



**Wednesday, November 15, 2023
Select Board Meeting Agenda**

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

Present were: Amy Parsons, Chair; Joyce Chunglo, Clerk; Jane Nevinsmith, Member; Randy Izer, Member; and Molly Keegan, Member.
Also present were Carolyn Brennan, Town Administrator; Scott McCarthy, DPW Director; Police Chief Mike Mason; Police Lt. Mitch Kuc; Haley Gaudette, Police Officer; Melanie Cianciola, Police Officer; Susan Glowatsky, Town Collector; Alex LaMarche, Hadley Media Director; Dan Zdonek, Town Assessor; William Dwyer, Planning Board; Jeff Mish, Board of Assessors; Ed Gralinski, Resident; and Mike Spanknebel, Fire Chief.

1. Call to Order

The Select Board will convene a hybrid meeting on Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hadley Senior Center at 46 Middle Street, Hadley, MA 01035 and on Zoom Meeting ID: 827 6921 3846 there and then to act on the following agenda.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82769213846?pwd=eB8k2ieDBiN0JcP24DF1z6lo7HObO8.1>

Meeting ID: 827 6921 3846

Passcode: 499268

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,82769213846#,,,,*499268# US

+19292056099,,82769213846#,,,,*499268# US (New York)

2. Appointments

2.1 Tax Classification Hearing 6:00 pm

Jeff Mish, a member of the Board of Assessors and Assessor Dan Zdonek presented the FY2024 Classification Hearing.

Dan Zdonek stated that the FY24 tax levy limit is \$14,442,399 with an actual tax levy of \$14,440,533.

Dan Zdonek stated further that the FY23 residential value was \$834,468,600. FY24 residential value is \$873,961,700, or 4.73% greater Y/Y.

Dan Zdonek added that FY23 CI & P value was \$376,177,201. FY24 CI & P value is \$393,863,865, or 4.70% greater Y/Y.

Dan Zdonek stated that the average single-family home in Hadley is rising in FY24 to \$439,600 from \$418,800 in FY23. Dan Zdonek then added that the average tax bill in FY23 of \$4833 will increase to \$5007 in FY24.

Dan Zdonek stated that if the single rate is adopted the single tax rate will be approximately \$11.39 for all classes of property. Dan Zdonek also stated that splitting the tax rate does not increase the tax revenue for the Town of Hadley. With this said the Assessors are recommending a single rate for FY24.

Dan Zdonek then walked the Select Board through a brief history of the split tax rate which originated with Proposition 2 ½ in 1980 based upon fair market value. Dan Zdonek explained that the Minimum Residential Factor (MRF) for Hadley is .774667. Dan Zdonek explained that the Select Board may adopt an MRF between 1.0000 and .774667, adding that an MRF of 1.0000 would translate into a single tax rate of \$11.39 for all classes of property. Dan Zdonek also stated that an MRF of .774667 would decrease residential taxes by 22.5% and would increase commercial properties by 50%.

Dan Zdonek shared a slide that compared average residential single-rate tax bills for FY23 across surrounding towns in comparison with Hadley's \$4833. For example, Hatfield was \$4994, Sunderland was \$4883, Amherst was \$8984, Northampton was \$6725, and South Hadley was \$5135.

Dan Zdonek explained that the Select Board did have the option of granting a residential exemption of 35% of all owner-occupied residential properties in Hadley. This reduction would result in a higher tax rate for residential properties and would shift the tax burden from lower-valued homes to higher-valued homes. As a result, in FY24 any home assessed at \$543,000 or higher would pay more in taxes if there were no residential exemption.

Dan Zdonek stated that small commercial exemptions granted by the Select Board if it so chooses, would allow for a discount of up to 10% from the tax calculation if the property has an assessed value under \$1,000,000 and less than 10 annualized employees. In FY24, 55 commercial properties would be classified for such an exemption if granted.

Dan Zdonek explained that the pros of a split tax rate would lower residential taxes. Conversely, the cons of a split tax rate, which must be voted on each year, would result in an increase in the number of abatement applications from CI&P properties and the related expenses for processing the applications. Additionally, any override funded through a split rate could be placed back onto residential properties.

In summary, Dan Zdonek listed the recommendations from the Board of Assessors as follows:

1. Adopt a single tax rate for FY24.
2. No open space discount.
3. No residential exemption.
4. No small commercial exemption.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda.
Motion: Keegan Second: Chunglo

Approved: 5-0-0.

5. Old Business

6. New Business

6.1 Hadley Police Department Appointments

Chief Mason asked that the Select Board appoint the following people:

Haley Gaudette to Full-Time Officer
Melanie Cianciola to Part-Time Officer

Motion to appoint Haley Gaudette and Melanie Cianciola as recommended by Chef Mason.

Motion: Izer Second: Chunglo
Approved: 5-0-0.

Chief Mason followed by expressing gratitude to the Select Board and other Town leaders for helping to make the police recruiting process less painful than it might otherwise be. Joyce Chunglo responded by praising the public safety (police and fire) leadership.

6.2 Cannabis Equity Policy

The Select Board reviewed the Cannabis Social Equity Policy including a potential fee reduction based on the new Municipal Equity Memorandum from Cannabis Control Commission.

