



THE

Gill Newsletter

Spring 2021 Issue

Disclaimer:

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Town Hall

Town Hall – Hoping to Reopen Soon

Town Hall remains closed to the public for walk-in visits out of an abundance of caution for the health and safety of our residents and Town Hall staff. We have grown quite adept at handling most requests by telephone, email, and mail. Activities that require an in-person transaction can be done by appointment. As more and more people, including Town Hall staff, become fully vaccinated we anticipate reopening to the public. Here's looking forward to better days real soon.

Asbestos Floor Tiles at Gill Elementary School

Most of the classrooms, hallways, and the all-purpose room in the "old" section of the Gill Elementary School still have the original vinyl tile floors that were installed when the school was built in 1955. That type of tile contains asbestos.

For many years the mastic (glue) has held the tiles securely to the concrete foundation, and excellent maintenance by the custodial staff has kept the floors in good condition with no health risks to students and staff. However, the life span of the mastic has been reached, and there are loose tiles in all of the areas with the asbestos vinyl tiles. The time has come to remove the asbestos-containing tiles and install new flooring at our school. This will be a significant expense, with a projected total cost well above \$250,000. However, it must be done and cannot be put off another year.

The Selectboard, Finance Committee, Capital Improvement Planning Committee, and Gill-Montague Regional School District officials are working

together to develop a plan and cost estimates for the project. Although all possible funding sources are being considered, based on the sheer magnitude of the projected cost, the Selectboard has placed a debt exclusion question on the ballot of the May 17th Town Election. The question seeks permission to assess taxes in excess of the levy limit in order to pay the debt service costs (principal and interest on the loan) for the flooring project. The additional amount for the payment of debt service is added to the levy limit only for the life of the debt and does not become part of the base upon which the levy limit is calculated for future years.

The question on the ballot does not include a dollar figure; state guidelines dictate the format of the question and do not allow dollar amounts. The total dollar amount requested for the project will be presented as part of an article for the next Town Meeting, and will include the various sources and amounts of funding, including taxation, Free Cash, stabilization funds, borrowing, and grants. The ballot question requires a simple majority to pass, and the Town Meeting vote must have a 2/3 majority in order to borrow or use stabilization funds for the project.



Check in with the Gill Website

www.gillmass.org

for up to date news,
announcements and
contact information!





Please vote at the May 17th Town Election and attend and vote at the Town Meeting (date, time, and location to be announced).

Trash Stickers by Mail

If any resident wants to purchase trash stickers by mail, send a check payable to Town of Gill along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354. Trash stickers are \$3 apiece. Please include a note or indicate on your check that you are purchasing trash stickers. Trash stickers continue to be available at the following locations during their posted business hours: Upinngil, Spirit Shoppe, The Mill, and Scotty's.

Recycling Bins & Compost Pails

Recycling bins are available at the Town Hall for \$5 each. We will receive a shipment of the free recycling bins later this spring or early summer. Kitchen compost pails are still available free of charge at the Town Hall, with a limit of one per household. Call or email Ray at Town Hall, 413-863-9347 or administrator@gillmass.org to make a request and schedule the pickup.

Clean Sweep Bulky Waste Collection Day in May - Cancelled

The Clean Sweep Bulky Waste Collection Day regularly scheduled for May has been cancelled. Gill residents who need to dispose of bulky items can use the Greenfield Transfer Station. There is a disposal fee for most items and a non-resident fee of \$5 per load. More information and a price list can be found at <https://greenfield-ma.gov/p/280/Transfer-Station-Recycling--Solid-Waste>.

From the Town Clerk

Town Election

Vote by Mail Application for Gill Town Election on May 17, 2021

Currently, no-excuse voting by mail has been extended by the state law until June 30, 2021. No-excuse voting by mail is a type of early voting, and it is available for all elections held on or before June 30. If you are applying to vote by mail in a town election or special election being held on or before June 30, you may use the [Vote by Mail Application](#) (PDF) to request your ballot.

To register to vote, you must be a U.S. citizen, a resident of Gill and at least 18 years old on or before the date of the town election. Voter registration forms are available online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>. The last day to register to vote for the Town Election is Wednesday April 27, 2021 from 2–4PM and 7–8PM at the Town Hall. If you register by mail, it must be postmarked no later than April 27, 2021. Call the Town Clerk with any questions.

The Town Election will be held Monday May 17, 2021 upstairs at the Town Hall, 325 Main Road from 12PM to 8PM.

Ballots can be mailed or put in the drop box at the rear door of the Town Hall. To mail your ballots place in the provided envelope and mail to: Town Clerk, Town Hall, 325 Main Rd, Gill, MA 01354

The Town Clerk will be glad to help explain the process if you have any questions, and more information will be posted on the Town website

www.gillmass.org as they become available. There will also be notices put in the Greenfield Recorder and the Montague Reporter.

The town is always looking for election workers if anyone is interested in working at the elections. This is a great way to contribute to our community and get to know your fellow "Gillbillies". Please call the Town Clerk at 413-863-8103 to learn more.

Upcoming Election Dates

April 1st, 2021 - Vote by Mail applications available on Town web site or at the Town Clerk's Office.

April 26, 2021 – Vote by mail ballots available from the Town Clerk's office

April 27, 2021 – Last day to register to vote or make changes to voter registration. The Town Hall will be open to register 2–4PM and 7–8PM

May 17, 2021 – Annual Town Election 12–8PM upstairs at the Town Hall, please use the ADA accessible entrance to the rear of the Town Hall for access to the elevator.

May 17, 2021- Vote by Mail ballots must be placed in the drop box by 8PM sharp.

Dog Licenses

Dog licenses for 2020 are still available in the Clerk's Office. April 1, 2020 was the deadline to license all dogs in Gill, if you have not yet licensed your dog, please do so ASAP.

Doreen Stevens
Town Clerk
413-863-8103
townclerk@gillmass.org



Board of Assessors' Office

The Board of Assessors will begin preparations for valuation of properties for FY2022. This is a very important valuation year as it will audit and establish the base values for the next five years. The Assessors and their consultants from Patriot Properties will be working in Gill to update information related to building permits taken out during 2020. The sales will be evaluated over a period of two years beginning in 2019.

The visits scheduled by the Assessors will address questions as they arise from studies being made by the Department of Revenue. Any assistance you can give them in their efforts to do their work will be greatly appreciated. There will also be consultants reviewing and updating business location and second home locations as they reflect the personal property values.

Our consultants will begin the building permit assessments in May and continue over a period of three to four weeks. If they do make a contact with you, they will be exercising the COVID precautionary protocols of wearing masks and social distancing.

The Assessors have been interviewing candidates for an Assistant to the Assessors to begin working in this office in June. That person will be taking over the office responsibilities for Lynda Hodsdon May.

"Many thanks for making my time in Gill, in the Assessors' office so special. I'll miss you all!"

— Lynda Hodsdon Mayo

*Bill Tomb, Chair
Pam Lester, Tim Storrow*

*Office hours are Monday through Thursday 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM.
The Board of Assessors meet alternate Wednesday evenings at 4 PM via Zoom.
Office Phone: 413-863-0138*

Real Estate Taxes

Semi-annual real estate taxes are due on Monday, May 3, 2021. **Please note Massachusetts law dictates all payments must be RECEIVED in the Tax Collector's office on or before the due date!** The postmark has no bearing.

To pay by mail, please pay via check or money order - no cash - and include the remittance portion with your payment. The mailing address is on the bill. If you prefer, there is a drop-off box located at the rear entrance to Town Hall. In either case, if you would like a receipt, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your payment and the remittance portion of the bill.

If you use your bank's online check-writing system, please be sure to note the type of bill you are paying (real estate, excise, sewer, personal property) AND the bill number in the memo section of your check. If we can't determine what you are trying to pay, we'll be returning the check to you for clarification, which could delay posting your payment.

We are hoping to have an online payment option up and running by the end of this year.

Thank You, Tom Hodak

Doug's Auto Body
Doug Smith - Owner



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Memorial Committee

The Town of Gill will be having the annual Memorial Day recognition on Sunday May 30, beginning at 9:30 AM. **Note that this is earlier than the 10 AM starting time of previous years.** The service will begin at the Gill Church with the singing of patriotic hymns, an address by Chet Kuzontkoski and a video montage, and then will proceed across the road for the Rose Ceremony, flag-raising, gun salute and taps. The address and video will be in keeping with the theme of recognizing the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The actual anniversary was in 2020, but because of the gathering restrictions we were unable to proceed as planned. In attendance will be the Northfield VFW post 9874 and the Oak Ridge Marine Corps League Detachment. We invite the community to come together for this important time of recognizing those who lost their lives in all conflicts while serving our country.

FREE FOOD!

The Food Bank of Western Mass distributes free groceries on the third Wednesday of every month from 1:30 to 2:30 PM at the Gill-Montague Senior Center parking lot (5th St & K St, Turners Falls). Open to **everyone**: no income or age requirements, no ID necessary. One box of groceries per household.

Upcoming distributions are:
May 19th, June 16th, and July 21st.

If you are house-bound and cannot pick up food yourself, call or text Barb Watson at (413) 325-3652 or email bwatson1066@gmail.com to arrange a home delivery.

Energy Commission

New Low-Income Discount program

If you are a low-income discount Eversource customer with The Gill Community Choice Power Supply Aggregation you will automatically be enrolled in the new low income .02 cent discount on generation supply costs when it becomes available.

If you opted out of the Gill Community Choice Power supply Aggregation, you will need to opt in. To join Gill's Program, you can do one of three things:

- Visit <https://colonialpowergroup.com/gill/>, click the orange OPT-IN / OPT-OUT button, then provide the requested account information and submit the form;
- Call Colonial Power Group at (866) 485-5858 ext. 1 and ask to be enrolled in the Town of Gill's Program; or
- Call Dynegy at (866) 220-5696 and ask to be enrolled in the Town of Gill's Program

For any of the above, folks should have their Eversource bill handy. Lastly, if anyone is currently contracted with their own supplier, they should first confirm that they won't incur any early termination fees or penalties for leaving that supply. If you don't receive the low income discount, applications are available at Town Hall Lobby for the R2 or R4 Low Income Eversource discount. You are eligible if you receive benefits from any of the following programs: SSI, TAFDC, EAEDC, Food Stamps, MassHealth, LIHEAP, Head Start, Free or reduced school

lunch, Mass Veterans Benefits, DIC, WIC, and more! Also apply online: <https://www.eversource.com/nstar/CustomerCare/Residential/DiscountRate>

Thanks to the latest grant from the DOER, there are 2 new programs benefiting the Town of Gill.

- The town received full funding for a new electric vehicle (EV) charging station. There are two, level-2 ChargePoint units in the parking lot of the Riverside Municipal Building behind Four Winds School.
- The installation of air source heat pumps has just been completed at the Town Hall. This will allow the building to heat and cool more efficiently and create a more pleasant working environment for our town administrators.

Your Lawn: It's Exhausting

The problem: Gas lawnmowers and leaf blowers emit toxins into the air you breathe

What happens if I mow less?

- A longer lawn is a healthier lawn
- A longer lawn is better for bees and other pollinators

What to do?

- Re-think what a healthy yard looks like
- Get a mower with a carburetor or an electric engine
- Mow less often. Grass grows less during hot, dry weather
- If you have a mowing service, ask them to come based on need to mow, not automatically



- Mow less area – define less formal lawn and create naturalized areas in your yard
- Leave clippings on the lawn – they return nutrients to the soil

The result:

- Instead of smelling gasoline fumes you will smell clover and fresh air
- Your yard becomes a paradise for bees, butterflies and other pollinators
- You will have peace and quiet in your neighborhood

Based on an article by Alden Booth, a member of the Energy Commission

DEAN'S LIST

Martha Kenyon was named to the fall semester's dean list, with high honors, at Connecticut College in New London, CT. She is studying English and in the Class of 2021.

Mackinnon Donnelly-Minshall, Bryn Kruzlic, and Bailey Kathleen McNamara were named to the Dean's List at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst for the fall semester.

Cassandra Holmes was named to the Dean's List at Elms College, for the fall semester.

HONOR ROLL

Pioneer Valley Regional School

2nd Quarter

Grade 11

Highest Honors: Isaac Damon

Grade 10

Highest Honors: James Staelens

Grade 7

Highest Honors: Anthony McNamara and Charlotte Relyea-Strawn

Honors: Elizabeth Polatin

Turners Falls High School

2nd Quarter

Grade 12

First Honors: Leah Timberlake, Hailey Wheeler and Olivia Whittier

Third Honors: Taylor Murphy

Grade 10

First Honors: Anna Baskowski

Second Honors: Adeline Riley

Grade 9

Second Honors: Megan Leveille

Great Falls Middle School

2nd Quarter

Grade 8

First Honors: Pamela Gomez and Josiah Little

Second Honors: Zachary Zilinski

Grade 7

First Honors: Dylan Brunault, Lincoln Coleman, Christopher Halla, Olivia Hunt, Vaughn LaValley, Emma Little, Miles Riley and Kainen Stevens

Four Rivers Charter Public School

1st Semester

Grade 12

High Honors: Carlie Kempf

HOWL (Habits of Work and Learning) of Fame: Carlie Kempf

Grade 10

Honors: Isaac Morton, Grace Parzyck and Olivia Vassar

HOWL: Kole Broderick, Issac Morton and Grace Parzyck

Grade 9

Honors: Alex Shutta

Grade 8


Highest Honors: Charley Cormier

HOWL: Charley Cormier

Grade 7

Honors: Grace Mackenzie and Zachary Robertson

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HONOR ROLL (continued)

Turners Falls High School

3rd Quarter

Grade 12

First Honors: Leah Timberlake, Hailey Wheeler and Olivia Whittier

Grade 10

First Honors: Anna Baskowski

Second Honors: Adeline Riley

Grade 9

First Honors: Owen LaValley and Megan Leveille

Great Falls Middle School

3rd Quarter

Grade 8

First Honors: Maren Batchelder and Josiah Little

Second Honors: Pamela Gomez and Zachary Zilinski

Grade 7

First Honors: Dylan Brunault, Lincoln Coleman, Shayla Freeland, Christopher Halla, Vaughn LaValley, Emma Little and Kainen Stevens

Second Honors: Olivia Hunt

Grade 6

First Honors: Johnny Bartolon

Four Winds School

We are excited to announce that Four Winds School has been fully in-person since April 1st! In order to undo a year's worth of social isolation, inactivity, and too much screen time, we have modified our normal schedule to include more activity and social time. Part of this modified schedule includes a daily walk to and from Unity or Peskeomskut Park to play (weather permitting, of course). We have also had parent volunteers in the building so vulnerable staff members can still teach remotely, which has strengthened our community. The students and teachers have enjoyed being in school in person and together once again, and we are looking forward to the rest of the school year. Please check our website to learn more about our program (www.fourwindsschool.info), or send us an email at fourwindsteachers@gmail.com if you have any questions. Stay well!

Photo below:

Four Winds students, smiling behind their masks, happy to be together again.

Roadside Trash Pick-Up

Have you noticed how terrific our roadsides look recently? Over twenty-six families responded to the call for a Gill Community Roadside Trash Pick-Up on April 22nd, Earth Day. Ranging in age from 3 to 70+, they fanned out over the community and picked clean approximately 80% of Gill's highways and byways.

- Most Interesting Find: a crockpot.
- Hardest to Lift: a deteriorated sound system.
- Most Frequent Litter Objects: nip bottles, beer cans and Dunkin Donuts trash.
- Most Unique Trash Retrieval Method: Pack Mule

This was a great community event costing no money and without a lot of fuss, just neighbors new and old working to keep Gill beautiful. Check out Gill's Facebook page for photos of community members who donned gloves and filled their bags with roadside trash. We send our heartfelt thanks to these industrious neighbors. Give yourselves a big pat on the back!





Gill Historical Commission

Exciting New GHC Book Arrives!

Meet Jennie and her Williams and Bardwell Families. Learn more about Life in Gill from 1860-1950. *Jennie: Life in Gill* follows *Riverside: Life Along the Connecticut River*. Fill out the enclosed flyer to order either or both books.

Twelve years ago, the editors and researchers of this book set out to discover more about Jennie (Williams) Bardwell's life. In doing so, we gained a much clearer sense of her world, not just of Gill, but of Brattleboro, Deerfield, Greenfield, Easthampton, and the Greater Pioneer Valley. We also began to understand how Jennie and her relatives were impacted by their times, and the impact they, in turn, had on their towns. We hope that as the details of Jennie's life unfold, they add another dimension to our understanding of Gill's rich and complex history.

The Golden Pumpkin

In 1941, Gill resident Ethel Reum Maddern wrote a detailed essay on Gill's history. The following excerpt describes The Golden Pumpkin or the Chenery Tavern, "whose sign swung from the trees on the common."

The Golden Pumpkin was the oldest of Gill's taverns and stood nearly opposite the present site of Slate Library. On the steps of this tavern stood the men eagerly waiting to take the mail bag from the stage-coach and carry it to the post office [at the Canning home, west of the church]. Later, part of this tavern was bought from the widow Chenery by Roswell Purple and moved across the Unadilla Brook, where it was occupied by his son, Henry Purple, until destroyed by fire in September 1904. The rest of the tavern was torn down. Another clipping reveals that "the old Gill tavern that entertained George Washington has at last gone the way of all earth, and yesterday the remains of the structure curled up in wreaths of lazy smoke, telling the last chapters of its eventful history."

The Robert Darr Wert Project

GHC has recently been contacted by two textile historians from Lexington, MA, and a writer and historian associated with a museum in New Jersey; they and several others are interested in Country Prints, the Gill home industry of Robert Darr Wert. His designs silk-screened on cloth and gracing other objects have attracted many homeowners and now collectors. The GHC his-

torical collection has on display and in storage many contributions of Wert artifacts. Thanks to Al Wallace and Barbara Watson, the original two Country Print signs are hung in the Riverside Building. GHC is beginning to enlarge and share in display and in photographs as much of the Wert work as we can identify. If you own products from Country Prints, we hope you would let us photograph them or loan them for a temporary show. We would also like to collect stories from those of you who worked at Country Prints and can tell us about Wert and your experiences. If you are interested in sharing Wert material for display or photographing, let Kit Carpenter or Pam Shoemaker know [kitc16@comcast.net. or pshoe27@gmail.com]. We would also like to hear from you if you worked at Country Prints or knew Robert Darr Wert and can tell us about him.

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