1. CONVENE AS SEWER COMMISSIONERS - Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00pm with Selectboard members: Steve Bannon, Ben Elliott, Eric Gabriel present. Absent: Leigh Davis, Garfield Reed. Also in attendance: Town Manager Mark Pruhenski
   a. Review/vote to approve sewer abatements.
      E. Gabriel made a motion to convene as Sewer Commissioners; B. Elliott seconded. All in favor: 3-0.
      Joe Aberdale, Superintendent Department of Public Works (DPW), stated this is for the period July 31 to December 31, 2022.
      E. Gabriel made a motion to approve sewer abatements as recommended by the DPW; B. Elliott seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 3-0.

2. CALL TO ORDER SELECTBOARD REGULAR MEETING
   E. Gabriel made a motion to return as Selectboard; B. Elliott seconded. All in favor: 3-0.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   a. August 2, 2023
   b. June 12, 2023
   c. June 13, 2023
   d. June 26, 2023
   e. July 10, 2023
      S. Bannon stated the June 12, June 13 and June 26 minutes have already been approved.
      E. Gabriel made a motion to approve the July 10 and August 2, 2023 minutes as written; B. Elliott seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 3-0.

4. SELECTBOARD’S ANNOUNCEMENTS/STATEMENTS
   E. Gabriel thanked Heather Campbell for organizing and Town staff for permitting the Housatonic community tag sale on August 26.

5. TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT
   a. Housatonic Water Works – M. Pruhenski stated the Selectboard met in executive session with Town Counsel on August 7 and will meet again on September 11 to continue the strategy session. He noted he is researching the hydrant issue on Division Street and will have information to share at the September 11 meeting. He also stated HWW is hosting an informational meeting Wednesday night at 6:00pm and participation information will be shared online. He added that the Town received official notice of the rate case filing which is posted on the Selectboard page, HWW tab - and a public statement is being prepared.
   b. Building Commissioner retirement – M. Pruhenski stated Ed May retired last week - he thanked him for his many years of service and wished him well. He noted recruiting for the position has been challenging but a candidate has been identified and there will be an update at the next meeting. He thanked residents for their patience in this transition period.
c. Town Projects- DPW Superintendent Update – J. Aberdale outlined an extensive list of projects in progress and upcoming this fiscal year. He highlighted cross walks on Main Street; updated street lighting; road paving; drainage projects; sidewalk repair/installation; wastewater improvements; Town building repairs including Town Hall, the Libraries and the Police Department; Parks upgrades and bridge repairs.

6. LICENSES AND PERMITS
   a. Karen Beckwith for Great Barrington Fish and Game, requesting 10-one day beer and wine licenses for their annual Turkey Shoot from 12 noon to 6:00 PM on the following days: September 17, September 24, October 1, October 8, October 15, October 22, October 29, November 5, November 12, and November 19, 2023.
   E. Gabriel made a motion to approve 10-one day beer and wine licenses for Great Barrington Fish and Game Turkey Shoot event on September 17, September 24, October 1, October 8, October 15, October 22, October 29, November 5, November 12, and November 19, 2023, 12 noon to 6:00 PM; B. Elliott seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 3-0.

7. PREVIOUS BUSINESS
      i. M. Pruhenski provided background stating this is the fourth meeting to discuss the use of $250,000 earmarked funds for HWW customer relief. He noted the revised executive summary reflects Selectboard feedback and is intended as a jumping off point for discussion. He noted it includes expenses for bottled water, laundry and filtration systems and added it is likely more households will apply now with this broader focus - and suggested reimbursement be reduced to $300 which would accommodate 830 households. He added if funds remain it can be revisited.
      ii. E. Gabriel advocated for a $500 reimbursement for filtration systems with receipts – as it is more permanent relief. He noted making this broader will create a lot of confusion and be difficult for staff to manage.
      iii. B. Elliott stated this funding is a band aid and should be used by customers as needed since there are so many different issues caused by the water situation. He stated it is complicated so flexibility is important. He also expressed concern about staff having to collect receipts.
      iv. M. Pruhenski clarified the focus is on households as they can be identified. He also noted the approach can be reevaluated in six months, once there is a sense of who applies and for what kind of relief.
      v. S. Bannon stated a vote should be by the full board and emphasized the intention is to do what’s best for HWW customers. He noted both approaches as compelling and logical.
      vi. S. Bannon asked for public input
         • Donna Jacobs, 260 park Street, stated she supports the executive summary approach that provides funds to each customer to address their needs.
Debra Herman, 373 North Plain Road, stated every HWW customer has HAA5 problems and the funds should be distributed with no receipts required. She urged a focus on finding a permanent solution.

Kevin Regan, Housatonic, noted HWW violations since 2021 that have not been addressed, and while acknowledging the emergency funds, he stated it should be repaid by HWW. S. Bannon replied HWW will not repay and clarified the funds are from the state budget. He added that the DPW will hold a public hearing and questions can be asked there. It was also stated that if the Town is to buy HWW it would have to be approved at Town Meeting.

vii. S. Bannon stated the discussion would be continued at the September 11 meeting.

8. NEW BUSINESS (Discussion and possible vote) (The Board reserves the right to pass over any agenda item when no applicant or representative is present)
   a. Abby Chaput for the Josh Billings Run Aground request to use Town roads
      S. Bannon stated this matter should be under Licenses and Permits.
      Details of the event on September 10 were presented stating the start time of 9:30am and the route through GB. It was confirmed all participant safety measures are covered.
      E. Gabriel made a motion to approve the use of Town roads for the Josh Billings Run Aground; B. Elliott seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 3-0.
   b. Presentation of Town Hall Campus Renovation Plans
      i. S. Bannon stated this is the first public presentation of the plan and it will not be voted on at this meeting. He added that the plan would need to be reviewed/approved by the Historic District Commission and then would return to the Selectboard for a vote. It was confirmed that a Town park is within the Campus.
      ii. M. Pruhenski provided background stating discussions around renovation were held in 2010-2011 during the Redesign of Main Street project and added that $700,000 was approved at Town Meeting with $100,000 earmarked for a public restroom. He outlined project goals highlighting many improvements for safety and public/handicapped access.
      iii. Steve Mack, Foresight Land Services, provided details on the renovation plan including redesigning traffic flow; ADA accessibility; new paths, sidewalks and parking spaces; reconfigured/regraded gathering areas/green space, EV charging stations/bike racks; new lighting and a permanent public restroom. He stated that at the rear, the park area would be regraded and leveled for better public usage and events; the gazebo would be moved to the back area; and trees would be added for shade.
      iv. The Selectboard discussed the new gazebo area and improved access to Town Hall.
         It was suggested that seating be added in the front courtyard. S. Bannon stated there would be an update on the plan at the end of September.
      v. S. Bannon asked for public comment
         • Lee Rogers, 31 Prospect Street, stated he has been organizing concerts at the gazebo, and while he supports the renovation plan especially around accessibility, he expressed concerns about moving the gazebo and having less
green space and additional parking. It was discussed that the area used to be level, and is being restored and that the new gazebo location would provide a larger audience area. It was confirmed the gazebo is structurally sound.

- Karen Smith, Chair Parks and Recreation Commission, stated her support for the plan and added the leveling is important for events and the new gazebo location opens up the park
- Don Howe, Chair Historic District Commission, provided a historical perspective that the bandstand was moved before from Main and Castle Streets to its current location.
- Terry Chamberland, 3 Magnolia Street, stated his support for adding shade trees near the gazebo.

c. Mason Library Mural Project Proposal
   i. S. Bannon stated there would not be a vote at the meeting, this is only a presentation. He confirmed this project would be reviewed/approved by the Historic District Commission and the Library Trustees would provide a recommendation - and it would then be returned to the Selectboard for a vote.
   ii. John Horan, project volunteer, provided an overview of the concept and plan stating the Mason Library mural is part of a larger project remembering local victims of slavery and celebrating Elizabeth Freeman and her historic freedom law suit. He shared a picture of the Library Church Street side as the suggested location for the mural.
   iii. Gwendolyn VanSant, Multicultural Bridge described the importance of these efforts, their connection to the community and Elizabeth Freeman’s journey from slavery to freedom to activist for economic independence – and the mural’s purpose in telling that story.
   iv. Britt Ruhe, Common Wealth Murals, described the extensive mural creation process which includes community input and participation.
   v. S. Bannon asked for public input
      - Carol McGlinchy, 10 Beacon Hill and Library Trustee, asked about project funding and why the Library Trustees were not advised in advance. It was explained funds would have to be raised, not through the Town/taxpayers, and that the presentation was intended to identify any roadblocks from a Town/Selectboard perspective. C. McGlinchy asked why the focus is on GB and the library – it was confirmed the larger project includes other Towns especially Stockbridge, but GB is where Elizabeth Freeman won her freedom. It was also confirmed other locations were considered, but the Library seemed best.
      - D. Howe stated the Mason Library is in the Historic District and the entire building is on the National Register of Historic Properties.
      - Jennifer Clark, Oak Street and Chair of the Design Advisory Committee asked about the timeframe and to provide input on the project. It was confirmed the timeframe would depend on fundraising and the lengthy approval/selection process for the mural was described including the creation of an advisory group. It was confirmed the Selectboard is the final decision-maker.
• Ed Abrahams suggested the mural should be on the Pleasant Street side of the Library so it is more visible.
• Ruby Chang, Long Pond Road and Library Trustee, asked where the mural would be located at the library – it was confirmed it is on the Pleasant Street side.

d. Special Town Meeting and Citizen Petition Window
S. Bannon stated the Special Town Meeting tentatively scheduled for October 23, 2023 for the school merger discussion has to be approved so Citizens Petitions can open tomorrow. E. Gabriel made a motion to approve the 2023 Special Town Meeting calendar as written; B. Elliott seconded. S. Bannon asked for any discussion – there was none. All in favor: 3-0.

9. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME
a. Housatonic resident, name inaudible, asked about the Selectboard and Health Department advocating on behalf of HWW customers with state agencies - S. Bannon replied the Selectboard has been advocating, though it has no authority. It was also confirmed tax bills for Housatonic residents do not include payments to the GB Fire District.
b. Donna Jacobs, 260 Park Street, stated there is federal funding for environmental protection and infrastructure that should be tapped and asked for more transparency in what the Town is doing to support the HWW situation.
c. Kathy Regan, Housatonic, asked what it would take for the Town to take over HWW - S. Bannon replied that would be eminent domain which would have to be decided in the courts. She asked about next steps with resolving water issues - S. Bannon replied residents should attend the DPU public hearing to ask questions.
d. Tilvila Hurwit asked about the Seven Minutes of World Piece – S. Bannon replied it is not on the agenda as the Town was awaiting the proclamation.

10. SELECTBOARD’S TIME – There were no comments.

11. MEDIA TIME
a. Eileen Mooney asked about Alford and the Mason Library – S. Bannon replied that would be on a future agenda.

12. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Bannon adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 7:02pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Ostrow, Recording Clerk