

HARDWICK SELECTBOARD MEETING

**307 Main Street
Gilbertville, MA 01031
September 25, 2023**

Attendees: H. Robert Ruggles (HRR), Chair; Kelly Kemp (KK), Vice Chair; Eric Vollheim (EV), Clerk; Nicole Parker (NP), Town Administrator; Janet Pierce (JP), CMRPC; Scott Potter (SP), Superintendent, WWTP.

Executive Session

Meeting called to order September 25, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

HRR called the meeting to order with first order of business to go into Executive Session. Reason: To discuss strategies with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of a public body, and the Chair so declares.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0)

Acknowledgement – Letter to Attorney General’s Office: Open Law Complaint

HRR stated Selectboard should acknowledge complaint and submit a response.

Motion

EV made a motion to acknowledge receipt of the complaint as well as the response from Legal and send it to everyone concerned.

KK seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

Selectboard Meeting Reconvened in Open Session -

NEW BUSINESS:

Special State Primary Warrant – October 10, 2023

Motion

KK made a motion to accept the warrant for the 2023 Special State Primary which will take place on Tuesday, the 10th of October, at the Hardwick Elementary School at 76 Wheelhouse Drive.

EV seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

Memorandum of Understanding with Central Mass Regional Planning Commission

EV stated there had been a meeting of the Capital Planning Commission Committee, and asked Janet Pierce, Central Mass Regional Planning Commission, was invited to attend the Board meeting in order to discuss possible avenues for funding projects.

EV stated they had been working with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission as well as Central Mass Regional Planning Commission. CMRPC has offered to work on the CDBG grant for this coming year. The thought was it would be a good idea to have a formal agreement as there is ample staff and consultants available that will prove valuable while proceeding through the needed projects.

Janet Pierce introduced herself as the Executive Director with the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission, which is currently working on and nearing the end of the Open Space Plan while also attempting to find funding for the Master Plan. The CMRPC have worked on the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan.

She explained the CMRPC is very engaged with the Town of Hardwick. There is currently a staff of 4 to 5 staff members that work on Community Development Block Grants, and as of the end of next month there will be a staff of 52. They are aware of an issue concerning the Community Development Block Grant being submitted this year. She further explained CMRPC's program is modeled somewhat after Pioneer Valley's, and they enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the communities in order to put together a competitive application knowing they would administer the funds should the grant be awarded, similar to what's been done in the past with Pioneer Valley. She stated the CMRPC would submit the application and back-up, they will coordinate with the Town for all public outreach in developing a plan, and continue the effort and funding that goes into the Town through the Community Development Block Grant Program.

NP stated the Town has gone with Ware as the lead community thus relying on them. She stated that is not necessary and the Town of Hardwick can be its own community going for their own funds with CMRPC's help and guidance, and there is the Memorandum of Understanding with them, then they'll be able to assist greatly in our applications.

JP stated every community in the State is given a community needs score based on the need for particular funding – the higher the score the better. She wanted to confirm the Town would be equally competitive, and the Town is considered a 9 out of a 10 which speaks to demographics with 10 being

many entitlements almost guaranteed funding through the Community Development Block Grant program, so there would be no need to partner with anyone as the Town stands very strong on its own as far as the needs assessment based on the score the state gives the Town which JP confirmed following last week's meeting.

Motion

KK made a motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between Central Mass Regional Planning Commission and the Town of Hardwick.

EV seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

Intermunicipal Agreement with QRSD Debt Repayment

HRR stated the Agreement was pertaining to the need for a heating/air conditioning system. He questioned if Hardwick was only 1 of 2 towns who decided to finance it or did all towns? NP stated 2 towns did not finance it and the other 3 towns are financing it. She went on to explain it's going to stay the same regardless of enrollment, so it is separate from the typical Intermunicipal Agreement we have with the Quabbin Regional School District. KK noted this is strictly just for that project. HRR questioned if it is a 5-year agreement and was told it is.

Motion

KK made a motion to accept the Intermunicipal Agreement with the Quabbin Regional School District.

EV seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

HRR requested NP to put the Agreement and the CRMPC items on-line, so people can have an understanding of what NP is signing. NP agreed.

Wastewater Superintendent's Report for September

- SP stated a surge protector was replaced at the Eagle Hill Pump Station.
- Installed a new channel monster at the Wheelwright WWTP and did so with own staff saving an estimated few thousand dollars.

- Had a pre-bid meeting at the Wheelwright WWTP with potential contractors interested in doing the upgrade at that facility.
- Controls were lost at the Wheelwright WWTP last weekend due to a power surge. Able to reset it with own staff, and all is up and running.
- Note: SP stated they still have not had the re-routing of the vent line done at the first air release valve at the Eagle Hill location and stated that Jason Gerulaitis is still interested in doing that, but it's pending his tight schedule.

Eric Vollheim: Disclosure for Two Special Employee Positions - Board of Selectmen and Emergency Management Director

EV requested Board reconsider this at their next meeting.

New Highway Employee – Andrew Hausrath

Motion

KK stated Marty interviewed Andrew and would like to hire him at a pay rate of \$20.40 with the understanding he gets his hydraulics license within 30 days of hire; if not, his rate would be \$19.40 with a start date of October 10, 2023 or sooner.

EV seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

Sewer

NP stated she received an email from Justin Skelley. Some of the bidders are wondering if permit fees will be waived.

Motion

EV made a motion to waive permit fees.

KK seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

Oversight of USDA Project

EV requested a discussion when meeting in person. HRR agreed. KK agreed.

KK stated as mentioned at a previous meeting any projects over a certain dollar amount there's supposed to be oversight. KK requested clarification by the next meeting.

Agreement was reached to meet again for discussion in person either on October 16th or 30th.

Acknowledge Receipt Only of Draft Host Community Agreement from Casella

Motion

EV made a motion to acknowledge receipt of the draft host community agreement from Casella.

HRR seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Erik Vollheim agreed.

KK abstained.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (2:1:0 Kemp).

Meeting Minutes Approval - September 11, 2023

Motion

EV made a motion to accept the minutes from September 11, 2023 as printed.

KK seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

OLD BUSINESS:

Appointment Requests/Discussion/Appointment

Zoning Board of Appeals – Elizabeth Cyran, Richard Romano and John Tomasi

Motion

EV made a motion to appoint Elizabeth Cyran, Richard Roman, John Tomasi to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

KK seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp abstained.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles disagreed.

Motion

HRR made a motion to appoint Richard Romano and John Tomasi to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

EV seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp abstained.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (2:1:0 Kemp).

Committee Reports

NP stated reports will be available at next meeting of the Board.

Miscellaneous Correspondence

KK noted receipt of an email from Lauren Mace about the voting on October 10, 2023, and she's looking to clarify if they're using the school for that. There had been talk about the location and reiterated that some of it is out of the Selectboard's control.

EV noted because it is a State election, which will happen in November, this is a primary special election, but the State sets it up for the date. A vote had been taken previously to move the Town's own meetings to Saturdays; however, there is no control over the State.

Town Administrator Report

NP stated for the USDA update:

- Wheelwright Wastewater Treatment Plant went out to bid Wednesday, September 5th, 2023 and are due back October 18th at 9:00 a.m.
 - Pre-bid meeting was held on September 19th, 2023. Four general contractors with one in attendance
 - Mass DEP WM16 permit application was mailed to DEP in progress of uploading to web portal.
 - DPC has worked for Gilbertville Wastewater Treatment Plant. NP noted working on 30B RFP's, so if the equipment costs something it needs to be procured separately. DPC is working on this and considered our OPM's and are doing all the work behind the scenes as well as working through the contractor pre-qualification process.
- Pump Station:

- Ricciardi Drill Rig subcontractor is scheduled for September 25th to pre-drill the ledge.
- Ricciardi's crew is beginning on October 16th, 2023.
- Wet well delivery is expected on November 1st.
- October 9th is Columbus Day/Indigenous Day and all Town Offices will be closed.
- NP stated *My Town Manager* segments for W-A-R-E is October 19th, 2023.
- Capital Planning Committee has been meeting monthly and should have recommendations to Board soon. There are many building deficiencies, so a lot of the infrastructure is in need of some attention.
- A safety install is forthcoming for the boiler which will shut the pump off should water go above a certain amount – this is not a permanent fix, but due to the cold weather, the heat will need to be turned on. A permanent solution will have to be found for next year.
- An application was submitted for a USDA grant for a 35% match for equipment. Last Friday, September 15, 2023 the USDA released \$1.8MM for non-construction projects, and it was strongly suggested NP apply whether or not it is utilized it could be de-obligated. It would have to go to Town Meeting for approval and believes she would need to run it by the Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee. It would be over \$25K which is the threshold for the Capital Planning Committee. It would be for 2 vehicles – a police car which was not funded this year, and a new Highway truck. NP is proceeding with it but may not go with it if Board doesn't feel it is necessary at this time. It's a 35% savings for vehicles that were not purchased this year and that means that money would be taken from somewhere else. NP will have more info later when she has a handle on the numbers and approvals from other boards.
- The formal ribbon cutting for the extension of the Mass Central Rail Trail is tomorrow, September 26th, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. at the small park.

Signatures and Approvals

NP stated signatures are needed on the warrant for State Primary and the School.

Adjournment

Motion

EV made a motion to adjourn.

KK seconded.

Roll Call Vote Taken

Kelly Kemp agreed.

Erik Vollheim agreed.

H. Rob Ruggles agreed.

Motion passed (3:0).

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

