

## Annual Town Meeting Minutes 5/11/02

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, the Annual Town Meeting was held at the Becket Town Hall on May 11, 2002 at 7:15 P.M. for the following articles:

PRESENT: Bruce Garlow, Moderator. William Cavanaugh, Robert Beckwith, and John Murray, Selectmen. Ann Spadafora, Cheryl Powers, Joseph Maiorella, and Stephen LaBelle, Finance Committee Members. Richard Furlong, Town Administrator. Sally Bell, Town Attorney.

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order. There were 68 registered voters present. The Moderator opened the meeting stating the rules to be followed. A show of hands from non-registered voters was called for.

The warrant was read and noted 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.

**Article 1** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by William Cavanaugh. 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:

### GENERAL GOVERNMENT

1. TOWN COUNSEL	\$ 3,000.00
2. LEGAL EXPENSE	\$ 2,000.00
3. MODERATOR	\$ 100.00
4. MODERATOR EX.	\$ 50.00
5. SELECTMENS' SALARIES	\$ 4,617.00
6. SELECTMENS' EX.	\$ 1,100.00
7. ADVERTISING	\$ 2,000.00
8. TOWN SECRETARY	\$ 26,890.00
9. TOWN ADMIN. SALARY	\$ 38,783.00

10. TOWN ADMIN. EXPENSE	\$ 1,100.00
11. TEMP. OFFICE HELP	\$ 0.00
12. FINANCE COMMITTEE	\$ 150.00
13. ASSESSORS' SALARIES	\$ 75,123.00
14. ASSESSORS' EXPENSE	\$ 11,300.00
15. TOWN TREASURER SALARY	\$ 25,609.00
16. TOWN TREASURER EXP.	\$ 3,800.00
17. TAX TITLE	\$ 5,000.00
18. TAX COLLECTOR SALARY	\$ 23,547.00
19. TAX COLLECTOR EXPENSE	\$ 6,000.00
20. ASSIT. TAX COLLECTOR	\$ 6,526.00
21. TOWN CLERK SALARY	\$ 11,750.00
22. TOWN CLERK EXPENSE	\$ 700.00
23. ELECTION-REGISTRATION	\$ 4,000.00
24. CONSERVATION COMM.	\$ 5,000.00
25. PLANNING BOARD EXPENSE	\$ 1,700.00
26. REGIONAL PLAN COM.	\$ 987.00
27. BOARD OF APPEALS	\$ 100.00

#### **HIGHWAY**

28. GENERAL MAINTENANCE	\$ 200,000.00
29. VACATION & HOLIDAYS	\$ 28,277.00
30. MACHINERY ACCOUNT	\$ 35,000.00
31. RECONST. OF GRAVEL ROADS	\$ 35,000.00
32. FUEL ACCOUNT	\$ 25,000.00
33. WINTER ROADS	\$ 130,000.00
34. STREET LIGHTS	\$ 6,500.00

#### **SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES**

35. SCHOOL OPERATING	\$1,336,119.00
36. SCHOOL CAPITAL	\$ 15,003.00

37. VOCATIONAL TUITION	\$ 52,800.00
38. VOCATIONAL TRANSPORT.	\$ 43,200.00
39. LIBRARY	\$ 20,000.00
40. SO. BERK. LITERACY NET.	\$ 400.00

**VETERANS**

41. VETERANS AGENT SALARY	\$ 1,488.00
42. VETERANS AGENT EXPENSE	\$ 400.00
43. VETERANS BENEFITS	\$ 4,000.00
44. MEMORIAL DAY	\$ 450.00

