1. CALL TO ORDER - Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00pm with Selectboard members: Ed Abrahams, Steve Bannon, Leigh Davis, Eric Gabriel, Garfield Reed present. Also present: Town Manager Mark Pruhenski

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   a. March 27, 2023
   b. April 3, 2023
   c. April 10, 2023
   L. Davis made a motion to approve the minutes of March 27, April 3 and April 10, 2023; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0.

3. SELECTBOARD’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS
   a. E. Gabriel thanked volunteers, DPW and the Town and Housatonic the Beautiful for the set-up and clean-up efforts around Earth Day. He also noted the importance of properly disposing of garbage.
   b. S. Bannon thanked E. Abrahams for his nine years of service on the Selectboard and stated it was an honor to serve with him.

4. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT
   a. Housatonic Water Works – M. Pruhenski stated there are no updates at this time.
   b. Annual Town Meeting – M. Pruhenski reminded the public about Town Meeting on May 1 at 6:00pm at Monument Mountain Regional High School. He stated the proposed FY24 budget and warrants are posted on the Town website – and added that anyone needing transportation can call 413-591-3826 or reach out to the Town Manager’s Office.
   c. Mattress and Box Spring Disposal – M. Pruhenski stated there has been a moratorium the last few months on mattress disposal, but collection has resumed at the Transfer Station at a cost of $65 and disposal tags can be purchased at the Town Clerk’s Office during regular business hours.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS
   a. Adam Dion of National Grid requesting to install 1 joint owned pole on Seekonk Road beginning at a point approximately 30 feet north of the centerline of the intersection of Seekonk Road @ Division St and continuing approximately 438 feet in a west direction. Install Pole #21-55 and anchor in the public way on the north side of Seekonk Road approximately 30’ from Pole #21-50.
      i. E. Gabriel recused.
      ii. A. Dion appeared stating he is a contractor for National Grid and explained the need to install a new pole.
   L. Davis made a motion to approve; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 4-0.

6. LICENSES AND PERMITS
   a. Andy Moro for the Murphy-Leary American Legion’s annual request to hand out Poppies in Great Barrington and in the village of Housatonic during the month of May.
   L. Davis made a motion to approve; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0.

   b. Andy Moro for the Murphy-Leary American Legion’s annual request to hold their Poppy Boot
Drive on Main Street in Great Barrington on Saturday May 20 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. A rain date of Saturday May 27, 2023 is also requested.

L. Davis made a motion to approve; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0.

c. Katherine Hand of Berkshire Cider Project, 58 State Road North Adams, for a Special Farm Winery License for sale and sampling at the Great Barrington Farmers Market, 18 Church Street, beginning Saturday, May 13 until Saturday, November 11 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
   i. K. Hand stated they have been attending farmers markets selling hard cider and it has gone well – the request is to attend the GB Farmers Market selling hard cider in bottles and offering small samples.

L. Davis made a motion to approve a Special Farm Winery License at the Great Barrington Farmers Market Saturday, May 13 until Saturday, November 11 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM to Katherine Hand for Berkshire Cider Project; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – G. Reed asked if someone would be checking identification – K. Hand stated IDs would be checked and they have had no issues in the past. All in favor: 5-0.

d. Heather Kowalski Nine Pin Cider Works LLC, 22 Park Row Chatham NY 12037 for a Special Farm Winery License for sale and sampling at the Great Barrington Farmers Market, 18 Church Street, beginning Saturday, May 13 until Saturday, November 11 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
   i. Jake Samascott, Samascott Orchards, appearing as a partner with Nine Pin Cider Works stated they have been at the Farmers Market the last few years and would like to continue.

L. Davis made a motion to approve a Special Farm Winery License at the Great Barrington Farmers Market Saturday, May 13 until Saturday, November 11 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM to Heather Kowalski for Nine Pin Cider Works; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – G. Reed asked if someone would be checking identification – it was confirmed that all staff check IDs. All in favor: 5-0.

e. Oskar Hallig/Janis Martinson for the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center and their request for a temporary weekday entertainment License for their Annual Gala on July 15, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 8:00PM at Memorial Field, Bridge Street, Great Barrington.
   i. O. Hallig stated this is an important annual event for the Mahaiwe starting at 4:00pm at Memorial Field and then proceeding to the theater by 8:00pm.

