

## Annual Town Meeting Minutes 5/8/04

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, the Annual Town Meeting was called on May 8, 2004, 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 Town Clerk. A total of 85 voters were present.

Present: William Cavanaugh, John Murray, and Doug Walter, Selectmen; Jeanne Pryor, Town Clerk; Richard Furlong, Town Administrator; and Sally Bell, Town Attorney.

In the absence of the Moderator, the Town Clerk opened the meeting and read the call of the meeting and officer's return of service. She noted that the first order of business is the election of a temporary moderator. It was moved and seconded on the floor to nominate Robert Gerner as Temporary Moderator. The motion passed. A motion that the Town Clerk cast one ballot for Robert Gerner was moved and seconded on the floor. The motion passed. The Town Clerk declared that Robert Gerner is elected temporary moderator. The oath of office was administered and Mr. Gerner presided over the meeting and stated the rules to be followed.

Mr. Furlong noted the following typographical errors on the warrant:

- In Article 2, the column heading "Budget Approved FY 2003" should be Budget Approved FY 2004, the column heading "Budget Requested FY 2004" should be Budget Requested FY 2005 and the column heading "Budget Recommended FY 2004" should be Budget Recommended FY 2005.
- In Article 3, the sum of "\$150,743.00" should be \$91,912.

The following articles were voted on:

**Article 1:** To see if the Town will vote to allow the following boards to employ their members, pursuant to Chapter 41, Section 4A of the Massachusetts General Laws and to pay members at the listed hourly rates.

- 1.) Board of Health at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for the performance of their duties as Board of Health members.
- 2.) Cemetery Commission at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for the performance of their duties as Cemetery Commission members in maintaining the cemeteries.
- 3.) Conservation Commission at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for the performance of their duties as Conservation Commission members.
- 4.) Planning Board Chairman at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for time spent doing research that is in excess of meeting time.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 1** was moved by William Cavanaugh and seconded by John Murray. Discussion followed on the difference in language of item 4. Mr. Furlong noted that neither the Board of Health nor the Conservation Commission pay themselves. Mr. Falcone made a motion to amend the article by changing items 1-3 to also read "that is in excess of meeting time". Discussion followed on the amendment. A vote was taken and the amendment passed. The amended article is as follows:

**Article 1:** To see if the Town will vote to allow the following boards to employ their members, pursuant to Chapter 41, Section 4A of the Massachusetts General Laws and to pay members at the listed hourly rates.

- 1) Board of Health at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for the performance of their duties as Board of Health members that is in excess of meeting time.
- 2) Cemetery Commission at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for the performance of their duties as Cemetery Commission members in maintaining the cemeteries that is in excess of meeting time.
- 3) Conservation Commission at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for the performance of their duties as Conservation Commission members that is in excess of meeting time.
- 4) Planning Board Chairman at the rate of \$11.65 per hour for time spent doing research that is in excess of meeting time.

Discussion followed on the amended article including a discussion of cemetery commissioner salaries. A vote was taken on the amended article. **Article 1 as amended passed unanimously.**

**Article 2:** 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	%
	FY. 2003	FY. 2004	APPROVED	REQUESTED	RECOMMENDED	Chan
<b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>						
1.TOWN COUNSEL	\$3,000.00		\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	0.0%	
2.LEGAL EXPENSE	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	0.0%	
3.MODERATOR	\$100.00		\$100.00	\$100.00	0.0%	
4.MODERATOR EX.	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	0.0%		
5.SELECTMENS' SALARIES	\$4,500.00		\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	0.0%	
6.SELECTMENS' EXPENSES	\$1,100.00		\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00	0.0%	

7.ADVERTISING	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	0.0%	
8.TOWN SECRETARY	\$27,698.00	\$29,640.00	\$29,640.00	7.0%	
9.TOWN ADMIN. SALARY	\$39,946.00	\$41,144.00	\$41,144.00	3.0%	
10.TOWN ADMIN. EXPENSE	\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00	0.0%	
12.FINANCE COMMITTEE	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	0.0%	
13.ASSESSORS' SALARIES	\$77,377.00	\$84,711.00	\$84,711.00	9.5%	
14.ASSESSORS' EXPENSE	\$12,800.00	\$12,800.00	\$12,800.00	0.0%	
15.TOWN TREASURER SAL.	\$26,378.00	\$28,235.00	\$28,235.00	7.0%	
16.TOWN TREASURER EXP.	\$4,400.00	\$4,675.00	\$4,675.00	6.3%	
17.TAX TITLE	\$4,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	50.0%	
18.TAX COLLECTOR SALARY		\$24,254.00	\$24,985.00	\$24,985.00	3.0%
19.TAX COLLECTOR EXPENS	\$6,800.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	2.9%	
20.ASSIT. TAX COLLECTOR	\$11,880.00	\$22,440.00	\$22,440.00	88.9%	
21.TOWN CLERK SALARY	\$12,103.00	\$15,652.00	\$15,652.00	29.3%	
22.TOWN CLERK EXPENSE	\$1,080.00	\$1,345.00	\$1,345.00	24.5%	
23.ELECTION-REGISTRATIO	\$4,330.00	\$5,639.00	\$5,639.00	30.2%	
24.CONSERVATION COMM.	\$5,500.00	\$7,177.00	\$6,177.00	12.3%	
25.PLANNING BOARD EXPEN	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00	25.0%	
26.REGIONAL PLAN COM.	\$987.00	\$1,011.00	\$1,011.00	2.4%	
27.BOARD of APPEALS	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	0.0%	
<b>SUBTOTAL GEN. GOVT.</b>	<b>\$274,633.00</b>	<b>\$308,054.00</b>	<b>\$307,054.00</b>	<b>11.8%</b>	

#### HIGHWAY

28.GENERAL MAINTENANCE	\$209,000.00	\$214,000.00	\$214,000.00	2.4%	
29.VACATION & HOLIDAYS	\$31,563.00	\$30,372.00	\$30,372.00	-3.8%	
30.MACHINERY ACCOUNT	\$36,000.00	\$37,000.00	\$37,000.00	2.8%	
31.RECONST of GRAVEL RD	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00	0.0%	
32.FUEL ACCOUNT	\$25,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00	20.0%	
33.WINTER ROADS	\$130,000.00	\$143,500.00	\$135,000.00	3.8%	
34.STREET LIGHTS	\$6,500.00	\$6,800.00	\$6,800.00	4.6%	
<b>SUBTOTAL HIGHWAYS</b>	<b>\$473,063.00</b>	<b>\$496,672.00</b>	<b>\$488,172.00</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	

#### SCHOOLS and LIBRARIES

35.SCHOOL OPERATING	\$1,474,859.00	\$1,575,684.00	\$1,575,684.00	6.8%	
36.SCHOOL CAPITAL	\$13,850.00	\$20,787.00	\$20,787.00	50.1%	
37.VOCATIONAL TUITION	\$86,000.00	\$47,500.00	\$47,500.00	-44.8%	
38.VOCATIONAL TRANSPORT	\$33,500.00	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00	64.2%	
39.LIBRARY	\$20,000.00	\$21,000.00	\$21,000.00	5.0%	
40.SO BERK LITERACY NET	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	0.0%	
<b>SUBTOTAL SCHOOL &amp; LIB.</b>	<b>\$1,628,609.00</b>	<b>\$1,720,371.00</b>	<b>\$1,720,371.00</b>	<b>5.6%</b>	

#### VETERANS

41.VETERANS AGENT SALAR	\$1,488.00	\$1,562.00	\$1,562.00	5.0%	
42.VETERANS AGENT EXPEN	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	0.0%	
43.VETERANS BENEFITS	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	\$3,000.00	-25.0%	
44.MEMORIAL DAY	\$450.00	\$450.00	\$450.00	0.0%	
<b>TOTAL VETERANS</b>	<b>\$6,338.00</b>	<b>\$6,412.00</b>	<b>\$5,412.00</b>	<b>-14.6%</b>	

