

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 12, 2010

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Nancy Griswold and John Ward, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant

Others Present: David Detmold, Tupper Brown, Rick James

Technical Panel on GMRSD Financial Stability: Tupper presented a draft of a letter that the Technical Panel is proposing be sent to DESE officials and our legislators. He explained that at the meeting on 3/25, town and school officials were hoping for a greater display of leadership from the DESE officials and aides from Rep. Kulik and Sen. Rosenberg. If the school district is going to obtain financial stability, state officials will need to show more leadership. Tupper did note, however, that Kulik is working with Rosenberg and Rep. Donelan to arrange a meeting sometime in late May or early June.

Tupper suggested that the letter, along with the "Tables A & B" spreadsheets from the 3/25 meeting, be sent to other Selectboards. Assuming the other parties to the letter are in agreement, he will supply a final version that can be signed, hopefully this week.

John made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to support the proposed letter and authorize John as Selectboard Clerk to sign the letter in the absence of the Chair. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Tupper left the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to approve the minutes from 3/29. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Schuetzen Verein Club License: The ABCC has approved the modified club liquor license for the Schuetzen Verein Athletic Association. Nancy and John signed the license certificate. The ABCC is still processing the request for the new license for a seasonal restaurant.

Gill Elementary Well: Ray presented a \$900 invoice from Safewaters Environmental for the extra monitoring and testing required at Gill Elementary necessitated by last year's water problem. In lieu of a separate purchase order, Nancy and John signed the invoice to approve payment.

Ray also reported that a leak developed in the school basement storage room, caused by the heavy rains of March 30/31 and the resulting high water table. It is suspected that the water is collecting in a buried water tank vault, and leaking in around the water pipe where it enters the building. The Highway Dept. will excavate the vault on 4/20, and will make repairs as necessary to seal the leak.

Conservation Commission: Ken Sprinkle appeared before the Board to explain that the ConCom is spending the \$4,540 which remains in their Agricultural Protection/Restoration account to support an APR that Dick French is placing on property on Main and Boyle Roads. For an APR, the state requires a 5% town match; for this project that is approximately \$12,000. The difference between what the ConCom has to spend and the 5% town match will be made up by a "bargain sale", where the seller accepts a lesser amount of money for the APR. This land is not currently enrolled in Chapter 61A, but will be when the APR is in place.

Ken also recommended Paul Sievert of Mountain Road for appointment to the Conservation Commission effective 4/15, when Ken's resignation becomes effective. Mr. Sievert is a professor of wildlife biology at UMASS. Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to appoint Paul Sievert to the Conservation Commission effective 4/15/10. The motion carried unanimously. The appointment is through 6/30/2012, when Ken's term was to expire.

The ConCom has also been approached by Dick French to assume monitoring responsibility on two of his properties on Ben Hale and Center Roads. The land is under a Conservation Restriction, and the monitoring requirement involves walking the boundaries annually, and making sure there has been no improper activity or encroachment. One parcel is 25 acres; the other is two small hayfields at the intersection of Ben Hale and Center Roads. The ConCom believes it can handle the monitoring requirements.

Trash & Recycling Contract Renewal: The Board of Health (Doug Edson, Randy Crochier, Ed Galipault) joined the meeting to discuss a 2-year renewal of the Town's contract with Alternative Recycling for trash and recycling collection/hauling/disposal. The initial discussion centered around Ray's research and recommendations, which are summarized in an email dated 4/8/2010 and are appended to these minutes.

The proposed renewal contract will be a fixed rate of \$58,786 per year, and will not include any adjustment clause for the cost of fuel. Trash disposal costs at the Northampton Landfill will be billed by Alternative Recycling at a fixed rate of 4 tons per week at \$67.50 per ton (any future rate increases by the Landfill will be passed on to the Town).

Both Boards support the terms of the proposed contract. It was decided that the Board of Health will sign the contract once a draft has been received and reviewed by Town Counsel.

Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway Project: The Board reviewed a request from the FRCOG to send a letter in support of a project that will permanently protect land along the Mohawk Trail (Route 2). Citing short notice of the request (received 4/9, letters due 4/13), and the lack of information about specific locations in Gill that might be protected, the Board declined to send a letter.

FY11 Diesel Bid: The Town is again participating in the FRCOG's bid for diesel fuel, with an anticipated use of 5,500 gallons. Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to authorize the FRCOG to bid and contract on the Town's behalf for the procurement of diesel fuel for FY11. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Facilities Use Request: Ray presented a request from the Agricultural Commission to use the Riverside Building grounds and restroom for a Farmers Market on June 13th from 3-6pm. Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to permit the use. The vote passed unanimously.