Carolyn Brennan introduced the Select Board to what such a policy would look like. Carolyn Brennan asked that the Board read all the documentation provided prior to a vote at the next meeting.

6.3 North Lane Parking

Scott McCarthy, DPW Director, and Police Lt. Mitch Kuc discussed the ongoing parking issues on North Lane and proposed the installation of NO Parking signs. Scott McCarthy cited issues such as soil erosion, tree canopy detriment, and traffic navigation around some of the parked cars. Scott McCarthy referred the Board to some photos that he had submitted.

Molly Keegan commented that the area is popular with visitors, resulting in all the available parking frequently being used.

Randy Izer inquired if it was possible to expand the parking lot.
Scott McCarthy stated that the Conservation Commission had limited the size of the parking area.

Joyce Chunglo inquired about the walking area/path along the levee.

Scott McCarthy responded by stating that the walking path owned by the Town is fairly worn down because of frequent visitors. Scott McCarthy added that perhaps allowing parking on the Town Common might be better.

Lt. Kuc mentioned the possibility of expanding the utilization of Ernie's Towing in the North Lane area and/or ticketing parking offenders.

Joyce Chunglo stated that the priority should be the protection of the dike, asking why would walking along the dike be promoted. Scott McCarthy added that the maintenance of the property along the dike has become increasingly difficult for the DPW with all of the activity by visitors.

Randy Izer concurred that the number one priority should be the protection of the dike.

Joyce Chunglo stated that nobody should be parking on the Town Common. If somebody needs to park on the Town Common because of the size of an event, there needs to be permission granted by the Town.

Motion to authorize the DPW in concert with the Police Department to find appropriate placement for No Parking signs with possible towing along North Lane.

Motion: Keegan Second: Izer

Approved: 5-0-0.

6.4 DPW Facility Schematic Design Committee

The Select Board discussed the DPW Facility Schematic Design and the continuation with the current committee or the creating a new one.

Carolyn Brennan explained to the Select Board what other towns typically do in terms of committee work throughout different phases of a major project. Carolyn Brennan added that at this point, the committee work might be called a Building Committee.

Molly Keegan suggested soliciting additional input from residents, possibly requiring more non-governmental residents to serve on the committee going forward.

Randy Izer responded by stating that having 2 non-governmental residents added to the committee would be good as they might bring questions to the committee that may be otherwise asked during the discussion at the next Town Meeting.

Joyce Chunglo added that possibly adding 2 residents with some engineering or related expertise might be helpful.

Amy Parsons warned against making the committee too big.

The Select Board resolved to solicit letters of interest from the residents to join the DPW Building Committee.

7. Other Items Not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

None.

8. Town Administrator Report

Carolyn Brennan reported that the recruitment of new employees is going well.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the new ambulance has responded to nearly a dozen calls.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the fire department has received an AFG award for a grant of \$250,000 for new air packs.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the ADA plan is substantially complete. The PVPC will provide an update to the Select Board on December 20.

Carolyn Brennan stated that interviews are to begin for the Russell School feasibility study.

Carolyn Brennan provided a brief update regarding the temporary housing at the Knights Inn. The service provider has not yet been contracted with, necessitating that the National Guard remain onsite.

Carolyn Brennan stated that a hearing has been scheduled for December 6 for the transition of Birch Meadow Drive to a town road. Property abutters will be contacted in advance.

Carolyn Brennan stated that the special election is scheduled for December 12 at the Senior Center. Voters will be asked to consider Proposition 2 ½ overrides for the Hopkins Academy gym locker rooms as well as a new ladder truck for the Fire Department.

9. Select Board Members Items for Future Discussion

Randy Izer stated that he would like to discuss at a future meeting Public Comment periods. Randy Izer would also like to discuss abutters taking use of Town property.

Molly Keegan stated that she would like to discuss communications protocol as it may relate to the Code of Conduct and that the feedback loop is being properly closed.

Joyce Chunglo would like to discuss applying for CPA money for the Town Hall.

10. Select Board Members Liaison Report

None.

11. Executive Session

11.1 UPSEU Local 424 Unit MADIV 108, UMASS Amherst; HAP Community Housing Services Inc.

Motion to convene in Executive Session for the purposes of Per M.G.L. Chapter 30A Section 21(a)(3) to conduct strategy session to conduct collective bargaining- UPSEU

Local 424 Unit MADIV 108; per M.G.L. Chapter 30A Section 21(a)(3) potential litigation – UMASS Amherst; per M.G.L. Chapter 30A Section 21(a)(3) litigation - HAP Community Housing Services, Inc. v. Town of Hadley, Western Housing Court Docket No. 19H79CV000509, where an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating positions of the Town and not to reconvene in open session.

Motion: Parsons Second: Chunglo

Roll Call Vote: Keegan: Aye; Chunglo: Aye; Parsons: Aye; Nevinsmith: Aye; Izer: Aye

Select Board entered Executive Session at 7:26 pm.

12. Announcements

Joyce Chunglo offers the Select Board’s condolences to the family of Patrick Gainer. Joyce Chunglo announced the tree lighting scheduled for November 25 at 5:00 at Hopkins Academy.

Joyce Chunglo announced that the North Hadley Sugar Shack was having a tree lighting on November 26 at 5:30.

Joyce Chunglo also announced the police department angel tree with information posted on the police department web page.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Lore
