

Dear Board of Selectmen,

For the purposes of this memo, my use of the phrases "town" and "Board of Selectmen" as they relate to messages are intended to refer specifically to Kenan Young and Theresa Cofske only. I make this distinction because I believe Julie Quink and Kelly Allen have been completely shut out of most aspects of their duty to run the Town and, as it relates to the sewer issues, have been held hostage by the threat that the USDA they would look unfavorably upon a leadership change on the Board of Selectmen, a threat voiced by representatives of the USDA itself. At this point, however, I regret wholeheartedly my Town House meeting support against a leadership change because I feel as though none of the USDA conditions or Selectmen's promises around greater harmony and communication have been realized. In fact, conditions have deteriorated further. Julie and Kelly were voted into office by members of this community who wanted them to have a voice among the leadership triad, and it would seem to me that their authority—and the will of the people as expressed in their hopes and by their votes—has been usurped by a not-so-dynamic duo.

The town continues publicly to lie, misrepresent, and purposely omit important information as it relates to Eagle Hill School and the sewer extension line. This is completely unacceptable, and I will no longer stand by and allow you to tarnish the image of this great school. There are no lengths to which I will now not go to defend against the deceit and lies from Kenan, Theresa, the USDA, and some Town employees. You have my undivided attention.

Let me offer you a few examples from Monday night alone:

-Scott flatly lied about the extension line having a PH problem. As requested, we have checked and logged the PH levels weekly for the agreed upon time and then, as we agreed, we transitioned to every 2-3 weeks. Our PH levels have never once been outside the compliance thresholds provided by the sewer commissioners. Scott further lied by saying he has never seen the log. I can provide you with email evidence that we have sent the log to Scott multiple times at his request. Scott seems like a decent person, so I can't even imagine the amount of pressure he is feeling from Theresa and Kenan to misrepresent and lie.

-Suggesting that the extension line is heading toward failure is inaccurate and, frankly, slanderous. It is completely irresponsible for the town to use such scare tactics with its citizens and, additionally, to position Eagle Hill in this light. And, your use of "reoccurring" on the slide deck was very slick...and so smarmy. So Cofskian, actually. Perhaps you did not want to talk about the fact that you did zero O&M on the system for the first year, and you left the biocide line on full blast for the same period! You wonder why you have valve problems? And, let's omit the fact that Eagle Hill spent \$100k to put in a septic tank to try to support the Town even further and, since then, we have not had any blockages. As for the flows mentions...try running the system correctly and get out of bypass mode.

-For Jennifer Lerch to intimate that we may have spent less than the full \$4.6mm of the total project cost is beyond reckless and, again, slanderous. She essentially suggested publicly that Eagle Hill may have lied to the Town. We painstakingly documented every single expense and submitted every invoice to you. It is hard for me to believe that a USDA official came up with that idea by herself, especially given the level to which she has clearly been managed and possibly manipulated by Kenan and Theresa. Jennifer's line about "taking care of Eagle Hill" was rather intentional too, I imagine. I'll get back to Jennifer shortly.

-Until I pointed it out, you were very clearly willing to let people believe that the extension line was 1) a significant part of the financial impact, 2) the biggest issue of the three that "needed to be addressed first," and 3) a condition of the entire project moving forward. Conveniently, you never did answer the "conditional" question despite the fact that I asked it twice. Folks, you admitted you had feces flying around rooms, and you are dumping raw sewage into the Ware River, and you are trying to sell to the audience that the priority is the extension line? Shame on you. You and I both know that this is yet another subtle way in which you are trying to pit Eagle Hill against the community and leverage us to come to the table financially.

Now, as disgusting and loathsome as was this behavior Monday night, it still pales in comparison to Kenan and Theresa's past actions and, even more concerning, what I firmly believe they intend to do next. I see this story playing out in three phases—two that have already occurred, and the next phase that should make us all shudder. First, though, let me offer you a little contextual opinion: Kenan and Theresa's absolute hatred for Eagle Hill School blindly drives their thinking and their decision making. They are obsessed with getting Eagle Hill to either break the sewer agreement or forcing the school to pay more by any means necessary. This is a dangerous way to do business if I am correct.