Annual Election Warrant: The Board signed the five copies of the warrant for Annual Elections to be held on Monday, May 17th.

Appointment of Fire Department Board of Engineers: In a letter dated 3/22/2010, Stuart Elliott, Clerk of the Gill Fire Department, notified the Selectboard that the following Gill firefighters have been nominated to the Board of Engineers for 2010 - 2011: Gene Beaubien, Michael Crochier, Jason Edson, Stuart Elliott, Noah Pack, Steve Peters, Kenneth Sears, and Eric Vassar. Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to appoint those eight firefighters to the Board of Engineers for the May 1, 2010 - April 30, 2011 term. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Stage Elevator Inspection: The Board signed a \$660 purchase order to Garaventa USA to coordinate and oversee the state inspection of the stage elevator (vertical lift, technically). The lift must be inspected every five years, and the current inspection certificate expires 4/23/2010. There is also a \$400 inspection fee that must be paid separately to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Energy Commission Appointment: Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to appoint Ivan Ussach of 75 Bascom Road to the Energy Commission. The motion passed unanimously. Ivan's term runs from 4/12/2010 to 6/30/2011.

Lawn Mowing Bids: Ray announced that lawn-mowing services for Town Hall, Slate Memorial Library, Public Safety Complex, and Riverside Municipal Building were awarded to Alex Urgiel, who was the low bidder.

South Cross Road Complaint: A letter from Allen Constantine and Sharon Drew of 17 South Cross Road was read. The letter alleges violations of Gill's Unregistered Motor Vehicles bylaw at 10 South Cross Road, and asks the Board for whatever assistance they can provide. The Board directed Ray to refer the matter to the Building Inspector for investigation and enforcement.

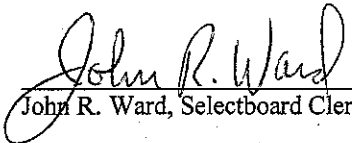
Planning Board Members: The Board made an impassioned public plea for volunteers to step forward to join the Planning Board. That group is down to just three members, and unless at least one more person is appointed, will not be able to act on an ANR application from one of its own members.

Gill Emu Week: Dee Dee Mares, a partner in Gill's Songline Emu Farm, requested that May 1-9 be declared "Gill Emu Week", to coincide with a nationwide effort by emu farmers to educate the public about the emu industry. Since Dee Dee was unable to attend this meeting, Ray read the official Proclamation that she had prepared. Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to proclaim May 1-9, 2010 as Gill Emu Week. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Warrant #21: The Board reviewed and signed Warrant #21.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.



John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk

Attachment: email dated 4/8/201 regarding trash & recycling contract, 3 pages

Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard

From: Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard [administrator@gillmass.org]
Sent: Thursday, April 08, 2010 11:01 AM
To: 'Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard'; Ann Banash; johnrward@hotmail.com; nancyanngr@aol.com; edson4550@gmail.com; health@gillmass.org
Subject: RE: trash & recycling budget/contract

One more update, based on a conversation I just had with Pat Kennedy. He did think of way to save us some money - about \$1,000/year.

Currently, after all our trash has been collected, the truck makes a dedicated run to the Northampton Landfill, where the trash is weighed and dumped. We are billed monthly by the City of Northampton for the total tons at \$72.50 per ton.

Pat is tentatively proposing that after Gill's trash is collected, he would be allowed to send the truck to other customers in other towns to maximize the load before going to the landfill. Because our trash weight wouldn't be identifiable, he is proposing to bill us at a flat-rate 4-tons per week, which is our weekly average over the past 52 weeks. (Since we started with Alternative, our weekly average has crept up from 3.8 to 4.0, probably due to more people eating at home because of the poor economy. 0.2 tons is 400 pounds - it's not too hard to imagine an extra 400 pounds of packaging and food waste per week.)

As a large-scale waste hauler, Alternative Recycling gets preferred rates at the landfill, so they would bill us at \$67.50 per ton. It works out to a savings of \$20/week, \$1,040/year. There is also a slight savings from not having to write a check every month to Northampton. If the landfill decides to increase its rates, that increase would be passed on to us.

This change wouldn't affect recyclables; Gill's weights for those would still be reported as part of the monthly statement. If Gill launches a major initiative to reduce trash (more recycling or starting a composting program), the 4-tons per week flat rate could be adjusted lower. Likewise, if we have a major increase in trash (new housing development), it would be adjusted higher.

I have also heard from several sources this week that rollercoaster fuel prices are coming back, mostly on an upward trend. This makes the 2-year flat-rate contract that much more appealing.

Food for thought...

Ray

-----Original Message-----

From: Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard [mailto:administrator@gillmass.org]
Sent: Tuesday, April 06, 2010 3:41 PM
To: Ann Banash; johnrward@hotmail.com; nancyanngr@aol.com; Carlene Millet (clerical@gillmass.org); 'edson4550@gmail.com'; health@gillmass.org
Subject: trash & recycling budget/contract

Good afternoon,

I'll lead off with the one piece of good news: We've been getting a very good deal on our trash hauling contract this year because of the very aggressive fuel adjustment clause in the current contract. Given the price of diesel most of this fiscal year, Alternative Recycling believes they have been servicing Gill at a loss of revenue.

Our 2-year contract with Alternative Recycling expires June 30, 2010, but does contain a clause that allows us to extend the agreement for another 2 years. Trash hauling services are exempt from procurement laws, so we can renew without going out to bid.

The proposed renewal is for the same base rate as the current contract, \$58,786 annually/\$4,898.83 monthly, but would eliminate any adjustment for movements in the cost of fuel. We would have a flat-rate contract for the next two years. I suspect if we go out to bid, this offer would be withdrawn.

In preparing the proposal, I had asked Patrick to consider two-week collection schedules as a possible cost-saving option. You can see from his letter (attached) that our recycling volumes don't lend themselves to that option, at least in his opinion. I had a long conversation with Patrick today, to again quiz him on cost-saving scenarios. Every-other-week pickup would probably work for our trash. The trash trucks they currently use in Gill can hold between 8 and 10 tons, which is in line with our 4-tons-per-week average. Every-other-week on recycling still doesn't work - those materials don't compact like trash does, so the trucks hold less.

They have larger recycling trucks, but those aren't suited for our hilly terrain. He pledged to keep thinking about it, but didn't have any immediate cost-saving ideas.

I spoke with Jan Ameen (F.C. Solid Waste Management District) this morning, and quizzed her about trash collection bids for other towns, as well as to get her take on this proposal. Gill, Montague, Erving, and Greenfield are the only towns still offering curbside pickup, and none go out to bid regularly, so there isn't any bid information. Erving "loves" Duseau Trucking, and Montague re-ups with Allied Waste on a regular basis. Jan feels that Alternative Recycling and Allied Waste are the only potential responsible bidders in this area, and in her experience, Allied is always higher priced. (It's worth noting that in the past year or so, Mickey switched from Allied to Alternative for the dumpster at the Highway Garage because of a lower price.)

Jan also feels that the proposed price - especially the fixed price for two years - is a good deal, and that we should take it. Alternative Recycling has a good reputation in the area, provides good service, and runs their business professionally. In my 4 months in this job I've had one or two complaints at most.

The hard piece of this is that this year's budget is built around the advantageous fuel credit we've been getting from the contract. Our projected cost for FY10 is about \$47,000. After subtracting for a slight savings in disposal costs for next year, we're still looking at an FY11 Solid Waste budget that is up \$10,245. Ouch!

We receive roughly \$35,000 in trash sticker revenue each year. We no longer use the Trash Sticker Revolving Fund, so the revenue goes into the General Fund, and becomes part of next year's Free Cash. I'd consider this \$35,000 an appropriate, regular use of Free Cash toward the Operating Budget.

Our total trash costs for next year are projected at \$77,093 (attached spreadsheet, "General Fund" tab). Our sticker revenue covers roughly 46% of costs.

With trash stickers at \$3.00 each, Gill and Montague are tied as the most expensive in the area. Jan does not recommend increasing our sticker price to offset higher costs. She feels that would lead to a major decrease in sticker sales, which would worsen our problem. More households would outsource their trash (rent their own dumpster), take it to a friend/relative in another town, take it to work, or dump it illegally.

Another twist to look forward to, probably in FY12, is the closure of the Northampton Landfill, where our trash is presently dumped. Wherever we end up, the cost will likely be higher, either for tipping fees or for hauling longer distances.

For now I'm going to plug these new, higher costs into an FY11 budget that is getting harder to keep balanced while adequately funding necessary repairs/replacements and saving for known capital expenses. The two Boards can review the figures, and perhaps discuss it together during a joint meeting with the Finance Committee sometime in the not-too-distant future.

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