

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



www.gillmass.org

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

October 12, 2010

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order in open session at 6:30pm.

Present: John Ward, Randy Crochier, and Ann Banash, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.

Others Present: Rick James, Tupper Brown

Tupper Brown spoke on behalf of the four-member Technical Panel that has been working for the past eight months (or so) as a subgroup of an Oversight Group which is seeking to achieve long-term fiscal stability for the Gill-Montague Regional School District. He explained that during the course of its work the panel has met at various times with legislators and two senior DESE officials. He asked to be placed on the Board's agenda for October 25, so that he can present the current plan for sustainable funding. The Board will be asked to be one of the signers of a "Funding Compact", along with legislators, DESE and town officials, and the School District. Tupper left the meeting.

Executive Session: John announced that the Selectboard will meet in executive session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, in that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Town. A roll-call vote was taken to go into executive session. Ann – yes; Randy – yes; John – yes. It was also announced that the Board will reconvene in open session following the executive session. The Board left for executive session at 6:36pm.

The Board reconvened in open session at 6:55pm. Patricia Crosby joined the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to approve the minutes of 9/27 and 10/6. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Mariamante Follow-up: The Board briefly discussed the October 6th presentation by Doria Kutrubes of the results from the ground penetrating radar study performed last year at the town-owned Mariamante property on Main Road. It was stated that the presentation was informative, and that it is hoped that at a to-be-scheduled meeting in November, representatives of the various Tribes will be prepared to make an offer to purchase the property from the Town. It was asked that the November meeting be scheduled as part of a Selectboard meeting in order to keep the discussion focused and on track. Ray will inform Doug Harris, the primary contact for the Tribes, of the two regular meeting dates in November.

Mariamante Field Mowing: Ray reported that two bids were received to mow the Mariamante field and to cut the trees damaged by storms earlier in the year. Joe Williams bid \$325.00 and Roger Augustine bid \$450.00. Both were determined to be qualified bidders. Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to award the work to Joe Williams at a cost to the Town of \$325.00. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

ESPC and UniBank Financial Advisors: Ann and Ray reported on an October 6th meeting with three representatives from UniBank plus Ronnie LaChance (Treasurer) and Tupper Brown and Claire Chang (both Energy Committee and Finance Committee). This free consultation provided the Town with some options and recommendations for ways to obtain short-term and long-term borrowing for the Energy Savings Performance Contract with Siemens.

UniBank recommends we use the USDA loan program for our long-term financing, and probably a state house note for the short term.

The next steps are to get Siemens to finalize the IGA (promised for 10/15), develop the contract with Siemens, apply for the USDA loan, and move forward on the energy savings agreement with the school. Also coming out of that meeting was the consensus that since the Town doesn't have guaranteed financing in place, and likely won't have it in the next few weeks, we will not push to get the lighting upgrades done by 12/15 in order to qualify for the \$2,500 in extended rebates from WMECO. It was also noted that the Town should consider whether it needs to employ a financial advisor (like UniBank). Ronnie will be getting a fee schedule from UniBank.

Community Development Strategy: Ray presented the final version of the 2010 update to Gill's Community Development Strategy, noting that no public comments were received, and only two minor changes had been made since the draft was presented on 9/27. Ann made a motion, seconded Randy, to accept the updated Community Development Strategy. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Farm Excise Ballot Question: The Board signed the warrant for the farm excise ballot question appearing on the November 2nd election.

Shared Bucket Truck Agreement: Ray presented the finalized agreement to be signed by the Towns of Gill, Northfield, and Vernon, Vermont, which will govern the shared ownership and use of a bucket truck that was jointly purchased by the towns earlier in the year. The document has been reviewed by counsel from all three towns, and is ready for signing. Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to sign the Shared Bucket Truck Agreement. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Alcoholic Beverage Compliance Initiative: Ray presented an updated Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Franklin County ABCI, noting that it is essentially the same compliance check agreement that was signed in 2006 and 2008. Police Chief Hastings has reviewed the MOU and supports it. Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to sign the memorandum. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Sewer Abatement: The Board, acting as Sewer Commissioners, reviewed a request from Francis Ahearn for abatement of some portion of his most recent sewer bill. Ann announced that Mr. Ahearn is her next-door neighbor, that she had discussed his request with him, and that she would abstain from any votes on the matter.

In the Comments portion of the abatement request form Mr. Ahearn stated that the higher-than-normal water use was due to the installation of an irrigation system that was immediately shut off when the water and sewer bills were received in September. He noted that as the water was used for irrigation, it did not enter the sewer system.

Ray presented a copy of a letter from June 10, 2008 that was sent to all sewer users when the new Sewer Regulations were adopted. The letter explains that irrigation uses are no longer eligible for abatement. It was pointed out that the abatement request form used by Mr. Ahearn is the same form used by other sewer customers (for other abatement reasons), and that the form does list "water used for irrigation" as a valid reason.

The Board noted concern about "opening Pandora's box" by granting this abatement for an ineligible reason, but also had concerns about the continued availability and use of an outdated form. Randy made a motion, seconded by Ann for the purpose of discussion, to deny the request for abatement. The vote was one in favor, one against, and Ann abstained. The motion was defeated.

John made a motion, seconded by Ann for the purpose of discussion, to grant a \$100 abatement to Mr. Ahearn as a token gesture. The vote was two in favor, none against, and Ann abstained. The motion carried.

The Board reviewed a new abatement request form, and asked that the new form and an updated version of the June 2008 letter be sent with the next mailing of sewer bills in December.

Appointments: The Town Clerk made a request that Kenneth Johnson be appointed as a Registrar. Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to make the appointment. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Warrant # 8: The Board reviewed and signed Warrant #8.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.



Randy Crochief, Selectboard Clerk