



Wednesday, January 17, 2024

Select Board and Finance Meeting Agenda

Hadley Senior Center at 46 Middle St., Hadley MA, 01035 at 6:00 pm

Present were: Amy Parsons, Chair; Joyce Chunglo, Select Board Clerk; Jane Nevinsmith, Member; Randy Izer, Member; and Molly Keegan, Member.

Also present were: Carolyn Brennan, Town Administrator; Jennifer Sanders James, Licensing Coordinator; Troy Brin, HR Director; Scott McCarthy, DPW Director; Linda Sanderson, Town Treasurer; Fire Chief Spanknebel; Susan Glowatsky, Town Collector; Alex LaMarche, Hadley Media Director; Dan Zdonek, Town Assessor; William Dwyer, Planning Board; Tom Quinlan, Building Inspector; Jack Czajkowski, Climate Change Committee; Kathy Nelson, , Climate Change Committee; David Fill, Finance Committee; Paul Benjamin, Finance Committee; Amy Fyden, Finance Committee; Jo-Anne Konieczny, Library Trustee; Lynne Latham, Library Trustee; Susan Mooring, Library Trustee; Jessica Kern, Library Trustee; David Labarge, co-op student for the DPW; Nicholas Capers, Hadley Media Production Assistant; Jonathan Parrott, Mass. Department of Energy Resources; and Nick D'Arbeloff, SunBug Solar.

1. Call to Order

1.1 Call to order

The Select Board and Finance Committee will convene a remote meeting on Wednesday, January 17, 2024. at 6:00 p.m. on Zoom Meeting ID:881 3060 1730 there and then to act on the following agenda.

The public may access the meeting remotely by using a computer or telephone and follow the instructions below:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88130601730?pwd=EXeGhp0J5a3v4kfGrFKGobibVvvXnr.1>

Meeting ID: 881 3060 1730

Passcode: 971055

2. Appointments

2.1 Solar Discussion for Town Projects 6:00 pm

Carolyn Brennan kicked off this agenda item by stating that approximately 3 years ago Eversource had interest in a solar project at the Town landfill. Carolyn Brennan stated that the Town has had difficulty receiving bids for the solar project on the Senior Center as well as

intentions to place solar panels on the library. With this said, Carolyn Brennan stated that the presentation shared at this meeting was for information only and no action was asked of the Select Board at this time.

Jonathan Parrott and Nick D'Arbeloff presented to the Board regarding the acreage near the Town landfill as a potential solar location as well as other potential sites.

Jonathan Parrott stated that Governor Healey stated early last year that there is a need for a gigawatt of solar power by 2030 in Massachusetts, or 5000 acres of solar panels per year. Jonathan Parrott further stated that a starting point might be to place solar panels on rooftops and landfills. Jonathan Parrott pointed out that solar production at the Hadley landfill could provide energy at municipal buildings. Jonathan Parrott also pointed out that buildings now heated with heat pumps are more efficient, but the cost of electricity for these buildings has increased as a result.

Jonathan Parrott stated that battery backups are also part of the energy solution, as there are days when there is not a lot of sun, and no sun when it is dark.

Joyce Chunglo mentioned that Hopkins Academy is looking into a geothermal solution. Jonathan Parrott responded by stating that geothermal is a process related to a heat pump that is utilizing energy from the ground rather than the air, but eventually depleting the energy from the ground. Jonathan Parrott also stated that the electricity bill at Hopkins Academy will be a lot higher with the geothermal solution.

Nick D'Arbeloff explained the definition of "good" solar, that being able to find "the big win". Nick D'Arbeloff stated that a big win comes from the balance of generating energy at a cost beneficial price point.

Nick D'Arbeloff stated that in recent conversations with Carolyn Brennan, some of the better possibilities for solar installations include the parking lot between the Library and the Senior Center, the elementary school, and the landfill. Nick D'Arbeloff stated that the rooftops of the Senior Center and the Library are good "targets" for solar panels but because the roof areas are so small, the amount of electricity generated would be limited.

