

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 21, 2009

Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Present

Ann Banash, Nancy Griswold, and John Ward, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Interim Administrative Assistant; Tracy Rogers, Town Administrator

Baystate Health Ambulance

Fire Chief Gene Beaubien introduced Bill Travis of Baystate Health Ambulance (BHA). Travis informed the Board that the State has recently approved a Service Zone plan that identifies BHA as the Town's primary ambulance service, and the Fire Department as the primary emergency responder. BHA would like to formalize its service agreement with Gill, and presented a 3-year agreement for the Board to consider. The agreement is at no cost to the Town. Beaubien expressed his thanks to Travis and BHA for the excellent service they provide to the Town.

The Board will discuss the agreement at a future meeting, after Town Counsel has reviewed it. Travis left the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Fire Department Purchase Order

Beaubien explained the \$1,209.90 purchase order for a replacement gas meter, charger, and calibration gas. The existing meter cannot be maintained or serviced after 2010, and service costs are around \$700 per year. The meter is kept on the first fire truck that responds (Engine 2), and is used to check carbon monoxide levels. It is also used to check building environments before allowing firefighters into a fire zone without air packs.

A motion to sign the purchase order was made by Griswold, seconded by Ward, and voted unanimously in the affirmative. The purchase order was then signed.

Beaubien also reported that the dump valve on Engine 3 had recently failed, and that around \$400 was spent to repair it.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Griswold, seconded by Ward, to approve the minutes from 11/9, 12/7, 12/14, and 12/16. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Energy Audit

Purington reported that auditors associated with the Siemens Building Technologies Investment Grade Audit were in Gill on 12/14 and 12/16 and evaluated the building envelopes (attics, basements, walls, windows, insulation) and lighting in the Town Hall, Slate Memorial Library, Highway/Public Safety Building, and Riverside Municipal Building. The Board asked Purington to contact Roland Butzke of Siemens to find out why the Gill School was not included, and to have him send the Town a signed copy of the IGA agreement.

Banash and Purington reported being contacted by Jessica Bergman with SmartPower, who requested an opportunity to make a presentation before the Board. Bergman will be invited to the 1/4 meeting. The Energy Commission will also be invited.

Giving Thanks

The Board expressed their deepest gratitude and appreciation to outgoing Town Administrator Tracy Rogers for all she has done for the Town during her 2+ years of service. She will be sincerely missed.

Assessor Re-qualification

Griswold reported that she has passed DOR's Course 101 for Assessors, and is again qualified to act and vote on all matters in her role as an elected assessor.

Assessor Peter Conway joined the meeting.

FY2010 Tax Classification Public Hearing with Board of Assessors

The FY2010 tax classification hearing with the Board of Assessors was opened at 5:00 p.m. Purington, as Chair of the Board of Assessors, stated that his Board recommends the Selectboard vote a residential factor of 1, which results in a single tax rate. There were no comments or questions. A motion to adopt a residential factor of 1 was made by Banash, seconded by Ward, and voted in the affirmative. Griswold abstained from the vote. The tax classification hearing was closed at 5:03 p.m.

DOR FY2010 Tax Bill Mailing Extension

Collector/Treasurer Veronica LaChance presented to the Board a bulletin from the DOR that explains a recently signed local option legislation that extends the time for mailing FY2010 actual tax bills. If the local option is accepted, the Town has until January 30, 2010 to mail the actual tax bills and still have an April 1 due date for payments and abatement applications. Without the local option, there is a December 31, 2009 mailing deadline, and bills mailed after that would be due May 1, 2010. Accepting the local option will improve cash flow for the Town.

Griswold made a motion, seconded by Ward, that the Town of Gill accept Chapter 183 of the Acts of 2009 to extend the time for mailing the actual tax bills for fiscal year 2010 until January 30, 2010. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

LaChance also reported that collections from the Preliminary tax bills stand at 94.35%, a much higher figure than anyone expected, considering the economic conditions. She also explained that payment plans are available for those who haven't paid.

Hiring Process – Administrative Assistant

Purington, who is an applicant for the permanent position of Administrative Assistant, left the meeting.

The Board discussed the process and timeline for reviewing applications and conducting interviews.

Purington rejoined the meeting. The Board asked that meetings be posted for 1/6 at 4:30 p.m. and 1/11 at 4:30 p.m. (times are tentative).

Financial Audit

On behalf of the Financial Management Team, Purington reported their recommendation that the low bidder, Scanlon & Associates, be hired to conduct the financial audit of the Town for the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2009 (FY09). The Team found both bidders (Melanson Heath was the other) to be well-qualified, but noted that Scanlon's lower price includes a Single Audit process as well as the GASB 34 Reporting Model, both of which are a more rigorous level of audit.