#### CEMETERIES

45.BECKET CENTER	\$2,500.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	20.0%	
46.NORTH BECKET CEMETER	\$4,500.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	11.1%	
47.WEST BECKET	\$600.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	66.7%	
<b>SUBTOTAL CEMETERIES</b>	<b>\$7,600.00</b>	<b>\$9,000.00</b>	<b>\$9,000.00</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	

#### PROTECT. PERSON & PROP

48.POLICE DEPT SALARIES	\$112,000.00	\$130,945.00	\$130,945.00	16.9%	
49.POLICE DEPT. EXPENSE	\$14,000.00	\$15,500.00	\$15,500.00	10.7%	
50.HARBOR MASTER	\$940.00	\$940.00	\$940.00	0.0%	
51.OUT REACH PROGRAM	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00	\$1,250.00	0.0%	
52.CONSTABLE EXPENSE	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	0.0%	
53.FIRE CHIEF SALARY	\$3,220.00	\$3,382.00	\$3,382.00	5.0%	
54.FIRE DEPT. EXPENSES	\$16,500.00	\$16,500.00	\$16,500.00	0.0%	
56.BUILDING INSP SALARY	\$48,157.00	\$49,837.00	\$49,837.00	3.5%	
58.BUILDING INSP EXPENS	\$2,260.00	\$3,710.00	\$3,710.00	64.2%	
59.DEMOLITION FUND	\$2,500.00	\$10,000.00	\$5,000.00	100.0%	
60.PUBLIC SAFTY INSPECT	\$6,700.00	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00	4.5%	
61.CIVIL DEFENSE	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	0.0%	
62.DOG OFFICER SALARIES	\$12,928.00	\$10,400.00	\$10,400.00	-19.6%	
63.DOG OFFICER EXPENSES	\$1,430.00	\$1,430.00	\$1,430.00	0.0%	
64.FORESTRY	\$300.00	\$300.00	\$300.00	0.0%	
65.MOTH ACCOUNT	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	0.0%	
66.TREE ACCOUNT	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	0.0%	
<b>TOTAL PROT. PER. &amp; PROP.</b>	<b>\$230,635.00</b>	<b>\$259,644.00</b>	<b>\$254,644.00</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	

#### HEALTH & SANITATION

67.BECKET AMB. SALARIES	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$120,000.00	0.0%	
68.BECKET AMBULANC DEPT	\$15,700.00	\$15,700.00	\$15,700.00	0.0%	
69.E911 COMMUNICATION	\$4,100.00	\$4,581.00	\$4,581.00	11.7%	
70.INSPECTOR of ANIMALS	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	0.0%	
71.TRANSFER STATION	\$77,000.00	\$84,000.00	\$84,000.00	9.1%	
72.SO BERK SOLID WASTE	\$5,200.00	\$5,500.00	\$5,500.00	5.8%	

73.BRD of HEALTH SALARI	\$12,500.00	\$15,000.00	\$13,500.00	8.0%
74.BRD of HEALTH EXPENS	\$5,000.00	\$7,200.00	\$7,200.00	44.0%
75.LEE VISITING NURSE	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	0.0%
76.MENTAL HEALTH CENTER	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	0.0%
<b>TOTAL HEALTH &amp; SANIT.</b>	<b>\$244,700.00</b>	<b>\$257,181.00</b>	<b>\$255,681.00</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>UNCLASSIFIED EXPENSES</b>				
77.STABILIZATION FUND	\$30,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$20,000.00	-33.3%
78.ACCOUNTING SERVICES	\$14,200.00	\$16,000.00	\$16,000.00	12.7%
79.GENERAL INSURANCE	\$81,000.00	\$88,000.00	\$88,000.00	8.6%
80.MUNICIPAL BUILDING	\$29,586.00	\$30,500.00	\$30,500.00	3.1%
81.MUNICIPAL UTILITIES	\$44,494.00	\$46,500.00	\$46,500.00	4.5%
82.TOWN REPORTS	\$4,000.00	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	-25.0%
83.POSTAGE	\$9,500.00	\$9,700.00	\$9,700.00	2.1%
84.COUNCIL on AGING	\$4,420.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	13.1%
85.RECREATION COMM.	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$9,000.00	-10.0%
86.PARKS COMM.	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	0.0%
87.HISTORIC COMMISSION	\$700.00	\$700.00	\$700.00	0.0%
88.INT. SHORT-TERM DEBT	\$6,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	-16.7%
89.COUNTY RETIREMENT	\$88,064.00	\$113,824.00	\$113,824.00	29.3%
90.HEALTH INSURANCE	\$171,000.00	\$180,000.00	\$180,000.00	5.3%
91.PAYROLL TAX ACCOUNT	\$10,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	20.0%
92.RESERVE FUND	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00	0.0%
<b>TOTAL UNCLASS. EXP.</b>	<b>\$519,964.00</b>	<b>\$577,224.00</b>	<b>\$556,224.00</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,385,542.00</b>	<b>\$3,634,558.00</b>	<b>\$3,596,558.00</b>	<b>6.2%</b>

**Article 2** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. The Moderator stated that he would read all the line items aloud. If there were to be any questions or discussion on any item, a "Hold" would be asked to be placed on that item. At the end of the reading of the line items, 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. "Holds" were placed on the following line items:

- Line item 8 – Town Secretary
- Line item 13 – Assessors' Salaries
- Line item 15 – Town Treasurer Salary
- Line item 20 – Assit. Tax Collector
- Line item 21 – Town Clerk Salary
- Line item 33 – Winter Roads
- Line item 35 – School Operating
- Line item 38 – Vocational Transport.
- Line item 56 – Building Insp. Salary
- Line item 73 – Board of Health Salaries
- Line item 74 – Board of Health Expenses
- Line item 90 – Health Insurance

In response to a question, it was noted that some line items were numbered incorrectly due to an error. After reading all line items, a motion was moved and seconded on the floor to vote to approve all line items that did not have a Hold placed on them.

**All line items not held passed unanimously.**

**Line item 8** (Town Secretary \$29,640.00). Jeremy Dunn asked to address the salary increase items as a group. He said that he understood that the requests were based on a wage survey done by an outside firm in the spring of 2003 and that the employees have requested increases that would bring them into or close to the minimum shown in the wage survey. He asked that a portion of the increases be approved instead of the full amount. Mr. Furlong noted that, for about the past 5 years, when employees have asked for increases, the Finance Committee would only approve about a 2-3% increase. This year, the Selectmen have agreed with their salary requests within the wage survey ranges. Discussion followed on the salary increases, hours worked, hourly rates, fees, etc.. In response to a question, it was noted that employees pay for a portion of their health insurance now and within the next couple of years the Town will be paying 80% and the employees 20%. Barbara Roberts noted that the people who work in this Town Hall will earn every penny that they get. They work very hard for us, serve us cordially and professionally and they deserve every penny requested. **Line item 8 passed.**

**Line item 13** (Assessors' Salaries \$84,711.00). There was no discussion. Line item 13 passed.

**Line item 15** (Town Treasurer Salary \$28,235.00). There was no discussion. Line item 15 passed.

**Line item 20** (Assit. Tax Collector \$22,440.00). There was no discussion. Line item 20 passed.

**Line item 21** (Town Clerk Salary \$15,652.00). There was no discussion. Line item 21 passed.

**Line item 33** (Winter Roads \$135,000.00). Discussion followed concerning the difference in the amount requested (\$143,500.00) and the amount recommended (\$135,000.00). Mr. Furlong noted that winter roads is one of the only line item accounts that you

have any leeway with to overrun. If this account is overrun, which it is this year, it can appear on the next year's recap. The recommended amount of \$135,000.00 for **Line item 33 passed.**

**Line item 35** (School Operating \$1,575,684.00). In response to a question, Thomas Potter, Superintendent of Schools, noted that the increase in the request was to re-instate jobs lost in last year's budget. **Line item 35 passed.**

**Line item 38** (Vocational Transport. \$55,000.00). In response to a question, Mr. Furlong said that vocational education and transportation is part of state law. The tuition amount dropped because we had 9 students signed up in April for whom we had to budget, but they weren't all accepted. A municipal relief bill was passed last year by the Legislature that said you do not have to transport vocational students except for certain instances. The Selectmen discussed this and decided that it wasn't fair to stop transporting students who were already enrolled in a program. Mr. Furlong discussed the cost of bussing students to different schools (i.e. Westfield, Taconic, Smith Voc.), the quality of some of the vocational schools and the possibility that the Selectmen could decide to set a time and place not to transport students in the future. In response to a question, Mr. Cavanaugh noted that we had the option of having a vocational school in Becket when we were planning to build the school and decided not to do so as it was determined at the time that it would not be cost-effective. It was decided instead to transport vocational students. He stated that he would always support transporting students who choose to go to a vocational school. **Line item 38 passed.**

**Line item 56** (Building Insp. Salary (\$49,837.00). In response to a question, Mr. Furlong indicated that the Building Inspector salary is over the maximum as noted on the wage survey. Mr. Cavanaugh said that the request was approved because it had been put before the voters previously at an Annual Town Meeting where a very strong case was made for his salary and the Selectmen felt now that they were going along with that mandate. Mr. Fuller spoke in favor of the requested salary noting that the Building Inspector saved the town over \$100,000 by his participation and attendance when needed at meetings concerning the building of the Becket/Washington school. Mr. Elovirta spoke against the request noting that highway employees are not getting a raise because they are over the maximum based on the survey, but the Building Inspector is getting a raise. **Line item 56 was defeated.**

Eve Cholmar made a motion to change the Building Inspector Salary to \$49,000 and it was seconded on the floor. Discussion followed. Mr. Furlong spoke in support of the good work done by the Building Inspector. In response to a question, Mr. Furlong noted that highway department employees are eligible for overtime pay but the building inspector position does not receive overtime. The Moderator called for a vote on the amended Line item 56 for the Building Inspector Salary of \$49,000 and the votes were counted. There were 51 votes in favor and 26 votes opposed. **Line item 56 as amended to \$49,000.00 passed.**

**Line item 73** (Board of Health Salaries \$13,500.00). In response to a question, Mr. Furlong noted that this line item is to fund the amount that was approved in Article 1. Mr. Fuller noted that the Board of Health has not raised fees in the past 5 years. The fees taken in are the same as the amount the Board spends. **Line item 73 passed.**

**Line item 74** (Board of Health Expenses \$7,200.00). There was no discussion. **Line item 74 passed.**

**Line item 90** (Health Insurance \$180,000.00). Madeleine Swindlehurst asked how much employees are contributing to health insurance. Mr. Furlong noted that this year they are contributing 10%, next year 13%, the following year 16% and then 20%; the increases are cumulative and are set by the Selectmen. In response to a question, Mr. Furlong noted that the Town, as a municipality, does not pay unemployment tax. **Line item 90 passed.**

The Moderator asked for a motion to approve the entire Article 2. It was moved and seconded on the floor. **Article 2 passed.**

**Article 3:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$91,912.00 to fund the bond payment for the following previously debt excluded items:

Becket Washington School	\$38,084.00
Nessacus Regional Middle School	\$53,828.00
<b>Selectmen: Recommend</b>	<b>Majority Vote Required</b>

**Article 3** was moved by Madeleine Swindlehurst and seconded on the floor. Following a brief discussion of why this did not appear as a line item, **Article 3 passed unanimously.**

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$125,214.00 to be used for maintenance and reconstruction of Town roads and to fund the appropriation by transferring said amount from available funds with any unspent funds to carry over from year to year until spent by the Town. This sum will be reimbursed to the Town by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in accordance with Chapter 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

<b>Selectmen: Recommend</b>	<b>Majority Vote Required</b>
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**Article 4** was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. **Article 4 passed unanimously.**

**Article 5:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$45,000.00 for the Ambulance Department Salary Account and to fund the appropriation by transferring \$45,000.00 from the Ambulance Department Receipt Reserved Account.

<b>Selectmen: Recommend</b>	<b>Majority Vote Required</b>
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**Article 5** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. In response to a question, Mr. Furlong noted that this amount gets added to the already approved line item amount. This is the cost of 24-hour ambulance service as there are no

volunteers. After a brief discussion, **Article 5 passed unanimously.**

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$120,000.00 for the purchase of a new mini pumper for the Fire Department. This appropriation subject to a Capital Exclusion vote on the Town Election.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 6** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Following a brief comment by the Moderator, **Article 6 passed unanimously.**

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000.00 for ongoing Arts Center building repairs.

**Selectmen: Recommend - \$2,000.00**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 7** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by John Murray. Mr. Furlong noted that the Arts Center is a town building that has been given \$6,000 in previous years and that this year the amount was reduced in order to balance the budget. Robert Gorden asked voters to consider the \$6,000 amount again this year. He said that \$14,000 has been spent on a handicapped access ramp and that a handicapped accessible bathroom is planned. Discussion followed on Arts Center funds and how the money is used. **Article 7 passed unanimously.**

**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,300.00 for the Becket Athenaeum to be used toward building repairs and renovations.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

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

**Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,400.00 for the binding and preserving of Town Clerk and Board of Selectmen records.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 9** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 9 passed unanimously.**

**Article 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,900.00 for the weed treatment of Center Pond.

**Selectmen: Recommend - \$2,500.00**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 10** was moved and seconded on the floor. Mercedes Gallagher said that the Selectmen recommended \$2,500 for this because the Town Beach is on Center Pond. Mr. Cavanaugh agreed noting that approval of \$6,900 could cause other groups to follow suit with requests for assistance. Discussion followed concerning the value of Center Pond, the ongoing weed pulling project and chemical versus manual weed treatments. Robert Gorden made a motion to amend the article to read "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500.00 for the chemical and/or mechanical weed treatment of Center Pond". It was seconded on the floor. Discussion followed on the wording of the amendment. It was agreed to change the word "mechanical" to "manual". The Moderator called for a vote on the amendment and the votes were counted. There were 40 votes in favor and 24 votes opposed. The amendment passed. **Article 10 as amended, "To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500.00 for the chemical and/or manual weed treatment of Center Pond" passed.**

**Article 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 for the purchase of a snowplow for the Highway Department.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 11** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by John Murray. There was no discussion. **Article 11 passed unanimously.**

**Article 12:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,000.00 for the installation of a well at the Highway Department.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 12** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by John Murray. Discussion followed as to why this well was needed. **Article 12 passed.**

**Article 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 for beaver maintenance throughout the Town.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 13** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by John Murray. Bill Elovirta explained that devices have to be installed and maintained to control the beaver; trapping is no longer a solution. He noted that this has become a safety issue to protect our roads. **Article 13 passed unanimously.**

**Article 14:** To see if the Town will vote to purchase from Robert T. Capeless, Jr. a 7,276 square foot parcel of land located on Bancroft Road in the Town of Becket for the purpose of relocating Bancroft Road in conjunction with the construction of a new bridge over the Westfield River and to transfer from Chapter 90 funds the sum of \$2,500.00 and the relocation of a water pipe as the consideration for such purchase.

The said parcel of land is shown on a plan titled "Order of Taking Prepared for the Town of Becket, Berkshire County—Bancroft Road, The Town of Middlefield, Hampshire County—Town Hill Road, Massachusetts, dated March 8, 2004", a copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk together with a metes and bounds description of the parcel to be taken, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 14** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by John Murray. The Moderator noted that, because this article is related to Article 15, we will discuss both articles at the same time. Mr. Furlong explained that this is the only road from Becket to Middlefield. The state is paying for the bridge and they must meet federal standards. Negotiations with Mr. Capeless are ongoing and the issue needs to be resolved within a timeframe needed for the work to go out to bid. The road needs to be straightened and the bridge moved. Mr. Capeless noted that the road may end up on the line with his 6-bedroom septic. Mr. Furlong noted that the town is working with Mr. Capeless on an agreement but it may have to be taken by eminent domain. Discussion followed on a possible settlement and the need to pass both Articles 14 and 15. Mr. Elovirta added he has been trying to secure funds for the bridge for more than 10 years and that for safety reasons the bridge needs to be repaired or it may be closed. **Article 14 passed unanimously.**

**Article 15:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by eminent domain, from Robert T. Capeless, Jr. a 7,276 square foot parcel of land located on Bancroft Road in the Town of Becket for the purpose of relocating Bancroft Road in conjunction with the construction of a new bridge over the Westfield River and to transfer from Chapter 90 funds the sum of \$401.00 as the award for such taking.

The said parcel of land is shown on a plan titled "Order of Taking Prepared for the Town of Becket, Berkshire County—Bancroft Road, The Town of Middlefield, Hampshire County—Town Hill Road, Massachusetts, dated March 8, 2004", a copy of which is on file in the office of the Town Clerk together with a metes and bounds description of the parcel to be taken, or take any other action in relation thereto.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 15** was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. **Article 15 passed unanimously.**

**Article 16:** To see if the Town will vote to accept as gifts the following parcels of land:

- A. Map 204, Lot 138 (0.56 acre), located on Otis Road from the owner Leslie Cooper. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1262, Page 409.
- B. Map 216, Lot 33 (0.76 acre), located on Prince Paul Path from the owner Dominick Dimuro, Jr. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1286, Page 6.
- C. Map 216, Lot 141 (0.27 acre), located on Golden Knight Lane from the owner Henry Roncarti. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle Registry of Deeds in Book 914, Page 162.
- D. Map 216, Lot 351 (0.55 acre), located on King Richard Drive from the owners Bernard and Judith Quinn. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle Registry of Deeds in Book 918, Page 240.
- E. Map 216, Lot 551 (0.24 acre), located on Wells Road from the owner Jane Gaudiosi. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle Registry of Deeds in Book 822, Page 324.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 16** was moved and seconded on the floor. Mr. Furlong made a motion to amend Article 16 by adding:

F. Map 218, Lot 10 (0.60 acre), located on Quill Lane from the owner Great Trails Council, Inc. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1108, Page 257.

G. Map 218, Lot 21 (0.28 acre), located on Porcupine Court from the owner Robert H. Wilcox. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1019, Page 905.

The motion was seconded on the floor. A vote was taken on the amended article and it passed. **Article 16 as amended passed.**

**Article 17:** To see if the Town will vote to declare the following town owned properties as surplus and direct the Board of Selectmen to sell these parcels at a sealed bid sale at their discretion:

- A. Map 204, Lot 138 (0.56 acre), located on Otis Road. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1262, Page 409.
- B. Map 216, Lot 33 (0.76 acre), located on Prince Paul Path. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1286, Page 6.
- C. Map 216, Lot 141 (0.27 acre), located on Golden Knight Lane. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 914, Page 162.
- D. Map 216, Lot 351 (0.55 acre), located on King Richard Drive. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 918, Page 240.
- E. Map 216, Lot 551 (0.24 acre), located on Wells Road. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 822, Page 324.

**Selectmen: Recommend**

**Majority Vote Required**

**Article 17** was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by John Murray. Mr. Furlong made a motion to amend Article 17 by adding:

F. Map 218, Lot 10 (0.60 acre), located on Quill Lane. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1108, Page 257.

G. Map 218, Lot 21 (0.28 acre), located on Porcupine Court. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1019, Page 905.

The motion was seconded on the floor. A vote was taken on the amended article and it passed. **Article 17 as amended passed unanimously.**

A motion to adjourn was moved and seconded on the floor. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m. The Poll Workers were Beverly Gillette, Gale LaBelle and Maryellen Lake.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne W. Pryor

Town Clerk