**CEMETERIES**

45. BECKET CENTER	\$ 2,250.00
46. NORTH BECKET CEMETERY	\$ 4,000.00
47. WEST BECKET	\$ 600.00

**PROTECT, PERSON & PROP.**

48. POLICE DEPT. SALARIES	\$ 95,045.00
49. POLICE DEPT. EXPENSE	\$ 12,500.00
50. HARBOR MASTER	\$ 940.00
51. OUT REACH PROGRAM	\$ 1,000.00
52. CONSTABLE EXPENSE	\$ 300.00
53. FIRE CHIEF SALARY	\$ 3,125.00
54. FIRE DEPT. EXPENSES	\$ 16,500.00
56. BUILDING INSP. SALARY	\$ 38,688.00
57. CODE ENFORCER	\$ -0-
58. BUILDING INSP. EXPENSE	\$ 2,260.00
59. DEMOLITION FUND	\$ 5,000.00
60. PUBLIC SAFETY INSPECTIONS	\$ 6,700.00
61. CIVIL DEFENSE	\$ 50.00
62. DOG OFFICER SALARIES	\$ 12,928.00
63. DOG OFFICER EXPENSES	\$ 2,430.00
64. FORESTRY	\$ 300.00

65. MOTH ACCOUNT	\$ 100.00
66. TREE ACCOUNT	\$ 8,000.00

#### **HEALTH & SANITATION**

67. BECKET AMB SALARIES	\$ 75,411.00
68. BECKET AMBULANCE DEPT.	\$ 15,700.00
69. E911 COMMUNICATION	\$ 4,100.00
70. INSPECTOR OF ANIMALS	\$ 200.00
71. TRANSFER STATION	\$ 73,000.00
72. SOUTH BERK. SOLID WASTE	\$ 5,184.00
73. BOARD OF HEALTH SALARIES	\$ 11,000.00
74. BOARD OF HEALTH EXPENSES	\$ 7,200.00
75. LEE VISITING NURSE	\$ 4,500.00
76. MENTAL HEALTH CENTER	\$ 500.00

#### **UNCLASSIFIED EXPENSES**

77. STABILIZATION FUND	\$ 40,000.00
78. ACCOUNTING SERVICES	\$ 13,800.00
79. GENERAL INSURANCE	\$ 72,325.00
80. MUNICIPAL BUILDING	\$ 28,700.00
81. MUNICIPAL UTILITIES	\$ 42,375.00
82. TOWN REPORTS	\$ 2,800.00
83. POSTAGE	\$ 9,500.00
84. COUNCIL ON AGING	\$ 4,420.00
85. RECREATION COMM.	\$ 10,000.00
86. PARKS COMM.	\$ 9,000.00
87. HISTORIC COMMISSION	\$ 600.00
88. INT. SHORT-TERM DEBT	\$ 25,000.00
89. COUNTY RETIREMENT	\$ 83,331.00
90. HEALTH INSURANCE	\$ 146,956.00
91. PAYROLL TAX ACCOUNT	\$ 8,000.00

**Article 2** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by William Cavanaugh. 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" should be asked to be placed on that item. At the end of the reading of the line items all items not having had a "Hold" put on them would be voted on. Following this, all line item having a "Hold" would then be voted on separately.

**"Holds"** were placed on the following line items:

- 5. Selectmens' Salaries
- 11. Temp. Office Help
- 21. Town Clerk Salary
- 24. Conservation Comm.
- 34. Street Lights
- 36. School Capital
- 48. Police Dept. Salaries
- 56. Building Insp. Salary
- 57. Code Enforcement
- 73. Board of Health Salaries
- 90. Health Insurance

At this time all the other line items (those not having had "Holds" placed on them) were voted on. All these line items Passed Unanimously.

**Line Item 5 (Selectmens' Salaries).** Madeleine Swindlehurst stated that she did not feel that the these salaries should be increased because the Selectmen were not meeting every week any more. She moved that the salaries be cut to \$4,500.00 (2002 approved budget amount). This was seconded from the floor. The amendment passed.

The Amended Line Item was then voted on. It Passed.

**Line Item 5 (Selectmens' Salaries) \$4,500.00.**

**Line Item 11 (Temp. Office Help).** Madeleine Swindlehurst asked why the town did not need this office help. Richard Furlong gave a brief explanation.

**Line Item 11** Passed Unanimously.

**Line Item 21 (Town Clerk Salary).** Madeleine Swindlehurst asked if this salary should be reconsidered because a new town clerk is going to have to be appointed and his/her hours have not been established yet. Richard spoke briefly.

**Line Item 21 (Town Clerk Salary)** Passed Unanimously.

**Line Item 24 (Conservation Comm.)** Madeleine Swindlehurst asked why less money (than requested) was being voted on. Both Richard Furlong and Kathy Vsetecka gave explanations.

**Line Item 24 (Conservation Comm.)** Passed Unanimously.

**Line Item 34 (Street Lights)** Madeleine Swindlehurst asked why the amount in this account was being lowered. Richard Furlong explained.

**Line Item 34 (Street Lights)** Passed Unanimously.

**Line Item 36 (School Capital)** Richard Furlong gave a brief explanation of what the expenses were for this line item.

**Line Item 36 (School Capital)** Passed Unanimously.

**Line Item 48 (Police Dept. Salaries)** Madeleine Swindlehurst asked Bill Elovirta why the police salary budget was going up 28.8%. Bill gave an explanation. He stated that the town needs a second full-time police officer.

**Line Item 48 (Police Dept. Salaries)** Passed.

**Line Item 56 (Building Inspector Salary)** It was asked why the Building Inspector's salary was being increased by 27.3%. Keith explained what his hours were and what his hourly rate was. Richard Furlong stated that the Selectmen would like to see the Building Inspector be a full time position, and if this happened, the Building Inspector would also be the Code Enforcer. Several people spoke out stating what a great job Keith was doing as Building Inspector and how he had helped out different home owners. Martie Martin said that he was very good in working with the Conservation Commission.

Joan Kaiser made the motion that the Building Inspector's Salary be raised to \$48,157.00 (requested 2003 budget). This motion was seconded on the floor. Bruce Garlow questioned if this could be done, because the tradition of the town was not to raise line item amounts. A brief discussion followed and it was decided that this could be done because the amount had been requested.

The amendment Passed.

**Line Item 56 (Building Inspector Salary) \$48,157.00** Passed Unanimously.

**Line Item 57 (Code Enforcer)** Passed.

**Line Item 73 (Board of Health Salaries)** Madeleine Swindlehurst asked how the Board of Health felt about the cut in the salary amount. Richard stated that they were in agreement with this.

**Line Item 73 (Board of Health Salaries)** Passed.

**Line Item 90 (Health Insurance)** A discussion took place concerning how many people were on the insurance and if insurance programs and carriers had been researched.

**Line Item 90 (Heath Insurance)** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 3:** 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 3** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion.

**Article 3** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$40,000.00 for the Ambulance Department Salary Account and to fund the appropriation by transferring \$40,000.00 from the Ambulance Department Receipt Reserved Account.

**Article 4** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by Ann Spadafora. No discussion followed.

**Article 4** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 5:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of no more than \$80,000.00 for the purchase of a new loader for the Highway Department and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$80,000.00 from the Stabilization Account.

**Article 5** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Several questions were asked of Bill concerning the repairs needed on the old loader.

**Article 5** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$16,700.00 for the purchase of skateboard equipment.

**Article 6** was moved by Rita Furlong and seconded from the floor. Rita Furlong gave a brief explanation of what this equipment is and why it is so expensive. Several people questioned if the town would be at a greater liability risk. Several people felt that this was a luxury item and that this was not the year to obtain this equipment. Several other people stated that if this amount of money was appropriated that it should go towards other needs.

**Article 6** Failed.

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,000.00 to replace our current voting machines with an electronic voting system.

**Article 7** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by Robert Beckwith. A discussion followed. Several voters asked what the machines did and how they worked and what the benefits would be.

**Article 7** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,500.00 to replace the mower at Becket Center Cemetery.

**Article 8** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by William Cavanaugh. A brief discussion followed.

**Article 8** Passed.

**Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$6,000.00 for ongoing Arts Center building repairs.

**Article 9** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by William Cavanaugh. A discussion followed. It was asked what repairs were going to be covered. It was asked if the Arts Center has a way of getting contributions from people using the Art Center. It was stated that the Art Center has 200 members which pay a membership fee and that donations are given from other visitors.

Madeleine Swindlehurst stated that she is not against this appropriation and asked the Town Administrator to look into the roof and ice slide problems that the Art Center is having.