A motion was made by Griswold, seconded by Ward, to accept the bid from Scanlon & Associates, and to contract with them for the amount of \$12,000. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Management Consultants

The Board discussed the three proposals submitted to conduct a needs assessment of the Town's police, fire, and highway departments, to review the governing structure of the fire department, and to make recommendations on adding several elected and appointed positions to the Town's wage scale. Two of the firms were interviewed during the first round of proposals, and the third firm, Human Resources Services, Inc. was interviewed on 12/14.

A motion was made by Griswold, seconded by Ward, to award the contract to Human Resources Services, Inc. in the amount of \$8,000. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. The Board directed Purington to prepare the contract, obtain a letter from the Town Accountant that affirms to HRS the availability of funding, and to schedule an orientation meeting to begin the project.

Tupper Brown, Chair of the Finance Committee joined the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

FY2011 Budget Process

Brown, on behalf of the Finance Committee, proposed that Town departments prepare three budget scenarios for FY2011: level-funded, level minus 5%, and level minus 10%. He also recommended that departments make their budget presentations at a joint meeting between the Selectboard (SB) and the Finance Committee (FC), as was done last year. He suggested that once the Board and Finance Committee receive the various budgets, both groups furnish the departments with written questions, and that the departments then respond in writing.

Brown proposed the following timeline for the budget process:

- Feb. 1 – Department budgets received by SB & FC.
- Feb. 15 – SB & FC submit budget questions in writing to the departments.
- Mar. 15 – Departments respond in writing to SB & FC questions.
- Apr. 12 (week of) – SB & FC meet jointly with departments to review budgets.
- May 1 – Budgets completed.

Banash agreed to try to have department budgets for 2/1, but noted that it may not be possible to give departments their 6-month spending figures for FY2010 until mid-January or later. She also feels there are too many unknowns with the state's figures to expect a completed budget for 5/1. However, Brown's timeline can serve as a starting point.

Banash reported that there are indications that the Town's health insurance premiums for FY2011 will only be increasing 7%, which is favorable news.

Joint Selectboard/Finance Comm. Letter to DESE Commissioner

Brown discussed with the Board a letter he wrote for the Finance Committee and Selectboard to Mitchell Chester, the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The letter highlights the structural deficit in the Gill Montague Regional School District's FY2010 budget, and urges the Commissioner to convene a meeting of representatives from his office, the District, and the two Towns.

A motion was made by Griswold, seconded by Ward, that the Board jointly sign with the Finance Committee a letter to DESE Commissioner Chester. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Banash and Brown signed the letter on behalf of the Selectboard and Finance Committee, respectively.

IRS Standard Mileage Rate for 2010

Purinton reported that the IRS mileage rate for business miles driven will be 50 cents per mile, effective January 1, 2010. He recommended the Board adopt this new, lower rate for the Town. A motion was made by Ward, seconded by Griswold, to adopt the IRS rate for 2010. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Sewer Abatement

The Board, acting as Sewer Commissioners, reviewed an application for abatement of sewer taxes from Jeff Suprenant. A motion was made by Griswold, seconded by Ward,

to grant Suprenant an abatement of sewer taxes in the amount of \$11.74. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Warrant for Special State Election

The Board signed five copies of the warrant for the Special State Election to be held on January 19, 2010 to elect a Senator to the United States Senate.

2010 Class I, II, and III Motor Vehicle Licenses

The Board signed renewals of nine motor vehicle licenses, which will now expire on January 1, 2011. Purington noted that Fred Chase II is not renewing his license, and that Robert Higgins of Atlantic Wholesale did not submit an application for renewal.

Receiving Thanks

Banash read a note from Gill 6th grade student Fallyn Adams thanking the Board for its involvement earlier this year in the 6th Grade's field trip to Town Hall, the explanation of various roles and duties of town government, and the mock town meeting for the students.

Emergency Repair at RMB

Purington reported that the burner motor at the Riverside Municipal Building failed sometime on 12/12, and that Mackin Fuel performed the \$600 repair. The Board asked that the Highway Department check that the building temperature alarm is functioning properly, and that a letter be sent to Four Wind School principal Steve Hussey thanking him for detecting the problem, and asking that in the event of future emergencies, he notify the Town first.

Energy Commission Appointment

Purington reported that Mountain Road resident Joseph Lafleur, a 17-year old student at the Franklin County Technical School, has volunteered to serve on the Energy Commission. Claire Chang, Chair of the Energy Commission, happened to be in the audience, and read Lafleur's letter of interest to the Board. Stating they would be "thrilled to have him," Griswold made a motion to appoint Lafleur. The motion was seconded by Ward, and the vote was a unanimous and enthusiastic Yes.

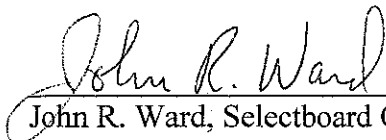
Warrant #13

The Board reviewed and signed Warrant #13. The Board noted a 20-cent error in a payment to Cintas, and asked for that check to be held for correction.

Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Interim Administrative Assistant.



John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk

