



# TOWN OF MILLVILLE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

290 Main Street  
Millville MA 01529

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES Tuesday, September 5, 2023

**Location of Meeting:** Millville Town Hall, 290 Main St, Millville MA 01529

Name	Title	Attendance
Jennifer Gill	Chairperson	<i>present</i>
Andrew Alward	Vice Chair	<i>absent</i>
Richard Bremilst	Member	<i>present</i>
Roland Barrett	Member	<i>present</i>
Matthew Maille	Member	<i>absent</i>
Peter Caruso	Town Administrator	<i>present</i>

### **OPEN MEETING:**

At 7:18 PM Chairperson Jennifer Gill opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- 1. Steven B. Furno Retirement Proclamations, Including Representative Soter**  
On behalf of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Representative Soter congratulated former Deputy Chief Furno on his retirement after 34 years in service to the Town of Millville Fire Department. A certificate was presented to Mr. Furno.

Chairperson Jennifer Gill presented a Proclamation of Appreciation, noting Mr. Furno's over 34 years of service as a firefighter/EMT. Selectmen Barrett also commented on Mr. Furno's service.

*On a motion by Chairperson Jennifer Gill, seconded by Selectmen Bremilst, the Proclamation of Appreciation was voted unanimously by the three present Selectmen.*

Chairperson Jennifer Gill presented the Massachusetts Firefighter Service Award from the Massachusetts Fire Service Commission to Mr. Furno.

**2. Appointment of Planning Board Member Justin Allen as FY 24 CMRPC Alternate Delegate**

*On a motion by Selectman Roland Barrett, seconded by Selectman Richard Bremilst, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to appoint Justin Allen as FY24 CMRPC Alternate Delegate.*

**3. Special Town Meeting Planning**

**a. Set Meeting Date**

*On a motion by Chairperson Jennifer Gill seconded by Selectman Richard Bremilst, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to schedule the Special Town Meeting on November 1, 2023.*

A member of the audience asked whether the Special Town Meeting would be held at the Millville Elementary School and if it was safe to hold it there. Town Administrator Peter Caruso answered that it was safe for this purpose and that a request would be submitted to the School Committee for use of the building.

**b. Set Warrant Opening and Closing Dates**

*On a motion by Chairperson Jennifer Gill, seconded by Selectman Richard Bremilst, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to set the warrant opening date as September 5, 2023 and the closing date as September 27, 2023 at 5:00pm.*

**c. Consideration of Potential Warrant Articles**

Town Administrator Peter Caruso discussed anticipated warrant articles, stating that there would typically be warrant articles regarding prior year bills and budget adjustments. There is also an expected warrant article regarding a Board of Health member who needs approval via town meeting to act as a health agent. Mr Caruso also stated the feasibility study would have a warrant article as well. The Planning Board was also mentioned as possibly updating some zoning bylaws.

**4. Public Safety Committee**

**a. Appointment of Police and Fire Department Representatives \***

**Appointment of Members from Public; Status Update and Discussion**

Selectman Richard Bremilst explained the purpose of the Public Safety Committee, especially its role in addressing staffing issues.

*On a motion by Chairperson Jennifer Gill, seconded by Selectman Richard Bremilst, the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to appoint Steven LaCava, Joseph Guilbeault, and Gregory Gomes to the Public Safety Committee.*

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1. MES Water Status Update**

**a. Updates from the School Committee Meeting (8/31/2023)**

Chairperson Jennifer Gill offered that the School Committee send a liaison to each meeting, as there would be a standing item on the Board of Selectmen agendas regarding MES water updates.

Chairperson Jennifer Gill corrected an error in the meeting on August 31, 2023, where she stated that the Board of Selectmen did not vote on the Open Meeting Law violation. There was a vote during executive session and it was included in the letter from August 14, 2023.

Chairperson Jennifer Gill stated that she had children of her own at MES from 2012-2021. She also stated that the Board of Selectmen is open to having a discussion with the School Committee regarding the policy that anything under \$25,000 is considered an operational expense according to the Regional Agreement.