**Article 9** Passed.

**Article 10:** 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.

**Article 10** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by John Murray. Richard gave a brief history of the Mullen House.

**Article 10** Passed.

**Article 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 to create a separate scholarship fund to be named the Eleanor Mullen Scholarship.

**Article 11** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by Madeleine Swindlehurst. Rita Furlong stated that because Article 10 had passed that this article was redundant.

Madeleine Swindlehurst stated that she felt that article should be voted on as is and that possibly next year this could be put on the town warrant as a line item for the amount of \$500. or \$1000. It was asked if part of the money awarded yearly from the Scholarship Fund could be designated as the Eleanor Mullen Scholarship award. It was agreed that this could be done.

**Article 11** failed.

**Article 12:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,000.00 for the cost for filing Notice of Intents for Highway culvert replacement by the engineering company.

**Article 12** was moved and seconded on the floor. No discussion followed.

**Article 12** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 for the purchase of an oil separation system for the highway garage.

**Article 13** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by John Murray. No discussion followed.

**Article 13** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 14:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$275,000.00 for the repair of Brooker Hill Road and to fund this appropriation by borrowing \$275,000.00 as a debt exclusion or take any other action thereto. Contingent upon favorable action on a debt exclusion vote on the Annual Town Election ballot on May 18, 2002.

(2/3 Vote Required)

**Article 14** was moved by Bill Elovirta and seconded on the floor. Bill gave an explanation of what has been happening with this road and why he placed this article on the warrant. Madeleine Swindlehurst made a motion to amend the article so that the borrowing could be done by a three year loan. The Moderator stated that this could not be done under the scope of this article as written.

**Article 14** Failed.

**Article 15:** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$7,000.00 to reduce the tax rate and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$7,000.00 from Overlay Surplus.

**Article 15** was moved by Cheryl Powers and seconded by William Cavanaugh. No discussion followed.

**Article 15** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 16:** To see if the Town will vote to accept Chapter 59, Section 5 Clauses (17E) and (41D) of the Massachusetts General Laws. These clauses allow the Town to increase the asset basis and/or gross receipts used in determining eligibility for abatements under clauses (17), (17C), (17C1/2), (17D), (41), (41B) and (41C) of Chapter 59, Section 5 of Massachusetts General Laws. The asset base will increase annually by the Consumer Price Index published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics for each year.

**Article 16** was moved and seconded on the floor. Sue Donnelly, an Assessor, gave a brief explanation of what this article means and how it would help seniors.

**Article 16** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 17:** To see if the Town will vote to accept as a gift the following parcel of land:

- A. Map 213, Lot 103 (0.74 acre), located on Trail Circle from the owner James Vumbaco. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1361, Page 1134.
- B. Map 212, Lot 18 (2.70 acres), located on Mallard Drive from the owner Herbert Abedon. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1301, Page 1036.

**Article 17** was moved by Stephen LaBelle and seconded by William Cavanaugh. No discussion followed.

**Article 17** Passed Unanimously.

**Article 18:** 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 214, Lot 60 (0.51 acre), located on Johnson Road. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1669, Page 1081.
- B. Map 216, Lot 266 (0.30 acre), located on King Richard Drive. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1649, page 291.
- C. Map 216, Lot 373 (0.27 acre), located on Black Arrow Way. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 968, Page 32.
- D. Map 216, Lot 177 (0.55 acre), located on Black Arrow Way. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1101, Page 293.
- E. Map 213, Lot 103 (0.74 acre), located on Trail Circle. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle Registry of Deeds in Book 1361, Page 1134.
- F. Map 212, Lot 18 (2.70 acres), located on Mallard Drive. Recorded at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 1301, Page 1036.

**Article 18** The Moderator asked if there was a motion to waive the reading of this article (Sec. A-F) . Stephen LaBelle made the motion and it was seconded on the floor. No discussion followed.

**Article 18** Passed.

Stephen LaBelle made the motion to adjourn and this was seconded by Ann Spadafora. This passed.  
The meeting adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

The Poll Workers were: Eva Bonney and Gale LaBelle

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia A. Andrews  
Town Clerk