The Bully Phase: This was a six-month phase starting in the summer of 2017 and concluding at a February 5, 2018 meeting requested by Kenan Young and Theresa Cofske. Their presentation laid out like a bad movie. Scene 1: the opening scene with smiles and promises of partnership. Scene 2: ten PowerPoint slides of woe about the dire and true fiscal circumstances of both the sewer enterprise fund and the Town more generally. Scene 3: five slides of the heroic actions they had already taken but to no avail. Scene 4: the dramatic pictures and descriptions of what they say was bankrupting the enterprise fund and the Town—you guessed it—the sewer extension line. Scene 5: the beautifully scripted "you can save us" moment with the clear understanding that if EHS doesn't agree to these terms, they can and will make this case to the community. Scene 6: the one-page unveiling of their terms:

- EHS takes the complete system back, maintains system, and invoices existing users at the current EDU rate

- Modify complete system to meet the specifications of Option #3 as contained within the 2010 preliminary engineering report prepared by **Wright Pierce**

- Forgive the remaining \$2.4mm of prepaid EDUs AND start paying full EDUs

- Contribute \$2.5mm to Gilbertville WWTP upgrade

Not surprisingly, that meeting ended before the credits even rolled and without proper goodbyes.

The Blackmail Phase: This devious Phase started in planning immediately following the Bully Phase and has not yet concluded...for me at least. This phase is best understood and laid out in the memo that I sent to you following the September 10, 2018 Selectmen's meeting, and which I have also re-sent to you numerous times with the repeated request that it be put in public record. This document details threats and blackmail at the state and federal level. It's a good read...if it were fiction. I've attached the memo again so you can remember how low two people are willing to go.

The Gutting Phase: This is the current phase we are in, and, if I am right, it is nothing short of insidious. To be honest, I didn't see this phase coming and until Monday night had not put the pieces together. It's only a theory, but I believe this phase is aimed at gutting Eagle Hill School and, whether intentionally or not, gutting of the Town of Hardwick in the process.

Please allow me expound on the gutting theory. Eagle Hill School was not the only target of lies and misrepresentations on Monday night. The Townspeople fell victim to Theresa and Kenan's deviousness, too. They were purposefully vague about what it would mean in terms of costs to individuals under the thin veil of not knowing USDA's contributions until after the 3/16/20 vote. While it is true they didn't have exact figures, they intentionally chose not to share the estimated costs listed in the DPC study (\$2,792 per user). Instead, they allowed people to do "back of the napkin" calculations that they knew were vast underestimations of the final truth. One non-sewer user woman who would only be impacted by the tax increase side of the equation even said, "This is only going to cost me \$100. Sign me up." The town knew that she was far from accurate based on the figures in the full DPC engineering report that had been distributed to only a select few, but they didn't correct people when people were trying to do the math based only on the amount of the loan payments. They CHOSE not to mention that people should also be calculating the estimated costs of the required USDA plant upgrade/replacement fund using 2040 price estimates, as well as the costs associated with the requirement to have a third party company overseeing the sewer operators.

So, let's follow this through to its logical conclusion. After failing to bring EHS to the table in either or the Bully or Blackmail Phases, Jennifer Lerch mentions that part of this deal is to buy out EHS of the remaining \$2.4mm in prepaid user fees at a cost of \$1.8mm. In fairness, this is a solution that I proposed to Kenan many months back with the idea that if USDA came to the table with a 75/25 grant/loan proposal, \$1.8mm on the grant side would go to EHS and \$600,000 would be forgiven by EHS on the loan side. Sounds like a good deal for all – between USDA and EHS, the prepaid EDUs are satisfied and EHS then becomes a regular paying user.

Here's the problem, though. By the Town's proposed structure of the overall deal including USDA's participation, the annual repayment of the total overall debt of \$30mm would be shared equally between the users and the Town's taxpayers. If they were being honest with the math though, the user fees would then likely balloon by 2.5X – 3X the current user rate from day one and continue rising annually. From EHS's perspective, that is a terrible financial deal and a complete non-starter. You see, right now at current EDU rates, we have an estimated 22 years of prepaid EDUs in the bank. If we were to agree to the new structure, the value of those same EDUs is under 8 years given the higher EDU rate and the requested \$600,000 forgiveness of debt to the Town in that buyout scenario. And, of course, Kenan almost seemed gleeful when he blurted out that Eagle Hill would also be paying on both sides because we would be paying higher taxes as part of the PILOT program.

Unfortunately, their effort to stick it to EHS turns a blind eye to who this really hurts the most – the poorest sections of our community. The 500-600 sewer users in Wheelwright and Gilbertville would get hammered by both the sewer increase and the tax increase in this deal. So, their current \$1,200 annual cost to be a current user would likely jump above \$3,000 annually (increased user fees + increased tax on the loan alone). If you think you have delinquencies now, get ready to either begin foreclosing on a large number of those properties now or be prepared to have the entire Hardwick tax base eat that shortage every year thereafter.

And remind me why the users should be forced to so disproportionately carry the financial burden of the Town's sewer failures when.....wait for it.....Kenan flat out admitted in public on Monday night that the reason the Town is in this situation is because his predecessors on the board of selectman made bad deals, provided no oversight, and made terrible decisions! And, to make matters worsewait for it.....Kenan fully admitted that the O&M (Operations & Maintenance) on the plants has

never been done properly. Wow! And who do the people doing the O&M report to? You got it—the sewer committee and ultimately the Selectman...all elected Town officials.

