

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

FRANKLIN, SS.

TOWN OF GILL

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING: DECEMBER 20, 2010

1077 Registered Voters

22 Voters present

Population: 1477

The Moderator, Ray Steele, opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the upstairs of the Gill Town Hall.

Article 1: To see if the Town will vote to amend the vote taken under Article 10 (Fiscal Year 2011 Gill Montague Regional School District assessment) on June 21, 2010 to decrease the sum of money by Thirty Eight Thousand One Hundred Twenty One and 00/100 Dollars (\$38,121.00), or take any action relative thereto.

Motion: Move the Town vote to amend the vote taken under Article 10 (Fiscal Year 2011 Gill Montague Regional School District assessment) on June 21, 2010 to decrease the sum of money by Thirty Eight Thousand One Hundred Twenty One and 00/100 Dollars (\$38,121.00).

This article is unanimously recommended by the Finance Committee (7-0) and Selectboard (3-0). At June's Annual Town Meeting, Gill voters approved \$1,410,359 for the GMRSD assessment. The compromise budget that was approved by the District-wide meeting on November 18th resulted in a Gill assessment of \$1,372,238. The difference is the \$38,121.

Passed Unanimously

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation or transfer from available funds Two Thousand Fifty Seven and 13/100 Dollars (\$2,057.13) to be used to pay Veterans' Benefits, or take any action relative thereto.

Motion: Move to pass over this article.

In October the Treasurer was notified that the Town would now be responsible for paying the remaining 9 months of FY11 veterans' benefits to an eligible Gill resident. Since this expense was not known when the FY11 budget was developed, it was not included in the budget approved in June. We will eventually receive a 75% reimbursement (\$1,542.85) from the State. The full-year amount (\$2,742.84) will need to be included in the FY12 budget.

Passed over Unanimously

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to establish one or more Education Stabilization Funds, and vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the fund(s), or take any action relative thereto. (A 2/3 vote is required to establish and/or fund a Stabilization Fund.)

Motion: Move the Town vote to establish an Education Stabilization Fund, said fund to be used for the payment of assessments from or otherwise in support of the Gill Montague Regional School District and/or the Franklin County Technical School, and further vote to raise and appropriate by taxation Thirty Eight Thousand One Hundred Twenty One and 00/100 Dollars (\$38,121.00) for the Education Stabilization Fund.

This article is unanimously recommended by the Finance Committee (7-0) and Selectboard (3-0). The Town will almost certainly face increases in next year's school budgets, as well as a decrease to the Town's state aid. Placing this money into a stabilization fund will provide a cushion to higher assessments in FY12:

1. Gill's assessment percentage for the GMRSD will rise from 14.8% to 15.0% due to shifts in enrollment in the District. Based on this year's (FY11) school budget assessment calculations, the enrollment shift could produce a \$7,000 increase to Gill's FY12 assessment, even with a level assessment FY12 budget from the District.

2. The "Table B" financial plan for the District in fact does not call for a level assessment for the Towns in FY12, but rather an increase of \$75,191 to the total assessment, of which something in excess of 15% will be Gill's responsibility. Assuming 15.6% (Gill's FY11 portion), our Town's assessment for FY12 will increase by a further \$11,730.

3. Our enrollment at Franklin County Technical School increased this year from 11 to 13 students, which will likely increase our assessment for FY12. Gill's FY11 per-pupil cost at FCTS is \$9,849 (vs. the FCTS district average of \$9,833), so an FY12 increase of almost \$20,000 would be a reasonable prediction this early in the budget cycle.

4. From a December 3rd article in the Recorder, the president of the Mass. Taxpayers Foundation is projecting a 5-10% cut in local aid to towns next year. For Gill, this is in the \$12,000 to \$24,000 range. However, this is the prediction of only one person, and so we will have to wait to get a clearer picture of the likely levels of local aid for FY12.

Passed Unanimously

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash to the general Stabilization Fund a sum or sums of money equal to the amount expended to purchase and install a dump body for the 1990 Highway truck, or take any action relative thereto. (A 2/3 vote is required to transfer money into Stabilization.)

Motion: Move the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash to the general Stabilization Fund the sum of Four thousand five hundred and 00/100 Dollars (\$4,500.00).

This article is unanimously recommended by the Finance Committee (7-0) and Selectboard (3-0).

At Annual Town Meeting in June voters approved \$9,350 from Stabilization to purchase and install a dump body on our oldest highway truck. When the vote was taken, it was explained that the intent was to return the money to Stabilization after a FEMA/MEMA 2008 snowstorm reimbursement was certified as part of Free Cash this fall. Article 4 will accomplish that.

As of Dec. 8th the installation of the body was in process by J.C. Madigan Inc. in Harvard, Mass. The total cost of the project should be known by Dec. 20th, and that will be the dollar amount of the motion. The unspent portion of the \$9,350 will automatically revert back to the Stabilization Fund on June 30, 2011 without any further town meeting action necessary.

Passed Unanimously

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 138: Section 33B to authorize the Licensing Board to allow licensees under section twelve to sell alcoholic beverages between the hours of 10:00 AM and 12:00 Noon on Sundays, or to take any other action relative thereto.

Motion: Move the Town vote to accept the provisions of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 138: Section 33B to authorize the Licensing Board to allow licensees under section twelve to sell alcoholic beverages between the hours of 10:00 AM and 12:00 Noon on Sundays.

This is a Local Option statute that went into effect on July 1, 2010. "Section 12" licenses are for establishments that serve alcohol for on-premises consumption, e.g., restaurants, bars, and clubs. Prior to this change, sales were not allowed before noon on Sundays. If the Town accepts this statute, a license holder could ask the Selectboard (aka Licensing Board) for a change in its licensed hours of Sunday alcohol sales. A public hearing must be held, and the ABCC must also approve the change. This warrant article was not requested by any license holder.

Passed by Majority

Meeting adjourned at 6:40PM

A True Copy. Attest:

Lynda Hodsdon Mayo
Gill Town Clerk

December 20, 2010
Special Town Meeting