

TOWN OF GILL

M A S S A C H U S E T T S



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SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES February 4, 2016

Call to Order: The Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings were called to order at 6:35 PM.

Selectboard Members Present: Randy Crochier, John Ward, Greg Snedeker

Selectboard Members Absent: None

Finance Committee Members Present: Nancy Griswold, Timmie Smith, Claire Chang, Fred Chase II, Tupper Brown, and Ronnie LaChance

Finance Committee Members Absent: Jacob Rau

Others Present: Ray Purington, Admin. Assistant

Final Spending Recommendations for FY16: Ray presented two financial summaries for FY16, one as of the Annual Town Meeting in June 2015, and the other as today. The Town's New Growth for FY16 was certified by the Dept. of Revenue at \$60,943, which is \$45,943 more than the \$15,000 that was assumed when the budget was crafted. He recommended that at least \$46,000 of additional spending be presented to voters at a Special Town Meeting later this month. The budget for FY17 is showing early signs of being financially challenging, and having the extra \$46,000 built into the tax rate now will make it easier on balancing next year's budget.

The major increase in the FY17 budget is expected to come from the Tech School, as Gill's enrollment has doubled from 5 to 10 students. Typically, each extra student translates into roughly \$12,000 more on the Town's assessment. The Gill-Montague assessment is also expected to increase, but the increase may be much less than the \$50,000 increase that was first proposed. Several of the FRCOG assessments are expected to go up, and there will be about a \$10,000 combined increase in the Town's costs for health insurance and retirement.

Additionally, the Town's Free Cash was certified at only \$85,485. Of that, \$15,017.20 should not have become Free Cash, and needs to be transferred back to the Sewer Fund. Of the remaining \$70,467.80, the Town's annual operating budget is still supported by \$68,000 of "Free Cash to reduce the tax rate." Unless ways can be found to reduce the dependency on Free Cash, it will mean only \$2,467.80 of Free Cash available for projects in FY17.

Various scenarios of additional spending were looked at for their impact on the tax rate, taxes of the average single family home, and excess levy capacity. By consensus, \$50,000 was settled on as a good balance between keeping the tax rate down, while increasing spending on one-time uses this year. If \$50,000 of additional spending is approved by voters, it is expected that the tax rate will increase from \$16.85 to \$16.95 per thousand dollars of valuation.

A draft of articles for the Special Town Meeting was reviewed. Article 1 addresses the \$15,017.20 transfer from Free Cash back to the Sewer Fund, and does not count toward the \$50,000 of additional spending.

Ray reviewed the other six articles:

Article 2 would provide additional money for the purchase and setup of the 2009 Sterling highway truck. Ray recommended \$18,000 - \$20,000 in order to cover a shortfall in that account, as a new plow and repairs to make the truck winter-ready cost \$17,883.80 more than was originally budgeted. There was discussion of appropriating only an additional \$10,000, and paying for the new plow from the FY16 Snow & Ice budget, as it's been a very mild winter so far. Ultimately, it was decided it was better to not pay for capital equipment from an operating budget, and a figure of \$18,000 was settled on for the article.

Article 3 would provide additional money for the library's basement wetness remediation project, as the project budget currently does not include any money for contingencies. Ray recommended \$3,000 - \$4,000, and \$4,000 was settled on as the amount for the article.

Article 4 would provide additional funding for the Safety Complex roof project, as a way of reducing the amount the Town would have to borrow. During discussion it was noted that the roof project and loan are part of an already approved debt exclusion, so reducing the amount of the loan isn't as important as other articles being considered. The article was removed from further consideration.

Article 5 would provide funds for legal representation and technical assistance related to the Kinder Morgan / Tennessee Gas Pipeline. There were strong feelings in support and in opposition to the article, and it was decided to include the article on the warrant, and allow Town Meeting voters to make the decision. No particular amount was settled upon, but it was agreed that if voters approve an amount for this article, it should probably be subtracted from the amount for Article 7.

Article 6 would provide funds for a one-time purchase or project that would have to be chosen tonight. It was decided that this article would be circumventing the process of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, and the article was removed from further consideration.

Article 7 would provide funds for one or more of the Town's stabilization funds. It was suggested that \$28,000 be recommended for the General Stabilization fund.

Randy made a motion, seconded by John, that the Selectboard sign a warrant and recommend articles as follows: Article 1 - \$15,017.20; Article 2 - \$18,000; Article 3 - \$4,000; Article 4 - not on the warrant; Article 5 - on the warrant but with no specific amount; Article 6 - not on the warrant; and Article 7 - \$28,000. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Tupper made a motion, seconded by Claire, to recommend the articles and amounts as recommended by the Selectboard. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

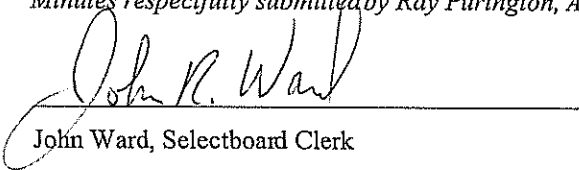
It was decided to hold the Special Town Meeting on Monday, February 22nd at 7:00 PM.

Fred Chase left the meeting at 7:55 PM. The Finance Committee adjourned at 8:00 PM.

The Selectboard reviewed and signed warrants for the February 22nd Special Town Meeting and the March 1st Presidential Primary.

The Selectboard adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.


John Ward, Selectboard Clerk