

May 4, 2026  
Annual Town Meeting, Part 1



**Please use the microphone  
when recognized to speak.**

It greatly improves the audio quality of the recording, which is kept as an archival record of the meeting.

**Volunteers Wanted**

The Town is always looking for residents who are able to volunteer for one of Gill's many boards, committees, councils and commissions. If you think you might be interested in joining any of these groups, please contact the Chair, or contact Ray Purington at 413-863-9347.

Agricultural Commission (Tom Chalmers, 617-538-7886)

Cable Advisory Committee

Finance Committee (Claire Chang, 413-626-3620)

Council on Aging (Roberta Potter, 413-863-9357)

Historical Commission (Kit Carpenter, 413-863-2505)

Memorial Committee (Merri Bourbeau, 413-863-8613)

Sewer Commission (Riverside resident)

Town Forest Committee (Ken Sprankle, 413-863-2975)

Veterans' District Advisory Board (Gill's rep, should be a veteran)

Zoning Board of Appeals (Suzanne Smiley, 413-863-8174)



The Gill Cultural Council wants your input! You may have seen paper surveys on this topic in past Gill Newsletters. We've gone digital! Please use the QR code to fill out our brief survey. It should take less than five minutes of your time.

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

FRANKLIN, SS.

TOWN OF GILL

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: MAY 4, 2026

To any of the Constables of the Town of Gill in the County of Franklin,

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said town, qualified to vote in elections and in town affairs, to meet at the Gill Town Hall, 325 Main Road in said town on Monday, the Fourth day of May, in the year Two Thousand and Twenty Six (05/04/2026) at 7:00 PM then and there to act on the following articles.

**Article 1:** To elect the following officers: Two or more Field Drivers; Fence Viewers; Measurers of Wood, Bark and Surveyors of Lumber - all for one year; AND

To see if the Town will vote to accept and expend any sum of money that might be made available from State or Federal funds for roadwork or other purposes for the Fiscal Year 2027 and for the Chapter 90 type funds, authorize the Selectboard to enter into contracts with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation; AND

To see if the Town will vote to accept any sum of money that might be made available from the Quintus Allen Trust during Fiscal Year 2027, and authorize the Selectboard to expend such funds in support of the Gill Elementary School, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to elect Edward J. Golembeski and Clifford C. Hatch as Field Drivers and the Regional Animal Control Officer as Assistant Field Driver and elect the Selectboard as Fence Viewers; Measurers of Wood, Bark and Surveyors of Lumber - all for one year; AND

It is moved the Town vote to accept and expend any sum of money that might be made available from State or Federal funds for roadwork or other purposes for the Fiscal Year 2027 and for the Chapter 90 type funds, authorize the Selectboard to enter into contracts with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation; AND

It is moved the Town vote to accept any sum of money that might be made available from the Quintus Allen Trust during Fiscal Year 2027, and authorize the Selectboard to expend such funds in support of the Gill Elementary School.

*The Finance Committee voted to recommend this article by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The names and positions (Field Drivers, Fence Viewers, and etc.) are the same as last year.*

*Chapter 90 funds are given annually by the state to the Town and are used for our road maintenance program – activities such as repaving asphalt roads, applying new oil & stone (now called “chip sealing”), and drainage and guardrail projects. In Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025 the state also provided Chapter 90-like funds for road maintenance through the Rural Roads and the Fair Share programs. The total state aid received in Fiscal Year 2024 was \$351,059, and \$289,742 was received in Fiscal Year 2025.*

*For Fiscal Year 2025 the Town anticipates it will receive \$260,781 through the Chapter 90 program plus an additional \$75,009 from a supplemental Chapter 90 appropriation, for a total of \$335,790. Subject to approval by the Legislature, the Town expects to receive \$260,000 of traditional Chapter 90 funds for Fiscal Year 2027, and it is too soon to know if there will be any supplemental allocations. And while \$260K is a lot of money, keep in mind the estimated cost to mill and re-pave 1.5 miles of West Gill Road last year was \$288,000. Gill has approximately 26 miles of paved roads and 8.5 miles of gravel roads.*

*Quintus Allen was an original trustee of the Greenfield Savings Bank. Upon his death in 1884, his will established a trust fund to be used for education-related expenses in Colrain, Gill, Leyden, and Shelburne. The interest earned by the Trust is distributed to those towns each year. The Town received \$2,459 from the Trust during Fiscal Year 2026, and there is a balance of \$10,009 in the Town’s Quintus Allen account.*

*In recent years the School has used the Quintus Allen funds for:*

2025	All-School end-of-year field trip to Look Park (\$3,558.36)
2024	Gaga Ball Pit & Rubber Mat (\$4,900)
2022	Portable Netting behind Basketball Hoops (\$1,842.30)
2018-19	Outdoor Learning Center (\$4,537.96)
2017	Chromebook Computers (24) & Storage Cart (\$6,050.00)

**Article 2:** To see if the Town will vote to fix the maximum amount that may be spent during Fiscal Year 2027 beginning on July 1, 2026 for the revolving funds established in town by-laws for certain departments, boards, committees, agencies or officers in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½, or take any other action relative thereto.

Revolving Fund	Department, Board, Committee, Agency or Officer Authorized to Spend from Fund	Fiscal Year 2027 Spending Limit
Oil Burner Inspections	Fire Chief	\$2,000.00
Energy Commission Programs	Energy Commission	1,000.00
Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)	ZBA, Administrative Clerk	3,000.00
Dog	Town Clerk, Selectboard	8,000.00
Conservation Commission Project Review	Conservation Commission	10,000.00
Cemetery Opening Fees	Cemetery Commission	2,000.00
Agricultural Commission Programs	Agricultural Commission	500.00
Solid Waste & Recycling	Board of Health, Town Administrator	5,000.00
Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station	Selectboard, Town Administrator	4,000.00

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to fix the maximum amount that may be spent during Fiscal Year 2027 beginning on July 1, 2026 for the revolving funds established in town by-laws for certain departments, boards, committees, agencies or officers in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 53E½, in accordance with the amounts listed in the table above.

*The Finance Committee voted to recommend this article by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*A revolving fund allows a “department” to use its program revenues within the fiscal year for the purposes listed in the Town’s Departmental Revolving Funds bylaw adopted at the June 12, 2023 town meeting. At the end of the fiscal year the remaining fund balance carries forward to the next year.*

*The listed revolving funds and spending limits for Fiscal Year 2027 are identical to those approved at last year’s Town Meeting and are felt to be adequate for the foreseen needs of the Town.*

**Article 3:** To see if the Town will vote to approve the \$3,798,130.00 borrowing authorized by the Gill-Montague Regional School District (the “District”), for the purpose of paying costs of a roof replacement and building accessibility compliance renovations for the Gill Elementary School located at 48 Boyle Road in Gill, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the “Project”), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”), said amount to be expended at the direction of the Gill Roof Replacement Committee. The MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District and its member municipalities. Any grant that the District may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) seventy-seven and 47/100ths percent (77.47%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved that the Town hereby approves the \$3,798,130.00 borrowing authorized by the Gill-Montague Regional School District (the "District"), for the purpose of paying costs of a roof replacement and building accessibility compliance renovations for the Gill Elementary School located at 48 Boyle Road in Gill, Massachusetts, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the “Project”), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable

of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”), said amount to be expended at the direction of Gill Roof Replacement Committee; that the Town acknowledges that the MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District and its member municipalities; provided further that any grant that District may receive from the MSBA for the Project shall not exceed the lesser of (1) seventy-seven and 47/100ths percent (77.47%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA; provided that the approval of the District’s borrowing by this vote shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt its allocable share of the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2-1/2); and that the amount of borrowing authorized by the District shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA.

*A 2/3 majority vote is required to authorize borrowing.*

*The Finance Committee voted to recommend this article by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*A presentation on the need, scope, and projected cost of the roof replacement and building accessibility project will be made during the Town Meeting by members of the Roof Committee and design team. This handout includes three pages (white paper, color printing) with key points from the presentation.*

*The motion for this article includes language that the vote is contingent upon a second vote colloquially called a “debt exclusion.” The debt exclusion question will be on the ballot for the May 18, 2026 town election and is worded “Shall the Town of Gill be allowed to exempt from the provisions of proposition two and one-half, so-called, the amounts required to pay for the bond issued in order to perform a roof replacement and building accessibility compliance renovations for the Gill Elementary School? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_.” Debt exclusions must receive a simple majority vote to pass.*

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to update the definition of manufactured housing by amending or adding the following sections, or take any action relative thereto. (A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.)

1. Amend Section 2C, Table of Use Regulations to change the label of item 1.f from “Trailer Park or Mobile Home” to “Manufactured Housing Community or Manufactured Home”; and
2. Amend Section 17, Definitions to delete the definition of MOBILE HOME OR TRAILER and insert new definitions of MANUFACTURED HOME and MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY.