L. Davis made a motion to approve a temporary weekday entertainment License for the gala on July 15, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 8:00PM at Memorial Field to Oskar Hallig and Janis Martinson for the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0.

f. Oskar Hallig/Janis Martinson for the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center and their request for a one day All Alcoholic license for the Annual Gala on July 15, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 8:00PM at Memorial Field, Bridge Street, Great Barrington.

L. Davis made a motion to approve a one day All Alcoholic license for the gala on July 15, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 8:00PM at Memorial Field to Oskar Hallig and Janis Martinson for the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0.

g. Terry Chamberland for the Great Barrington Firefighter’s Association request for a temporary Entertainment License for the Annual Car Show on August 3, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM. This request includes closing Main Street from Cottage to Bridge Streets, including Castle and Railroad Streets.
   i. It was stated this is the same request/event for the last 14 years and it was requested that the rain date of August 10, 4:00pm – 9:00pm be included

L. Davis made a motion to approve a temporary Entertainment License for the Annual Car Show on August 3, 2023 from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM and rain date August 10, 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM to Terry Chamberland for the Great Barrington Firefighter’s Association; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 5-0.

h. Adrian Misacango of The Elm restaurant for a request for an Annual Weekday Entertainment License at 20 Railroad Street, Great Barrington from Monday to Saturday 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM.
7. NEW BUSINESS
   a. Recreational cannabis – Ananda Timpane/Railroad Street Youth Project –
      i. Timpane presented on the impacts of cannabis on South County youth based on the Railroad Street Youth Project’s connection with the South Berkshire Community Health Coalition and county-wide collaboration to collect local level data on risk and protective factors and use rates for alcohol, cannabis, nicotine and other drugs among 8th-12th grade youth. She framed the presentation with an inquiry from E. Abrahams about whether the sale of recreational cannabis has had an impact on youth in our community. She stated there is important context to consider in reviewing the years of data - and noted Railroad Street Youth takes a public health approach which focuses on preventing, reducing and delaying substance use for youth, as adult moderate use is not a problem for overall health and development. She continued to describe Railroad Street Youth’s programs around teen substance prevention/use and noted risk factors such as parent/peer behaviors and perceptions and the impact of the pandemic on youth behavior. She noted changing risk factors and the importance of balancing prevention with increased risk to impact use rates. She shared data reflecting community norms and how South County compared with national statistics around use and perception of risk. She also clarified that South County has had persistently high teen substance use rates across all substances compared to Berkshire County and the nation – and while there was a decrease in use during the height of the pandemic, it is on the rise now.
      ii. S. Bannon asked for a copy of the report and for it to be posted on the town website.
      iii. E. Abrahams asked about the direct impact on youth – A. Timpane replied from a health perspective there are concerns about brain development that we are still learning about. He also asked about community norms and the prevalence of legal cannabis as part of what is driving increases in use – and how can Railroad Street Youth address that. A. Timpane replied we must look at the data for increased use rates in light of risk and protective factors and watch community norms in prevention work as that is a strong driver. She added community norms can shift and public forums/vendors can help with prevention – and there should be work with parents as well as accurate information for youth.
      iv. L. Davis asked what can the Town do more or better and if youth boredom an issue – A. Timpane replied the Town has done well with open discussion/positive messaging that informs policy and positions and by investing in prevention including funding social activities for youth. L. Davis confirmed this work would be impacted if Community Impact Fees were eliminated. L. Davis asked about the impact on mental health – A. Timpane replied research is in early stages, but there are some causal links being identified.
      v. S. Bannon asked about trends regarding alcohol use – A. Timpane replied alcohol use is the number one issue for teens. S. Bannon stated we should dig deeper into the report to identify other trends and to see where we are in two years – A. Timpane added it is too early to see trends on cannabis use related to shops opening especially due to the pandemic lockdown.
      vi. E. Abrahams noted host agreements and community impact fees will be on the agenda soon and urged Dr. Ruby Chang and Gary Pratt to be part of that discussion.

b. Opioid Settlement Funds- Request for Selectboard Commitment. Gary Pratt/South County Recovery Center.
i. G. Pratt presented on the history and current operations of the South County Recovery Center and highlighted the work of its recovery coaches; its programs for everyone affected by substance use and partnerships with local medical facilities/health organizations, educational institutions and human service agencies to support its role as a referral hub to address multiple needs. He noted in the last reporting period there were 270 visitors – 170 of which returned for at least a second visit and 73 from Great Barrington. He shared statistics on opioid use and the substantial increase in overdose deaths since 2010. He noted the Center’s federal grant is in the final year, and as they serve all of Berkshire County, is his seeing opioid settlement funds from multiple towns as it is well positioned to provide direct services and fills gaps in services. He asked the Selectboard to commit to channeling opioid settlement funds to the Center when they become available.

ii. M. Pruhenski stated the Town will receive $55,000 over ten years.