Nick D'Arbeloff stated that roof at the elementary school would be an excellent solar target, with the Town landfill being the best target.

Jonathan Parrott stated that when making choices and determining capacity needs for the future, one must take into consideration electric school buses, electric police vehicles, electric DPW vehicles, etc.

Jonathan Parrott stated that in terms of capacity needs, if a residential home has a good southern-facing roof, solar panels will create enough capacity to meet the current demand of the home. Jonathan Parrott also stated that if the same home was to transition to the use of a heat pump, the home would need another roof. Jonathan Parrott stated that if that same home was now

going to support electrical charging of an electric passenger car (i.e., Tesla), the home would need a third roof.

Jonathan Parrott stated that if solar is desired on a rooftop, the Town may be 1 year away from being operational. Jonathan added that if the Town wished to install solar at the Town landfill, the lead time might be 3 years away.

Jonathan Parrott stated that much of the lead time is associated with ISO New England conducting a full evaluation of all related impacts.

Jane Nevinsmith asked about back up batteries with solar energy that is generated on rooftops of schools and potential negative impact/physical harm on students.

Jonathan Parrott responded by acknowledging that batteries can be a fire threat and some people are concerned about electromagnetic radiation. Jonathan Parrott further stated that battery storage could be housed in a storage container-like facility not on or at the school.

Jonathan Parrott stated that if the Town were to enroll in the State's SMART program, the solar-producing customer would be required to have battery storage as a component of the solar project. Jonathan Parrott stated that a project at the landfill would meet that expectation. Jonathan further stated that to enroll in the SMART program, battery backup would have to be part of any project to produce up to 25% peak capacity. With this said, Jonathan Parrott stated that neither the elementary school nor the library would need battery backup.

Nick D'Arbeloff stated that under the SMART program, the only project under current discussion in Hadley that would require battery storage would be at the Town landfill. Nick D'Arbeloff stated that neither the elementary school nor the library project would require a battery.

Jonathan Parrott stated that the Hadley projects under consideration are very expensive but have with them attributes that the utility company will monetize, thus creating a revenue stream for the Town along with the return on investment (ROI) really coming from offsetting current energy costs. Jonathan Parrott stated that solar energy will help stabilize the customer's energy costs and make them much more predictable than being subject to various market conditions and rates.

Nick D'Arbeloff stated that some solar customers do invest in solar with the mindset of creating a positive ROI. Jonathan Parrott added that if a residential customer spends \$30,000 on a solar project, the tax credit equates to \$10,000, or one third of the initial cost. Jonathan Parrott stated that a town does not have the same tax liability as a consumer/resident, so it is a little more complicated.

Nick D'Arbeloff stated that one option for the Town might be a Power Purchase Agreement, wherein an investor/owner would build the solar installation at the school or library or landfill and then sell the power to the Town at a rate less than what is currently paid to Eversource. Nick D'Arbeloff stated that such an agreement would make the cost of power predictable for 20 years with possible buyout provisions for the Town to purchase the solar array from its owner. Nick D'Arbeloff stated that this approach is extremely popular.

Jonathan Parrott stated that the Town could “chase” MVP (Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness) Funds from the OER and that the Town needs to determine its goals and desires related to energy.

Nick D’Arbeloff stated that an installation at the Town landfill producing 2.5 megawatts might cost \$6 million.

Michael Doctor asked questions relating to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2023 with respect to tax credits for non-profit organizations and municipalities seeking to undertake solar projects.

Jonathan Parrott responded by stating that he has not yet seen the IRA in action but wanted to be clear that the Town needs to know that solar is not a “get-rich-quick” mechanism but will save money and will make the cost of energy more predictable. Nick D’Arbeloff noted the complexity of the IRA.

Joyce Chunglo stated that the Planning Board would have to be involved with discussions around battery storage.

Randy Izer added that the Fire Chief is well aware of battery and fire-related issues as well.

Jack Czajkowski stated that the Climate Change Committee would be willing to work on pursuing target sites in Hadley while mitigating the risk of eliminating farmable land.

Carolyn Brennan clarified for everyone that this session was meant to be educational and that no vendors have been pursued or engaged.

2.2 Joint meeting with the Finance Committee to discuss FY 25 Budget - 6:30 pm

David Fill moved that the Finance Committee members of the meeting come to order.

Motion: Fyden 2nd: Benjamin

Roll call vote: Amy Fyden, ye; Paul Benjamin, aye; David Fill, aye.

Vote: 3-0-0.

Linda Sanderson provided a status update for the Select Board and the Finance Committee.

Linda Sanderson stated that so far FY 2024 to date revenues are better than planned while expenses are lower than planned.

Looking ahead to the entire FY 2024, Linda Sanderson shared an exhibit with some of the highlights as follows:

1. Full year FY 2024 Revenue from the Property Tax Levy is projected to be \$14.307 million, while FY 2025 is projected to see Property Tax Levy Revenue to increase to \$15.173 million.
2. State Aid is projected to be \$1.019 million for both FY 2024 and FY 2025.
3. Revenue from Local Receipts for FY 2024 are projected to total \$19.148 million while FY 2025 is projected to be \$20.437 million.

4. Enterprise receipts (Hadley Media, Wastewater Administration, and Water Administration) are projected to total \$.45 million in FY 2024 and FY 2025.
5. Total Revenue is projected to be \$19.568 million in FY 2024, while the projection for FY 2025 will be \$20.887 million.
6. Total Transfers for FY 2024 are projected to be \$1.123 million and \$.751 million in FY 2025.
7. Total Revenues and Transfers for FY 2024 are projected to be \$20.721 million, while FY 2025 is projected to be \$21.638 million.

David Fill asked if there were any increases in requests for Free Cash in FY 2025. Linda Sanderson stated that funding for the new Town ambulance is being reviewed on January 18.

Carolyn Brennan stated that potential increases in compensation resulting from the compensation and classification studies and recommendations may require Free Cash. Carolyn Brennan added that the impact of the compensation and classification studies is currently unknown, but a draft from the external consultant may be ready for review by the Select Board at the next scheduled meeting (January 31). Carolyn Brennan further stated if exact numbers are not ready in a month or two, she will not move forward with a funding request. Carolyn Brennan reiterated, however, that the funding of the anticipated changes in classification and compensation is a priority but may actually have to be funded in a delayed or gradual fashion. Carolyn Brennan stated that she hopes for the support of both the Select Board and the Finance Committee for funding recommended classification and compensation changes.

Jane Nevinsmith stated that in a prior meeting it was agreed upon that the funding for the recommended classification and compensation changes was critical.

Carolyn Brennan stated that she anticipates the request for a new ladder (fire) truck to be back on the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

David Fill acknowledged the scheduled meeting on January 18 to discuss the Town ambulance. David Fill stated that the ambulance will have to be subsidized until it is generating enough revenue. David Fill asked if there was any idea how many years the ambulance may have to be subsidized. Carolyn Brennan responded that it would take a few years before the ambulance is financially self-sufficient. Joyce Chunglo the ambulance must perform basic life support for 1 year before applying for advanced life support (ALS). Molly Keegan stated that the Board needs to start looking at the numbers and call volume associated with the operation of the ambulance with perhaps financial self-sufficiency being maybe 5 years away.

Linda Sanderson and Molly Keegan briefly spoke to the Town's borrowing position and savings accounts which have been reported but need to be reviewed.

Molly Keegan stated that she hoped the Finance Committee might be engaged in better balance sheet management relating to interest-bearing assets (investment accounts). Linda Sanderson

stated that interest earnings from banks so far through December are around \$100,000 against a plan of \$25,000.