NOTE: The complete text of these proposed amendments is labeled “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Manufactured Housing” and is dated April 16, 2026. Copies of the complete text of the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment are available at the Town Hall during its regular business hours, on the Town website at [www.gillmass.org/](http://www.gillmass.org/), and as handouts at Town Meeting.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to update the definition of manufactured housing by amending or adding the following sections in accordance with the wording contained in the handout “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Manufactured Housing” and summarized as follows:

1. Amend Section 2C, Table of Use Regulations to change the label of item 1.f from “Trailer Park or Mobile Home” to “Manufactured Housing Community or Manufactured Home”; and
2. Amend Section 17, Definitions to delete the definition of MOBILE HOME OR TRAILER and insert new definitions of MANUFACTURED HOME and MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY.

*A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.*

*The Finance Committee took no action regarding this article.*

*These changes to the Zoning Bylaws are recommended by Gill’s Planning Board. The “Report of the Planning Board” is attached (lavender colored paper), and the complete text of the proposed amendments are attached as “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Manufactured Housing” (green colored paper).*

*The current Zoning Bylaws use the terms “mobile home” and “trailer park.” These are antiquated terms, and the proposed changes will align our bylaws with US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations, Massachusetts General Law, and Massachusetts building codes.*

**Article 5:** To see if the Town will vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by amending or adding the following sections, or take any action relative thereto. (A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.)

1. Amend Section 2C, Table of Use Regulations to change the label of item 1.e from “Accessory Apartment” to “Accessory Dwelling Unit”; and
2. Create a new Section 4, Accessory Dwelling Units to establish the purpose, definitions, regulations, administration and enforcement, and severability relating to allowing Accessory Dwelling Units in Gill; and
3. Amend Section 17, Definitions to delete the definition of ACCESSORY APARTMENT and insert a definition of ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU).

NOTE: The complete text of these proposed amendments is labeled “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: ADUs” and is dated April 16, 2026. Copies of the complete text of the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment are available at the Town Hall during its regular business hours, on the Town website at [www.gillmass.org/](http://www.gillmass.org/), and as handouts at Town Meeting.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) by amending or adding the following sections in accordance with the wording contained in the handout “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: ADUs” and summarized as follows:

1. Amend Section 2C, Table of Use Regulations to change the label of item 1.e from “Accessory Apartment” to “Accessory Dwelling Unit”; and
2. Create a new Section 4, Accessory Dwelling Units to establish the purpose, definitions, regulations, administration and enforcement, and severability relating to allowing Accessory Dwelling Units in Gill; and
3. Amend Section 17, Definitions to delete the definition of ACCESSORY APARTMENT and insert a definition of ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU).

*A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.*

*The Finance Committee took no action regarding this article.*

*These changes to the Zoning Bylaws are recommended by Gill’s Planning Board. The “Report of the Planning Board” is attached (lavender colored paper), and the complete text of the proposed amendments are attached as “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: ADUs” (ivory colored paper).*

*In response to a shortage of homes and skyrocketing housing prices in Massachusetts, the Affordable Homes Act was enacted in August 2024. A key provision of the law is that it supersedes local zoning bylaws and allows ADUs “by right” (without a zoning special permit) on any lot with a pre-existing home. ADUs must still adhere to building and fire codes and must follow Title 5 septic regulations. Towns are allowed to regulate ADUs but may not be more restrictive than the state’s regulations.*

*Highlights of Gill’s proposed zoning bylaw on ADUs include: a higher maximum square footage (up to 1,200 sq ft) for an ADU in all areas of town except the Village Residential zoning district (Riverside, essentially); ADUs may not be used as short-term rentals (i.e. AirBNB); and ADUs must be located within 100 feet of the principal dwelling.*

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to incorporate updated Floodplain Regulations that are in full compliance with the FEMA minimum requirements model bylaw and are based upon the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) dated June 18, 1980 by amending or adding the following sections, or take any action relative thereto. (A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.)

1. Delete in its entirety the existing Section 15, Flood Plain Regulations; and
2. Create a new Section 15, Floodplain Regulations to establish the purpose; district, administrator, and permits; floodway encroachment, zoning, use regulations, and permitted uses; notification; variances; disclaimers; and definitions relating to allowed uses of floodplains in Gill.

NOTE: The complete text of these proposed amendments is labeled “Proposed Changes to Town of Gill Zoning Bylaws: Floodplain Regulations” and is dated April 16, 2026. Copies of the complete text of the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment are available at the Town Hall during its regular business hours, on the Town website at [www.gillmass.org/](http://www.gillmass.org/), and as handouts at Town Meeting.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to incorporate updated Floodplain Regulations that are in full compliance with the FEMA minimum requirements model bylaw and are based upon the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) dated June 18, 1980 by amending or adding the following sections in accordance with the wording contained in the handout “Proposed Changes to Town of Gill Zoning Bylaws: Floodplain Regulations” and summarized as follows:

1. Delete in its entirety the existing Section 15, Flood Plain Regulations; and
2. Create a new Section 15, Floodplain Regulations to establish the purpose; district, administrator, and permits; floodway encroachment, zoning, use regulations, and permitted uses; notification; variances; disclaimers; and definitions relating to allowed uses of floodplains in Gill.

*A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.*

*The Finance Committee took no action regarding this article.*

*These changes to the Zoning Bylaws are recommended by Gill's Planning Board. The “Report of the Planning Board” is attached (lavender colored paper), and the complete text of the proposed amendments are attached as “Proposed Changes to Town of Gill Zoning Bylaws: Floodplain Regulations” (blue colored paper).*

*For homeowners to obtain federal flood insurance for homes located in a flood zone (as designated by the current FEMA flood maps), a town's zoning bylaws must include floodplain regulations that meet the minimum standards provided by FEMA. The floodplain section of Gill's Zoning Bylaws no longer meets those minimum standards, and this article proposes to delete the non-compliant regulations and replace them with compliant regulations. According to [arcgis.com](http://arcgis.com) there are 5 properties in Gill with policies through the National Flood Insurance Program.*

*Note the current flood maps date back to 1980. New maps are expected to be finalized by FEMA in another year or two, at which time Gill's bylaws will need to be amended for the new map date.*

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to allow for Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers by amending or adding the following sections, or take any action relative thereto. (A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.)

1. Create a new Section 18, Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers to establish a one-year moratorium on Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) having an aggregate energy capacity equal to or greater than 50 kWh and less than 100 MWh and establish a one-year moratorium on Data Centers, in order to provide the Planning Board with sufficient time to study, consider, and adopt zoning regulations governing the siting, permitting, construction, installation, operation, and maintenance of the same.

NOTE: The complete text of these proposed amendments is labeled “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers” and is dated April 16, 2026. Copies of the complete text of the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment are available at the Town Hall during its regular business hours, on the Town website at [www.gillmass.org/](http://www.gillmass.org/), and as handouts at Town Meeting.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to revise its Zoning Bylaws to allow for Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers by amending or adding the following sections in accordance with the wording contained in the handout “Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers” and summarized as follows:

1. Create a new Section 18, Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers to establish a one-year moratorium on Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) having an aggregate energy capacity equal to or greater than 50 kWh and less than 100 MWh and establish a one-year moratorium on Data Centers, in order to provide the Planning Board with sufficient time to study, consider, and adopt zoning regulations governing the siting, permitting, construction, installation, operation, and maintenance of the same.

A 2/3 majority vote is required to amend the Zoning Bylaws.

The Finance Committee took no action regarding this article.

These changes to the Zoning Bylaws are recommended by Gill's Planning Board. The "Report of the Planning Board" is attached (lavender colored paper), and the complete text of the proposed amendments are attached as "Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers" (salmon/orange colored paper).

Nationwide there is a growing need for commercial-sized energy storage facilities to manage the electric grid by balancing electricity supply and demand, storing renewable energy (solar/wind) for when it is needed, enhancing grid reliability, and reducing reliance on fossil fuel electricity generation during winter peaks. However, there are also real and perceived risks associated with these facilities, including hard to extinguish fires, air quality toxicity during fires, groundwater contamination from toxic leaks or post-fire runoff, and insufficient firefighters, equipment, and water supply to put out battery fires.

Data centers are often massive physical facilities housing networked computer servers used by organizations to store, process, and distribute large amounts of data, and can act as the backbone of the internet and AI (artificial intelligence). They are criticized for environmental and local impacts, including massive energy/water consumption, noise pollution, high-volume e-waste, and taking up vast land areas with minimal permanent local job creation.

Adopting this 1-year moratorium will give Gill's Planning Board time to better understand the benefits and risks of BESS and data center facilities, gather input from the local community as to ways such facilities could be located in Gill, and reconcile local needs with various state-level mandates.



A motion to continue the meeting until Monday, June 8, 2026, at 7:00 PM at the Town Hall is anticipated at this point. The additional time will allow the Town to complete the budget process for Fiscal Year 2027.



**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries or compensation of the several officers of the Town as follows, or take any action relative thereto.

- Constable(s) – Each Posting
- Moderator – Annual Town Meeting
- Special Town Meeting, Each
- Selectboard Chair
- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Member, Each
- Board of Assessors Chair
- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Member, Each
- Board of Health Chair
- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Member, Each
- Town Clerk
- Registrars – Three members, Each
- Town Clerk, as Chair

**Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to implement updates to the Town's Wage Compensation Plan as recommended by the Personnel Committee and Selectboard, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation a sum or sums of money to provide a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for all appointed Town employees and certain elected officials, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the maintenance of the several departments of the Town (the "Omnibus budget") for Fiscal Year 2027, and for other necessary charges, in accordance with the amounts recommended by the Selectboard, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 12:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide \$2,149,571.00 for its Fiscal Year 2027 operating assessment for the Gill-Montague Regional School District, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 13:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to add to the account to be used toward the costs associated with an appraisal of the real and personal property in the Town of Gill owned by FirstLight Power and Northfield Mountain LLC and an appraisal of the personal property in the Town of Gill owned by National Grid, New England Power Company, and NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 14:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to add to the Board of Assessors Revaluation Account (001-142-5801), or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 15:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to add to the Town Audit Account to be used toward the cost to conduct an independent financial audit of the Town, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 16:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund (account 256) a sum or sums of money to add to the account (001-159-5846) previously established to provide for Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) Access operations and other municipal cable-related expenses, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 17:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums or money for the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 18:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds or otherwise provide a sum or sums or money to be expended by the Town Treasurer for the purpose of paying legal fees, recording fees, land court proceedings, and other necessary expenses related to the enforcement, collection, and foreclosure of tax titles and tax takings, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 60, Section 50B and other applicable laws; or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 19:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to purchase a wood chipper and related accessories for the Highway Department, including borrowing costs that may be associated with said purchase and authorize the Town Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard, to borrow in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7; all or some of which may be contingent upon a Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion vote override, or take any other action relative thereto. (A 2/3 vote is required for authorization to borrow.)

**Article 20:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) or other available funds and place said amounts into one or more of the following stabilization funds: Capital Stabilization Fund, Education Stabilization Fund, Energy Stabilization Fund, Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs Stabilization Fund, and General Stabilization Fund, or take any action relative thereto.

**Article 21:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) or other available funds to be used to reduce the tax rate and stabilize the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2027, or take any action relative thereto.

And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting up attested copies thereof at the Town Hall, Main Road; Post Office, Mt. Hermon; The Gill Tavern, Main Road; and Riverside Municipal Building, Route 2, in said Town seven days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

Hereof fail not and make due return of this Warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk at the time and place of meeting, as foresaid.

Given under our hand this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April in the year Two Thousand Twenty Six (04/23/2026).

**Selectboard of Gill**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charles J. Garbiel II, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
John R. Ward, Board member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gregory M. Snedeker, Board member

A true copy Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doreen J. Stevens, Town Clerk

Date: April 23, 2026

Individuals who may need auxiliary aids for effective communication for this meeting should call the Gill Town Hall at (413) 863-9347.

Pursuant to the within Warrant, I have notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Gill by posting up attested copies of the same at Town Hall, Main Rd.; Post Office, Mt. Hermon; The Gill Tavern, Main Rd.; and Riverside Municipal Building, Route 2, seven days before the date hereof, as within directed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Constable of Gill                      Date:



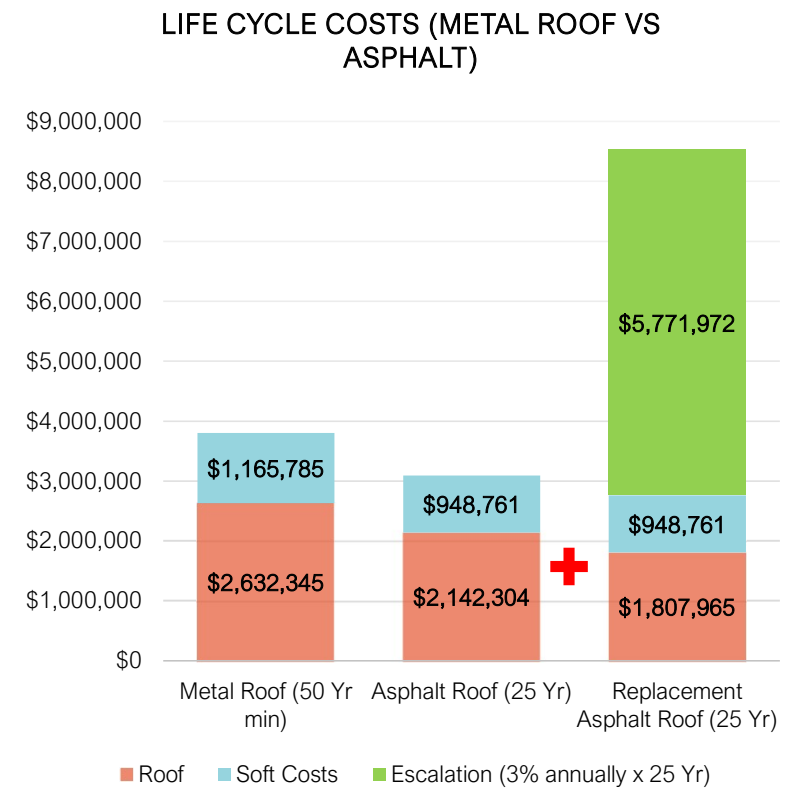
# GILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Annual Town Meeting May 4, 2026

Gill Town Election Debt Exclusion vote at Town Hall May 18, 2026 10am-6pm

# ROOF SYSTEM SELECTION & LIFECYCLE COST ANALYSIS

EVALUATION CRITERIA	SELECTED METAL STANDING SEAM SYSTEM	ASPHALT SHINGLES
Expected Lifespan	50+ years	25 years
Maintenance Frequency	Low	Medium to High
Total Lifecycle Cost	Lowest over 50 years	Higher due to replacements and old roof material disposal



# COST, FUNDING & COMMUNITY BENEFIT

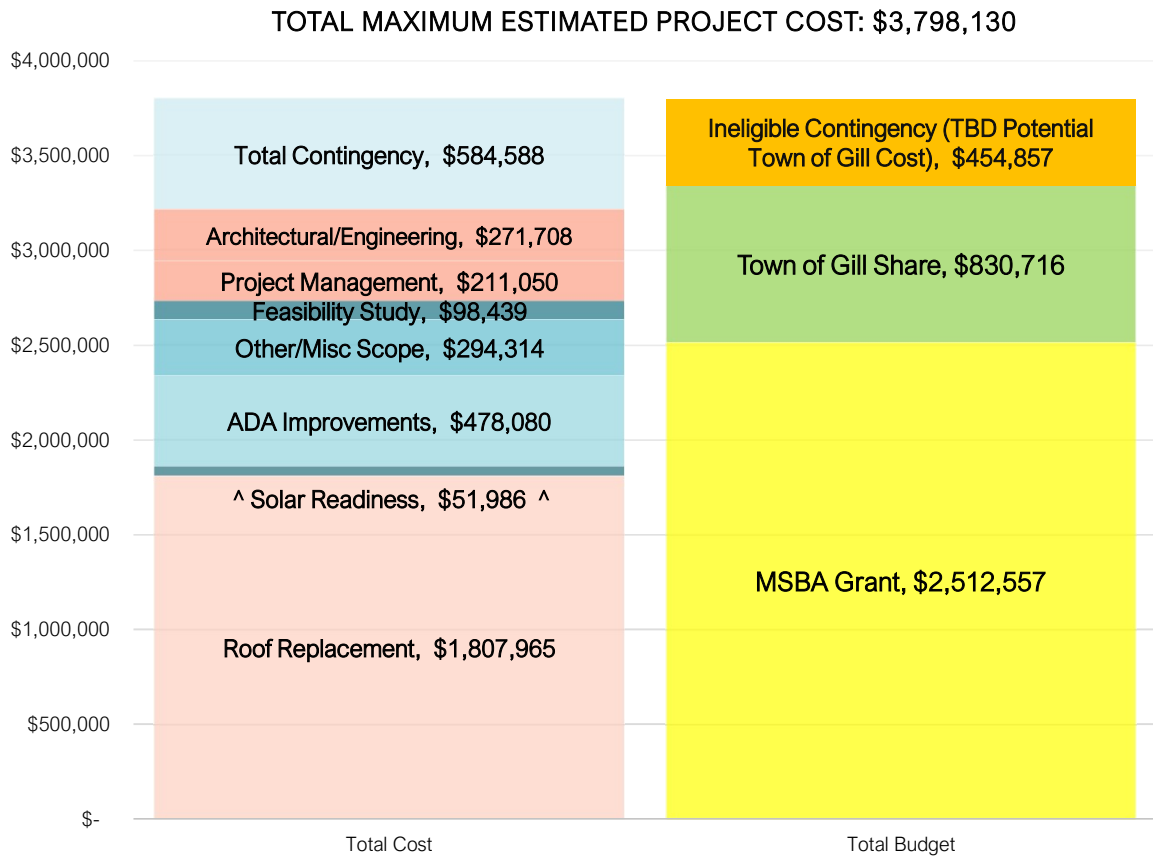
FUNDING SOURCE *percentage*

MSBA *66 to 75%*  
(77.47% of eligible costs)

Town of Gill *~25% to 34%*

POTENTIAL TAX IMPACT:  
For a 15-Year Loan at 4.25% interest:

- Average Assessed Value of Gill Single Family Home: **\$337,267**
- Year 1 tax burden (avg): **\$204**
- Year 15 tax burden (avg): **\$124**



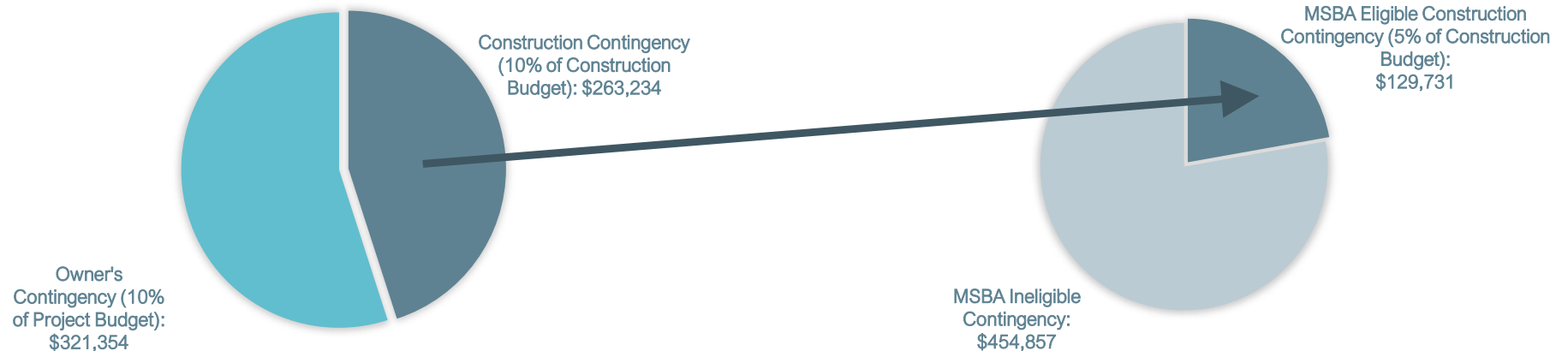
# CONTINGENCIES

CONTINGENCIES ARE EXTRA FUNDS USED TO COVER UNEXPECTED COSTS DURING THE PROJECT

- 10% is the minimum recommended contingency in 2026
- Construction contingency is 10% of construction budget, used for unforeseen conditions on site
- Owner's contingency is 10% of project budget, including soft costs, used for other unforeseen costs
  - Ineligible for reimbursement
- Unspent contingency goes back to the town & MSBA

TOTAL CONTINGENCY: \$584,588

CONTINGENCY ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT: \$129,731



## GILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROOF REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The 1994 roof at the Gill Elementary School is at the end of its functional lifespan and must be replaced. The Massachusetts School Building Administration (MSBA) will reimburse 77.47% of *eligible costs*.

*Eligible costs include:*

- Roof replacement, Insulation, Solar readiness
- Accessibility improvements
- Most soft costs (Architect, Owner's Project Manager/OPM)

*Ineligible costs include:*

- Some of the contingency
- Some OPM costs
- Plants for planters included in the current design.

The total maximum anticipated project budget is **\$3,798,130 (as approved by the MSBA) and includes a substantial contingency for unexpected conditions, inflation, tariffs, and other bid price uncertainties between October 2025 and June 2027.**

- In the worst-case scenario (using all of the contingency funds), Gill's contribution will be 34% of the total project cost of \$3.8 million.
- In a best-case scenario (using none of the contingency funds), Gill's contribution will be 25% of the total project cost.
- The likely reality is somewhere in the middle; some of the contingency funds will be spent.

At maximum project cost (using all the contingency funds), and assuming a 15-year loan at 4.25%, the average home assessed at \$337,267 will pay an additional \$204 in taxes for the first year of the loan. The additional taxes will decrease each year as the loan is repaid, and by year 15 the additional taxes will be \$124. If construction and contingency costs are less, the borrowing and tax payments will be less, too.

### **Required repairs and code compliance**

#### **Existing roof condition:**

- Significant granule degradation was observed across multiple sections of the existing asphalt shingle roofing surface.
- Portions of the roofing membrane are lifting away from the underlying wood decking, indicating potential adhesion failure and increasing the risk of water infiltration and accelerated roof deterioration.
- Shingles were observed to pull apart easily from the course below, indicating a loss of adhesive bond between shingle layers. This condition suggests that the factory-applied adhesive strips are no longer effectively sealing the shingles together, which may leave them more susceptible to wind uplift and water infiltration.
- Missing and broken shingles, organic material build-up and lichen growth, gaps at curb flashings, exposed fasteners, missing ridge caps

**While replacing the roof surface, we have a once-in-decades opportunity to improve the energy efficiency and prepare for future solar panel installation as required by the MSBA.**

- *Solar panels are not part of this project.*
- During the roof replacement is the most cost-effective opportunity to add bracing needed to support panels in the future.

**We are required to bring the building into compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), i.e. be made fully accessible.**

- Because the *roof replacement* will cost over \$500,000 the ADA compliance is required. Splitting the roof replacement into multiple smaller projects will not avoid this requirement.

**MSBA reviewed the design and budget and approved it in December 2025. The Town must now vote to approve the full amount of the project. MSBA will reimburse us as construction progresses.**

- *Delaying or voting down the project will mean MSBA funding is lost. The roof will continue to degrade and the likelihood of leaks and water damage increases. Our roof project will go to the bottom of the list for MSBA funding, and it took 9 years to get this far with MSBA.*

**Gill's Roof Replacement Committee (5 Gill residents as voting members plus 2 District officials), the architect, engineers, and the OPM looked at two possible roof systems: standing seam metal and asphalt shingle. The metal roof is an eligible cost for MSBA funding. We can replace the asphalt shingles with a higher quality, more durable system.**

- Standing seam metal has 50+ year lifespan. It costs about \$500,000 more than asphalt shingle roof.
- During the lifespan of a metal roof we would need a second asphalt roof replacement.
- With inflation, estimated cost to replace an asphalt roof again in 25 years could exceed \$8 million.
- While it costs more now, the total life cycle cost over 50 years is much lower for metal, and the MSBA will cover 77.47%.

**The Committee believes it's a better use of tax dollars to install a higher quality roof now.**

### ***What's included in the project:***

#### **Roof replacement**

- Area A: Cafeteria: no attic, just structure, minimal insulation, plywood deck, and shingles
- Area B: Original classrooms: attic space, ducts run in the unconditioned attic, varying types and amounts of insulation, plank roof deck and shingles
- Area C: Addition (kindergarten end of building): Prefabricated roof trusses, varying types and amounts of insulation, plywood deck, and shingles
- Remove shingles & underlayment, repair/replace any damaged sections of roof deck
- Add insulation over the top of the existing roof deck, airspace for ventilation, new standing seam metal roof. Air sealing walls to roof for a fully airtight roof

#### **Required accessibility improvements**

##### **Exterior entrances and parking:**

- Create an accessible entrance and parking area. (slope too steep)
- Opportunity to add bollards and a curb for student safety at drop-off/pickup area
- Create accessible entry/egress from cafeteria exterior door with ramp to parking area
- Provide accessible path to driveway from emergency exit doors around south end of building
- Modify exit door thresholds for accessibility

##### **Classrooms:**

- Create accessible student sinks and door access

##### **Cafeteria and Kitchen:**

- Address accessible clearance issues at cafeteria serving area with door replacements

##### **Restrooms:**

- Create accessible stalls in student restrooms (shared and kindergarten)
- Expand closet-sized staff restroom to be accessible

### **About the Contingency:**

- The largest variable in cost for Gill is the contingency. Our contingency, as recommended by the OPM and the Committee, is \$584,588

#### ***Two kinds of contingency:***

- Construction contingency covers change orders, unforeseen site conditions, and errors and omissions on the drawings – 10% of construction budget
- Owner's contingency covers bids that come in over the estimate, soft costs, owner-derived changes on site, and other unforeseen costs – 10% of project budget (includes soft costs)

**MSBA covers 77.47% of construction contingency up to 5% of construction budget, and 0% of owner's contingency**

- *The total contingency is very conservative (high) but is fiscally responsible given current volatile market conditions (inflation, unpredictable tariffs and oil prices).*
- *Cost estimates were calculated in September 2025; bids won't be opened until early 2027.*

**TOWN OF GILL**  
**M A S S A C H U S E T T S**



**REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD**

**MEMO**

**TO:** Town Meeting Members  
Gill Board of Selectmen  
Town Clerk

**FROM:** Gill Planning Board

**RE:** Proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment

**DATE:** April 16, 2026

Pursuant to Chapter 40A, Section 5 of the Zoning Act, the Planning Board held a public hearing on the following proposed amendments to the Gill Zoning Bylaws:

Adopt changes to Section 2C. Table of Use Regulations and Section 17: Definitions on Manufactured Housing.

