



THE

Gill Newsletter

Winter 2025 Issue

Disclaimer:

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From the Town Administrator Gill's Electricity Supply Program - New Energy Supplier and Long-Term Rates

The Town of Gill has signed a thirty-four month contract with a new supplier, First Point Power. Beginning with the January 2026 meter reads, the Gill Community Choice Power Supply Program, designed to meet the specific needs of the Town's electricity ratepayers, will continue to offer the same options but at new rates:

- A standard product that meets Massachusetts Renewable Energy Requirement (MA Req) of 69.1% plus an additional 25% Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) at a rate of \$0.13852 per kWh.
- An optional product that uses 100% Massachusetts Class I RECs at a rate of \$0.15452 per kWh.
- A second optional product that meets MA Req plus uses an additional 5% Massachusetts Class I RECs at a rate of \$0.13132 per kWh.

For Gill residents and businesses who are enrolled in the Town's standard product, the current rate of \$0.15136 per kWh will expire and the new rate of \$0.13852 per kWh will take effect with the January 2026 meter reads. This represents a decrease of \$8 per month on the supply side of the bill given average usage of 600 kWh. However, this new rate is 3 percent higher than Eversource's Residential Basic Service rate of \$0.13493 per kWh for the month of January 2026. Eversource's Basic Service rates will change on Febru-

ary 1, 2026.

Gill launched its electricity program in August 2020 in an effort to develop an energy program that would be stable, affordable and incorporate renewable energy. From inception through June 2025, the Program has saved residents and small businesses over \$352,000 in electricity costs as compared to Eversource Basic Service. It is important to note that no action is required by current participants. This change will be seen on the February 2026 bills. All accounts currently enrolled in the Program will remain with their current product offering and see the new rate and First Point Power printed under the "Supplier Services" section of their monthly bill.

The Gill Community Choice Power Supply Program has no fees or charges. However, anyone switching from a contract with a third-party supplier may be subject to penalties or early termination fees charged by that supplier. Ratepayers should verify terms before switching.

The Eversource Basic Service rates change twice a year or more, depend-



Check in with the Gill Website

www.gillmass.org

for up to date news,
announcements and
contact information!





ing on rate class. As a result, the aggregation rate will not always be higher than the Basic Service rate. The goal of the aggregation is to deliver savings over the life of the program against Eversource Basic Service. However, future savings cannot be guaranteed.

Eversource has several programs to help income-eligible families and customers needing special assistance meet their energy needs.

To learn more visit eversource.com/content/residential/account-billing/payment-assistance/discount-rate. You can be enrolled in Gill's Community Choice Power Supply Program and still be eligible for Eversource's financial assistance programs. In addition, for residential accounts, if you have a heat pump, you will continue to receive the Eversource heat pump discount. Residents may also visit colonialpowergroup.com/gill or call (866) 485-5858 ext. 1 to learn more about Gill's Community Choice Power Supply Program, to opt-in or opt-out, or to change product selection.

New to Town? Changed Phone Numbers?

Are you one of the many people who have moved to Gill during the past year? (Welcome!) Did you recently add a new phone number to your household? If so, please be sure to sign up for the Town's CodeRED emergency notification service. We use

this system to provide residents with time-sensitive general and emergency notifications for such things as town events, changes to the trash/recycling collection schedule, hazardous traffic or road conditions, detours, flooding, emergency shelters, or evacuation notices.

There is no deadline to sign up. If you haven't added your telephone numbers (landline and cell), text numbers, and email addresses, visit the Town's website (www.gillmass.org), and click on the link for CodeRED

Alternatively, you can now use the text-to-enroll feature to sign up for CodeRED alerts. Simply text GillCodeRed to 24639. You will receive a text message with a link to the account portal where you can enroll cell phone numbers, landlines, and email addresses to receive voice, text, and email alerts. For first-time users, scroll down to "Need an Account?" and click/tap "Register."

If you don't have access to the internet, or need assistance with signing up, call Ray at the Town Hall, 413-863-9347

From the Town Clerk:

Voter Registration:

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 town meeting/election. You may register in person or by mail (postmarked no later than the final registration date). Vote

by Mail postcards for the state elections will go out later the new year, if you are interested in voting by mail for the Annual Town Election you must fill out an application for vote by mail available on the Town website. Applications are good for 1 calendar year only.

Annual Town Election:

May 18, 2026 Annual Town Election 10AM-6PM

It is early, but it is good to look ahead to the new year.

