

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 29, 2010

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m.

Present: Nancy Griswold and John Ward, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant

Via Telephone: Ann Banash, Selectboard member (did not participate in any votes)

Guests: David Detmold, Montague Reporter; Claire Chang

Approval of Minutes: Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to approve the minutes of 3/15 and 3/25 as written. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Timeline for Annual Town Meeting: The Board discussed and approved the timeline for the 2010 Annual Town Meeting, as outlined on the Agenda. Annual Town Meeting will be Monday, June 21st at 7:00 p.m.

GMRSD Financial Stability Advisory Group & Hampshire/Franklin Municipal Conference: John reported on the 3/25 meeting of the Advisory Group, at which was presented two possible scenarios to address the funding gap between G-M budget increases and projected available revenue. One scenario makes no use of the towns' stabilization funds, and has an estimated \$1.2 Million revenue gap by FY15. The other has a reduced school budget and uses stabilization funds and slightly more E&D funds, and closes the revenue gap by FY15. There did not appear to be a clearly defined next step, and no future meetings were scheduled that evening.

Ray reported on Senator Rosenberg's Hampshire/Franklin Municipal Conference held on March 27th. The collective opinion of the various state officials who spoke is that the economy seems to be starting to improve, but at a very slow pace. Budgets for FY11 will be tough, as indicated by the 4% cut to local aid, and budgets for FY12 look even tougher, with a \$2.5 Billion gap between expected revenue and spending levels. The financial picture gets much, much worse if the November ballot question passes and the Sales Tax rate is reduced from 6.25% to 3%. At the end of the conference the Franklin County School Committee Caucus gave a report of its activities. They continue to meet monthly and are implementing collaborative and cooperative cost-saving measures over time. They will hold an Education Summit on November 6th, and agreed to meet with the Franklin County Selectmen's Association in the near future to discuss cost-saving options that could be implemented in time to impact FY11 budgets.

HRS Police/Fire/Highway Study: The Board set Tuesday, April 27th at 6:00 p.m. as the date for Sandy Stapczynski of Human Resources Services to present the results of the management study of the Police, Fire, and Highway departments. This will be a posted meeting of the Selectboard, and the departments and employees will be invited to attend. A separate, employees-only presentation is not planned at this time. The Board will meet Wednesday, April 28th to conduct its regular business.

Gill Elementary School Water Well: Ray reported that Mass. Rural Water Association did not detect any leaks during their visit on 3/19. It's possible that water from inside the electrical conduit might be finding its way into the well water, so that will be addressed. On a related note, the Town has been asked to pay a bill from Safewaters Environmental for \$900 for the additional testing related to last year's problems.

ECEBG Grant & ESCO Investment Grade Audit (IGA): The contract with the Commonwealth for the \$150K grant was signed at the Board's 3/25 meeting. The energy audit of Gill Elementary's lighting and boiler will be conducted on March 30th.

5:00 p.m. Gene Beaubien and Jason Edson from the Fire Department joined the meeting.

Fire Department Matters: Gene reported that the Fire Department has applied for waivers from Mass Highway for the 5th St. bridge over the canal in Turners Falls. The bridge's weight limit has recently been decreased, and waivers are needed if Gill's fire trucks are to cross the bridge to provide mutual aid at the Franklin Regional Housing Authority or Southworth paper mill buildings.

Gene also reported that the Sheffield School is continued to be studied as a location for a regional emergency shelter. If the various towns and agencies all get on board with the idea, the next step will be to approach Homeland Security for funding to buy a generator to supply the shelter with full electrical power. If the shelter is established, when activated, any expenses incurred would be paid by the participating towns, but MEMA and/or FEMA reimbursement is likely.

The Board of Engineers has decided that the Fire Department's Junior Firefighters (ages 14-16 and 16-18) will be now be called Volunteers, and will not have pagers. The B.o.E. is also working to establish more of an educational component for the Volunteers.

There has been no word on the FEMA grant that the Fire Department applied for last April. The application was for air packs. In this year's grant the F.D. will apply for funding for a new brush truck.

Gene asked the Board to approve 6 purchase orders, all over \$500, for various items that are part of the Department's approved budget for FY10. Ray and the Board questioned whether any of the purchases might be safely delayed until after the Town receives the management study report from HRS. While disagreeing that the purchases should be delayed, Gene did allow that the four P.O.s to Firematic Supply (4 sets firefighter turnout gear for \$9,200; 1 hydrant assist valve for \$1,300; 400 feet of 1-3/4" attack hose for \$975; and 4 air bottles for \$3,840) could be delayed, but are a vital part of the department's replacement schedule. The P.O.s to Industrial Protection Service (annual service on jaws and pump, \$1,000) and Bulldog Fire Apparatus (pump testing & maintenance on Engines 2&3, \$1,000) are more time sensitive, and should be approved to allow the pump testing to be performed before the Boat Ramp opens for the season.

Nancy made a motion, seconded by John, to approve the P.O.s to Industrial Protection Service and Bulldog Fire Apparatus. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Gene asked John if he would be willing to attend one of the Department's meetings to talk about rooftop solar systems and any special considerations for safely fighting fires in buildings that have them. John will research the topic and set up a date.

Lapachinski Letter of Resignation: Ray read a letter of resignation from part-time/reserve Police Officer Peter Lapachinski, who has taken a full-time position with the Town of Montague. The Board accepted his resignation with regret, and directed Ray to send a letter expressing the Board's thanks.

FRCOG Study of Dispatch Service: The FRCOG is applying for a grant to fund a study of dispatch services across Franklin County. They have asked Selectboards across the county to send letters in support of their application. The Board expressed unanimous support for the application and signed a letter to that effect.

Census Posters: Ray noted that Town Hall is proudly displaying four posters that explain the importance of the 2010 US Census. Four students from Gill Elementary's 6th grade made the posters as part of a unit on the census.

Highway Bids & Purchase Orders: Mick LaClaire presented the bids for Catch Basin Cleaning and Street Sweeping. John made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to award Street Sweeping to J.W. Cotton (the recommended vendor and low bidder at \$108/hour) and Catch Basin Cleaning to New England Basin Cleaners (the recommended vendor and low bidder at \$130/hour). The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

The Board also signed a purchase order for \$580 to cover the cost of two new "Men Working" signs that comply with new roadwork safety regulations.

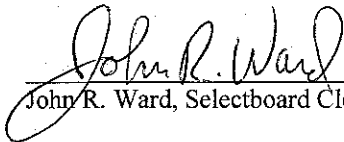
Cemetery Fencing: Ray reported that a West Gill Road resident has offered to supply a wrought iron fence to go along the roadside edge of the West Gill Cemetery. The resident has been referred initially to the Cemetery Commission and Highway Superintendent.

The business portion of the meeting concluded at 6:10 p.m.

Warrant #20: The Board reviewed and signed Warrant #20.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.



John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk