

TOWN OF GILL

M A S S A C H U S E T T S



www.gillmass.org

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 16, 2009

Called to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Present

Nancy Griswold, Ann Banash, Leland Stevens, Gill Selectboard members; Tracy Rogers, Gill Administrative Assistant; Bob Dean, Franklin Regional Council of Governments; Dorothy Storrow, Ted Castro-Santos, Jenn Waldron, Kyle Maurer, Sue Sibley, Gill Commission for Education members; Sandy Brown, Joyce Philips, Sorrel Hatch, Valeria Smith, Gill Montague Regional School Committee members; Ken Rocke, Interim Superintendent of Gill Montague Regional School District; Claire Chang, Gill Finance Committee member; John Hanold, Montague Finance Committee Chair; Patricia Pruitt, Al Ross, Pat Allen, Montague Selectboard members; Frank Abbondanzio, Montague Town Administrator; Chris Mason, Montague Energy Committee member; Bob Tombs, Colleen Lilly, and Paul Nowill, Gill residents.

Review Minutes

The Selectboard unanimously approved the minutes of its March 2, 2009 meeting as written.

DOR Recommendations

Tabled until the next meeting.

Pre-Town Meeting

Tracy reported that the Commission for Education will be ready to present its findings on April 27 at 7:00 p.m. and has arranged for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Associate Commissioner, Jeff Wulfson, to attend a meeting that evening. The Commission wondered if a pre-town meeting information session could be held that same evening. The Board agreed it sounded like a good idea.

Sewer Commitment

The Board unanimously approved a sewer commitment for the bill dated March 17, 2009 totaling \$14,189.49.

Commission for Education

Dorothy (Doff) Storrow and Ted Castro-Santos presented the status of the Commission's findings thus far. Because certain legal actions require a vote at annual town meeting, the Commission is recommending to the Selectboard to put two articles on the annual town meeting warrant. The first article will request that the Gill Montague Regional School Committee draw up amendments to the District agreement that would allow Gill to leave the District. The Commission wishes to make clear that **this does not mean it is recommending that Gill leave the District**. It is the only mechanism in the regional school agreement, however, that would allow the Town to get answers to questions about leaving, such as how outstanding debt would be handled, etc.

A second article would request that voters create a Regional Planning Committee to explore joining another district or reorganizing the current district. This step is required by law if the Town were to pursue such actions.

Doff reported that Jeff Wulfson has indicated that the Gill Montague Regional School District is too small and must change, but he won't say how. What Gill does in the future depends in part on what Montague does. DESE is not in favor of Gill joining another district if that meant leaving Montague by itself. According to the current regional school agreement, Gill (by a vote of town meeting) may remove its elementary school from the District. However, a vote of both Gill and Montague's town meetings is necessary in order for Gill to remove its students from the middle/high school.

Doff reported that Gill becoming a smaller district, tuitioning its students elsewhere, or removing its elementary school from the District is not an option according to her initial conversations with Mr. Wulfson. However, Mr. Wulfson was not as strong in his statements when she spoke with him later.

Pat Allen asked if Montague should also place the same two articles on its annual town meeting warrant. Doff responded that only one town would need to place the first article, though it wouldn't hurt to have it on both town's warrants. It would be advisable to have Montague include the second article.

Ken Roche read an excerpt from the current regional agreement. Article IX, section A states that a vote to leave the district may be held during a special town meeting, not only an annual town meeting, therefore, the time pressure may not be as great as the Commission was thinking.

Ted left the meeting.

Energy Savings Contract (ESCO)

Tracy reported that Lynn Bassett had requested a meeting to discuss the ESCO project relative to school buildings, but she was not in attendance. Ken spoke on Lynn's behalf, questioning the timing of the ESCO project. With Gill considering leaving the district and all of the other changes the District is facing right now, perhaps it would be better to put

the project off to a more stable time. Sandy Brown asked if there was a sample contract to review. Bob Dean said he would forward that to Tracy to disseminate.

Chris Mason reported on a conversation the Montague Energy Committee had recently with Beth Greenblatt, the consultant FRCOG hired to assist the towns through the ESCO process. Beth said creative arrangements may be made to work through the financing options, as far as the District realizing the savings in the utility bills, but the towns taking on the debt directly. She said the towns could take on the debt and work out an arrangement for the District to pay the towns the savings in the utility bills or the debt and payments could be attached to each building as opposed to each owner. Ken reported that building costs per town could be reported separately, but that would require a change in the regional agreement.

The Selectboard, Tracy, Claire, Bob Tombs, and Valeria remained at the meeting; everyone else left.

COPS Hiring Recovery Program

Tracy presented information on a federal grant to hire an additional full-time police officer. The grant application is due 4/14. It would pay the entire salary and benefits of an officer at Gill's starting salary for three years, with the requirement that the Town keep the officer on for at least one additional year after the grant ends. Claire recommended putting a third of the amount that will be needed in the fourth year aside every year to ensure the Town can make the payments in the fourth year, which the Selectboard agreed was a good strategy.

Tracy reported that she left a message with the grantor's office to see if they would allow the grant to cover an officer shared between two or more towns, but has not received an answer yet. The Board instructed Tracy to work with Northfield to apply jointly to share an officer, if the grantor said it would be acceptable. Otherwise, Gill should apply alone. *Addendum: The grantor notified Tracy that they will not allow a joint application.*

Ann left the meeting.

Sewer Abatements

Tracy reported on the status of the water leak on Riverside in December. Ronnie determined that the water did enter the sewer system. She, and the water commissioners, recommended sending a sewer bill to the owner and allowing her to file for an abatement per the usual method. The Board agreed.

Tracy reported that in order to revert to the original abatement process with regards to filling pools, as the Board voted to do during its last meeting, a public hearing would be necessary since the process would need to be changed in the sewer regulations. The Board decided to postpone addressing the sewer regulations and instead instructed Tracy to research spinning off the sewer department into a joint department with the water department, as a separate entity from the Town.

FY10 Budget

Tracy reported that the House budget is expected to be released on April 15. Given that, she asked when the Board would like to try to schedule meetings with departments and committees regarding their budget requests. The Board suggested aiming for the last week in April, but working around tentative School Committee budget meetings.

Tracy presented a draft spreadsheet to share with Assoc. Comm. Wulfson at Tuesday night's meeting. The Board approved the document with the suggestion that Tracy use a 2.7% increase for the school budget figure.

Dedication of Annual Report

Tracy asked if the Board would like to dedicate the 2008 annual report to Ed Pogoda. Lee moved to dedicate the report to Ed. Nancy seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote. The Board suggested asking Tony Mathews to write it.

Home Depot Tax Exempt Registration Renewal

Tracy asked the Board to sign a renewal form to keep the Town's tax exempt status current with Home Depot. Nancy signed the form.

FY10 Diesel Bid

Tracy reported that the FY10 diesel bids are due back to the FRCOG on April 7. The companies only agree to hold the bid offer for three days, so there needs to be some mechanism for a decision to be made on the bid by April 10, and there is no Board meeting scheduled in that time frame. Lee made a motion to allow Tracy to make the decision. Nancy seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Dispatch MOU

Tracy presented a contract renewal from the State Police regarding the Town's arrangement as part of the regional dispatch center. She asked Chief Hastings to review the contract and he had no issues with it. Nancy signed the contract.

KENO To Go at Gill Mobil

Tracy presented a letter from the MA State Lottery Commission notifying the Board that Gill Mobil is qualified to apply for KENO To Go. The letter states that if the Board objects to Gill Mobil selling KENO To Go, it may send its objections in writing. The Board had no objections.

Claire, Bob Tombs, and Valeria left the meeting.

Purchase Orders

The Board approved the following purchase orders:

- € Highway Dept.
 - Filters for new truck, G&S Industrial Inc., \$301.52
 - Steel for sander repair, Franklin County Fabricators Inc., \$70.00
 - 12-volt battery for grease gun, Ribco Supply, \$72.34

- Steel toed work boots, Mick, Ed, George, up to \$150.00
- Balance of tractor payment, CNH Capital, \$1,545.76
- € Police Dept.
 - Brake pads for 2005 cruiser, FC Auto Parts,\$110.00
 - Rear rotors for 2005 cruiser, FC Auto Parts, \$70.00
- € Recreation Committee
 - Medallions, Dinns Bros., \$84.57
- € Library
 - Books and magazines, \$300.00
- € Fire Dept.
 - Manikin adapters, AED Superstore, \$120.00
 - Equipment repair and replacement, The Fire Store, \$1,040.91
 - Medical supplies, Bound Tree Medical, \$316.90
 - Medical supplies, Moore Medical, \$1,237.92
 - Ceiling fan for fire dept. bay, NESCO Electric Supply, \$84.50
- € Sewer Dept.
 - Computerized billing, CDS, \$134.90

Payroll and Bill Warrants

The Board approved payroll and bill warrant number 19.

Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tracy Rogers, Administrative Assistant.

Nancy A. Griswold, Selectboard Chair