

Special Town Meeting Minutes 11/30/04

Pursuant to the foregoing warrant, a Special Town Meeting was called on November 30, 2004, 7:00 p.m. at Becket Town Hall, 557 Main Street, Becket. There being a quorum present, the meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by the Moderator. A total of 34 voters were present.

Present: William Cavanaugh and Doug Walter, Selectmen; Jeanne Pryor, Town Clerk; Bruce Garlow, Moderator; Michael Falk, Richard Pryor and Ann Spadafora, Finance Committee; and Richard Furlong, Town Administrator.

The Moderator opened the meeting stating the rules to be followed. 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 noted that we will be considering a warrant of 10 articles and asked the Town Administration for a summary of why the meeting is needed. Mr. Furlong noted that the meeting was needed because the Town is over the Proposition 2 ½ limit by \$76,840 making it necessary that we take that much out of the current budget. Since the school has already re-certified a lower amount (\$23,920) to the Town, we have to deal with the balance. He explained that we are over the limit because we had a revenue deficit last year, an overrun in winter roads, and an overrun in the tax account. The figures available prior to the annual meeting do not take into account final figures that were learned after the year was closed out. The accountant and DOR then noted that we were over the 2 ½ limit and as such cannot set a tax rate until we resolve the problem. If we resolve this tonight, the tax rate will be \$10.12. The Moderator noted that all the articles were recommended both by the Selectmen and the Finance Committee. 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 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.

Article 1: To see if the Town will vote to rescind the following list of line items from Article 2 of the Annual Town Meeting of May 8, 2004:

10. Town Administrator Expense	\$ 1,100.00
13. Assessors Salaries	\$ 84,711.00
14. Assessors Expense	\$ 12,800.00
16. Town Treasurers Expense	\$ 4,675.00
17. Tax Title	\$ 6,000.00
19. Tax Collectors Expense	\$ 7,000.00
24. Conservation Commission	\$ 6,177.00
31. Reconst. of Gravel Roads	\$ 35,000.00
33. Winter Roads	\$135,000.00
43. Veterans Benefits	\$ 3,000.00
45. Becket Center Cemetery	\$ 3,000.00
46. North Becket Cemetery	\$ 5,000.00
49. Police Department Expense	\$ 15,500.00
54. Fire Department Expense	\$ 16,500.00
59. Demolition Fund	\$ 5,000.00
63. Dog Officer Expenses	\$ 1,430.00
68. Becket Ambulance Dept. Exp.	\$ 15,700.00
74. Board of Health Expense	\$ 7,200.00
77. Stabilization Fund	\$ 20,000.00
86. Parks Comm.	\$ 9,000.00

Selectmen: Recommend

Majority Vote Required

Finance Committee: Recommends

Article 1 was moved and seconded on the floor. There was no discussion. **Article 1 passed unanimously.**

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the following amounts in the following list of line items to Article 2 of the Annual Town Meeting of May 8, 2004:

10. Town Administrator Expense	\$ 900.00
13. Assessors Salaries	\$ 83,521.00
14. Assessors Expense	\$ 12,600.00
16. Town Treasurers Expense	\$ 4,475.00
17. Tax Title	\$ 3,000.00
19. Tax Collectors Expense	\$ 6,800.00
24. Conservation Commission	\$ 4,177.00
31. Reconst. of Gravel Roads	\$ 34,000.00
33. Winter Roads	\$131,000.00
43. Veterans Benefits	\$ 1,000.00
49. Police Department Expense	\$ 15,000.00
54. Fire Department Expense	\$ 16,000.00
59. Demolition Fund	\$ 4,000.00

63. Dog Officer Expenses	\$ 1,230.00
68. Becket Ambulance Dept. Exp.	\$ 15,200.00
74. Board of Health Expense	\$ 6,700.00
86. Parks Comm.	\$ 8,000.00

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 2 was read and a Hold was placed on line item 54 Fire Department Expense, \$16,000. **A motion was made to vote on all items, except 54, in Article 2.** It was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. **Those line items passed unanimously.**

John Hall, representing the Fire Department, expressed concern as to why \$500 was being eliminated from the Fire Department Expense account. Mr. Furlong responded that \$500 was being taken from each budget that had been funded at the annual meeting above \$5,000 in an effort to resolve the shortfall so the tax rate can be set. He noted that the Finance Committee can transfer funds from the Reserve Account if the Fire Department needs \$500 at the end of the year. Following discussion it was moved and seconded to vote on line item 54 Fire Department Expense, \$16,000. **Line item 54 passed unanimously.**

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to amend Article 13 passed at the Annual Town Meeting of May 8, 2004 by reducing it from \$5,000.00 to \$1,000.00 for beaver maintenance throughout the Town.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 3 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Bill Elovirta noted that he had requested \$5,000 because of the beaver problem we had the previous year. The \$1,000 will be used for a maintenance contract. **Article 3 passed unanimously.**

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to close out the Cemetery Stone Repair Account in the amount of \$2,125.00 and apply the total of \$2,125.00 to reduce the tax rate.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 4 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Rita Furlong noted that the Historical Commission has presided over cemetery stone repair and that money will need to be voted on in the future to continue this work. **Article 4 passed unanimously.**

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 from free cash and apply as follows:

\$1,000.00 to Zoning Board of Appeals Expense Account
 \$4,000.00 to Legal Expense Account

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 5 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Mr. Furlong noted that this article has nothing to do with saving money. Funds are being transferred from free cash. **Article 5 passed unanimously.**

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$3,000.00 to Becket Center Cemetery Account and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$3,000.00 from the Cemetery Perpetual Care Interest Account.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 6 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 6 passed unanimously.**

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 to North Becket Cemetery Account and to fund this appropriation by raising and appropriating \$1,000.00 and transferring \$4,000.00 from the North Becket Cemetery Perpetual Care Interest Account.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 7 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 7 passed unanimously.**

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$500.00 to the West Becket Cemetery Account and to fund this appropriation by transferring \$500.00 from the Cemetery Perpetual Care Interest Account.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 8 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. There was no discussion. **Article 8 passed unanimously.**

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$13,700.00 from free cash to reduce the tax rate.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 9 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Mr. Furlong made a motion to amend Article 9 by re-wording the article as follows: "To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$2,700 from free cash to reduce the tax rate." The motion was seconded and the amendment passed unanimously. A vote was taken on the amended article. **Article 9 as amended passed unanimously.**

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to accept a deed in lieu of foreclosure of tax title from the Great Trails Council, Inc., Boy Scouts of America for a parcel of land shown as Lots 12 and 13, Block No. Y5 on a plan entitled "A Portion of Sherwood Forest, a subdivision in Becket, Mass., Gordon E. Ainsworth & Associates, South Deerfield, Mass., Plan September 11, 1969, Scale: 1"=200', Survey: 1969, Job No. D68-271, which said Plan was recorded in the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds in Book 417F, Page 144, the said parcels having been taken by the Town for non-payment of taxes by Instrument of Taking recorded on November 2, 1992 in the said Registry of Deeds in Book 1379, Page 1051, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 60, Section 77C, or take any other action in relation thereto.

Selectmen: Recommend
Finance Committee: Recommends

Majority Vote Required

Article 10 was moved by Doug Walter and seconded by William Cavanaugh. Mr. Furlong gave a brief explanation of the article. Following a brief discussion, **Article 10 passed unanimously.**

A motion to adjourn was moved and seconded on the floor. The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m. The Poll Workers were Ann Chagnon and Maryellen Lake.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne W. Pryor
Town Clerk