Carolyn Brennan and Linda Sanderson stated that capital projects and related plan will likely be discussed at the Fall Town Meeting.

Amy Fyden stated that the timeline to review projected expenses will be tight before the Annual Town Meeting.

Paul Benjamin stated that everyone needs to be realistic about what the Town's real needs are.

Motion: To adjourn the Finance Committee portion of the meeting.

Motion: Benjamin Second: Fyden

Roll call vote: Fyden, aye; Benjamin, aye; Fill, aye.

Vote: 3-0-0.

Randy Izer asked a follow up question to a point made earlier by Linda Sanderson regarding how to gain a better rate of return of investments.

Linda Sanderson stated that discussions regarding investment rates of return between Carolyn Brennan and herself have just really begun.

Molly Keegan stated that it might be a good idea to circulate investment policy guidelines among the Select Board members for the purpose of familiarity.

2.3 Joint Meeting with the Library Trustees to discuss the joint appointment of Jack Czajkowski as a Library Trustee. - 7:00 pm

Amy Parsons stated that there were 2 open positions. A letter of interest had been received from Jack Czajkowski.

The meeting of the Library Trustees was called to order by Lynne Latham.

Lynne Latham stated that she had sent an email to the Select Board members and that she did not have a lot to add.

Motion to appoint Jack Czajkowski to the interim position of Library Trustee:

Motion: Latham Second: Konieczny

Roll call vote: Konieczny, aye; Mooring, aye; Kern, aye; Latham, aye.

Vote: 4-0-0.

Motion to appoint Jack Czajkowski to the interim position of Library Trustee:

Motion: Chunglo Second: Nevinsmith

Roll call vote: Keegan, aye; Chunglo, aye; Parsons, aye; Nevinsmith, aye; Izer, aye.

Vote: 5-0-0.

Motion to adjourn meeting of the Library Trustees.

Motion: Latham Second: Konieczny

Roll call vote: Konieczny, aye; Mooring, aye; Kern, aye; Latham, aye.
Vote: 4-0-0.

3. Consent Agenda

3.1 Consent Agenda

Warrants	AP2426INS, AP2426, AP2427V, AP2427, AP2427S, AP2427S-2
Minutes	December 20, 2023

Motion to approve the Consent agenda.

Motion: Chunglo Second: Izer

Vote: 5-0-0.

4. Public Comment

4.1 Public Comments

The public comment period is a time for the public to bring their concerns before the Select Board. The Board will hear public comments for 15 minutes. Please limit your comments to 3 minutes so that other members of the public may have an opportunity to speak.

In general, the Board will take all items and issues raised under advisement. Requests that can be addressed administratively will be referred to the appropriate department head for action. Requests for public documents will be handled according to law.

If the Chair of the Select Board calls for public comments, and after all public comments are heard, and if there is still time available, the Chair may close that portion of the meeting agenda and move to other items on the agenda.

There were no public comments.

5. Old Business

5.1 Collins Center- Strong Town Administrator Special Act Scope of Work and Pricing

Troy Brin stated that the Collins Center has submitted its Scope of Work for Select Board consideration.

Molly Keegan asked if it made sense to check with some other towns who have engaged with the Collins Center and perhaps contacts can be made during the upcoming MMA conference.

5.2 2024 Select Board License Renewals

Class II Auto Dealer's License - River Drive Autobody
Automatic Amusements License - Kiddleton, INC.
Automatic Amusements License - Lucky Duck Vending

Motion to approve the license renewals for River Drive Auto Body, Kiddleton, and Lucky Duck Vending.

Motion: Chunglo
Vote: 5-0-0.