Chairperson Jennifer Gill explained that after the resignation of the prior operator, Northeast Water Solutions, on July 26, 2023 with less than 48 hours' notice, the Town immediately began to put together a water operations team, and she stressed that the Town is committed to working on this issue.

Selectman Richard Bremilst asked where it is documented that the water is an operational expense and how is it determined "whether the landlord or tenant" pays. Town Administrator Peter Caruso stated that the BMR Regional Agreement and the MES Lease Agreement define operating costs versus capital or other costs and explained that the letter sent to the school included an interpretation of the Regional Agreement as understood by Town Counsel and the Town.

Jane Reggio of 7 Diana Circle addressed the Board as a resident, with no current responsibilities or position with the School or Town. She described the history of the greensand system installed and validated in 2010-2011, and its subsequent issues in 2012 which resulted in an action plan with MassDEP. She stated that state law says that the owner of a public water system is defined as the legal owner of the property on which the water system components reside. She also stated that the "fear-mongering" about the water quality started well before 2010. Jane Reggio claimed that poor test results in the past used to result in actions, but more recently the plans have been to test, study, and consider, but not make active changes. Regarding the bottled water, Jane Reggio stated the DEP was under the impression that the Town was paying for bottled water since 2020.

Selectman Bremilst asked who validated the system in 2011. Jane Reggio read a report from Bob Ferrari that the greensand filtration system was validated in 2011, but it does not say who validated it. A discussion of historical issues with

the water system continued. The budget for MES water was discussed. Selectman Bremilst asked whether it was an option to scrap the system and start anew next year.

**b. Revised Corrective Action Plan**

Town Administrator Peter Caruso gave an update about Dr. Gullick's progress as the new operator. Dr. Gullick reported that the results are coming in and show better levels of contaminants, but since the violations occur with a 4-quarter running average, there will still be a violation until the average of multiple quarters is lower. The corrective action plan in place will be amended to include that they will continue with chlorine and not change to permanganate. They may also add another filter before the greensand filter.

Town Administrator Peter Caruso also mentioned that meetings with Uxbridge and Blackstone were scheduled to continue the conversation about water service from one of those towns. A discussion with Mary-Jude Pigsley from MassDEP included a question of whether the Town was officially required to supply bottled water; MassDEP stated it could issue an official order directing the Town to continue providing an alternate water supply.

Selectman Richard Bremilst questioned a portion of Dr. Gullick's report as reported by Town Administrator Peter Caruso, regarding a statement that the filter is oversized for the school. Town Administrator Peter Caruso responded that the tests were still in progress. Selectman Richard Bremilst asked why they were not testing more frequently than required. Town Administrator Peter Caruso responded that a lot of data was being collected and monitored carefully. Selectman Richard Bremilst reiterated that more frequent testing than required would give more reliability and credibility to the results. Town Administrator Peter Caruso stated that there is currently no one who can be there daily. Selectman Richard Bremilst asked if we could use Blackstone's water department for technical assistance, but Town Administrator Peter Caruso stated that they use a consultant. Selectman Richard Bremilst also asked whether the last water operator was paid in full yet. Town Administrator Peter Caruso reported that he has not yet been paid in full and that there were bills being disputed.

Gerry Finn of 47 Grove Street asked about the claim that the previous water operator would not release past records unless paid in full, and if those records have been released. Town Administrator Peter Caruso stated that those records were no longer necessary to move forward, since the current operator was able to determine the bulk of the information necessary sufficient to satisfy the MassDEP requirements. Gerry Finn stressed that the issue needs to be fixed. Chairperson Jennifer Gill responded that they are committed to fixing it, and that she regrets that the fix is not happening faster. Gerry Finn also stressed that it was an issue that the maintenance plan was not updated in 13 years. Selectman Roland Barrett stated that the issue was that the plan was not updated and it was not discovered until too late while the previous operator was involved.

A previous head custodian at the school by the name of Greenie was discussed, as once he left, maintenance was not done in a timely manner. Selectman Roland Barrett said that whatever money used to be paid to be Greenie should be set aside for a new maintenance staff member to oversee the filter system daily.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. DeFalco stressed that the same issues that occurred in the past should not be repeated. Another member of the public asked when the most recent corrective action plan was submitted. Town Administrator Peter Caruso stated that the most recent corrective action plan is from June 13, and an amendment to the plan from June 13 will be submitted when available. The member of the public asked whether the timeframes in the plan were open-ended or if they had deadlines. Town Administrator Peter Caruso replied that there are specific timeframes for different parts of the plan, and that it will take several months for Dr. Gullick to get a handle on the situation in the first place. Gerry Finn asked for a date for when the next steps could take place. Town Administrator Peter Caruso responded that he could not confirm a deadline, but that the decision to allow students back next year would be the deadline for positive results.

Dr. DeFalco asked for a phased approach with plans in place, as the current corrective action plan does not have clear phases or actions. Jane Reggio agreed that the corrective action plan looks too similar to the 2019 corrective action plan. A discussion about the responsibility of the Town in regards to the water system was revisited. The issue of the nearby beaver dam was discussed; Selectman Roland Barrett volunteered to discuss the situation with the Conservation Commission. Town Administrator Peter Caruso reminded that there is no scientific evidence that the beaver dam has any impact on the water quality. The Board noted that the beaver dam may be addressed as it may be impacting the playing fields. The feasibility of water service from another town was discussed in brief.

#### **DEPARTMENTS:**

None.

#### **PUBLIC FORUM:**

1. Gerry Finn of 47 Grove Street requested that the Town and Selectmen have a list of priorities by importance after the water issue. The old town hall was discussed in brief.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

1. Town Administrator Peter Caruso announced a lunch at the Senior Center on Thursday at noon followed by bingo. On Monday, a senior lunch is scheduled. The Senior Center also has line dancing and chair exercises next Tuesday, painting next Thursday, and crafts on the 18th.
2. Town Administrator Peter Caruso reached out to the library but did not hear back in time for the meeting; library events can be found online.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Central Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization, responsible for prioritizing how federal funds are spent on roads, bridges, and transit in Worcester and in 39 surrounding communities, sent correspondence regarding the term end for selectmen representation for the southeast subregion. The CMMPO invited a representative from the Millville Selectmen to attend a meeting regarding their upcoming election.

**MINUTES:**

None.

**SELECTMEN'S REPORTS:**

1. Roland Barrett stated he had nothing else to discuss.
2. Richard Bremilst stated that he had nothing else to discuss.
3. Jennifer Gill stated that she wanted to make a list of priorities, which included the playground/park beside the police station. A discussion of the playground would be added to a future agenda.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

1. Town Hall has many people out sick due to Covid.
2. Peter Caruso has reached out to Lifted Luxury, a marijuana company under a Host Community Agreement that will expire on October 5, 2023, but has not heard back.

**ITEMS NOT REASONABLY ANTICIPATED 48 HOURS PRIOR TO MEETING:**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

*A motion was made by Chairperson Jennifer Gill, seconded by Selectman Roland Barrett, for the Board of Selectmen to enter into Executive Session per MGL c.30A S21(a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the Town and the chair so declares, regarding Police Teamsters Union Local 170, returning to open meeting only to adjourn.*

**RETURN TO OPEN MEETING & ADJOURNMENT:**

*On a motion made by Jennifer Gill, seconded by Roland Barrett, the Board voted to adjourn at 9:45 pm.*

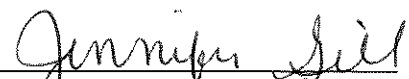
The next regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for Monday, September 25, 2023.

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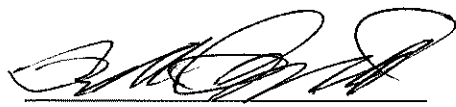
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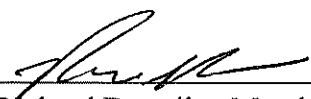
Respectfully Submitted,

Dylan Lindholm  
Recording Secretary

  
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Jennifer Gill, Chair

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Andrew Alward, Vice Chair

  
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Roland Barrett, Member

  
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Richard Bremilst, Member

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Matthew Maille, Member