

HARDWICK SELECTBOARD MEETING

**307 Main Street
Gilbertville, MA 01031
October 30, 2023**

Attendees: H. Rob Ruggles (HRR), Chair; Kelly Kemp (KK), Vice Chair; Eric Vollheim (EV), Clerk; Nicole Parker (NP), Town Administrator; Ryan Wilkos (RW), Town Clerk; Scott Potter (SP), WPCF Superintendent.

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

Set Tax Classification Hearing Date

HRR recommended setting the date for November 13, 2023.

Motion

KK made a motion to set the Tax Classification Hearing date for November 13th at 6:30 p.m.

EV seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

WPCF Superintendent Report

- New pump station started. Ledge has been dug out and wet well to be delivered. All went well with the tie-in. Superintendent was pleased with the contractors.
- There was an odor complaint from the force main down in Gilbertville, so the odor control chemical was increased.
- There were a couple of sewer calls that ended up being on personal property, so it is the responsibility of the residents to resolve their issues.
- Superintendent noted chain saws will no longer be used by their department following an incident.

Sewer Abatements

NP brought to the Board's attention there was one in the Board packet. Town has been charging for 2 ADU's while resident only has one.

NP believes Board should abate the one extra charge that the resident has been charged; therefore, the homeowner will be paying only 1 going forward thus abating \$2,263.93. Note: The Assessors have done the site visit to ensure the location is a single-family home.

Motion

EV moved the Board vote to agree with the abatement equaling \$2,263.93.

KK seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

Sign State Primary Warrant for November 7, 2023 Town Administrator Report

Ryan Wilkos, Town Clerk, recommended a motion be made to hold a Special State Election at 8:00 p.m. at the Hardwick Elementary School at 76 School House Drive.

Motion

KK made a motion as noted.

EV seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council

NP stated the Council has voted to bring Jacqueline Cole Goddard on to the Board for a term of 1 year.

Motion

KK made a motion to approve the recommendation from Hardwick/New Braintree Cultural Council to appoint Jacqueline Cole Goddard to their Board for a 1-year term.

EV seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

Meeting Minutes Approval

- September 25, 2023 approved.

Motion

KK made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from September 25, 2023.

EV seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

Bids for Wheelwright Treatment Plant

- Bids were opened.
- A memo was sent from DPC and forwarded to the Board from Waterline Industries in the amount of \$7,344,677 contingent upon the USDA's approval.
- Selectboard's approval was needed recommending they conditionally award Project 2A Wheelwright WPCF upgrades project to Waterline Industries Corporation for the total bid in the amount of \$7,344,677 contingent upon USDA Town approvals.
- HRR asked the Superintendent, Scott Potter, if he had anything to add, and SP's response was he was surprised at the prices and said they were both reputable companies. A discussion ensued in which KK stated there were concerns about a delay and causing prices to fluctuate, but reiterated covid caused this to happen and had nothing to do with the delay. A year ago the prices might have been actually higher and noted she's starting to see things go down.

SP said it was unfortunate that optional items were lost such as a new pump station at Wheelwright. SP said there were 5 potential add-ons with the pump station being number 5, therefore, it won't be done under this grant. The pump station will still be active; however, it will still be falling apart.

HRR recommended there be a meeting on Thursday in an attempt to look into the ultimate 5A/5B because it's \$200,000. The USDA would need to be approached. SP is correct that the pump station is the one thing where approximately \$15,000-\$20,000/year is spent. SP reiterated the station is 50 years old and is obsolete as it's an air ejection station which is obsolete.

KK stated they should have a meeting in order to discuss alternatives in order to get the pump station back on the list. She also asked SP to look at other items that might be equally important for discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

Request for Proposals Discussion/Vote: Sewer Oversight

KK noted there had been discussion at the last meeting in which HRR was absent and stated there probably should be a working session for that via Zoom next Monday, November 6, at 7:00 p.m.

Eric Vollheim's Disclosures for Two Special Employee Positions – Board of Selectmen and Emergency Management Director

EV explained he had taken an Ethics training reflecting a change. EV gets paid \$2,200 to be the Emergency Management Director, and EV explained he receives \$1,600 to be on Selectboard with one of them a supervisory position. He further explained he couldn't get paid for both positions unless he filed a disclosure which he has done with the Town Clerk.

The next step is the Selectboard would have to vote to accept EV's disclosure. At this point, EV exited the room per the rules so the Selectboard could vote.

KK stated she has no issues with the disclosure and stated EV has been the Emergency Director for a long time, and he does a great job.

Motion

KK made a motion to accept EV's disclosure as stated and approve the exemption.

HRR seconded.

Motion passed (2:0).

Reorganization of The Selectboard

HRR stated he would no longer wanted to be the Chair due to time constraints and unable to devote more time.

EV wanted to nominate KK but she declined also due to time constraints. She suggested EV take over as Chair.

Motion

KK made a motion to nominate EV as Chair.

HRR seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

Motion

EV noted KK will remain as Vice Chair.

HRR seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

EV nominated HRR as Selectboard Clerk.

KK seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

Call for Visitor Comments

- Jeffrey Smith who lives on Upper Church Street addressed the Board and passed out printouts to members of the Selectboard which addressed the meeting minutes and the posting of minutes on the Town's website. A discussion ensued and EV stated he would look into the issue.

Jeffrey Smith requested a response regarding his claim of conflicts of interest. EV stated he would look into it.

It was noted from the floor the minutes are posted slightly differently than other commissions however they are in the same location. EV stated he would look into it.

- Judy Kohn reiterated the Board of Health's request to meet with KP Law as noted in the previous meeting minutes.
 - NP explained briefly the phone conversation she and JK had with one of the attorneys. EV explained KP Law should be approached with clear questions.
 - It was suggested the Selectboard and Board of Health meet and then present a list of particulars to an attorney.
 - HRR reiterated Casella has not applied for anything yet and be mindful of legal expenses.
 - Further discussion ensued. EV reiterated again the importance of reviewing a list of questions from the Board of Health.

Adjournment**Motion**

KK made a motion to adjourn.

HRR seconded.

Motion passed (3:0).

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.