4/08/2025-Last Day to Register to Vote/Make Changes to Voter Registration

THERE IS NO EARLY VOTING FOR THIS ELECTION

Offices on the ballot this May are:

Selectboard 3-year term: Gregory M. Snedeker, Assessor for a 1-year term: Robert Whittier, Assessor 3-year term: Pamela Lester, Cemetery Commissioner 3-year term: Patricia Hawkins, Library Trustee 3-year term: Megan Bathory-Peeler, Board of Health 3-year term: Charles Garbiel, II, Tree Warden 3-year term: Joseph Williams, Constable 3-year term: Craig Gaudry, Constable 3-year term: Fred O, Chase, III, Constable 3-year term: Vacant.

At the time of printing the clerk had not confirmed if those in office were running again.

Nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk's Office after January 1, 2026 for anyone who would like to run for any of these offices. When you pickup nomination papers the clerk will explain to you the number of



signatures needed and the whole process of getting your name on the ballot. The last day to obtain nomination papers is Thursday March 26, 2026.

September 1st, 2026 State Primary

November 3rd, 2026, Mid-term elections.

More information about the state elections will be made available in the next newsletter.

Registrar Needed

The Town is in need of a registrar, in accordance with Election laws each party must be represented, our Republican registrar resigned, so if you are a registered Republican and are interested in becoming a registrar, please contact the Town Clerk for more information. 413-863-0138 or townclerk@gill-mass.com.

Census

Census/Street List forms will be in the mail shortly after the 1st of the year. Please remember to send back your census forms and make any changes necessary. Making sure your census is up to date is so important to keep your voter status active and making sure 911 has all the information about number of people in your home, this is so important in case of fire or other emergencies and state funding for roads, schools, etc. are based on Town Census numbers.

Fall Harvest Festival

The Fall Harvest Festival was a resounding success this year, better than ever with record attendance,

many activities and representatives from more town groups and organizations. Held on a sunny Sunday at the end of September, the Town was well represented with members from the Agricultural Commission, Library, Historical Commission, Recreation Committee, and Cultural Council all participating. While the Falltown String Band filled the air with music, a record number of adults and children perused the vendor' tables, enjoyed a hayride on the Flagg's hay wagon, climbed around on tractors, searched for coins in the shavings, competed for fame in the coloring contest, and ate and drank food provided by the Fire Department, or had a meal at the Tavern. Thank you all for a great turnout and see you next year. The Ag Commission


Cultural Council News

The Cultural Council met in October to consider grant proposals submitted through the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Local Cultural Council Program. This year we considered proposals from 29 persons and organizations and were able to offer funding to 16 of those. A full list of the funded projects will be posted on the Cultural Council page on the Gill Town website as soon as the official notification from the State is available. These projects will also be listed in the next Gill Newsletter.

Looking ahead to Spring, save the week of March 30th when Gill's after-school community theater, ACT, will be presenting "The Curse of the Ring" at Town Hall. Trolls, dragons, and mermaids, oh

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my! Two afternoon performances (dates to be announced) and an evening performance on April 3rd will be presented.

The Cultural Council also announces the 2026 publication of *Leaf Town* by Amy Gordon. In this book, Amy Gordon gives lyric treatment to an extraordinary moment in the COVID pandemic when “Leaf by leaf, word by word, the children build a town,” seeking a community of plays on the town square which come to mimic the challenges in their young lives. In poems that beautifully render the sense of both creativity and loss, Gordon shows us the possibility of communion and the forces that emerge to threaten that precious impulse. See www.slateroof-press.com/books/leaf-town.html

The Council also hopes that everyone is looking forward to the following festivities:

- The Shea Theater in Turners Falls is presenting three broad-ranging holiday shows. See <https://sheatheater.org/>
- The Carnegie Library in Turners Falls plans a family Gingerbread House Activity at the Great Falls Discovery Center on December 20 from 1-4pm. See <https://montaguepubliclibraries.assabetinteractive.com/calendar/gingerbread-houses/>
- Nolumbeka Project will hold their annual Full Snow Moon Gathering and Social Dance on February 7 (snow date February 8) at Greenfield Community College from 1-4pm. See <https://nolum->

bekaproject.org/events/

There’s so much to see and do in this culturally rich area. Get out and enjoy it, or hunker down at home with a good book or an art project. Until March ...

Energy Commission News

Did you know?

RECYCLING ELECTRONICS

- It is illegal to “throw away” electronics, monitors and TVs.
- Staples will recycle your dead and outdated electronics.
- Center for Ecotechnology will cycle your cell phone. <https://www.cetonline.org/>
- You can recycle CRTs (TVs and monitors) at Lenox Valley Waste Transfer Facility. 413-637-1101

HEAT PUMP REDUCED ELECTRIC RATE

Nov. 1 to April 30

- If you use a heat pump to heat all or part of your home, you can take advantage of a new, reduced distribution and transmission rate during the winter months (Nov. 1 to April 30) to help you save on your winter electric bill. If you received a Mass Save® rebate via your Eversource electric account for a heat pump you installed after Jan. 1, 2019, you will be automatically enrolled on this rate beginning Nov. 1, 2025. If you installed your heat pump prior to Jan. 1, 2019, you can apply at eversource.com/heat-pump-rate.
- Municipal aggregation and

third-party supplier customers - If you are a municipal aggregator or enrolled with a third-party supplier you can also receive the rate. The rate is on the delivery side of the electric bill, not the supply side.

