0.00%
78	COUNCIL on AGING	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	0.00%
79	RECREATION COMM.	\$13,633.00	\$13,633.00	\$13,633.00	0.00%
80	PARKS COMM.	\$7,000.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,000.00	0.00%
81	HISTORIC COMMISSION	\$650.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	53.85%
82	INT. SHORT-TERM DEBT	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	-100.00%
83	COUNTY RETIREMENT	\$130,846.00	\$140,835.00	\$140,835.00	7.63%
84	HEALTH INSURANCE	\$221,000.00	\$230,000.00	\$230,000.00	4.07%
85	PAYROLL TAX ACCOUNT	\$15,500.00	\$16,030.00	\$16,030.00	3.42%
86	LIBRARY	\$23,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$24,000.00	4.35%
87	MEMORIAL DAY	\$500.00	\$550.00	\$550.00	10.00%
88	ARTS CENTER	\$3,500.00	\$5,860.00	\$3,000.00	-14.29%
89	CRA	\$1,000.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,000.00	0.00%
	TOTAL UNCLASS. EXP.	\$635,929.00	\$658,828.00	\$654,368.00	2.90%
	GRAND TOTAL	\$4,359,775.00	\$4,614,921.00	\$4,537,294.00	4.07%

Article 1 was moved and seconded on the floor. The Moderator stated that he would not read each line item but rather he would announce the heading of each section. If there were to be any questions or discussion of any item, a “Hold” would be asked to be placed on that item. At the end of the process for any line items to be held, all items not having a “Hold” put on them would be voted on. Following this, all line items having a “Hold” would then be voted on separately. The Moderator noted that we are voting on the line items in the third column, “*Budget Recommended FY. 2009.*” “Holds” were placed on the following line items:

- 8 – Advertising
- 9 – Town Secretary
- 13 – Assessors Salaries
- 15 – Town Treasurer Salary
- 18 – Tax Collector Salary
- 21 – Town Clerk Salary
- 28 – Reserve Fund
- 39 – School Operating
- 43 – Police Dept. Salaries
- 45 – Harbor Master
- 50 – Fire Call Stipend
- 51 – Building Insp. Salary
- 55 – Emergency Management
- 56 – Dog Officer Salaries
- 58 – Becket Amb. Salaries
- 79 – Recreation Comm.
- 81 – Historic Commission

After placing holds on the above line items, a vote was taken to approve all non-held line items. **All line items that were not held passed unanimously.**

Line Item 8 (Advertising) - In response to a question from Mrs. Elovirta, it was noted that this budget line item is used to pay for advertising for employment, equipment, bids, etc. Mrs. Elovirta asked why advertising for the Fire Department was not paid from this account and Mr. Furlong noted that if the expense was for the current fiscal year it could be reversed out. A vote was taken and **Line Item 8 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 9 (Town Secretary) and Line Item 13 (Assessors Salaries) - Deborah Bruno noted she is a municipal employee in a different town and knows that the Town of Becket is working on equitable pay scales for employees. For items 9, 13, 15, 18 and 21, she asked why the pay increases are above 3%. Mr. Falk explained that, based on the salary ranges that were developed as a result of a salary survey done five years ago, the town is committed to paying employees on a competitive basis. The employee share of health insurance has been increased over the past 3 years and this year it was voted to increase the employee share from 20-25% over the next two years. People lower in the salary range have been given raises over the inflation rate (3.4%) and anyone who wasn’t above the high point of the range was given 3.4%. No one got an increase over 5% even though there were requests. In response to a question from Mr. Waite, Mr. Falk noted that in the Highway Dept. (all men) most are typically making just below the

top of the range. There are others in town hall who are not making what they should. It is a year by year process. A vote was taken and **Line Items 9 and 13 passed unanimously.**

Holds were then withdrawn on Line Items 15, 18, and 21. A vote was taken and **Line Items 15, 18 and 21 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 28 (Reserve Fund) – In response to a question from Mrs. Cholmar, Mr. Falk explained the purpose of the Reserve Fund and the Stabilization Account. A vote was taken and **Line Item 28 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 39 (School Operating) – Mrs. Swindlehurst asked why Becket’s share was so much higher than the 3%. Mr. Falk noted that the total value of properties owned in Becket and the income earned that is filed with DOR of people who live in Becket is put into a complex formula to come up with the minimum net contribution. Becket has many second homeowners that bring a lot of tax money into town and the added value of their homes adds to the total list of properties. Discussion followed. It was noted that they do not use raw numbers but equalized property values statewide and take into consideration a lot of factors including income. In response to a question from Mr. Nix, Donna Harlan said that the Becket school population is 108 children. She noted that Becket was awarded by the Department of Education a Compass School award last year for their extraordinary achievement in MCAS scores. She said that on May 22 at 9:00 am, they are having a Gold Awards ceremony at Kittredge School to celebrate the national recognition of Becket Washington School and Kittredge School for their nutrition and wellness programs. Becket is only the second district in the state to earn this award. A vote was taken and **Line Item 39 passed.**

Line Item 43 (Police Dept. Salaries) – Mr. Furlong noted that this line item also includes a stipend for the officers on duty on night. In a question related to Line Item 58 (Amb. Salaries), Mr. Furlong noted that \$250,000 in salary are paid for the Ambulance Dept. where there only 3 employees who get benefits and about 20-25 per diem people. He gave Jim Kupernik credit for the staffing and the good work that they do. Mr. Elovirta stated that he had requested a full-time midnight shift officer. A vote was taken and **Line Item 43 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 45 (Harbor Master) – After a brief discussion noting that you can have a Harbor Master on a great pond, a vote was taken and **Line Item 45 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 50 (Fire Call Stipend) –Mrs. Elovirta expressed her concern about funding the Fire Call Stipend and Mr. Furlong noted that there will be sufficient money to fund this. A vote was taken and **Line Item 50 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 51 (Building Insp. Salary) – There was no additional discussion about salaries. A vote was taken and **Line Item 51 passed.**

Line Item 55 (Emergency Management) – Mrs. Cholmar asked why the increase for this was so high. Mr. Furlong responded that this used to be Civil Defense but has changed both in name and work. The increase is to pay the Emergency Manager for expenses incurred for attendance at meetings and training. A vote was taken and **Line Item 55 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 56 (Dog Officer Salaries) – There was no discussion. A vote was taken and **Line Item 56 passed.**

Line Item 58 (Becket Amb. Salaries) – The hold on this item was withdrawn. A vote was taken and **Line Item 58 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 79 (Recreation Comm.) – In response to a question, Mrs. Furlong said that this money goes for uniforms, etc., for soccer, tee ball and baseball groups, for summer parks program, lifeguards at the beach, and renting of utility buildings for people attending the beach and playground. A vote was taken and **Line Item 79 passed unanimously.**

Line Item 81 (Historic Commission) - Mr. Gorden explained that this is a one time request to provide 4 new signs for the Historic Districts at a cost of about \$225 each. A vote was taken and **Line Item 81 passed unanimously.**

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000.00 for the Stabilization Fund.

Selectmen: Recommend **2/3 Vote Required**
Finance Committee: Recommends

Article 2 was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and **Article 2 passed unanimously.**

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,795.00 to fund the bond payment for the following previously debt excluded items:

Becket Washington School	\$ 78,465.00
Nessacus Regional Middle School	\$ 22,330.00

Selectmen: Recommend **Majority Vote Required**
Finance Committee: Recommends

Article 3 was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and **Article 3 passed unanimously.**

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to accept any monies appropriated by the Massachusetts Highway Department for Chapter 90 use. These funds to be used for maintenance and reconstruction of Town roads and to fund the appropriations by transferring said amounts from available funds with any unspent funds to carry over from year to year until spent by the Town. These sums will be reimbursed to the Town by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in accordance with Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Selectmen: Recommend **Majority Vote Required**
Finance Committee: Recommends

Article 4 was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and **Article 4 passed unanimously.**

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$46,000.00 for the Ambulance Department Salary Account and to fund the appropriation by transferring \$46,000.00 from the Ambulance Department Receipt Reserved Account.

Selectmen: Recommend **Majority Vote Required**
Finance Committee: Recommends

Article 5 was moved and seconded on the floor. In response to a question from Mrs. Swindlehurst, Mr. Furlong noted that this money is available now. A vote was taken and **Article 5 passed.**

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to approve its apportioned share of the debt authorized by the Central Berkshire Regional School District pursuant to General Laws Chapter 71, Section 16 in the amount of \$1,437,000.00 for the repair, equipping and furnishing of renovations to Wahconah Regional High School.

Selectmen: Recommend **Majority Vote Required**
Finance Committee: Recommends

Article 6 was moved and seconded on the floor. In response to a question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Falk responded that our share is 11% of the \$1.4 million. In response to a question from Mrs. Swindlehurst, Mr. Furlong responded that this is not subject to a debt exclusion. A vote was taken and **Article 6 passed unanimously.**

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$250,000.00 for the replacement of the bridge on Yokum Pond Road and to fund this appropriation by borrowing \$250,000.00 as a debt exclusion or take any other action thereto. Contingent upon favorable action on a debt exclusion on the annual town election ballot on May 17, 2008.

Selectmen: Recommend **2/3 Vote Required**
Finance Committee: Recommend

Article 7 was moved and seconded on the floor. Randy Thomas asked if there was any grant money available. Mr. Furlong noted that over a year ago we requested a grant for Algeria and Bonny Rigg but there are none available for this. He noted that currently there is only one lane in use and there is no repair option for this bridge, it is a replacement. The Selectmen and Finance Committee decided that the town needs to show some good faith in repairing some of our own infrastructure because the state is going to fund \$800-900,000 for McNerney Road for us. Mr. Tisdale described the condition of the bridge noting that it is a safety hazard, especially at night. It was asked if there is a future plan for repairing town roads, noting we can't keep closing roads. Discussion followed on the state's infrastructure problems and the concerns of tax payers not being able to get to their homes due to road closures. Mr. Cavanaugh spoke about the worsening condition of state and federal roads and noted that residents should contact their legislators and ask for infrastructure funds for roads. He noted that town roads needing repair may need to be closed if funding is not available from either the federal government, the state or the town. The town will apply for grants as much as possible. Mr. Osman expressed concern about road closings affecting County Road. In response to a question, Mr. Falk noted that this repair would cost residents approximately \$25 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation if paid over two years. Mr. Furlong noted that they will try to borrow over 3 years to lower the cost. Ann Spadafora spoke in support of this article. Mr. Furlong and Mr. Tisdale explained the bridge replacement work noting that the road would have to be closed for about 2-3 months and the work will be scheduled in the fall. Mr. Furlong noted that this article, if passed, also needs approval at the Town Election. Mr. Jourdain asked where traffic will go if Yokum Pond Road is closed. Mr. Furlong noted that most traffic will be detoured around Routes 8 and 20 but local residents will probably use Leonhardt Rd. where a heavier maintenance schedule will be needed. Discussion followed on keeping trucks off Leonhardt Rd. In response to a question regarding preventive

maintenance, Mr. Furlong noted that bridges are inspected and reports received by the town to assist with planning maintenance work. A vote was taken and **Article 7 passed unanimously.**

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 for the replacement of highway truck #2 and to trade in the current truck #2.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 8 was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and **Article 8 passed unanimously.**

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$39,000.00 for the replacement of the 4 wheel drive police cruiser; old cruiser to be retained for use by the Board of Assessors and Building Inspector.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 9 was moved and seconded on the floor. Following a question, a vote was taken and **Article 9 passed.**

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$13,100.00 for the purpose of providing the following:

	Requested	Finance Committee & Selectmen Recommendations
Records Binding:	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Center Pond Weed Treatment:	1,000.00	1,000.00
Center Pond Weed Pulling:	1,200.00	1,200.00
Transfer Station Fence & Gate:	1,700.00	1,700.00
Repairs to Town Hall:	4,000.00	4,000.00
Unemployment Account:	3,000.00	3,000.00
Berkshire South Regional Community Center:	1,200.00	0.00

Majority Vote Required

The Moderator noted that the vote would be on the amounts in the Recommendations listed. **Article 10** was moved and seconded on the floor. Mr. Furlong made a motion to amend the article

- by changing the appropriation amount from \$13,100 to \$11,900
- by amending Center Pond Weed Treatment to Center Pond Weed Surveys
- by amending Repairs to Town Hall to Fire Station #1 Generator

The motion was seconded. Mr. Furlong noted that the Center Pond Association asked for the amendment to “Surveys”; the Repairs to Town Hall item was changed due to an error made in translating the Fire Department’s request to an article, noting that the Town Hall repairs will go on at a slower rate; the Community Center request was not recommended because they didn’t tell the town why they wanted this funding. A vote was taken to amend Article 10 and the amendment was adopted. In response to a question, Mr. Tisdale explained why the Transfer Station Fence & Gate were needed. A vote was taken on the amended article and **Article 10, as amended, passed unanimously.**

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to have its elected Tax Collector become an appointed Tax Collector of the Town in accordance with Chapter 41, Section 1B of Massachusetts General Laws. If approved and an office or board becomes appointed, any incumbent serving at the time of voter acceptance continues to serve until the remainder of their term expires. If a person is elected to the position or board at the same time the change to an appointed status occurs, the newly elected office holder serves until an appointment is made