Second: Keegan

5.3 Green Community Funding, Process, Approval Discussion

Carolyn Brennan stated that there is grant funding available to the Town as a Green Community. Carolyn Brennan wanted to recognize the hard work put in by the Climate Change Committee already and that they will be leading the charge in terms of obtaining funding along with assistance from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

Carolyn Brennan asked if the Select Board had any questions regarding the process of obtaining funding. Jane Nevinsmith asked if all of the money being requested would cover all of the proposed Green projects. Carolyn Brennan stated that project funding requests would have to be submitted. Carolyn Brennan stated that there are two different project tracks: one for the schools and one for other Town buildings.

Randy Izer asked if there was a chart of specific projects. Jack Czajkowski stated that Chris for the School Department or Gary Berg of DPW would work with the Climate Change Committee in suggesting Green projects for funding with reviews by State agencies to determine if such projects fit the criteria. Jack Czajkowski stated that any project would then be referred to the Chief Procurement Officer.

Jane Nevinsmith asked what the proposed projects may be. Jack Czajkowski stated that Gary Berg would be looking to repair the air conditioning system and Chris is looking at projects for the schools. Kathy Nelson spoke to the Energy Reduction Plan and the types of energy-saving projects would be considered for grant funding.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the Climate Change Committee will need to keep the Select Board aware of potential energy saving projects and funding requirements. Kathy Nelson stated that some clarification from the Select Board may be needed regarding projects and priorities. Jane Nevinsmith stated that there needs to be collaboration with the Climate Change Committee.

Jack Czajkowski stated that there have been challenges in obtaining quotes from vendors relating to Green projects. Jack Czajkowski stated that there should be a meeting with the School Department and DPW in focusing on a list of Green projects along with the Climate Change Committee.

6. New Business

6.1 Employee Appointment - David Labarge, DPW Laborer and Nicholas Capers, Hadley Media Production Assistant, Vernon Harrington, Part- Time Local Building Inspector

Scott McCarthy introduced the co-op student David Labarge. Scott McCarthy stated that the co-op student would mostly assist and shadow Gary Berg in maintaining Town buildings. Scott McCarthy stated that the co-op student would not be operating/driving Town vehicles.

Motion to accept David Labarge as a DPW Laborer.

Motion: Chunglo
Vote: 5-0-0.

Second: Keegan

Alex LaMarche introduced Nicholas Capers as a candidate to be a Hadley Media Production Assistant.

Motion to accept Nicholas Capers as a Hadley Media Production Assistant.
Motion: Keegan
Vote: 5-0-0.

Second: Chunglo

Tom Quinlan introduced Vernon Harrington as a part-time Building Inspector.

Motion: to accept Vernon Harrington as a part-time Building Inspector.
Motion: Keegan
Vote: 5-0-0.

Second: Chunglo

6.2 New Fire Department Employee Introductions - Lieutenant Mike Minahan and Full Time Firefighter/ EMT-B Dwight Gregoire

Postponed.

6.3 Fire Department and Emergency Management Service update

Chief Spanknebel stated that the Fire Department will be staffed 24x7x365 starting on February 1. The shifts are being finalized and coordination with Action EMS is under way.

Chief Spanknebel also stated that funding will be needed for disaster training and coordination with FEMA.

6.4 Mosquito opt- Out Committee requests to be disbanded.

Motion to disband the Mosquito Opt- Out Committee.
Motion: Keegan
Vote: 5-0-0.

Second: Chunglo

6.5 Open Meeting Law Complaint filed by S. Delmolino on November 14, 2023- Select Board response.

Amy Parsons stated that the complaint relates to the time and date of posting on the Town website by the Town Clerk the agenda for the November 14, 2023, Select Board meeting. Amy Parsons stated that the meeting was posted 48 hours before the time and date of the meeting. Amy Parsons stated that the Town Clerk has responded.

Molly Keegan stated that the internal email from the Town Clerk is not the official response to the complaint filed. Jennifer Sanders-James stated that the meeting posting timing requirements were met on the Town website.

Randy Izer stated that he was uncertain what the complaint is.

Molly Keegan suggested that a response to the complaint might be that there was no violation of the Open Meeting Law, but the feedback is appreciated.

Amy Parsons stated that more information is included in Select Board meeting agendas than what is really required in order to fulfill perceived “wants”.

Carolyn Brennan stated that she and Molly Keegan will respond to the person who filed the complaint as well as to the Attorney General.

6.6 Communication Policy Discussion and Policy Follow up Procedures.

Carolyn Brennan stated that there are a lot of templates that exist relating to how communication and follow up from the Select Board should be handled and that the Select Board needs to decide how to proceed.

Joyce Chunglo stated that the Board Chair has always served as the Board spokesperson. Molly Keegan stated that her understanding is that any media inquiry may be handled by the Town Administrator but that the media may also be looking for feedback from the Select Board, which would be handled by the Board Chair.

Amy Parsons stated that it cannot be perceived that the Board Chair is speaking for the entire Board and that could lead to ambiguities or misunderstanding. Randy Izer stated that if the Board Chair was answering a question that it would be made known that s/he is not answering for the entire Board. Joyce Chunglo stated that if the question is on a subject that the Board has already discussed, it is OK to communicate as such. Randy Izer stated that if the Board Chair is uncomfortable discussing a topic then s/he should state as such in addressing a question.

Molly Keegan stated that she would be willing to work with the Town Administrator in developing draft communication protocols.

6.7 Opening of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Motion to open the Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Motion: Keegan Second: Chunglo

Vote: 5-0-0.

6.8 Town Clerk requests for the Town to Hold Early In Person Weekday Voting for the Presidential Primary Election

Motion to approve the request of the Town Clerk for the Town of Hadley to hold Early In-Person weekday voting for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election on Monday, February 26, 2024 through Friday, March 1, 2024 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30pm each day for a total of 25 hours for the week at the Town Clerk’s Office.

Motion: Parsons
Vote: 5-0-0.

Second: Nevinsmith

7. Other Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

8. Town Administrator Report

Carolyn Brennan stated that Troy Brin and Jennifer Sanders James would be meeting with a temp agency to fill a position in the Treasurer's office.

Troy Brin stated that there are still 2 position openings in the DPW.

Carolyn Brennan stated that cable contract renewal is moving along. Alex LaMarche stated that Spectrum is going through and MBI grant to secure funding for underserved areas.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the DPW Building project is moving along.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the girls' softball project has 3 interested contractors to do the work.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the Russell School project is waiting for signed contracts.

Carolyn Brennan stated that work on the Town Hall columns and hopefully windows will be worked on and/or replaced as previously discussed pending Town Meeting.

9. Select Board Members Items for Future Discussion

10. Select Board Members Liaison Report

Jane Nevinsmith stated that the Aging and Dementia Group at the Senior Center has secured a grant to run a memory café for caregivers and those who have memory loss with 5 scheduled events at the Senior Center.

11. Executive Session

11.1 Executive Session M.G.L. c. 30A sec 21(a)(2 and 3) - Vacation Exemptions Policy Non-union Personnel and Municipal Employees Union

11.2 Executive Session - M.G.L. c30A sec. 30A (3) Building Inspector Employment Offer and Exception to Policy

11.3 Executive Session: M.G.L. c30A sec. 30A (3) -Anticipated Litigation

Motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A sec 21(a)(2 and 3) To discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the newly formed municipal employees union and to conduct strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel - Building Inspector; and to conduct strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may

have a detrimental effect on the ... litigating position of the public body- Anticipated Litigation and not to reconvene in open session.

Motion: Nevinsmith Second: Chunglo

Roll call vote: Keegan, aye; Chunglo, aye; Parsons, aye; Nevinsmith, aye; Izer, aye.

Vote: 5-0-0.

12. Announcements

Joyce Chunglo offers the Select Board's condolences to the families of Richard Kostek and Cindy Malek.

13. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned to Executive Session at 8:27 pm and did not reconvene in open session.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Lore