- Customers who need bill assistance - If you are currently on the R-2 Residential Assistance Rate and have a heat pump, you are eligible for the R-2 Heat Pump Rate, which provides the same discount you receive on the R-2 electric rate.
- Solar and net metering customers - A customer that has solar or is net metered can participate in the heat pump rate.

Gill Historical Commission

The Historical Commission offered its lovely books on Gill’s history at the Fall Festival plus a new addition - a book by author, Liz Gardner. This book features gorgeous photographs of Gill throughout the four seasons, highlighting our very special surroundings. A copy of this book will be available at the Gill Library.

Including Gill, members of five towns and four tribes have been meeting with researchers since 2014 to study King Philip’s War, 1675 - 1676, and the events of the day of the massacre in Gill and Turners Falls on May 19, 1676. As reported in the Greenfield Recorder and the Montague Reporter, on November 5th, the American Battlefield Protection



Program grant has completed its research. Its Advisory Board, coordinated by David Brule, held its last meeting. Funded by the National Park Service, the final report is available at the Town of Montague website. The Advisory Board followed an inclusive and inspirational model of group study, gathering insights from tribal and non-tribal participants. The year 2026 marks the 350th anniversary of King Philip's War, and several commemorations are being planned. Three educational panels of text and photographs about the research will be placed in Unity Park on the shore of the river, opposite the site of the massacre, in the next few months. On May 16, a Day of Remembrance will be held at the Discovery Center. Details of other events will be forthcoming.

Gill Indivisible Group

Many Americans are suffering from food insecurity. If you are having trouble putting food on the table, here are some resources for free or reduced priced food in the Gill area. We recommend checking websites for updates.

Food Resources for All

Stone Soup Café thestonesoup-cafe.org
Hot lunch every Saturday, 12:00-1:30 pm, corner Hope and Main streets, Greenfield.
Pickup or delivery. Pay what you can.
Franklin County Community Meals Program fccmp.org
Free hot meals (dine-in or take-out) and bags of groceries. In

Greenfield, Turners, Northfield and Orange.

Holy Trinity Catholic Church,
holyltrinitygreenfield.org
Free community meals at 135 Main St., Greenfield, Thursday 5-6 pm

Bread of Life Holy Trinity Parish
413 773-3311

Meals delivered to you for free.

Food Pantries

Food Bank of Western Mass.
foodbankwma.org

Pick up groceries/meals in nearby towns. One example: The Brick House, 24 3rd St., Turners Falls, Mon10-1, Thurs 9-12, Sat 10-1

Full Cart fullcart.org
Virtual foodbank that mails boxes of food. (You only pay for postage.)

For Low Income people

Green Fields Market franklin-community.coop/join

10% discount if you are on SNAP or SSI

Local Public Schools gmrtd.org

Free breakfast/lunch for students
Salvation Army salvationarmy.org 413 774-3154

Emergency food pantry, including baby food

Savings on Groceries

CSAs Google "CSAs near me"
Upinngil, Everyday Farm, other local farms

Buy fresh produce through a farm share and save 20-50% over supermarket prices.

Online Bulk Food Buying Bulk Food Box, The Bread of Hope, Angel Food Ministries, more

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Trivia!

In November, the Gill Indivisible Group hosted a First Amendment Trivia Night fundraiser for New England Public Media, which has lost all of its federal funding, raising \$7,600 for our local independent radio station. It was a true community event, with Gill folks planning the program and cooking the dinner, the People's Pint providing a gathering space and beverages, radio personality Monte Belmonte joining in, and Senator Jo Comerford reading the trivia questions. Sixteen teams of 4-8 people competed and everyone had a great time. We all came away with a renewed appreciation of our freedoms.

Test your knowledge with this sampling of the trivia questions (with answers below):

1. Name four of the five rights given in the First Amendment.
2. How does the first amendment start?
 - a) Four score and seven years ago
 - b) We hold these truths
 - c) Congress shall make no law
 - d) Our government grants us
3. Who was exercising his first

amendment rights to free speech when he took a knee during the National Anthem?

- a) Colin Kaepernick.
 - b) LeBron James
 - c) Mohammed Ali
 - d) Harrison Butker
- 4.) True or false: The Supreme Court has made First Amendment rulings on everyday items such as license plates, beer labels, billboards, music lyrics and comics.
- 5) This song includes words about civil rights: "Yes an' how many years can some people exist, before they're allowed to be free? Yes an' how many times can a man turn his head, and pretend that he just doesn't see?"
- a) Turn, Turn, Turn
 - b) Masters of War
 - c) One Tin Soldier
 - d) Blowin' in the Wind
- 6) Which of these actions is NOT protected by the first amendment?

- a) Wearing frog costumes and protesting outside an ICE detention center
 - b) Campaign contributions by corporations
 - c) Students wearing black armbands in schools
 - d) Incitement to imminent lawless action
 - e) Publishing cartoons that ridicule the President and his administration.
- 7) Name the late politician and civil rights activist who encouraged us to protest and "get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America,"

Answers: 1) Freedom of Speech, Press, Religion, Assembly and Right to petition the government;

- 2) c; 3) a; 4) True; 5) d; 6) d; 7) John Lewis."

School News

From the Principal of Gill Elementary

We have had a very busy and productive fall here at Gill Elementary. We currently serve 116 students across seven classes, with most classes having 15 or more students.

I am pleased to report that the third-grade students were recently able to return to their classroom after the electrical fire that occurred on October 2nd. Our school custodian, Wayne Ekert, was instrumental in quickly extinguishing the blaze, which prevented a much more serious tragedy. On a different note, our annual Bonfire Night was a great success. We extend our sincere thanks to Gill Fire for overseeing the event and to everyone who donated pallets.

Our Farm to School program continues to flourish under the direction of Faith Rand and Sorrel Hatch. Although the garden has been put to rest for the winter, the program is still active. Students are continuing to sample garden-fresh vegetables and are beginning to plan for next spring's garden. We are fortunate to have such wonderful resources available to our school community.

Finally, I wanted to share some personal news: I will be retiring as Principal of Gill Elementary at the end of December. After 37.5 years as an educator, I am ready to begin a new adventure, though I will greatly miss the students. I have cherished my 3.5 years at



Gill Elementary. My last day with the students will be December 23rd. A new principal is scheduled to begin on January 1st and will be in place when everyone returns from the holidays. Thank you to everyone here in Gill for your continuous support of our little school. It is a great place.

Gill Elementary School Garden Club and Farm-to-School Initiative

Roughly a dozen enthusiastic students and their caregivers attended The Garden Club this fall. We met once a week after school to tend the gardens and learn about growing and eating our own delicious food. In addition, we had eight Garden Stewards from 5th and 6th grades join us weekly as part of a new afterschool program designed for students who are ready to take on more responsibility caring for our gardens and grounds. In an effort to connect our students to our local farming community, we took a walking field trip to Laughing Dog Farm where we herded goats, snuggled bunnies and tasted homegrown raspberries, kiwis and chestnuts. The entire school was treated to raspberry picking, generously donated by our neighbors at Upinngil Farm. As we approached Halloween, we sent every student home with a pie pumpkin donated from Bascom Hollow Farm. The garden has now been put to bed for the winter, but we will continue learning about farming and connecting our kids to the land throughout the winter with farm-based classroom activities!

Gill Elementary School Roof Project: Investing in Our Town's Future

The roof at Gill Elementary has reached the end of its useful life, and after years of patching and repairs, requires a full replacement. A reliable, weather-tight roof is essential not only for protecting classrooms and equipment, but also for ensuring that students and staff have a safe, comfortable place to learn every day.

The good news is that the Massachusetts School Building Authority will provide substantial financial support, which will significantly lower the cost to local taxpayers. However, the town would still need to contribute its share to complete the project. While Gill Elementary is used and operated by the Gill-Montague Regional School District, the building is owned by the Town, and the Town is responsible for major capital repairs. Because of the size of the investment, voters will be asked to approve the project in early 2026. Ahead of that vote, the Roof Committee and Select Board will host an information session to review the project's scope, expected costs, and timeline. Residents will have the chance to ask questions, understand how state funds offset local spending, and learn about the financial implications and desirability of replacing the roof during the summer of 2027. We encourage all residents to stay informed and take part in the upcoming conversations.

Gill Church

We would like to invite you to our Christmas Eve candlelight service beginning at 5:30pm in the beautiful and traditional setting of the Gill Church. We will be singing some of the most beloved carols and looking at the biblical account of the birth of Jesus. We also expect a (surprise) visit from the Moldovan youth as they go around the community caroling. We trust you will be blessed by the special time.

Gill Neighbors

Offering Help to Gill Seniors

We are a group of volunteers who give rides to appointments, pickup prescriptions, pick up pre-ordered groceries, deliver library books... Are you a senior who could use some neighborly help? Do you know of someone else who might? Would you be interested in becoming a driver?

Please call Emily Samuels at 413-863-9446 and leave a message

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The photo in the last issue was of the Mill Gas Station. Can you find this area in Gill?