L. Davis made a motion to commit opioid settlement funds to the South County Recovery Center; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – G. Reed asked how the funds would be used – G. Pratt replied funds would be used to sustain ongoing operations and programs. E. Abrahams stated he was peripherally involved in writing the original grant, but was not paid for that work. L. Davis confirmed the Center is connected with the schools and works directly with students. A. Timpane added the Center works closely with Railroad Street Youth and provides space for recovery groups to meet. All in favor: 5-0.

S. Bannon stated there are 6 panelists and 24 attendees.

c. Strategic Sustainability and Livability Committee update and discussion of the future of the committee.

i. Natalie Narotzky and Jovanina Pagano, Committee members, presented on the origins, mission, projects and successes/collaborations of the Strategic Sustainability and Livability Committee – noting the focus of its work on the intersectionality, complexities and key aspects of sustainability. They shared the Committee’s efforts to support energy aggregation, LED streetlights, electric vehicle charging stations and waste reduction. They also shared learnings around how to improve inclusivity especially around Town decision-making processes for the betterment of the community. They provided recommendations including a checklist for Town boards/committees is assess the inclusivity process; creating stronger relationships by repairing/building trust; and creating a Town-wide composting program. They stated their request to dissolve the Committee as interest in membership has waned, but also to allow ideas/objectives to permeate at higher levels, for which, a Committee is not the ideal driver.

L. Davis made a motion to dissolve the Strategic Sustainability and Livability Committee; E. Abrahams seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – E. Gabriel noted composting is being discussed in other committees and there is broad interest in moving forward. It was noted that changes in the building code come up every three years and someone will need to replace E. Abrahams representing the Selectboard. All in favor: 5-0.

8. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME

a. Charlie Williamson, 48 Blue Hill Road, stated the EPA can be contacted regarding the Housatonic water situation as they have authority under the Clean Water Act. He also inquired about a record of health issues among Housatonic residents.

b. Ruby Chang, 253 Long Pond Road, stated she was speaking as a resident, physician and Board of Health member - and asked that the work of the Strategic Sustainability and Livability Committee continue through an advisory board potentially under the Board of Health or DPW. She also shared
her work on composting and noted the importance of the program and getting the right people involved.
c. Claudia Shapiro, 70 Egremont Plain Road, asked for a copy of the decision and findings of fact for
the Airport special permit granted on April 10. S. Bannon replied it would be emailed to her when it is ready.
d. Nancy McConnell, 1066 Main Street, asked that GB rescind its support for using public funds for
Rest of River clean-up/disposal which is opposed by two local environmental groups and being
appealed. She stated she had asked for the matter to be placed on the meeting agenda. She asked
that the GB and Lee Selectboards meet and noted Rest of River Committee meetings are not
accessible.
e. Jovanina Pagano, 74 Division Street, stated legalizing and normalizing substance use should lead to
a decrease in extreme/harmful use – and asked about the role of parents in making that happen.
f. R. Chang stated youth get cannabis online, from friends and from family.

9. SELECTBOARD’S TIME
   a. E. Gabriel referred to a letter from Pat Hollenbeck about the Ramsdell Library and asked that M.
      Pruhenski reconsider signing the letter of intent for the grant for the building – S. Bannon replied it
      must be signed by Friday and it is not on the agenda so there is not time to reconsider.
         i. R. Chang stated she is a Library trustee and noted the letter can be signed and amended in
            the future. She stated the Library needs reconstruction and asked for it to be put on an
            agenda.
         ii. E. Gabriel acknowledged the need to sign the letter and there not a requirement to move
             forward. He urged open discussion on the matter with everyone at the table.
   b. E. Abrahams stated it has been an honor to serve on the Selectboard for the last nine years and
      thanked the members and voters for their support.

10. MEDIA TIME – No media asked to speak.

11. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 7:59pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow, Recording Clerk