This article is contingent on the passing of a ballot question at the Annual Town Election.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 11 was moved and seconded on the floor. Discussion followed on the pros and cons of changing the position from elected to appointed. It was noted that an elected position requires that the candidate be a registered voter in the town of Becket but no other qualifications are needed to be elected. An appointed position would enable the town to seek applications from a candidate with the best qualifications not limited to residents of Becket. A vote was taken and **Article 11 passed unanimously.**

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to have its elected Treasurer become an appointed Treasurer of the Town in accordance with Chapter 41, Section 1B of Massachusetts General Laws. If approved and an office or board becomes appointed, any incumbent serving at the time of voter acceptance continues to serve until the remainder of their term expires. If a person is elected to the position or board at the same time the change to an appointed status occurs, the newly elected office holder serves until an appointment is made

This article is contingent on the passing of a ballot question at the Annual Town Election.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 12 was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and **Article 12 passed unanimously.**

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of Section 8 of Article 89 of the Massachusetts Constitution, to authorize the Selectmen to petition the General Court for special legislation to amend Chapter 662 of the Acts of 1989, as most recently amended, with said amendments to become effective upon the passage of the Act by the Legislature, as follows:

To delete from Section 2 (the list of elected officers and boards) Items **(h) Treasurer** and **(i) Tax Collector** and renumbering the remaining items to take into account those deletions.

and to

add to Section 4 (the list of officers and boards appointed by the Selectmen) Items **(w) Treasurer** and **(x) Tax Collector, each for a term of three years.**

or take any other action in relation thereto.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 13 was moved and seconded on the floor. Mrs. Swindlehurst made a motion to amend the article by inserting after “to authorize the Selectmen,” the words “*subject to and constrained by the results of the ballot questions referred to in Articles 11 and 12,*” and the motion to amend was seconded. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken to amend Article 13 and it passed. A vote was taken on the amended article and **Article 13, as amended, passed unanimously.**

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to replace Article 17, Section 4 of the Town of Becket Bylaws which reads as follows:

Dog owners are required to restrain their dogs when they are not on the owner’s property. Hunting dogs when being used for hunting or training are exempt. Violators of this provision shall be subject to a fine of ten (10) dollars.
(Adopted 6/13/81)

with Exhibit A Titled “Dog Control By-Law” on file with the Town Clerk, available on Town of Becket website www.townofbecket.org or by request at Town Hall.

Selectmen: Recommend

Majority Vote Required

Article 14 was moved and seconded on the floor. The Moderator gave those in attendance time to review the proposed bylaw. Following an explanation, Mr. Furlong made a motion to amend Section 10 by inserting, after the phrase “The provisions of these regulations may be enforced”, the words by *the Animal Control Officer*, and the motion was seconded. A vote was taken to amend Section 10 to read as follows: “The provisions of these regulations may be enforced **by the Animal Control Officer** utilizing the procedures....” and it passed unanimously. In response to a question, it was noted that this new bylaw would apply to all residents of Becket, including those in private communities. In response to a question concerning the term livestock, Mr. Furlong noted that the wording is from state law and recommended that we should not change it. Discussion followed on the violation of regulations punishable by a fine and an explanation of MGL Chapter 40, Section 21D was provided. Nuisance barking was discussed. A vote was taken on the amended article and **Article 14, as amended, passed.**

The Moderator noted that, before adjourning, there would be presentations but no votes will be taken. Mr. Neil Toomey was introduced and gave a presentation on the Community Preservation Act. He asked those present to vote Yes to adopt the Community Preservation Act on May 17, 2008 at the Annual Town Election. Mr. Doug Walter was introduced and gave a presentation on the preliminary work done on the design of the new police and highway department facility identifying the location (Rte. 20, Jacobs Well) and scope of the project. Mr. Falk noted that it is possible that this project could be bid before this winter. Mr. Elovirta explained that the current police facility was built in 1992 and does not have the space needed for today’s police department. There was a discussion about the Community Preservation Act, noting that matching funds are available from the state. Mr. Furlong noted that Town Meeting decides what the CPA funds are used for. Mrs. Swindlehurst, Mr. Gorden and Mr. Cavanaugh spoke in favor of voting for the Community Preservation Act.

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn to the Annual Town Election which will be held one week from today on May 17, 2008, starting at 10:00 a.m. A vote was taken and the motion passed. The checkers were Election Workers Dorothy Bellavance and Blanche Lennington.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne W. Pryor
Town Clerk