A new Section; 4: Accessory Dwelling Units to be added, to adopt changes to Section 2C. Table of Use Regulations and to adopt changes to Section 17: Definitions.

Strike in its entirety Section 15: Flood Plain Regulations and to adopt a new bylaw for Section 15: Floodplain Regulations that is in full compliance with the FEMA minimum requirements model bylaw.

A new Section; 18: Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers and adopt a one (1) year moratorium.

The petition was submitted to the Select Board by the Planning Board on Feb 24, 2026 and the public hearing was held on March 26, 2026. Public comments were received by the Planning Board at the public hearing.

After consideration of the public comments and suggestions received from other Town Departments, the Planning Board voted 4:0 (French was not present) on April 16, 2026 to recommend to Town Meeting the adoption of the proposed amendments to the Gill Zoning Bylaws as outlined above. The proposed bylaw amendments are attached.

# Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Manufactured Housing

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## Section 2: USE REGULATIONS

C. Table of Use Regulations

1. Residential Uses

f. Manufactured Housing Communities

## Section 17: DEFINITIONS

**MANUFACTURED HOME:** shall mean a structure, built in conformance to the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards which is transportable in one or more sections, which in the traveling mode, is 8 body feet or more in width or 40 body feet or more in length, or, when erected on site, is 320 or more square feet, and which is built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling unit with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities, and includes the plumbing, heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems contained therein.

**MANUFACTURED HOUSING COMMUNITY:** Any lot or tract of land upon which three or more manufactured homes occupied for dwelling purposes are located, including any buildings, structures, fixtures and equipment used in connection with manufactured homes shall be defined as a manufactured housing community. No lot or tract of land may be used for a manufactured housing community unless the owner or occupant thereof is the holder of a license granted under M.G.L. Ch 140, Section 32 B. The Board of Health of a city or town shall, forthwith upon granting an original or renewal license under said Section 32 B for a manufactured housing community, send a copy of such license to the city or town clerk. A lot or tract of land provided by a state or county fair, agricultural and horticultural society, grange or 4-H club for the use of manufactured homes to accommodate personnel who are to participate in any fair or exhibition conducted by such organization, which fair or exhibition does not continue for a period of exceeding ten consecutive days, or a lot or tract of land provided by a college or university for the use of manufactured homes to accommodate students lacking dormitory facilities shall not be deemed a manufactured housing community.

# Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: ADUs

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## Section 2: USE REGULATIONS

- C. Table of Use Regulations
- 1. Residential Uses
- e. Accessory Dwelling Unit

## Section 4: ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

### *A. Purpose*

The purpose of this Section 4 is to allow for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), as defined under M.G.L. c. 40A, §1A, to be built as-of-right in Gill in accordance with Section 3 of the Zoning Act (M.G.L. c. 40A), as amended by Section 8 of Chapter 150 of the Acts of 2024, and the regulations under 760 CMR 71.00: Protected Use Accessory Dwelling Units. This zoning provides for the by-right ADUs to accomplish the following purposes:

1. Increase housing production to address local and regional housing needs across all income levels and at all stages of life.
2. Develop small-scale infill housing that fits in context of town while providing gentle/hidden density.
3. Provide a more moderately priced housing option to serve smaller households, households with lower incomes, seniors, and people with disabilities.
4. Enable property owners to age in place, downsize, or earn supplemental income from investing in their properties.

### *B. Definitions*

For purposes of this Section 4, the following definitions shall apply:

1. **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).** A self-contained housing unit, inclusive of sleeping, cooking, and sanitary facilities on the same Lot as a Principal Dwelling, subject to otherwise applicable dimensional and parking requirements, that maintains a separate entrance, either directly from the outside or through an entry hall or corridor shared with the Principal Dwelling sufficient to meet the requirements of the Building and Fire Code for safe ingress and egress. ADUs may be detached, attached, or internal to the Principal Dwelling. Only one (1) Protected Use ADU is allowed on a lot.

- 2. Gross Floor Area.** The sum of the areas of all stories of the building of compliant ceiling height pursuant to the Building Code, including lofts, basements, and intermediate floored tiers, measured from the interior faces of exterior walls or from the centerline of walls separating buildings or dwelling units but excluding crawl spaces, garage parking areas, attics, porches, and similar spaces.
- 3. Modular Dwelling Unit.** A pre-designed Dwelling Unit assembled and equipped with internal plumbing, electrical or similar systems, in compliance with the Building and Fire Code, prior to movement to the site where such Dwelling Unit is affixed to a foundation and connected to external utilities; or any portable structure with walls, a floor, and a roof, designed or used as a Dwelling Unit, transportable in one or more sections and affixed to a foundation and connected to external utilities. A Manufactured Home that does not comply with the Building Code or Fire Code shall not be considered a Modular Dwelling Unit.
- 4. Principal Dwelling.** A structure, regardless of whether it, or the Lot it is situated on, conforms to zoning, including use requirements and dimensional requirements, such as setbacks, bulk, and height, that contains at least one Dwelling Unit.
- 5. Protected Use ADU.** An attached, detached, or internal ADU that is located, or is proposed to be located, on a Lot with a Principal Dwelling in the Residential, Residential-Agricultural, or Village Commercial Zoning District and is not larger in Gross Floor Area than 1200 square feet, provided that only one ADU per lot may qualify as a Protected Use ADU; or in the Village Residential Zoning District and is not larger in Gross Floor Area than 900 square feet, provided that only one ADU per lot may qualify as a Protected Use ADU. An ADU that is nonconforming to zoning shall still qualify as a Protected Use ADU if it otherwise meets this definition.
- 6. Short-Term Rental.** An owner-occupied, tenant-occupied, or non-owner occupied property as defined in M.G.L. c. 64G § 1, including, but not limited to, an apartment, house, cottage, condominium or a furnished accommodation that is not a hotel, motel, lodging house or bed and breakfast establishment, where: (i) at least 1 room or unit is rented to an occupant or sub-occupant [for a period of 31 consecutive days or less]; and (ii) all accommodations are reserved in advance; provided, however, that a private owner-occupied property shall be considered a single unit if leased or rented as such.
- 7. Transit Station.** A Transit Station includes a subway station, commuter rail station ferry terminal or bus station serving as a point of embarkation for any bus operated by the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. There are currently no Transit Stations in Gill, nor does the closest Transit Station have a half-mile radius that extends in Gill (as of May 2026).

## **C. Regulations**

### **1. General Provisions for All ADUs**

#### **a. Code Compliance**

i. ADUs shall maintain a separate entrance from the Principal Dwelling sufficient to meet safe ingress and egress under the Building Code and Fire Code.

ii. ADU Construction shall comply with the 780 CMR 71.00: Massachusetts State Building Code and 310 CMR 15.000: The State Environmental Code, Title 5 regulations, Building Code and Fire Code.

#### **b. Short-Term Rentals**

i. ADUs may not be operated as Short-Term Rentals.

### **2. Protected Use ADUs.**

The Building Inspector shall approve a Building Permit authorizing Protected Use ADU installation and use within, or on a Lot with, a Principal Dwelling, including within, or on a lot with, a Pre-Existing Nonconforming Structure, if the following conditions are met:

#### **a. Dimensional Standards.**

i. A Protected Use ADU shall not be larger than a Gross Floor Area of 1200 square feet in the Residential, Residential-Agricultural, and Village Commercial Zoning Districts. A Protected Use ADU shall not be larger than a Gross Floor Area of 900 square feet in the Village Residential Zoning District.

ii. A detached Protected Use ADU may be located within a garage, barn, or other accessory structure in existence on May 4, 2026, or within a new accessory structure located within 100 feet of the existing Principal Dwelling. Upon written request by the applicant, the Planning Board may waive or increase the 100 foot separation requirement by a majority vote upon written findings that: 1. special circumstances of the site, its surroundings, or the proposal design that negate the need for imposition of the requirement, or the objectives of this section may be met in alternative manner; and 2. that such a waiver or reduction will not derogate from the public purposes and intent of this zoning bylaw.

iii. A Protected Use ADU shall not have more restrictive dimensional standards than those required for a Single-Family Residential Dwelling, Principal Dwelling, or accessory structure within the same district, whichever results in more permissive regulation.

