

TOWN OF GILL

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



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SELECTBOARD/FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 16, 2009

Called to Order

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Present

Nancy Griswold, Ann Banash, Leland Stevens, Selectboard members; Tracy Rogers, Administrative Assistant; Tupper Brown, Claire Chang, Ronnie LaChance, Finance Committee members; Mitchell (Mickey) LaClaire, Sr., Highway Superintendent.

Highway Department

Mickey explained his FY2010 budget request. He stated that he could not reduce it to the 10% cut figure requested, but that he did provide a 6% cut budget. Level funding will be tough, but with ingenuity, he can make it work.

Following are some questions and answers from the discussion:

- How many miles of road do we have in Gill? *12 miles of dirt road, 22 miles oil and stone, 15 miles asphalt paved.*
- How long does oil and stone last? *Five years.*
- How much is currently in Chapter 90? *\$364,000, which includes the FY2010 appropriation.*
- How much Chapter 90 do you propose to use in FY2010? *Approximately \$115,250.*

Board of Assessors Chair Ray Purington joined the meeting.

- What impact would the 6% budget cut have? *Catch basins wouldn't be cleaned, fewer trees would be trimmed, plowing would happen less frequently.*
- How is the Center Cemetery work looking? *The Department will need to do more work this spring, but it will come in under the \$2,000 still left in the account.*
- What are you doing to work with other town highway departments? *The Department has been working with Bernardston and Northfield to share equipment and labor.*
- Why has the Chapter 90 balance always been kept so high? *Ann responded that it was to be able to pay for the expensive paving jobs. Mickey reported that Northfield was just quoted \$200,000/mile for paving in FY10.*

- What do you anticipate happening to petroleum product prices next year? *MassHighway is predicting that prices will remain high for a while still.*
- Please explain the Building Repair Account. *There are several maintenance and repair projects on town buildings that need to be addressed in the near future, such as repairing the town garage roof, replacing windows and the Riverside Municipal Building, and repointing the chimney at the Riverside Municipal Building. There has never been an account in the past to address these items.*
- How many miles of road have been paved over the past ten years? *Mickey will provide a count of the miles of oil and stone and asphalt paved roads for the past ten years.*

Mickey reported that the town garage budget for FY09 is in the red, due to the cost of heating oil being almost double what we estimated when creating the FY09 budget. He is currently paying town garage bills out of the highway budget, but other arrangements need to be made soon.

Mickey left the meeting.

Board of Assessors

Assessors' Assistant Lynda Hodsdon Mayo joined the meeting.

Ray handed out an explanation of items in the FY10 budget request.

Following are some questions and answers from the discussion:

- Is \$3,000 in the revaluation special article enough? *Yes, if it is also set aside in FY11. The board was originally not going to ask for the \$3,000 because of the financial straits of the town, but decided it would ultimately be irresponsible not to do so.*
- What is the \$400 request for training for? *Nancy needs to get certified and Lynda should take another course per DOR's recommendations. If Mayflower agrees to provide their services for a lesser price, it may cover the amount needed for both trainings (\$800). The Assessors will have a definitive answer on that in a couple of weeks.*

Firefighters Gene Beaubien, Ken Sears, Jason Edson, and Chris Goodhind joined the meeting.

- How is the situation with FirstLight going? *The FirstLight appeal is settled. Nancy praised Ray for the amount of work he put into making that happen, which saved the Town significant legal fees. The result of the appeal is that the Town lowered the valuation of much of FirstLight's land along the river and the value of the dam increased by only \$3 million, not \$5 million.*

Ray and Lynda left the meeting.

Fire Department

Following are some questions and answers from the discussion:

- What does the grant situation look like for FY10? *We're not sure if any of them will come through next year. We are in the process of applying for an \$87,344 Assistance to Firefighters grant with a 5% matching component to upgrade the SCBA units.*
- What happened with NMH purchasing a fire truck? *Ann responded that NMH offered to purchase a truck, but at the expense of the \$10,000 annual gift, which goes to provide the matching funds for fire department grants. The Selectboard declined their offer, deciding that the grants were more important at this time.*
- What capital needs does the department have? *The department will provide a list, include SCBA unites.*
- How many calls has the department been on this year? *Gene will get statistics to Ann.*

Everyone but the Selectboard and Tracy left the meeting.

Executive Session

Ann made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the Police Chief's contract, not to reconvene in open session. Lee seconded the motion. Ann voted to accept the motion; Lee voted to accept; Nancy voted to accept. The Board entered executive session at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tracy Rogers, Administrative Assistant.

Ann H. Banash, Selectboard Clerk