

## Annual Town Meeting Minutes 5/10/03

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, the Annual Town Meeting was called on May 10, 2003, 7:15 p.m. at Becket Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by the Moderator. A total of 86 voters were present.

Present: Bruce Garlow, Moderator; Robert Beckwith, William Cavanaugh and John Murray, Selectmen; Jeanne Pryor, Town Clerk; Cheryl Powers and Joseph Maiorella, Finance Committee; and Sally Bell, Town Attorney.

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 participate but 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 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 \$11.30 per hour for the performance of their duties as Board of Health members.
- 2.) Cemetery Commission at the rate of \$11.30 per hour for the performance of their duties as Cemetery Commission members in maintaining the cemeteries.
- 3.) Conservation Commission at the rate of \$11.30 per hour for the performance of their duties as Conservation Commission members.
- 4.) Planning Board Chairman at the rate of \$11.30 per hour for time spent doing research that is in excess of meeting time.

**Article 1** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by Cheryl Powers. There was no discussion. **Article 1 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:

|                            | TOWN of BECKET | BUDGET      | BUDGET      | BUDGET      | %      |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------|
|                            | FY. 2004       | APPROVED    | REQUESTED   | RECOMMENDED | Change |
|                            | FY. 2003       | FY. 2004    | FY. 2004    |             |        |
| <b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>  |                |             |             |             |        |
| 1- TOWN COUNSEL            | \$3,000.00     | \$3,000.00  | \$3,000.00  | 0.0%        |        |
| 2- LEGAL EXPENSE           | \$2,000.00     | \$2,000.00  | \$1,000.00  | -50.0%      |        |
| 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          | \$26,890.00    | \$28,235.00 | \$27,698.00 | 3.0%        |        |
| 9- TOWN ADMIN. SALARY      | \$38,783.00    | \$40,722.00 | \$39,946.00 | 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    | \$75,123.00    | \$79,496.00 | \$77,377.00 | 3.0%        |        |
| 14- ASSESSORS' EXPENSE     | \$11,300.00    | \$12,800.00 | \$12,800.00 | 13.3%       |        |
| 15- TOWN TREASURER SALARY  | \$25,609.00    | \$26,890.00 | \$26,378.00 | 3.0%        |        |
| 16- TOWN TREASURER EXP.    | \$3,800.00     | \$4,400.00  | \$4,400.00  | 15.8%       |        |
| 17- TAX TITLE              | \$5,000.00     | \$5,000.00  | \$4,000.00  | -20.0%      |        |
| 18- TAX COLLECTOR SALARY   | \$23,547.00    | \$24,724.00 | \$24,254.00 | 3.0%        |        |
| 19- TAX COLLECTOR EXPENSE  | \$6,000.00     | \$6,800.00  | \$6,800.00  | 13.3%       |        |
| 20- ASSIT. TAX COLLECTOR   | \$6,526.00     | \$11,880.00 | \$11,880.00 | 82.0%       |        |
| 21- TOWN CLERK SALARY      | \$11,750.00    | \$12,338.00 | \$12,103.00 | 3.0%        |        |
| 22- TOWN CLERK EXPENSE     | \$700.00       | \$1,080.00  | \$1,080.00  | 54.3%       |        |
| 23- ELECTION-REGISTRATION  | \$4,000.00     | \$4,330.00  | \$4,330.00  | 8.3%        |        |
| 24- CONSERVATION COMM.     | \$5,000.00     | \$7,467.00  | \$5,500.00  | 10.0%       |        |
| 25- PLANNING BOARD EXPENSE | \$1,700.00     | \$2,000.00  | \$2,000.00  | 17.6%       |        |
| 26- REGIONAL PLAN COM.     | \$987.00       | \$987.00    | \$987.00    | 0.0%        |        |

|     |                            |                     |                     |                     |      |
|-----|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------|
| 27- | BOARD of APPEALS           | \$100.00            | \$100.00            | \$100.00            | 0.0% |
|     | <b>SUBTOTAL GEN. GOVT.</b> | <b>\$260,815.00</b> | <b>\$283,249.00</b> | <b>\$274,633.00</b> | 5.3% |

**TOWN of BECKET Budget Budget BUDGET**  
**APPROVED REQUESTED RECOMMENDED**  
**FY. 2003 FY. 2004 FY. 2004**

**HIGHWAY**

|     |                          |                     |                     |                     |       |
|-----|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------|
| 28- | GENERAL MAINTENANCE      | \$200,000.00        | \$209,000.00        | \$209,000.00        | 4.5%  |
| 29- | VACATION & HOLIDAYS      | \$28,277.00         | \$31,563.00         | \$31,563.00         | 11.6% |
| 30- | MACHINERY ACCOUNT        | \$35,000.00         | \$36,000.00         | \$36,000.00         | 2.9%  |
| 31- | RECONST. of GRAVEL ROADS | \$35,000.00         | \$35,000.00         | \$35,000.00         | 0.0%  |
| 32- | FUEL ACCOUNT             | \$25,000.00         | \$25,000.00         | \$25,000.00         | 0.0%  |
| 33- | WINTER ROADS             | \$130,000.00        | \$139,000.00        | \$130,000.00        | 0.0%  |
| 34- | STREET LIGHTS            | \$6,500.00          | \$6,500.00          | \$6,500.00          | 0.0%  |
|     | <b>SUBTOTAL HIGHWAYS</b> | <b>\$459,777.00</b> | <b>\$482,063.00</b> | <b>\$473,063.00</b> | 2.9%  |

**SCHOOLS and LIBRARIES**

|     |                                   |                       |                       |                       |        |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| 35- | SCHOOL OPERATING                  | \$1,336,119.00        | \$1,615,714.00        | \$1,416,286.00        | 6.0%   |
| 36- | SCHOOL CAPITAL                    | \$15,003.00           | \$13,850.00           | \$13,850.00           | -7.7%  |
| 37- | VOCATIONAL TUITION                | \$52,800.00           | \$86,000.00           | \$86,000.00           | 62.9%  |
| 38- | VOCATIONAL TRANSPORT.             | \$43,200.00           | \$33,500.00           | \$33,500.00           | -22.5% |
| 39- | LIBRARY                           | \$20,000.00           | \$20,000.00           | \$20,000.00           | 0.0%   |
| 40- | SO. BERK. LITERACY NET.           | \$400.00              | \$400.00              | \$400.00              | 0.0%   |
|     | <b>SUBTOTAL SCHOOL &amp; LIB.</b> | <b>\$1,467,522.00</b> | <b>\$1,769,464.00</b> | <b>\$1,570,036.00</b> | 7.0%   |

**VETERANS**

|     |                        |                   |                   |                   |      |
|-----|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------|
| 41- | VETERANS AGENT SALARY  | \$1,488.00        | \$1,488.00        | \$1,488.00        | 0.0% |
| 42- | VETERANS AGENT EXPENSE | \$400.00          | \$400.00          | \$400.00          | 0.0% |
| 43- | VETERANS BENEFITS      | \$4,000.00        | \$4,000.00        | \$4,000.00        | 0.0% |
| 44- | MEMORIAL DAY           | \$450.00          | \$450.00          | \$450.00          | 0.0% |
|     | <b>TOTAL VETERANS</b>  | <b>\$6,338.00</b> | <b>\$6,338.00</b> | <b>\$6,338.00</b> | 0.0% |

**CEMETERIES**

|     |                            |                   |                   |                   |       |
|-----|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|
| 45- | BECKET CENTER              | \$2,250.00        | \$2,500.00        | \$2,500.00        | 11.1% |
| 46- | NORTH BECKET CEMETERY      | \$4,000.00        | \$4,500.00        | \$4,500.00        | 12.5% |
| 47- | WEST BECKET                | \$600.00          | \$600.00          | \$600.00          | 0.0%  |
|     | <b>SUBTOTAL CEMETERIES</b> | <b>\$6,850.00</b> | <b>\$7,600.00</b> | <b>\$7,600.00</b> | 10.9% |

**PROTECT. PERSON & PROP**

|     |                                     |                     |                     |                     |        |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------|
| 48- | POLICE DEPT. SALARIES               | \$95,045.00         | \$112,000.00        | \$112,000.00        | 17.8%  |
| 49- | POLICE DEPT. EXPENSE                | \$12,500.00         | \$14,000.00         | \$14,000.00         | 12.0%  |
| 50- | HARBOR MASTER                       | \$940.00            | \$940.00            | \$940.00            | 0.0%   |
| 51- | OUT REACH PROGRAM                   | \$1,000.00          | \$1,250.00          | \$1,250.00          | 25.0%  |
| 52- | CONSTABLE EXPENSE                   | \$300.00            | \$300.00            | \$300.00            | 0.0%   |
| 53- | FIRE CHIEF SALARY                   | \$3,125.00          | \$3,220.00          | \$3,220.00          | 3.0%   |
| 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         | \$48,157.00         | 0.0%   |
| 58- | BUILDING INSP. EXPENSE              | \$2,260.00          | \$2,960.00          | \$2,260.00          | 0.0%   |
| 59- | DEMOLITION FUND                     | \$5,000.00          | \$10,000.00         | \$2,500.00          | -50.0% |
| 60- | PUBLIC SAFTY INSPECTIONS            | \$6,700.00          | \$6,700.00          | \$6,700.00          | 0.0%   |
| 61- | CIVIL DEFENSE                       | \$50.00             | \$50.00             | \$50.00             | 0.0%   |
| 62- | DOG OFFICER SALARIES                | \$12,928.00         | \$12,928.00         | \$12,928.00         | 0.0%   |
| 63- | DOG OFFICER EXPENSES                | \$2,430.00          | \$2,430.00          | \$1,430.00          | -41.2% |
| 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>\$215,335.00</b> | <b>\$241,515.00</b> | <b>\$230,635.00</b> | 7.1%   |

**HEALTH & SANITATION**

|     |                        |              |              |              |       |
|-----|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| 67- | BECKET AMB. SALARIES   | \$102,411.00 | \$120,000.00 | \$120,000.00 | 17.2% |
| 68- | BECKET AMBULANCE DEPT. | \$15,700.00  | \$15,700.00  | \$15,700.00  | 0.0%  |
| 69- | E911 COMMUNICATION     | \$4,100.00   | \$4,100.00   | \$4,100.00   | 0.0%  |
| 70- | INSPECTOR of ANIMALS   | \$200.00     | \$200.00     | \$200.00     | 0.0%  |
| 71- | TRANSFER STATION       | \$73,000.00  | \$77,000.00  | \$77,000.00  | 5.5%  |

**TOWN of BECKET BUDGET BUDGET BUDGET**  
**APPROVED REQUESTED RECOMMENDED**

|                                  | <u>FY. 2003</u>       | <u>FY. 2004</u>       | <u>FY. 2004</u>       |             |  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--|
| 72- SOUTH BERK. SOLID WASTE      | \$5,184.00            | \$5,200.00            | \$5,200.00            | 0.3%        |  |
| 73- BOARD of HEALTH SALARIES     | \$11,000.00           | \$12,500.00           | \$12,500.00           | 13.6%       |  |
| 74- BOARD of HEALTH EXPENSES     | \$7,200.00            | \$5,000.00            | \$5,000.00            | -30.6%      |  |
| 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>\$223,795.00</b>   | <b>\$244,700.00</b>   | <b>\$244,700.00</b>   | <b>9.3%</b> |  |
| <b>UNCLASSIFIED EXPENSES</b>     |                       |                       |                       |             |  |
| 77- STABILIZATION FUND           | \$40,000.00           | \$40,000.00           | \$30,000.00           | -25.0%      |  |
| 78- ACCOUNTING SERVICES          | \$13,800.00           | \$14,200.00           | \$14,200.00           | 2.9%        |  |
| 79- GENERAL INSURANCE            | \$72,325.00           | \$81,000.00           | \$81,000.00           | 12.0%       |  |
| 80- MUNICIPAL BUILDING           | \$28,700.00           | \$29,586.00           | \$29,586.00           | 3.1%        |  |
| 81- MUNICIPAL UTILITIES          | \$42,375.00           | \$44,494.00           | \$44,494.00           | 5.0%        |  |
| 82- TOWN REPORTS                 | \$2,800.00            | \$4,000.00            | \$4,000.00            | 42.9%       |  |
| 83- POSTAGE                      | \$9,500.00            | \$9,500.00            | \$9,500.00            | 0.0%        |  |
| 84- COUNCIL on AGING             | \$4,420.00            | \$4,420.00            | \$4,420.00            | 0.0%        |  |
| 85- RECREATION COMM.             | \$10,000.00           | \$10,000.00           | \$10,000.00           | 0.0%        |  |
| 86- PARKS COMM.                  | \$9,000.00            | \$9,000.00            | \$9,000.00            | 0.0%        |  |
| 87- HISTORIC COMMISSION          | \$600.00              | \$700.00              | \$700.00              | 16.7%       |  |
| 88- INT. SHORT-TERM DEBT         | \$25,000.00           | \$6,000.00            | \$6,000.00            | -76.0%      |  |
| 89- COUNTY RETIREMENT            | \$83,331.00           | \$88,064.00           | \$88,064.00           | 5.7%        |  |
| 90- HEALTH INSURANCE             | \$146,956.00          | \$180,000.00          | \$171,000.00          | 16.4%       |  |
| 91- PAYROLL TAX ACCOUNT          | \$8,000.00            | \$10,000.00           | \$10,000.00           | 25.0%       |  |
| 92- RESERVE FUND                 | \$8,000.00            | \$8,000.00            | \$8,000.00            | 0.0%        |  |
| <b>TOTAL UNCLASS. EXP.</b>       | <b>\$504,807.00</b>   | <b>\$538,964.00</b>   | <b>\$519,964.00</b>   | <b>3.0%</b> |  |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>               | <b>\$3,145,239.00</b> | <b>\$3,573,893.00</b> | <b>\$3,326,969.00</b> | <b>5.8%</b> |  |

The Moderator noted that Article 2 was recommended by both the Selectmen and the Finance Committee. Article 2 was moved and seconded on the floor. The Moderator stated that he would read all the line items aloud. If there was to be any discussion on any item, then 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 35** (School Operating).  
**Line Item 37** (Vocational Tuition)  
**Line Item 56** (Building Insp. Salary)  
**Line Item 82** (Town Reports)

At this time all other line items (those not having "Holds" placed on them) were voted on. **All line items not held passed unanimously.**

**Line Item 35** (School Operating). Mr. Soluri, member of the School Committee, proposed a substitute motion "to approve the dollar amount of \$1,615,714.00 for the 2004 operating budget as certified by the Berkshire Regional School District." The motion was seconded from the floor.

Mr. Soluri gave a presentation on the FY2004 school budget noting unknown but anticipated cuts from the Governor and/or the Legislature. He referred to the School District FY2004 Budget handout giving details of the budget, including cuts in transportation. He noted the quality of the school district at a cost of less than \$6,000 per student and asked for support of the budget as proposed.

Discussion followed on how accepting this higher budget amount would affect the overall Town budget and if other purchases in the Town's budget should be deferred. The Finance Committee indicated that an override would be needed if the larger school budget amount is accepted. This would cause an increase of \$0.80 per thousand in the tax rate. Giles Falcone stated that these are tough times that should not come on the backs of our children and that perhaps the Town should consider not giving pay raises this year. Jonathan Melle noted that, since we don't know what the final budget will be, perhaps we should put off the vote for the higher amount to later in the fiscal year. Superintendent Potter explained that school employees need to be notified of their status

by June 15. Madeleine Swindlehurst said that she would like to support the higher amount and proposed to defer other items in the Town's budget to avoid an override. Discussion followed on substituting the numbers on this line item. Bill Elovirta and others spoke in support of not deferring the purchase of needed equipment. It was noted that local legislators should be contacted asking for their support to restore funding to towns and schools.

A vote was taken on substituting the higher amount and the higher amount passed. Robert Beckwith made a motion to amend as follows:

“that the town raise and appropriate \$1,416,286.00 to pay its assessed share of the Central Berkshire Regional School District Budget for fiscal year 2004 and that it raise and appropriate the additional \$199,428.00 required to fully fund the assessment and thereby approve the district's budget for the year, provided that this additional appropriation be contingent on the approval of a levy limit override question under General Laws Chapter 59 §21 C(g).”

The motion was seconded from the floor. Discussion followed on the dollar amount and on when an override vote would be scheduled by the Selectmen. Jack Young moved to add the words “if necessary” and the motion was seconded on the floor. Discussion on the amended wording followed. A vote was taken on amending the motion and passed. A vote was then taken on the amended item as follows:

“that the town raise and appropriate \$1,416,286.00 to pay its assessed share of the Central Berkshire Regional School District Budget for fiscal year 2004 and that it raise and appropriate the additional \$199,428.00 required to fully fund the assessment and thereby approve the district's budget for the year, provided that this additional appropriation be contingent on the approval of a levy limit override question, if necessary, under General Laws Chapter 59 §21 C(g).”

This passed and the line item was amended to make it contingent on an override vote, if necessary, and the Selectman agreed to call a Special Town Election hastily. A vote was then taken on the Line Item as amended. **Line Item 35, as amended, passed.**

**Line Item 37** (Vocational Tuition). After a brief discussion, **Line Item 37 passed.**

**Line Item 56** (Building Insp. Salary). A question was raised as to why other employees were receiving a raise but not the Building Inspector. Discussion followed concerning the Inspector's Salary. Cheryl Powers noted that the Finance Committee's review of the recent salary study indicated that the Town of Becket Inspector's Salary was already more than the salary of other inspectors in area towns. **Line Item 56 passed.**

**Line Item 82** (Town Reports). In response to a question, it was noted that the Article Explanations indicated that the increased amount this year was for the printing of the Town Assessments book which is required by Town bylaw to be printed every five years. **Line Item 82 passed.**

**Article 3:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$150,743.00 to fund the bond payment for the following previously debt excluded items:

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Becket Washington School        | \$98,952.00 |
| Nessacus Regional Middle School | \$51,791.00 |

**Article 3** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by Cheryl Powers. After a brief discussion, **Article 3 passed unanimously.**

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$187,618.02 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.

**Article 4** was moved and seconded on the floor. After a brief 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.

**Article 5** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Discussion followed concerning two sources of funds for the Ambulance Department, this article and 2 line items. Mark Hanford moved that this article go to a committee and it was seconded on the floor. Discussion followed. The amendment failed. The Moderator stated that the article stands. **Article 5 passed.**

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of no more than \$120,000.00 for the purchase of a 4 wheel drive dump truck for the Highway Department and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$120,000.00 from the Stabilization Account.

**Article 6** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded from the floor. Discussion followed on whether or not it might be possible to defer this purchase due to the increased expense of the school budget this year. Bill Elovirta explained that the Highway Department is on a schedule to replace equipment, that this truck had been deferred last year and it would negatively impact the department's ability to maintain and plow roads if it was deferred again. Madeleine Swindlehurst made a motion to amend the article by striking out the words "by transferring \$120,000.00 from the Stabilization Account" to "and make this appropriation contingent on capital debt exclusion". After further discussion a vote was taken. The amendment failed. The Moderator called for a vote on Article 6 and the votes were counted. There were 62 votes in favor and 17 votes opposed. **Article 6 passed.**

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of no more than \$35,000.00 for the purchase of a 4X4 Police Cruiser for the Police Department and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$35,000.00 from the Stabilization Account.

**Article 7** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by Cheryl Powers. Discussion followed on possibly deferring this purchase. Bill Elovirta gave an explanation as to why the purchase of the cruiser was needed. The Moderator called for a vote on Article 7 and the votes were counted. There were 69 votes in favor and 4 votes opposed. **Article 7 passed.**

**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 to perform an audit of the Town's records for fiscal year 2002.

**Article 8** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by John Murray. There was no discussion. **Article 8 passed unanimously.**

**Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,000.00 to establish an unemployment account.

**Article 9** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by Jack Young. In response to questions, Bill Elovirta and Cheryl Powers gave explanations as to why this account was needed. **Article 9 passed unanimously.**

**Article 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,000.00 for the binding and preserving of Town Clerk and Board of Selectmen records.

**Article 10** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 10 passed unanimously.**

**Article 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,200.00 for ongoing Arts Center building repairs.

**Article 11** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 11 passed unanimously.**

**Article 12:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,300.00 for Police Academy Tuition.

**Article 12** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 12 passed.**

**Article 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$14,700.00 for the purchase of skateboard equipment.

**Article 13** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Rita Furlong gave an explanation in support of this article on behalf of the children. Mark Hanford recommended that this equipment not be purchased as it is dangerous and a liability to the Town. Rob Gorden made a motion to amend the article by changing the amount from \$14,700 to \$500. It was seconded by Madeleine Swindlehurst. Following further discussion, Cheryl Powers said that the Finance Committee did not recommend this article due to the economic situation. A vote was taken on the amendment and it failed. The Moderator called for a vote on Article 13. **Article 13 failed.**

**Article 14:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000.00 to bring the Highway Garage into compliance with DEP regulations.

**Article 14** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded from the floor. There was no discussion. **Article 14 passed unanimously.**

**Article 15:** To see if the Town will authorize the Treasurer to establish a revolving dog fine account in accordance with the provisions of Section 53E ½ of Chapter 44 of the Massachusetts General Laws in order to place all revenue collected through dog fines in a separate account which will be used to provide a fee for the dog officer. The amounts expended from that fund shall not exceed \$3,000.00 and shall be approved by the Town Administrator.

**Article 15** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded from the floor. Bruce Garlow gave an explanation of a revolving fund account. Questions were raised as to why these extra funds are needed. Selectman Cavanaugh gave an explanation of the animal control officers' duties and Selectman Beckwith explained why this was needed. **Article 15 failed.**

**Article 16:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$7,800.00 to reduce the tax rate and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$7,800.00 from Overlay Surplus.

**Article 16** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Discussion followed. Sue Donnelly gave an explanation of overlay accounts. Pam Dutton made a motion to amend Article 16 to read "to reduce the school operating budget". The motion was seconded and discussion followed concerning the tax rate. A vote was taken on the amended article and it passed. The substitute article reads

"To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$7,800.00 to reduce the school operating budget and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$7,800.00 from Overlay Surplus."

**Article 16, as amended, passed.**

**Article 17:** To see if the Town will vote to rescind the vote taken at the Annual Town Meeting of May 11, 2002, Article 10 which reads as follows:

*"To see if the Town will vote to declare the Mullen House as surplus property and direct the Selectmen to sell same to the highest bidder. Any funds received from the sale to be transferred to the Becket Scholarship Committee to set up an "Eleanor Mullen Scholarship Fund" or take any other action thereto."*

or take any other action thereto.

**Article 17** was moved on the floor and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Ken Smith, Chair of the Mullen House Task Force, referred to the Task Force's report that was handed out at the meeting and gave a presentation on the work and recommendations of the Task Force. The Task Force recommends that the Town retain ownership of the Mullen House, so that the process of planning and renovating the building and turning it into an educational center be continued. Rob Gorden said that he had recently met with a representative from Verizon who indicated that a septic system easement could be granted for the Mullen House.

Discussion followed on the previous uses of the Mullen House and why keeping this house in good repair is a positive improvement for the Town. **Article 17 passed unanimously.**

**Article 18:** To see if the Town will enact a temporary tax amnesty program during 2003, in accordance with Chapter 4 §73 of the Acts of 2003, or take any other action relative thereto.

**To be voted:** That the Town of Becket enact the following tax amnesty program, in accordance with Chapter 4 §73 of the Acts of 2003, in order to encourage the payment of certain delinquent tax obligations.

Section 1. Amnesty Period: The amnesty program shall begin on June 1, 2003 and end on October 31, 2003 at 3:00 p.m.

Section 2. Program Scope: The amnesty program of the Town of Becket will only include properties currently in tax title. The Town will waive all accrued interest on the tax title account. The taxpayer will still be responsible for the assessed tax, penalties and charges due relative to the taking and redemption of title. Taxpayer must also satisfy any betterment liens and interest related to the lien at the time of payment. Payments must be made in cash, certified check or bank check and must be made before 3:00 p.m. on October 31, 2003.

**Article 18** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by Cheryl Powers. In response to a question, it was noted that the accrued interest on road district tax title accounts would be waived also. Sue Donnelly gave an explanation of the amnesty program. **Article 18 passed.**

**Article 19:** To see if the Town will vote to accept as a gift the following parcel of land:

- A. Map 217, Lot 227 (0.41 acre), located on King Richard Drive from the estate of Eleanor V. Daley. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 2035, Page 209.
- B. Map 217, Lot 179 (0.25 acre), located on Alan A Dale Drive from the owner Viola Soules. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 894, Page 116.
- C. Map 204, Lot 134 (1.10 acre), located on Bruce Roy Lane from the owner Lucille Peterson. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1249, Page 256.
- D. Map 216, Lot 821 (0.36 acre), located on Sherwood Drive from the owners John & Cecelia Vaughan. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 914, Page 104.
- E. Map 213, Lot 81 (0.53 acre), located on Long Bow Lane West from the owners Ronald and Mary Spenard. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 909, Page 274.

A motion to dispense with the reading of the article was made and seconded on the floor. It passed unanimously. **Article 19** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 19 passed.**

**Article 20:** 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 217, Lot 227 (0.41 acre), located on King Richard Road. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 2035, Page 209.
- B. Map 217, Lot 179 (0.25 acre), located on Alan A Dale Drive. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 894, Page 116.
- C. Map 204, Lot 134 (1.10 acre), located on Bruce Roy Lane. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1249, Page 256.
- D. Map 216, Lot 821 (0.36 acre), located on Sherwood Drive. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 914, Page 104.
- E. Map 213, Lot 81 (0.53 acre), located on Long Bow Lane West. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 909, Page 274.

A motion to dispense with the reading of the article was made and seconded on the floor. It passed unanimously. **Article 20** was moved by Robert Beckwith and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 20 passed unanimously.**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded from the floor. This passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:18 p.m.

The Poll Workers were Gale LaBelle and Jonathan Melle.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne W. Pryor  
Town Clerk