**b. Off-Street Parking.**

i. A maximum of one (1) additional off-street parking space shall be required for Protected Use ADUs in addition to the off-street parking spaces required for the Principal Dwelling. For lots within a half-mile of a Transit Station, providing parking for the ADU is not required. (As of May 2026, there are no Transit Stations in Gill, nor does a half-mile radius of a Transit Station extend into Gill).

**c. Allowed/Disallowed Building Types.**

i. Building Code-compliant dwelling structures, including Modular Dwelling Units, may be used as an ADU. A recreational vehicle or trailer or Manufactured Home, not compliant with the Building Code or Fire Code, may not be used as an ADU.

**d. Sale of ADU.**

i. A Protected Use ADU may not be sold separately from the Principal Dwelling.

**3. Nonconformance.**

i. A Protected Use ADU shall be permitted within, or on a Lot with, a Pre-Existing Nonconforming Structure so long as the Protected Use ADU can be developed in conformance with the Building Code, 760 CMR 71.00, and state law.

***D. Administration and Enforcement***

1. The Building Inspector shall administer and enforce the provisions of this Section 4.
2. No building shall be changed in use or configuration without a Building Permit from the Building Inspector.
3. No building shall be occupied until a Certificate of Occupancy is issued by the Building Inspector, where required.
4. The Building Inspector, when applicable, shall apply the Dover analysis as articulated in the standards in 760 CMR 71.03(3)(a), to any request for a Protected Use ADU Building Permit and shall waive any zoning requirement that the Building Inspector finds to be unreasonable under the Dover analysis.

***E. Severability***

If any subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or other portion of this Section 4 is, for any reason, declared invalid, in whole or in part, by any court, agency, commission, legislative body, or other authority of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be

severed and all other provisions of this Section 4 shall continue in full force and effect.

## **Section 17: DEFINITIONS**

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU): As defined in Section 4.

# Proposed Changes to Town of Gill Zoning Bylaws: Floodplain Regulations

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## **SECTION 15. FLOODPLAIN REGULATIONS**

### **ARTICLE I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

#### **Section A. Statement of Purpose**

The purposes of the Floodplain Overlay District are to:

1. Ensure public safety through reducing the threats to life and personal injury
2. Eliminate new hazards to emergency response officials
3. Prevent the occurrence of public emergencies resulting from water quality, contamination, and pollution due to flooding
4. Avoid the loss of utility services which if damaged by flooding would disrupt or shut down the utility network and impact regions of the community beyond the site of flooding
5. Eliminate costs associated with the response and cleanup of flooding conditions
6. Reduce damage to public and private property resulting from flooding waters

### **ARTICLE II. FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP DISTRICT, FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR AND PERMITS**

#### **Section A. FIRM District Boundaries**

The purposes of the Floodplain Overlay District are to:

The Floodplain District is herein established as an overlay district. The District includes all special flood hazard areas designated on the Town of Gill's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the administration of the National Flood Insurance Program, (NFIP) dated June 18, 1980 and on the Flood Boundary & Floodway Map dated June 18, 1980. These maps indicate the 1%-chance regulatory floodplain. The exact boundaries of the District shall be defined by the 1%-chance base flood elevations shown on the FIRM and further defined by the Flood Insurance Study (FIS) report dated December 1979. The effective FIRM, FBFM, and FIS report are incorporated herein by reference and are on file with the Town Clerk, Planning Board, Building Official, and Conservation Commission.

## **Section B. Floodplain Administrator**

The Town of Gill hereby designates the position of Town Administrator to be the official Floodplain Administrator for the Town.

## **Section C. Permits**

1. **Permits Required.** The Town of Gill requires a permit for all proposed construction or other development in the floodplain overlay district, including new construction or changes to existing buildings, placement of manufactured homes, placement of agricultural facilities, fences, sheds, ground-mounted solar panels, storage facilities or drilling, mining, paving and any other development that might increase flooding or adversely impact flood risks to other properties.
2. **Other Permits.** The Town's permit review process includes the requirement that the proponent obtain all local, state and federal permits that will be necessary in order to carry out the proposed development in the floodplain overlay district. The proponent must acquire all necessary permits, and must demonstrate that all necessary permits have been acquired.

# **ARTICLE III. FLOODWAY ENCROACHMENT, ZONING, USE REGULATIONS AND PERMITTED USES**

## **Section A. Floodway Encroachment**

1. In Zones A, A1-30, and AE, along watercourses that have not had a regulatory floodway designated, the best available Federal, State, local, or other floodway data shall be used to prohibit encroachments in floodways which would result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.
2. In Zones A1-30 and AE, along watercourses that have a regulatory floodway designated on the Town's FIRM or Flood Boundary & Floodway Map encroachments are prohibited, including fill, new construction, substantial improvements, and other development within the adopted regulatory floodway unless it has been demonstrated through hydrologic and hydraulic analyses performed in accordance with standard engineering practice that the proposed encroachment would not result in any increase in flood levels within the community during the occurrence of the base flood discharge.

## **Section B. Unnumbered A Zones**

In A Zones, in the absence of FEMA BFE data and floodway data, the building department will obtain, review and reasonably utilize base flood elevation and floodway data available from a Federal, State, or other source as criteria for requiring new construction, substantial improvements, or other development in Zone A and as the basis for elevating residential structures to or above base flood level, for floodproofing or elevating nonresidential structures to or above base flood level, and for prohibiting encroachments in floodways.

### **Section C. Subdivisions**

1. All subdivision proposals and development proposals in the floodplain overlay district shall be reviewed to assure that:
  - a) Such proposals minimize flood damage.
  - b) Public utilities and facilities are located & constructed so as to minimize flood damage.
  - c) Adequate drainage is provided.
2. When proposing subdivisions or other developments greater than 50 lots or 5 acres (whichever is less), the proponent must provide technical data to determine base flood elevations for each developable parcel shown on the design plans.

### **Section D. Recreational Vehicles**

In A, A1-30, AO, AH, AE Zones, all recreational vehicles to be placed on a site must be elevated and anchored in accordance with the zone's regulations for foundation and elevation requirements or be on the site for less than 180 consecutive days or be fully licensed and highway ready.

## **ARTICLE IV. NOTIFICATION OF WATERCOURSE ALTERATION**

### **Section A. Watercourse Alterations**

In a riverine situation, the Town Administrator shall notify the following of any alteration or relocation of a watercourse:

Adjacent Communities

Bordering states, if affected

NFIP State Coordinator,  
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

NFIP Program Specialist,  
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region I

**Section B. Submit New Data**

If the Town acquires data that changes the base flood elevation in the FEMA mapped Special Flood Hazard Areas, the Town will, within 6 months, notify FEMA of these changes by submitting the technical or scientific data that supports the change(s.) Notification shall be submitted to:

NFIP State Coordinator,  
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

NFIP Program Specialist,  
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region I

**ARTICLE V. VARIANCES**

**Section A. Variations and State Building Code**

1. The Town will request from the State Building Code Appeals Board a written and/or audible copy of the portion of the hearing related to the variance, and will maintain this record in the community's files.
2. The Town shall also issue a letter to the property owner regarding potential impacts to the annual premiums for the flood insurance policy covering that property, in writing over the signature of a community official that (i) the issuance of a variance to construct a structure below the base flood level will result in increased premium rates for flood insurance up to amounts as high as \$25 for \$100 of insurance coverage and (ii) such construction below the base flood level increases risks to life and property.
3. Such notification shall be maintained with the record of all variance actions for the referenced development in the floodplain overlay district.

**Section B. Other Variations**

A variance from these floodplain bylaws must meet the requirements set out by State law, and may only be granted if:

1. Good and sufficient cause and exceptional non-financial hardship exist;

2. The variance will not result in additional threats to public safety, extraordinary public expense, or fraud or victimization of the public; and
3. The variance is the minimum action necessary to afford relief.

## **ARTICLE VI. DISCLAIMERS**

### **Section A. Abrogation**

The floodplain management regulations found in this Floodplain Overlay District section shall take precedence over any less restrictive conflicting local laws, ordinances or codes.

### **Section B. Disclaimer**

The degree of flood protection required by this bylaw is considered reasonable but does not imply total flood protection.

### **Section C. Severability**

If any section, provision or portion of this bylaw is deemed to be unconstitutional or invalid by a court, the remainder of the ordinance shall be effective.

## **ARTICLE VI. DEFINITIONS RELATED TO FLOODPLAIN DISTRICTS**

DEVELOPMENT means any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to building or other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations or storage of equipment or materials. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

FLOOD BOUNDARY AND FLOODWAY MAP means an official map of a community issued by FEMA that depicts, based on detailed analyses, the boundaries of the 100-year and 500-year floods and the 100-year floodway. (For maps done in 1987 and later, the floodway designation is included on the FIRM.)

FLOODWAY. The channel of the river, creek or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. [Base Code, Chapter 2, Section 202]

FUNCTIONALLY DEPENDENT USE means a use which cannot perform its intended purpose unless it is located or carried out in close proximity to water. The term includes only docking facilities, port facilities that are necessary for the loading and unloading of cargo or passengers, and ship building and ship repair facilities, but does not include long-term storage or related manufacturing facilities. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59] Also [Referenced Standard ASCE 24-14]

HIGHEST ADJACENT GRADE means the highest natural elevation of the ground surface prior to construction next to the proposed walls of a structure. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

HISTORIC STRUCTURE means any structure that is:

- (a) Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing on the National Register;
  - (b) Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined by the Secretary to qualify as a registered historic district;
  - (c) Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in states with historic preservation programs which have been approved by the Secretary of the Interior; or
  - (d) Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs that have been certified either:
    - (1) By an approved state program as determined by the Secretary of the Interior or
    - (2) Directly by the Secretary of the Interior in states without approved programs.
- [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

NEW CONSTRUCTION. Structures for which the start of construction commenced on or after the effective date of the first floodplain management code, regulation, ordinance, or standard adopted by the authority having jurisdiction, including any subsequent improvements to such structures. New construction includes work determined to be substantial improvement. [Referenced Standard ASCE 24-14]

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE means a vehicle which is:

- (a) Built on a single chassis;
  - (b) 400 square feet or less when measured at the largest horizontal projection;
  - (c) Designed to be self-propelled or permanently towable by a light duty truck; and
  - (d) Designed primarily not for use as a permanent dwelling but as temporary living quarters for recreational, camping, travel, or seasonal use.
- [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

REGULATORY FLOODWAY - see FLOODWAY.

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA. The land area subject to flood hazards and shown on a Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard map as Zone A, AE, A1-30, A99, AR, AO, AH. [Base Code, Chapter 2, Section 202]

START OF CONSTRUCTION. The date of issuance for new construction and substantial improvements to existing structures, provided the actual start of construction, repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition, placement or other improvement is within 180 days after the date of issuance. The actual start of construction means the first placement of permanent construction of a building (including a manufactured home) on a site, such as the pouring of a slab or footings, installation of pilings or construction of columns.

Permanent construction does not include land preparation (such as clearing, excavation, grading or filling), the installation of streets or walkways, excavation for a basement, footings, piers or foundations, the erection of temporary forms or the installation of accessory buildings such as garages or sheds not occupied as dwelling units or not part of the main building. For a substantial improvement, the actual “start of construction” means the first alteration of any wall, ceiling, floor or other structural part of a building, whether or not that alteration affects the external dimensions of the building. [Base Code, Chapter 2, Section 202]

STRUCTURE means, for floodplain management purposes, a walled and roofed building, including a gas or liquid storage tank, that is principally above ground, as well as a manufactured home. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

SUBSTANTIAL REPAIR OF A FOUNDATION. When work to repair or replace a foundation results in the repair or replacement of a portion of the foundation with a perimeter along the base of the foundation that equals or exceeds 50% of the perimeter of the base of the foundation measured in linear feet, or repair or replacement of 50% of the piles, columns or piers of a pile, column or pier supported foundation, the building official shall determine it to be substantial repair of a foundation. Applications determined by the building official to constitute substantial repair of a foundation shall require all existing portions of the entire building or structure to meet the requirements of 780 CMR. [As amended by MA in 9th Edition BC]

VARIANCE means a grant of relief by a community from the terms of a flood plain management regulation. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

VIOLATION means the failure of a structure or other development to be fully compliant with the community's flood plain management regulations. A structure or other development without the elevation certificate, other certifications, or other evidence of compliance required in §60.3 is presumed to be in violation until such time as that documentation is provided. [US Code of Federal Regulations, Title 44, Part 59]

# **Proposed Changes to Gill Zoning Bylaws: Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers**

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## **Section 18: BUILDING-INTEGRATED ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEMS (BESS) AND DATA CENTERS**

A one-year moratorium on Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers.

The purpose of the moratorium is to provide the Gill Planning Board with sufficient time to study, consider, and adopt zoning regulations governing the siting, permitting, construction, installation, operation, and maintenance of Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Data Centers so that reasonable regulations can be developed for consideration at a spring 2027 Town Meeting. While the Town recognizes An Act Promoting a Clean Energy Grid, Advancing Equity and Protecting Ratepayers (the “2024 Climate Act”), the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, (DOER), has yet to promulgate final regulations governing Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems, a land use not presently addressed by Gill’s Zoning Bylaws. Data Centers are an emerging form of land use with unique impacts on energy and noise and is currently undefined in Gill’s Zoning Bylaws.

Since such regulations and land uses must be known and duly considered in order to effectively evaluate and establish local zoning regulations for such novel and evolving uses in regard to public health, safety and welfare, this interim restriction is hereby established.

For purposes of this section, a Building-Integrated Energy Storage System (BESS) is one or more devices, assembled together, capable of storing energy in order to supply and distribute electrical energy at a future time, including any standalone/principal such use of land, and any accessory system (supporting a non-BESS principal use) having an aggregate energy capacity of 50 kWh or more. Excluded from this definition is any large (100 MWh capacity or more) BESS solely under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth’s Energy Facilities Siting Board as specified by the Act and its regulations. A Data Center shall mean a facility primarily used for the storage, management, processing, or transmission of digital data, including but not limited to servers, networking equipment, cooling systems, and associated infrastructure.

During the term of this moratorium, no special permit, site plan approval, building permit, zoning permit, certificate of occupancy, or other discretionary or ministerial approval shall be issued for: Building-Integrated Energy Storage Systems (BESS); or Data Centers.

The moratorium will be in effect starting on May 4, 2026, upon adoption at Town Meeting. The moratorium will be in place until May 3, 2027, or such time prior when zoning regulations superseding any provision of this section are duly adopted.

If any subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or other portion of this Section 18 is, for any reason, declared invalid, in whole or in part, by any court, agency, commission, legislative body, or other authority of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be severed and all other provisions of this Section 18 shall continue in full force and effect.

## Why The STRPB Recommends Regionalization?

The STRPB supports regionalization for two primary reasons:

1. **Declining Enrollments** - reduce educational opportunities. The STRPB's proposal increases the middle and high school enrollments, which in turn increase our students' educational opportunities.
2. **Financial challenges** - declining enrollment increases financial challenges. It is the declines in enrollment that cause financial pressures as economies of scale are reduced.

A common misunderstanding regarding our educational system is the belief that more funding will correct the negative impacts of declining enrollment, and allow smaller school districts to enjoy the same opportunities as larger districts. This is not possible because the differences in opportunities primarily lie in the size of a school district's enrollment. As the student population decreases, many educational opportunities disappear due to the lack of students, not funding. Fewer students results in less state funding (see funding graph below). The opportunities that disappear are courses in a content area that fulfill a graduation requirement of interest to students and electives (not just offered, but that actually run), athletic teams, student clubs, and larger group classes like band or orchestra that require more students. These lost opportunities unfortunately cannot be regained solely through more funding.

GMRSD, PVRSD and WSD are all defined by the State as small districts (under 1300 students). When these three (or two regional districts) are merged to form the Great River Regional School District (GRRSD) the most noticeable difference will be at the middle and high school levels where the students, with the combined enrollments, will experience an array of increased opportunities in content subjects, electives, sports, and extra curricular activities. More opportunities help prepare students in making choices for beginning a career, military service, college, or an entrepreneurial enterprise.

The GRRSD's plan is for the courses presently offered in each of the districts to continue, with courses (required and electives) being added that students would like to see offered and run. Our elementary children and parents will continue to enjoy the benefits of their nurturing community based schools. They will also benefit from a larger district with more elementary school teachers to collaborate and share best practices. This regionalization does not have a goal of immediately "saving money" (although there would be some savings in consolidating Central Office), but rather making the money we do spend go much farther through increased economies of scale. Economies

of scale in education can be defined as how many benefits are realized within the same cost (as reflected in per pupil cost). There are two economies of scale that work together in education: enrollment and financial. These two economies of scale never function independently, but rather always together.

There are presently initiatives being undertaken to modify the Chapter 70 funding formula to provide additional funding for rural school districts and the Planning Board supports these efforts. If successful, students in the GRRSD will benefit from more efficient use of funding, as larger middle and high school enrollments allow resources to be leveraged more effectively to support the expanded opportunities created through regionalization.

The following are some of the primary benefits gained through regionalization:

#### **A. Primary Enrollment-Based Educational Benefits**

- **Stabilized Class Sizes** - allows the district to maintain viable class sections that are difficult to sustain in schools with low enrollment.
- **Expanded Course Offerings** - enables more diverse high school and middle school programs—including AP and honors courses, electives, and enrichment opportunities.
- **Expanded Extracurricular and Athletic Programs** - supports more teams, clubs, and activities.
- **Improved Student Access to Specialized Services** - shared staffing across six towns can support special education, counseling, and support services more efficiently.

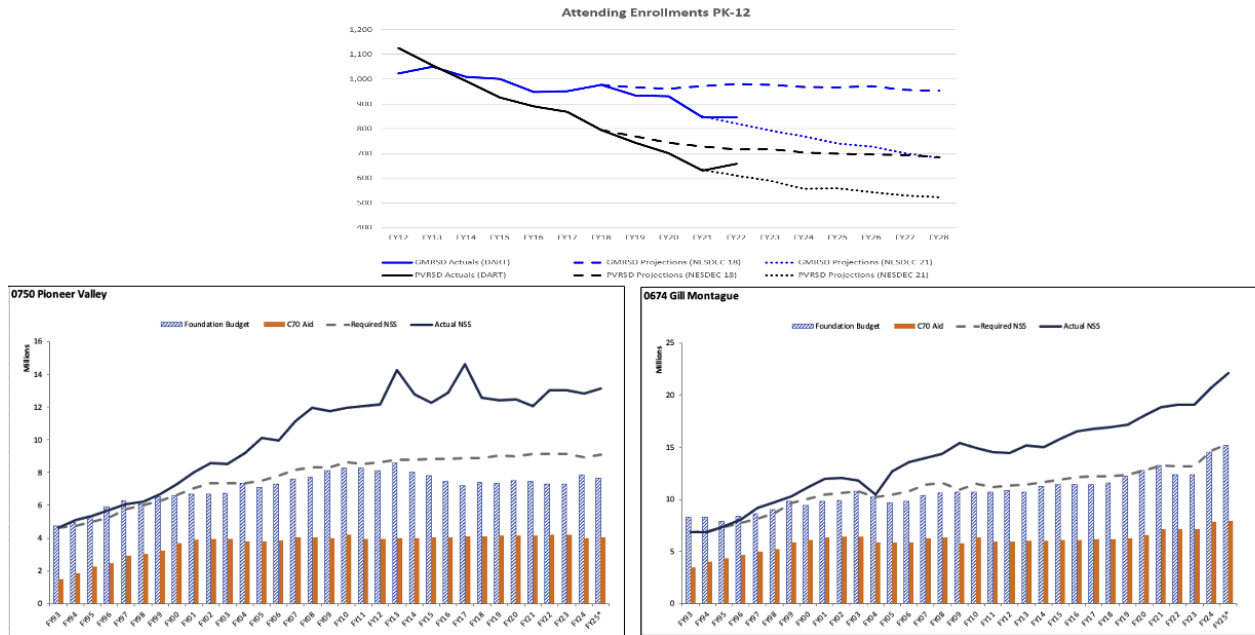
#### **B. Financial Efficiencies & Long-Term Sustainability**

Financial analysis is at the heart of regionalization efforts in exemplifying how economies of scale work. The Abrahams Group's assessments (2023) and updated town assessment tools (2025) helped model the comparative cost impact of operating as one district versus multiple separate districts. It was noted that this new district might be viewed from a cost benefit perspective, whereby the same amount of money produces many more opportunities for students.

The historical pattern for these districts has been that, due to enrollment declines, teachers, staff and opportunities for students have been reduced or eliminated, while town assessments have steadily increased. Doing the same thing and expecting a different result cannot be sustained. Supporting the GRRSD regionalization will help address the structural enrollment declines these towns have been experiencing over the

past 30 years. Putting aside the educational opportunities that have disappeared, consider the following enrollment declines since both districts peaked in 1996 and how they have impacted the budgets:

## Enrollment Declines & Increasing Local Contributions



### Primary Financial Benefits

- Reduced Administrative Duplication:** One regional district will eliminate overlapping and redundant administrative and Central Office structures across the current districts. Presently, the three districts in total are spending approximately \$2,265,367 in Central Office salaries, insurance not included.

The Planning Board does not take issue with the market value of key administrative position salaries (eg., Superintendent - \$180,000 to \$200,000, Director of Finance: \$140,000 - \$155,000), etc.), however, what does come into question is the cost to benefit efficiencies of these positions. If townspeople are paying the majority of these costs (see graph above - the gap between Ch. 70 Foundation Aid and Actual Net School Spending), would it not be more advantageous to have the knowledge, talents and skills of these professionals being utilized in a larger district to oversee more teachers, staff and students? Can the townspeople afford just two key positions that cost over 1million dollars

every three years while educational opportunities are declining? Regionalization is about maximizing the educational benefits in relation to the money spent.

- **More Efficient Staffing Allocation** - Larger system will provide more teaching faculty, specialists, and support staff to meet the diverse needs of students. More instructional staff increases the approaches to learning and teaching experience.
- **Ability to Share Major Cost Drivers** - Transportation, utilities, contracted services, and curricular materials benefit from bulk purchasing and unified budgeting by one district.
- **More Predictable & Equitable Assessment Formula** - results when it is distributed fairly across all towns, rather than 3 towns, 2 towns or 1 town. For instance, the cost of hiring a teacher is currently distributed across three towns in PVRSD and two towns in GMRSD. The proposed GRRSD would distribute the same cost across six or five towns.
- **Building Utilization Efficiencies** - current elementary schools remain the hub of their respective communities, Pioneer Valley serves as a districtwide middle school and Turners Falls serves as the high school.

**Transportation:** Transportation for elementary and middle school students should be relatively unchanged. Every year bus routes are established according to student pick up locations or addresses. There were more students in the districts at the time of the initial study. A reduction in students may result in fewer buses. This may also provide an opportunity to reduce student ridership time even further by maintaining some buses and/or having a bus exchange students at a designated area. The high school students will attend the Turner Falls High School in Montague.. Having reasonable transportation times for students is important to everyone.

### **In Summary - the Great River Regional School District will:**

- **Help Increase and Enhance educational opportunities**
- **Help Ensure long-term financial stability**
- **Make more effective use of staff and facilities**
- **Build a sustainable structure for future generations**

# **Six Town Regional Planning Board's Report Annual Town Report**

## **Phase I**

The Six Town Regionalization Planning Board (STRPB) was formed by the towns of Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Montague, Northfield and Warwick to research the feasibility of creating a new regional school district that was affordable, sustainable and educationally advantageous for our students. It began its work in November 2019.

## **Phase II**

In the Spring of 2024, after the full board voted to recommend moving forward with a proposed Regional Agreement (RA), a District Regional Agreement Subcommittee (DRAS) was formed with the Selectboards from each town recommending candidates to serve along with several Planning Board members. The DRAS and the MARS Consulting Group worked collaboratively to finalize a proposed RA for the STRPB's consideration. After due diligence in reviewing, editing and amending the proposed RA the Planning board voted to approve and forward it to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

## **Phase III**

The MARS Consulting Group worked with DESE to ensure the RA is compliant with DESE regulations and state laws. This unique proposed RA involves two existing regional school districts (Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley) and a municipal school district (Warwick), and requires specific language modifications that are acceptable to legal counsel. This due diligence added to the original timeline (Fall of 2025) for voters to approve or not approve the formation of a new school district: The Great River Regional School District.

## **Phase IV**

Warrant Articles were written for Town Meetings/Special Election and legislation was crafted to facilitate a smooth transition from the existing districts to the Great River Regional School District, should it be approved by all six towns. Consideration is also being given to proposing a 5-town district specific to the towns in the Gill-Montague and the Pioneer Valley Regional School Districts.

## Phase V

Additional outreach opportunities for the public will be scheduled in 2026 to complement the fall of 2025 forums to provide information and answer questions. The Planning Board will submit Warrant Articles for the towns to act upon at the Annual or Special Town Meetings or Special Election, unless the State Legislature passes special legislation to allow all Towns to hold a Special Election. If approved, the Great River Regional District's transition school committee will be appointed to prepare for its first year of operation in 2028. For more detailed STRPB information please visit our website: <https://6towns.org/>

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Genovese, Chair (Warwick)

Greg Snedeker, STRPB Vice-Chair/Secretary/Treasurer (Gill)

**Bernardston** - Jane Dutcher

**Gill** - Deb Loomer, Bill Tomb

**Leyden** - Michele Giarusso, Karen O'Neil, Steve Richter

**Montague** - Clifford Spatcher, Dorinda Bell-Upp

**Northfield** - Reina Dastous, Deb Potee, Pat Shearer

**Warwick** - David Young