

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

March 14, 2016

Call to Order: The Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings were called to order at 5:30 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 Jacob Rau

Finance Committee Members Absent: Ronnie LaChance

Others Present: Ray Purington, Admin. Assistant

Finance Committee Reorganization: Current FinCom Chair Nancy Griswold asked for nominations for a new Chair. Members indicated they would like to determine the schedule of budget meetings before holding the election.

Schedule for Budget Meetings: The budget will be developed with the goal of being finished in time for Annual Town Meeting on May 9th. Meeting dates were established: 3/21 @ 6:30PM, 3/28 @ 6:00 PM, 4/4 @ 6:30 PM, 4/19 @ 6:30 PM, 4/27 @ 5:30 PM, 5/4 @ 6:00 PM, and 5/5 @ 6:00 PM.

Members of the Fire Department Board of Engineers joined the meeting at 5:50 PM: Chief Gene Beaubien, Jason Edson, Paul Sweeney, Kyle Kendall, Greg Parody, Ken Sears, and Stuart Elliott. Bill Kimball joined the meeting.

Finance Committee Reorganization: Nancy nominated Timmie Smith to be Chair of the FinCom. The nomination was seconded by Claire. There were no further nominations. Timmie disclosed her dual role as a member of the FinCom and as an elected representative to the Gill-Montague Regional School Committee. By unanimous vote, Timmie was elected Chair of the FinCom.

Fire Dept. FY17 Budget Request: Chief Beaubien presented the Fire Department's budget request of \$78,235 for FY17, representing an increase of \$1,417 (1.8%). It was explained that the request is basically the same as last year, with some amounts shifted around to cover changing needs. For instance, "Equipment Replacement" was increased by \$2,000 to reflect the Department's priority to replace 3 sets of turnout gear next year instead of only 2. The Chief stated that the Department goes out on approximately 200 calls per year, and this year's numbers are running about the same as last year. Roughly 55% of the calls are medical calls.

There was discussion of the need to replace the Department's SCBA air packs (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus). All 20 of the current air packs were purchased at the same time, and all are three standards overdue for being replaced. The certifications on the tanks expire in March 2017.

The current tanks were purchased approximately 14 years ago using a FEMA grant. The Department applied for a similar grant last year, and almost received an award. After speaking with a grant reviewer about ways to strengthen Gill's application, the Department applied again this year, for a \$180,000 grant. If we do not receive this grant, the Town will need to quickly come up with a plan to purchase the air packs on its own.

Timmie raised the idea of budgeting and saving for specific purposes, either through a separate stabilization fund just for air packs, or by tracking "earmarked" deposits into the Capital Stabilization Fund.

It was noted that the Fire Department is currently working with the Capital Improvement Planning Committee on a request for a new fire truck, with an eye toward making a funding request to NMH. In light of this ongoing discussion, it was decided to not discuss Fire vehicles at tonight's meeting.

Ken Sears, Jason Edson, Greg Parody, Paul Sweeney, and Stuart Elliott left the meeting at 6:25 PM.

Emergency Management FY17 Budget Request: In his role as Emergency Management Director (EMD), Gene Beaubien presented a budget request of \$7,500 for Emergency Management. Traditionally, this “department” has been funded by grant awards from MEMA, using money MEMA received from the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Plant. With the nuclear plant shut down, payments from MEMA/VY will cease at the end of FY16. Currently the VY account has a balance of \$20,576, with another \$4,000-\$5,000 expected to be received before June 30th. As a grant funded account, it has not been subject to votes and appropriations by Town Meeting.

There was a brief discussion of the role of Emergency Management, and that the duties include pre-planning for a variety of emergency incidents, including dam failures and chemical spills. Traffic control points are reviewed with the Police and Highway Departments, and the EMD coordinates and communicates with other local, state, and federal agencies. The EMD is the person who makes the recommendation to the Selectboard about declaring a State of Emergency, and is the person who requests emergency aid (equipment, supplies, and people) from MEMA during declared emergencies and disasters.

Ray explained that even though there is enough money remaining in the VY account to cover 2-3 years of Emergency Management expenses (at \$7,500/year), the request was brought forward this year to begin the discussion of adding it as a line in the Town’s annual budget. As a new “department”, at least one that is new to the annual budget, it would be a separate Town Meeting article for the first year, before potentially moving into the omnibus budget in subsequent years.

The Emergency Management budget could be funded by taxation (“raise and appropriate”), by a transfer from the VY account, or a blend of the two. Gene expressed his desire and recommendation to have this become a line in the annual town budget.

Gene Beaubien, Kyle Kendall, and Bill Kimball left the meeting at 7:05 PM.

Finance Committee Reorganization, continued: Timmie asked for a motion to reappoint Jacob Rau as the FinCom’s representative to the Personnel Committee and Ronnie LaChance as the FinCom’s representative to the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. The motion was made by Tupper, seconded by Nancy, and the vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Other FY17 Budget Requests: The following budgets were reviewed. Most are unchanged from the current FY16 levels.

- 1.01 Moderator – down \$0.61
- 1.04 Finance Committee - unchanged
- 1.05 Accountant - unchanged
- 1.09 Legal – unchanged

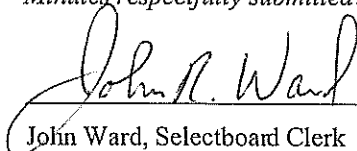
1.10 Information Technology – down \$300. Ray explained that he was able to reduce the budget by \$800 (one-time expenses related to the new computer for the Assessors’ Office), but that was offset by having to budget for software upgrades (Microsoft Office), and website backups. There was discussion about the agedness of the Town’s website, and that it will need to be replaced, probably in less than 2 years. The most recent estimate for that project is \$5,000, but the estimate is several years old.

- 1.13 Conservation Commission – up \$0.24
- 1.15 Planning Board – up \$1.49
- 1.16 Zoning Board of Appeals – up \$0.64

3.8 Memorial Committee – up \$44.00. A budget memo from the Memorial Committee was reviewed. There seemed to be general consensus that the request was “ok.”

Adjournment: On a motion by Tupper, second by Nancy, and unanimous vote, the FinCom adjourned at 7:30 PM. The Selectboard adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.


John Ward, Selectboard Clerk