

**Town of Wendell**  
**Selectboard Meeting Minutes**  
**September 4, 2024, 7 p.m.**  
Hybrid Meeting: Selectboard Offices and by Zoom

**Present:** Chair Laurie DiDonato, Vice Chair Gillian Budine, Member Paul Doud

**Also Present:** Glenn Johnson-Mussad, Town Coordinator; Cynthia Bolling, Recording Secretary; Treasurer Carolyn Manley; Josh Heinemann, Garden Committee; Tax Collector Penny Delorey; members of the public and press.

**I. Roll Call/Call to Order**

With all members present, the meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

**II. Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**III. Public Comment.** Josh Heinemann

The Community Garden Committee wants the Selectboard's input about charging for plots.

- When they started, Ted Lewis was firmly against charging for them, but people aren't doing anything with theirs, even though a work requirement is in place.
- The Hampden community garden committee charges, monitors work requirements, and is doing well.

**Discussion**

- The board members had no objection to having the committee charge money for plots.
- Gillian will reach out to people who might want to join the committee.

**IV. Selectboard Updates and Comments**

There were none.

**V. Selectboard Meeting and Warrant Schedule Review**

- The meeting and warrant schedule don't align for the month.
- Gillian won't be available on Sept. 11 to sign warrants.
- The Sept. 18 meeting will begin at 6 p.m., with a policy session.

**VI. Town Coordinator Report.** Glenn Johnson-Mussad

Annual Reports

Treasurer Carolyn Manley has resolved the issues Highland Press was having with the 2021 and 2022 Annual Reports, and they have been printed and delivered.

- a. Glenn will distribute copies to the people who requested them and file copies with the Town clerk, the library, and in Boston.
- b. Selectboard Clerk Su Hoyle will work on the 2023 Annual Report when she returns from vacation.

Entre Technologies

As a result of Gillian's work to improve things with IT services provider Entre Technologies, representative Pat Bierly made an on-site visit to Wendell.

- Glenn asked Pat to stop by the library, which has had problems getting its printers to work with the firewall.
  - a. Evidently, the issue is caused by the printers' age as well as a Wi-Fi access problem.
  - b. Pat gave Wendell a quote for the fix.
- Since Entre's invoices only show how many hours the rep spends on a visit, but not the total hours Wendell purchased for the year nor how many hours are left, Wendell will have to keep separate track of those numbers.

### Discussion

Gillian wanted Pat to visit the Town Office Building on his next visit.

### VII. Approval of August 21, 2024, Minutes

**Laurie made a motion to approve the August 21, 2024, Selectboard meeting minutes. Gillian seconded. No discussion.**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

### VIII. Inspections

A. Alternate Wiring Inspector. Glenn

The Selectboard is asked to approve the job posting that's in the documents folder for an alternate wiring inspector, which Wiring Inspector Gary Terroy has asked for.

**Laurie moved to approve the alternate wiring inspector job posting as presented. Gillian seconded. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Next Steps

- Glenn posted the position on Wendell's website.
- Steven Canning was scheduled to be interviewed for the position at 7:30 p.m.

B. Plumbing and Gas Inspection. Gillian

Director of Regional Services Bob Dean hasn't yet responded to Gillian's request for a quote from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) to do plumbing and gas inspections.

### Discussion

- The Selectboard talked about the feasibility of having the FRCOG submit a quote to bundle plumbing/gas, wiring, and building inspections for fiscal year (FY) 2026.
- Paul Doud has someone in mind for the currently open position of plumbing/gas inspector.
- The Selectboard asked Glenn to post a job opening and description for the plumbing/gas inspector position.

C. Inspection Fees. Glenn

The Selectboard was asked to consider accepting or changing the new electrical fee schedule Wire Inspector Gary Terroy submitted for approval at the end of May.

- a. The schedule (with increased fees) was based on what Gary is using in Petersham.
- b. While most of the fees were comparable to the FRCOG's July 2023 fee schedule, a few, like those for swimming pools, were much higher.

## Discussion

- The Selectboard went through the proposed fee schedule line by line and considered options ranging from replacing it with the FRCOG's July 2023 schedule to accepting the proposed schedule with changes for specific services that seemed too high for Wendell to accepting it as presented.
- Paul was very much in favor of adopting a schedule based on the FRCOG's 2023 fees plus \$10.

**Gillian made a motion to accept the proposed fee schedule as presented by Wiring Inspector Gary Terroy, effective Oct. 1, 2024, but to review the electrical inspection fee schedule in the spring. Laurie seconded. Paul abstained. With Gillian and Laurie voting aye, the motion passed 2-0.**

## D. Building Inspection Fees. Glenn

When asked, building Inspector Justin Gale agreed to revise the building inspection fee schedule to align with the 2020 schedule the FRCOG uses.

- Glenn noted that Justin isn't getting paid based on the fees collected.
- The most recent building inspection fee schedule for Wendell is from 2016.

**Gillian made a motion to ask Building Inspector Justin Gale to present a revised building permit fee schedule that's based on the FRCOG schedule from 2020 and adapted for the Town of Wendell's needs, plus inflation. Laurie seconded. No discussion.**

**The motion passed unanimously.**

## Next Steps

The Selectboard will request a meeting with Justin to discuss the fee schedule as well as complaints.

