

# TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



[www.gillmass.org](http://www.gillmass.org)

## SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

*April 28, 2010*

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

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

Others Present: David Detmold, Rick James

Gill Cemetery Commission: Cemetery Commissioners Carrie Stevens, Patricia Haigis, and Ann Marie Klein, along with West Gill Road resident Ted Graveline met with the Board to discuss Mr. Graveline's offer to donate and install approximately 125 feet of black wrought iron fence along the Hoe Shop Road side of the West Gill Cemetery. The Cemetery Commission explained that they appreciate the offer and are in favor of the fence, but have a question as to whether they can accept the gift, or if the Selectboard or Town Meeting would need to accept it.

Mr. Graveline expressed frustration over the amount of time it has taken to get any discussion of his offer, and that he is withdrawing the offer to install the fence. He did say that the woman who owns the fence is still willing to donate the fence if the Town wants it. He would deliver the fence to the Highway Garage. The Commissioners noted that after learning of his offer, they met with Mr. Graveline at their next meeting, which was April 21<sup>st</sup>, and got the issue in front of the Selectboard one week later.

The Commission is concerned the fence might increase the cost for lawn mowing; they will ask Cardaropoli for an estimate by May 5<sup>th</sup>, and will report that to Ray. Ray will check with the Highway Dept. to see if they have access to a post-hole digger and would be able to install the fence. Ray will communicate the info to the Board and Mr. Graveline by midweek (May 5<sup>th</sup>-ish).

The Commission also expressed a desperate need for additional land for another cemetery in Gill. The three town-owned cemeteries only have about 12 plots total remaining for sale. The Board asked Ray to find out if land is donated, would it be a tax-deductible contribution? Also, could APR land be donated, and could the rollback taxes be waived or otherwise negotiated? Ray will also put an appeal in the next newsletter.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes from 4/12 were not ready, and will be reviewed at the next regular meeting.

Ambulance Service Agreement: Ray reported that while the ambulance service agreement between Gill and Baystate Health Services (BHS) is complete, Town Counsel is recommending the Selectboard not sign it. The current section on indemnification would expose the Town to financial liability beyond the limits of Tort Law, and it's doubtful that taxpayers have authorized the Board to risk unlimited amounts. Counsel recommends trying to get BHS to change the agreement by applying political pressure through the FRCOG or other towns serviced by BHS. Another approach is to simply not sign the agreement, and allow the present informal arrangement to continue. The Board asked Ray to contact Bill Travis at BHS and to find out what are the ramifications if the Town does not sign.

Highway Loader Paperwork: The Chair signed forms for the RMV and MIIA relating to the new loader.

Recreation Committee: Members of the Rec. Committee (Deb Loomer, Cathy Demars, and Rose Levasseur) presented a report on the winter basketball program. It was successful, and served 20 kids on two teams. They thanked the coaches and referees, and thanked NMH and TFHS for the use of their courts. From the financial side, the program showed a net loss, but it was noted that this isn't uncommon, given the lower participation rates and higher costs (refs, scorekeepers, and gym rentals). Deb pointed out that some of the costs were one-time or multi-year expenses, such as first aid kits and a table.

The Rec. Committee has a need for dedicated storage space. The Board asked Ray to look at the lease with Four Winds School, and whether any spaces at the Riverside Municipal Building could be used for this purpose.

The baseball and softball season is underway, with two baseball teams and one softball team. Only four kids signed up for the 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> baseball team, so there is no team this year for that age group.

The Committee wants to purchase a scoreboard for the softball field at Gill Elementary, and is considering naming the scoreboard after Jasmine Edson. The Board advised that naming things should be done by a vote of Town Meeting, and that warrant articles are due on May 6<sup>th</sup>. There was some discussion whether the Ballfield Donations account could be used to purchase the scoreboard.

The Committee also discussed the condition of the bleachers at Gill Elementary, noting that the metal frames are still sound, but the old wooden planks were removed by the school for safety concerns. Ray will check with the Building Inspector to find out if pressure-treated lumber can be used for bleachers. Everyone agreed that with the right volunteers to organize it, this sounds like an excellent community-building project or Eagle Scout project.

Lastly, the Committee noted that there is still one open seat on the committee, if anyone wants to join.

H1N1 Vaccinations at Annual Town Meeting: Joan Pillsbury, Randy Crochier, and Gene Beaubien met with the Board to discuss an offer to provide H1N1 flu vaccinations during Annual Town Meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The vaccines are being offered through the FRCOG, and would be at no cost to the Town or to the residents. Even though June is not a traditional time for flu vaccinations, the H1N1 strain is still a threat, and it is important as many people receive the vaccine as possible. The plan is to set up a space on the first floor, and to offer vaccines slightly before and during the meeting. Anyone who wants a vaccination would sign up as they enter Town Hall, and would be given an assigned time to come down from upstairs and receive the injection. The Board supports the idea, and feels it's a helpful service to offer Gill residents. And who knows, it might even increase attendance at Town Meeting!

Fire Department Matters: Gene reported that the Department is investigating a pickup truck in Amherst that possibly could be used as a brush truck. It is part of the State's surplus equipment program, so would be free if we decide we want it. If not, the Department will probably apply for a brush truck from this year's FEMA grant program. The Department was not awarded a FEMA FY09 grant to upgrade its air packs.

Gene also reported that two firefighters are in the process of becoming "red card" certified, which is a special certification for fighting wildfires and brush fires. He also noted, as a follow up to the HRS study, that a replacement for our 1979 tanker is approximately \$475,000.

2010 COPS Hiring Program: Ray reported that the COPS Hiring Recovery Program from 2009 has been re-opened for 2010, but they expect to make fewer than 500 awards among the existing pool of 6,000 applications. Our application is on file, and we will be asked in early June to update our information. No new applications are being accepted.

Planning Board Appointment: The Planning Board asked that Dr. Jeffrey Blomstedt of 78 French King Highway be appointed to fill one of the two vacancies on that board. Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to appoint Dr. Blomstedt to the Planning Board effective immediately. The motion passed unanimously. The appointment will fill the unexpired term of Shirley Flagg, and is from 4/28/2010 to 6/30/2011.

Sewer District Installation Fees: Ray explained that the most recent fee schedule for the Sewer Commissioners dates to 1989, and asked the Board, as Sewer Commissioners, to reaffirm those rates. A survey of fees in

neighboring towns showed that our 1989 rates are still reasonable, so no changes are recommended. John made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to reaffirm the fee schedule from 9/25/1989. Unanimous in the affirmative.

Purchase Order Approval: Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to approve a purchase order from the Tax Collector for two boxes of stamped envelopes at a cost of \$536.60. Unanimous in the affirmative.

Elevator Inspection Changes: Ray reported that Garaventa, our elevator service company, has advised that Massachusetts has changed its interpretation of inspection requirements for elevators. Our vertical lift for the Town Hall stage had been inspected every 5 years, but now must be inspected annually. The State's fee is \$400, plus another \$660 from the service company. Ray noted that he has contacted Rep. Donelan's office about this added financial burden. The Board asked that Ray contact the Building Inspector to find out about code requirements should the Town want to replace the vertical lift with a ramp.

Skip's Roadside Diner: Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to approve a seasonal license for a food concession trailer for Skip's Roadside Diner at 24 French King Highway. Unanimous in the affirmative.

Wage Increase for John Miner: The Board read a letter from Mick LaClaire, Highway Superintendent, asking that John Miner's wage be moved from Grade 4 Step D (\$16.71) to Grade 5 Step A (\$17.23) based on his successful completion of his six-month probationary period and a positive performance review. The letter explained that Tracy Rogers, Mick, and John discussed this possible change at the time of his hiring interview, and a copy of a note from Tracy confirmed this. Although the position was advertised and hired as a Grade 4 Laborer, the position has always been a Grade 5 Mechanic/Operator, and John is performing successfully at that level. Savings from the difference between George Emery's (John's predecessor) wage and John's current wage will pay for the raise, and it has already been budgeted for FY11. The increase would take effect May 6<sup>th</sup>, the start of the next pay period.

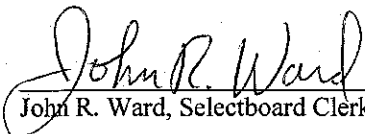
John made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to approve a change to John Miner's placement on the wage scale, moving from Grade 4 Step D to Grade 5 Step A. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Discussion of HRS Report: The Board reviewed the Public Safety Staffing & Equipment report from Sandy Stapczynski & Human Resources Services, and discussed changes they would like to have made. Most of the requests were asking Sandy to provide in the narrative the facts and data that each recommendation is based on. A complete list of the requested changes is attached to these minutes.

The Board agreed to meet again at 5:30 on May 4<sup>th</sup> to finish their review of the report, so that any other changes could be sent to Sandy for inclusion in the final report.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.*

  
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John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk

Attachment: email dated 4/29/2010 regarding alterations to the HRS report, 2 pages

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## Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard

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**From:** Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard [administrator@gillmass.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 29, 2010 5:15 PM  
**To:** Ann Banash (ahbanash@crocker.com); johnrward@hotmail.com; nancyanngr@aol.com  
**Subject:** FW: report alterations

Here's the list from last night, which Sandy is already working on. Ray

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

**From:** Sandy Stapczynski [mailto:hrsconsulting@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 29, 2010 1:50 PM  
**To:** 'Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard'  
**Subject:** RE: report alterations

Thanks for your input Ray. We will start working on it right away. Sandy

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

**From:** Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard [mailto:administrator@gillmass.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 29, 2010 12:46 PM  
**To:** 'Sandy Stapczynski'  
**Subject:** report alterations

Sandy,

The Selectboard spent about an hour last night reviewing the police/fire/highway report and discussing changes they would like to see made. Most of the requests are from only one member (Ann). They will spend some more time next Tuesday to go over any other issues. I'll get those suggestions/requests to you on Wednesday, 5/5.

Separately from the report, the Board felt you should make some type of statement to clarify/correct Tuesday's statement regarding the number of Finance Committee members who were interviewed. If it's not addressed, it weakens your credibility, and therefore weakens the credibility of the report.

Forgive me if there's some repetition in this list. I wrote them as they were discussed. If something appears multiple times, that's probably a good indication of its importance.

- The recommendations for the Police Dept need to be backed up in the narrative with references to incident reports, interviews, or other data or opinions.
- The section on the Capital Budget belongs either before or after the three departments, not in the middle.
- In general, throughout the document, sources and data (incident reports, call logs, comparative towns, other studies, best-practice manuals, expert knowledge) should be cited that support the conclusion or recommendation.
- In 4.2.1, what are the "benchmark data" that were evaluated?
- Be sure to provide, or tell us how to obtain, any documents or studies that are cited.
- Document-wide, what data led you to your conclusions?
- Page 17, Gill's shared roadside mower is missing from our list of equipment, as is the power sweeper attachment purchased at the same time as the new loader.
- Page 22, add Gill to the table and list the things we contract out, which include: some street sweeping, grading of gravel roads, catch basin cleaning, cemetery and lawn mowing, some paving/crack sealing/oil & stone, and back-hoe rental.
- In the Fire Dept, how many firefighters do we have, and what are their credentials (junior ff, emt, first responder, red-card, etc.)

- What is the justification for the recommendation to purchase a brush truck immediately (number of brush fire calls, best practices, comparable community, expert knowledge, etc?). Same question for the pumper truck within 5 years. Was timing of new pumper looked at - if we wait 5 years, then two years later our tanker will be due for replacement.
- Is the "According to best practices, a new fire truck should be purchased every ten years" based on a town with 3 fire trucks?
- Why is the 1987 pumper being recommended for the soonest replacement, and not the 1979 tanker? Is the tanker in better condition, gets less use, not as critical?
- Sections 6.2.4 and 6.2.5 should be clarified in the phone call with Gene.
- In 7.2, what is meant by "The smaller town police department must be aware of the social pressures that exist, and modify and adopt (adapt??) its services in response to them." Sounds like mumbo-jumbo.
- In 7.2.1, there is the statement that "a third employee...is needed to ensure the proper coverage for calls." What is "proper coverage? Based on what data, evidence, opinion?
- Table on page 42 - do we really have 4-6 Reserve Officers? What is difference between Reserve Officer and Part-time Officer?
- Table on page 42 - the number of officers on a shift in Gill is practically never 2, or should be footnoted that it's for X hours during shift overlap, Y days per week.
- Text on page 42 - "Ensuring two officers go to a call" - Even when we had 3 FT officers, there never was enough shift overlap that two officers on a call was a routine occurrence.
- In 7.2.3, is regionalization of investigations really a practical possibility? Need to explain this in more detail, because on the face of things, it just doesn't sound likely.
- Add Gill's data to the comparable community charts in the Appendix. It's just as necessary there as in the report's main body.
- Is the police incident report information available like the fire department's is? Can it be added to the appendix?
- Conclusions and recommendations need to be defended/supported by data, so that the Town can make informed decisions about difficult choices.

I'll send you the rest when I get it, probably on Wednesday.

Ray Purington  
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