So, then, please explain to me why the sewer users should be made to pay for the admitted failings of Hardwick's elected officials over decades. That's right, they shouldn't. This entire burden should be shared by the entirety of the tax base. To do otherwise would be criminal and gut the poorest citizens among us.

So, for my first Freedom of Information Act request, please provide me with the names and addresses of every sewer user in the Town of Hardwick. I think that I am going to make a lot of new friends.

Earlier in the document you probably noticed that I bolded the name of the company Wright-Pierce Engineering. Why? Well, one of the first people who I saw when I walked into Monday's meeting was Kevin Olson from Wright-Pierce, whom I've worked with previously. I didn't think much of it in the moment, but about halfway through the meeting, I looked over and he was thumbing through the full DPC report. I thought to myself, what the hell is going on here? Then it hit me! Kenan and Theresa are aware that DPC Engineering should never have been allowed anywhere near this project knowing that DPC's owner is a former disgruntled employee of Tighe & Bond (you guessed it again, the engineers for the extension line) and another member of their team worked on the failed Wheelwright Plant. Are you kidding me? So, is it possible knowing that DPC would not be able to move forward working on the actual design and installation phases of the project that they contacted Kevin Olson of Wright-Pierce, sent him the book from DPC, and asked him to attend the meeting? I hope not because that would be a big violation of some kind, I'm sure. I suppose it is also possible that DPC invited Kevin and provided the book, but that would have been in very poor form on multiple levels. And, of course, it is entirely possible that Kevin was simply driving through Hardwick on a Monday night and was curious why all the traffic was heading into the school, and then found on the ground the full DPC report that dropped out of the briefcase of Jim Russell, the reporter who somehow also had a copy of the DPC report prior to the other two Selectman. I'll check in with Kevin.

So, what do we do next? Honestly, our inclination is to simply and completely disengage from all things Hardwick until such time we are treated with the respect we deserve as a school that for 50 years has been there to support this town in so many ways, small and large. However, as the town's largest employer and as people of good and charitable will, and despite years of being the recipient of despicable behavior, we are still open to partnering with the town if it can be done in a mutually beneficial way. However, this would if you want any chance at working with Eagle Hill School from here forward, then we must enter into a new and final phase of this nightmare. And, of course, if you do not wish to engage Eagle Hill, then please just ignore my ideas and suggestions below.

TRANSPARENCY AND HONESTY PHASE – suggestions only

-I cannot and will not work with a Board of Selectmen that, as a public body, lies, misrepresents, and intentionally omits integral information. Moreover, I am not interested in working solely with a two-person fiefdom, one of whom is not even a Selectman. I will only work with a fully informed, collegial, three-person elected board. You figure out if and how to arrive at that possibility.

-Each of you in one manner or another has admitted that you have neither the time nor the expertise to manage the design and construction of a project of this scope. My suggestion is that you appoint a five-person committee to assist you in the process from this point forward. In my opinion, these committee members should be selected by vote of the board of selectman based on their individual skills, knowledge, and other key attributes that they bring to the table.

-While I appreciate the fact that the use of the name "Eagle Hill Extension Line" was an appropriate descriptor five years ago, today it is being intentionally weaponized. I request that you no longer refer to the extension line as the Eagle Hill Extension Line, and that you find a more appropriate descriptor that reinforces the Town's ownership and operation. Perhaps you could call it the Hardwick Common Extension Line as an appreciative nod to the fact that the partnership also solved the Town's municipal sewer needs around Hardwick common.

-I think a public apology is in order for the aforementioned lies, misrepresentations, and omissions.

-I would like an answer from Jennifer Lerch as to whether this deal is still contingent upon Eagle Hill changing the terms of the contract and, additionally, whether the USDA would still look unfavorably on a leadership change given the absolute dysfunction that exists currently. I can't imagine that the USDA wants to dictate or prohibit effective Town governance.

-If you are looking for EHS to partner in this project, and in light of the fact that you have admitted your past and present inability to manage such a large project, I request timely copies of all information related to the project going forward. And, by timely, I mean copies mailed within 48 hours of receiving them. If you prefer, I can also do this through a standing Freedom of Information Act request, or I can have my assistant file a new one every few days.

-I have chosen to bite my tongue publicly in the interest of both the project going through and in the hopes of partnership with the Selectmen. While I will always afford you the respect and civility you and your office deserve, please understand that I will no longer be sitting idly by if you continue to besmirch this incredible institution that Hardwick is so fortunate to have in its Town.

Respectfully, PJ