

P.O. Box 116
242 Old Petersham Road
Hardwick, Massachusetts 01037



ehs1.org
413-477-6000
Fax: 413-477-6837

EAGLE HILL SCHOOL

June 16, 2005

Board of Selectmen
Myron E. Richardson Building
307 Main Street
P.O. Box 575
Gilbertville, MA 01031

Re: PILOT Program

Dear Selectmen,

On June 4, 2005, the Eagle Hill School Board of Trustees met for the fourth and final time for the 2004-2005 academic year. As the third order of business, the trustees discussed the proposal put forth jointly by the offices of the selectmen and the assessors. After thoughtful consideration of the proposal, the board decided not to take action on the request to make a voluntary payment in lieu of taxes in the amount of \$19,036.84.

Although the board is in no way ruling out a future agreement, there were several reasons why the board decided not to take immediate action. First, the calculation provided by the assessors unfairly (although assuredly inadvertently) inflates the amount "owed" by Eagle Hill School because it fails to consider the economic impact of other Hardwick non-profits or the chapter 61A and 61B land that is currently given preferential tax treatment. When recalculated to include all of the properties in Hardwick equitably, Eagle Hill's share of the tax burden (using the assessor's calculation) drops significantly. Of course, that is before updating the assessments on the properties that are currently receiving tax relief.

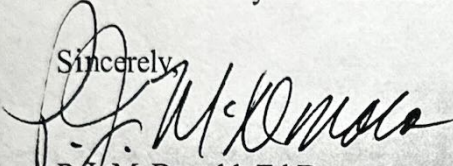
Secondly, and much more importantly, the board voiced its deep concern that the Town of Hardwick would actually end up in a worse position if we replaced our current contributions (financial and otherwise) with the payment in lieu of taxes you have proposed. Currently we have identified fifty-four different ways in which Eagle Hill School is significantly impacting the Hardwick community, many of which have a direct and dramatic financial affect on the town and its residents. As just one example, the new athletic complex that we recently opened up to town residents carries with it an annual benefit to Hardwick of between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

Finally, before making any impulsive or shortsighted decision, the EHS Board of Trustees felt that EHS and Hardwick should come together and share our respective visions and dreams for the future. If done openly and cooperatively, together we are sure to identify both

redundancies and partnership opportunities to which the community and financial affects will dwarf any annual payment in lieu of taxes.

As such, the EHS Board of Trustees did vote unanimously to form a joint task force to explore a mutually beneficial and acceptable partnership between Hardwick and Eagle Hill School. Although we are open to other configurations, we believe that a five-person task force (three members from Hardwick and two from EHS) will provide the necessary perspective and horsepower. If you are in agreement with setting up this task force, please let us know whom you would like to assign to this important team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P.J. McDonald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".

P.J. McDonald, Ed.D.
Headmaster