

TOWN OF GILL

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



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

May 26, 2009

Called to Order

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

Present

Nancy Griswold, Ann Banash, John Ward, Selectboard members; Tracy Rogers, Town Administrator; Claire Chang, Finance Committee member; Bruce Hunter, Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority.

CDBG

Bruce explained the CDBG program and what other projects the Town may be eligible to apply for. There are currently three housing units in Gill benefiting from the housing rehab program, which gives low- to moderate-income households up to \$35,000 in deferred loans to bring their homes up to building code.

The Board considered the idea of making the Riverside Municipal Building more handicap-accessible. CDBG funds can be used for design work or construction, but it would be advisable for the Town to fund a feasibility study first, which would cost approximately \$5,000 - \$6,000.

There was also discussion about making the library bathroom accessible if it isn't already. Bruce cautioned that the aisles between bookshelves might have to be widened if the Town pursued the bathroom issue.

Tracy will send a written request to the Authority by their June 5 deadline indicating that the Town is definitely interested in having their assistance in applying for housing rehab funds and is also considering applying for funds for handicap accessibility for the Riverside building. Bruce left the meeting.

Election of New Officers

Nancy made a motion to elect Ann as chair of the Board. John seconded the motion. Ann abstained from the vote. Nancy and John voted in favor and the motion passed.

Ann made a motion to elect John as clerk of the Board. Nancy seconded the motion. John abstained from the vote. Nancy and Ann voted in favor and the motion passed.

Nancy volunteered to be the Selectboard representative on the Personnel Committee.

Nancy resigned as the representative to the FRCOG. Ann can't serve as the representative since she already serves on the FRCOG's executive council. John volunteered to be the representative. Tracy will inform the FRCOG.

Review Minutes

Ann and Nancy voted to approve minutes from May 11 and 14 and from the May 14 executive session meetings as written. John abstained.

Release Executive Session Minutes

Nancy made a motion to release minutes from the executive sessions held on April 13, 16, and 27 and May 6 and 14. John seconded the motion and the motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

MassHighway Equipment

Tracy reported that she has been in contact with MassHighway to offer the Mariamante parcel as a place for the contractor working on the Gill-Montague bridge to place their equipment and field office. The bid opening is scheduled for June 30. Once the contractor is announced, Tracy will contact the company directly and make the offer. She will try to negotiate a flexible agreement in case the parcel is sold before construction is finished.

She asked the Board if she should offer the Riverside Municipal Building lot as an alternate site, since it is closer to the bridge. The Board felt it would not be a good match given the number of children who use the lot for recreational purposes and the amount of large equipment that will be moving through there.

Senior Center Director Hiring Committee

Tracy reported that Renee Jenkins was interested in serving on the hiring committee. Nancy made a motion to appoint Renee. John seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

James Diemand

Tracy explained that Mr. Diemand was ill and could not make tonight's meeting. She asked the Board if June 8 at 5:30 p.m. would be an acceptable time to reschedule. Town Counsel is available on that date. The Board agreed to reschedule as proposed.

FY10 Budget

Tracy reported that she received a request from the Conservation Commission today for approximately two hours of clerical help per week, which would total approximately \$1,000 for a year. The Board felt it important to include this request in the omnibus, which Tracy will do.

*Addendum: Tracy misquoted the Conservation Commission. It is requesting only two hours of help per **month**, not per **week**. This brings the estimated cost down to approximately \$336 for the year, including payroll taxes.*

Tracy reported that the Finance Committee is requesting a formal vote from the Board on the budget the Board will present to town meeting. The Board indicated its reluctance to vote on anything at this time, with state aid figures changing weekly.

Ann suggested perhaps going to town meeting with an unbalanced budget and planning to hold a special town meeting in the future when all numbers are known. If this were to take place, the Board would institute another spending freeze so departments wouldn't inadvertently overspend their tentative budgets.

Claire asked when the Board would like to meet jointly with the Finance Committee to discuss the budget. A tentative date of June 10 at 7:00 p.m. was agreed upon.