## IX. Structure of Tree Warden Position. Glenn and Director of Personnel Carolyn Manley

The Selectboard reviewed the laws applicable to changing the tree warden position to one that's appointed instead of elected.

- According to Carolyn, the laws involved say that the Town can vote at an annual or special Town meeting to change the status of a position from elected to appointed. Appointees don't have to be Wendell residents.
  - a. If the vote occurs at a Special Town meeting, it has to be held at least 60 days prior to the annual election. Then Town Clerk Anna Wetherby would put it on the ballot for the annual election in May. If a majority votes in favor both times, the position changes to appointed. If it fails at the election meeting, the position remains an elected one.
  - b. If the vote is taken at the Annual Town Meeting and passes, then the Town must wait until the next annual election before the change goes into effect.
  - c. If the person elected to the position leaves before the end of their term, the Selectboard can appoint a replacement to fill out the term.

## Discussion

The Selectboard considered putting this item on the agenda for a Special Town Meeting and writing up a job description for the position.

## Next Steps

- Glenn will let Tree Warden Cliff Dornbusch know that if he meets with the Selectboard about a complaint, Personnel Policy rules allow him to bring someone with him, either to an executive session or to an open Selectboard meeting.

Glenn will ask Town Counsel David Doneski if changing this position from elected to appointed requires both a Town meeting and a bylaw, and he will work on a job description for the tree warden position.

**X. Claiming .gov URL.** Glenn

The Selectboard was asked to consider internet provider ProudCity's recommendation that Wendell change its .us website address to a .gov address.

- Advantages: The change is free, a .gov address provides different protections, it's registered with the government, and it's easier for people to trust that it's a valid address.
- Disadvantages: It would involve changing email addresses.
- The Website Committee is in favor of making the change and would like to move ahead and claim the appropriate website name.

**Discussion**

- The Selectboard was in favor of the change.
- While the domain itself is free, Entre Technologies would have to be involved in the transition.

Glenn will talk to Entre about the possible cost of making the change.

**XI. Staffing of Tax Collector's Office.** Tax Collector Penny Delorey

Penny wanted to alert the Selectboard to upcoming staffing changes.

- Penny's assistant Kathy Soule-Regine is getting ready to transition out of the job, probably by the end of the current fiscal year.
- In addition, Penny may have surgery in the near future and will probably need a couple of weeks to recover. Kathy will cover for her while she's out.
- Penny will train with Kathy to pick up what Kathy does but thinks she will need to have a new assistant at some point.
  - a. In the interim, Carolyn will help Penny with a few tasks as volunteer support staff.
  - b. Kathy has prepared a job description for her position.

**Next Steps**

The Selectboard will check in with Penny after the new year to see when she and Kathy might be ready to post an opening for an assistant.

**XII. Animal Control.** Glenn

Police Chief Minckler says the sheriff's office will help with animal control, at a prorated cost to Wendell of \$2,261 for the remainder of FY 2025 (ending June 30, 2025).

**Discussion**

To fund the service, the Selectboard will take \$880 from the animal control line, with the balance coming from the community policing line (which has \$6,000 left).

Glenn sent a note to the Finance Committee about the proposed funding for animal control services.

**XIII. Wood Bank.** Gillian

Gillian posted a Wood Bank Applications announcement at the Town Office Building, which tells people where to find applications for getting wood.

- A QR code will let people access the online form. Completed forms can be dropped off at the Selectboard office, the treasurer's drop box, or the library (Maggie Houghton is helping out).

- This year's wood is green cordwood. There's no deadline for submitting the form.
- Sarah Butler is the coordinator and will be helped by volunteers, but they're not a Town committee.
- The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will help process the wood and deliver it to people in need.
  - a. DCR is looking for volunteers to help stack wood at recipients' homes. They have a release form.

**XIV. Extending the Town Water Supply.** Laurie

Wendell Country Store owner Patti Scutari has hired an engineer to give her quotes on the cost of the three different options she has to find a new water supply for her store.

- One option is to tie into the Town's water supply. Another is to drill a new well.
- The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has extended Patti's deadline until Sept. 30.

**Discussion**

- Carolyn and Selectboard Clerk Joy Gorzocoski looked at USDA, DEP, Conservation Commission, and Town of Wendell documents from as early as 2000 but couldn't find any formal agreements regarding its water supply system.
  - a. When Town minutes were reviewed, those conversations had more to do with whether the Meetinghouse could tie into the septic system.
  - b. The documents showed that funding for the library, septic and water systems were bundled.
- No reference was found in the Selectboard's past minutes to a Town vote about how to address tying into its water supply.
- According to the DEP, it's okay for a private enterprise to hook up to Wendell's public water supply system, as long as it doesn't have more than 12 bedrooms.
- The following questions remained:
  - a. What would Wendell need to do to make the hookup work?
  - b. What kind of agreement would Wendell have to make? How long should it be for?
  - c. Since Wendell would have to charge for water usage, what would the fee structure look like?

**Next Steps**

- Laurie will contact Attorney Doneski about the process for drawing up a formal agreement with the Country Store.
- Carolyn believes a Country Store hookup to Town water would involve a betterment (a property tax) but will confirm that as well as whether or not Wendell would need to create a water district with a Board of Commissioners.

**XV. Scott's Garage/Mormon Hollow Auto Licenses.** Glenn

Would the Selectboard want to hold a public hearing about the decision of the new owners to sell used cars?

**Discussion**

- The board members agreed that the process should include a public hearing.
- Glenn will base the Class II license application for used cars on the one used by Orange, since the Town doesn't have its own, and he'll adapt it for Wendell.

**XVI. Appointments.** Glenn

Glenn generated slips for people appointed to Town of Wendell positions for FY 2025, based on the Aug. 21 minutes.

## Discussion

After comparing appointment changes Carolyn processed as a result of the Aug. 21 Selectboard meeting, duplicates were discovered. The following appointments were found to be new:

- Linda Hickman, Cultural Council
- Christine Texiera, Cultural Council
- Phil Delorey, Zoning Board of Appeals

**Laurie made a motion to approve the appointments as presented. Gillian seconded. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.**

## XVII. Evaluation Schedule

The Selectboard reviewed the process for conducting evaluations, which should occur during the first quarter of the fiscal year.

### Discussion

- Each Selectboard member will complete the form, hopefully by the next meeting.
  - a. The form has sections for a person's strengths, areas for improvement, and comments.
- A list of duties or a job description should be on hand when the evaluation is conducted.
- Evaluation List:
  - a. Town Coordinator. The Selectboard will meet with Glenn at the next meeting.
  - b. Finance Co-Directors. Paul will meet with Glenn and Carolyn.
  - c. Project Coordinator. Gillian will meet with Phil Delorey.

## XVIII. ARPA-SLFRF Funds

Wendell has \$20,000 in federal money from the American Rescue Plan Act-State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) grant, which has to be spent or encumbered by the end of the calendar year.

### Discussion

- The Selectboard had committed \$20,000 in ARPA funds to pay Gill Engineering for its work designing the Erving-Wendell bridge repair.
  - a. Carolyn thought Wendell's share of the bill would actually come to about \$15,000, but Gill hasn't generated an invoice yet.
  - b. Phil Delorey said he thinks Gill is waiting to hear if the Community One Stop for Growth grant that was applied for would come through before it moved on to the procurement phase.
- The board considered these alternate ways to spend the money if there's no bill by December 15: a new copier or pay Anna for the additional time she's spending posting meetings or a computer for Asa de Roode.

*Carolyn will call Gill Engineering tomorrow and try to get a firm number from them, then follow up with Laurie.*

## XIX. Good Neighbors Agreement. Laurie

Wendell's insurance company, the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA), has asked that Wendell act soon to draw up a formal agreement with Good Neighbors Food Pantry that spells out responsibilities and includes insurance.

### Discussion

- Other questions to be answered:
  - a. Does the board want to incorporate all of MIIA's recommendations?
  - b. Should such an agreement apply to all groups that use Town buildings?

- c. How do other Towns manage?
- d. Would a simple waiver protect Wendell from liability issues with groups that don't have insurance? Who would sign it?
- MIIA has a new representative who says she will come to Wendell to review risk processes with Glenn and relevant Town officials and conduct mock inspections of Town facilities.

*Laurie will call MIIA and ask for details about what's involved in a waiver.*

**XX. Citizen of the Year**

The Selectboard will meet via Zoom on Thursday, Sept. 12, at 4 p.m. to consider nominees.

**XXI. Executive Session**

**Laurie made a motion to vote to enter into Executive Session pursuant to MGL c 30A, §21: To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Town Coordinator). Gillian seconded. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Declaration

"We are entering into Executive Session because bargaining in open session would have a detrimental effect on Wendell's negotiating position, bargaining position, litigating position, or ability to obtain qualified applicants."

**XXII. Return to Regular Session**

**Laurie moved that the Town Coordinator's position will have 112 hours of vacation going forward every year until it's renegotiated. Gillian seconded. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**XXIII. Adjournment**

**Gillian made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:06 p.m. Laurie seconded. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Documents**

- Proposed Electric Fees, May 31, 2024
- Selectboard Meeting Minutes, Aug. 21, 2024
- Selectboard Posting and Agenda, Sept. 4, 2024
- Alternate Wiring Inspector, Sept. 4, 2024
- Benefits of .gov domains\_get.gov, Aug. 16, 2024
- FRCOG Building Fee Schedule, 2020
- FRCOG Electrical Fee Schedule, 2023
- General Law — Part I, Title VII, Chapter 41, Section 1, Aug. 4, 2024
- General Law — Part I, Title VII, Chapter 41, Section II, Aug. 4, 2024
- General Law — Part I, Title VII, Chapter 41, Section IB, Aug. 4, 2024
- Petersham Electrical Inspector Fee Schedule, 2011
- TOW Memo — How to Convert Elected to Appointed, Aug. 3, 2024