Zoning Board of Appeals Appointment

Tracy reported that Alyn Hastings was interested in serving on the Zoning Board of Appeals. Nancy made a motion to appoint Alyn. John seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Recognition of Timmie Smith and Leland Stevens

Ann suggested the Board hold an event to thank and recognize Timmie and Lee for their years of service to the Town. The Board agreed on holding a potluck gathering on June 16 at 5:00 p.m. Tracy will ask for contributions toward gifts.

Biomass Forum

Tracy reported that she has worked with Montague's town planner to arrange a forum for Gill and Montague residents. The forum will be held on June 4 at 7:00 p.m. in the Turners Falls High School. Madera Energy will have 30 minutes to present their case and the remaining 90 minutes will be a moderated question and answer period.

Special Town Meeting Warrant

The Board signed the warrant for the June 16 special town meeting.

Newsletter

Ann asked Collector-Treasurer Ronnie LaChance to join the meeting. Ann reported that the newsletter editors felt uncomfortable about printing the names of delinquent taxpayers. Ronnie agreed to include an insert then telling people their names would be printed in the newspapers as of a certain date. Ronnie left the meeting.

Municipal Energy

Tracy reported that she met with Ken Johnson of Municipal Energy Consulting Group, LLC, who is offering to assist the town in suing Western Mass. Electric Company for overcharges related to streetlights. The consultant would be paid only if the town received any refund from WMECO, and would charge 25% of that refund. The Board asked Tracy to ask for references and some details on former cases.

Gill Elementary School Drawings

Tracy presented a collection of drawings made by the Gill 5th grade class. The students were asked to use their imaginations to turn musical artwork into visual art. The Board asked Tracy to send a thank you letter to the students.

Skip's Roadside Diner

Tracy reported that the owner of Skip's had turned in all the appropriate paperwork in order to renew his permit in the spring, but that she had inadvertently forgotten to prepare the actual permit for the Board to sign. Nancy made a motion to grant the permit. John seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Gift for Bunny Caldwell

Tracy reported that Bev Demars had asked her to look into having Gill and Montague officials provide a gift for the outgoing senior center director, Bunny Caldwell. Montague has answered that they will contribute as individuals. The Board concurred.

Bonding for Tracy

Tracy asked the Board if it felt she should be bonded since she does take it quite a bit of money throughout the week, especially when selling trash stickers in bulk to vendors. She also took in money, including cash, when the Collector-Treasurer was on vacation last fall. The Board agreed it would be wise to obtain bonding.

Trash Sticker Vendors

Tracy reported that the Mobil station has repeatedly run out of trash stickers since new management took over. Whose responsibility is it to make sure they're stocked? There are also reports that some of the clerks don't even know about the stickers when customers ask for them. The Board asked Tracy to talk with the new manager and see if he could make things work more smoothly, including making sure all of his clerks know about trash stickers.

Letter from Memorial Committee

Tracy presented a letter from the Memorial Committee describing the success of the Memorial Day ceremonies.

Purchase Orders

Tracy presented a purchase order from the Fire Chief for \$526 to purchase two new helmets. The Board approved the purchase order on the contingency that there is a good reason for the purchase, such as two new members have joined or two old helmets have broken. The Board agreed to leave it up to Tracy's discretion whether to release the purchase order once the Chief provides details.

Tracy presented a purchase order from the Tax Collector for \$798.60 to purchase pre-stamped windowed envelopes in order to send out tax bills. The Board approved.

Biomass Plant

John asked if the Board would like to form a statement on its position on the biomass plant in Greenfield. Members felt they didn't have enough information yet to form an opinion on the matter.

Board of Health Secretary Randy Crochier joined the meeting. Randy reported that our regional health inspector will be involved in biomass hearings on the Town's behalf. He expressed concern that many of the plants built in Maine were sold to another company after construction was complete. Those second companies were burning other matter, such as medical waste. Randy left the meeting.

Payroll and Bill Warrants

The Board approved payroll and bill warrant number 24.

Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tracy Rogers, Town Administrator.

John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk