

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING MINUTES May 13, 2010

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

Finance Committee: Colleen Sculley, Claire Chang, Tupper Brown, Ronnie LaChance, Timmie Smith, Lee Stevens, Alden Booth, Jim Poulsen

Others Present: Randy Crochier; Alyn Hastings; Bob Hunter; Chris Redmond, Marty Yarmac

Police Department: David Hastings, Police Chief, presented his requested budget for FY11, noting that the budget has the same bottom line as FY10. Because Community Policing grant money is no longer received from the state, he has reduced the budget for part-time officers in order to cover necessary operating expenses once funded by the grant. He explained that if 5% or 10% budget cuts become necessary, all of his cuts would come from further reductions in the part-time officer line.

Corrections were noted for Ray's police budget spreadsheet – that fuel should be \$10,700 (not \$8,800) and part-time officers should be \$15,643.14 (not \$17,543.14).

The Chief pointed out that Gill does not provide guns to its part-time officers, and does not have a clothing/equipment line large enough to supply bulletproof vests for its two full-time officers. Vests are good for 5 years; his expires in February 2011, and the Sergeant's in May 2011. The Sergeant wears a vest paid for and issued by Deerfield, where the Sergeant works part-time. The Chief has applied for a Federal grant for four vests. If received, the grant would cover 50% of the \$2800 cost for four vests.

Timmie raised a concern that the Town does not properly fund equipment, weapons, and uniforms for its police.

The Chief also explained that a weapons trade-in and upgrade for his gun and the Sergeant's would cost a total of \$727, including a holster for the Chief.

There was general discussion about vests and their expected life, and what guidelines might govern their replacement. The Chief was asked to provide information that shows a 5-year life for bulletproof vests.

For clothing and uniforms, the Chief stated that in total over the past 8 years the Gill has paid \$517 for his needs and \$1,400 for the Sergeant's. In the surrounding towns of Bernardston, Northfield, and Erving, full-time officers receive a \$500 uniform allowance annually, and part-time officers receive \$150, \$100, and "as needed" respectively.

Timmie recommended including in the FY11 budget \$1500 for vests, \$727 for weapons, \$600 for part-time officer uniforms (\$150x4), and \$1000 for full-time officer uniforms (\$500x2). Tupper stated he was inclined to agree with Timmie.

Tupper asked what policing activities are not being performed due to a lack of funds. The Chief answered that we are generally in good shape, equipment-wise, but that a cruiser will need to be replaced soon. What the Town is lacking is adequate funds for shift coverage. There are many hours when the Chief is on call.

In order to provide proper shift coverage the Chief would like a total of \$30,000 for part-time officers. Proper coverage includes daytime and evening shifts when the Chief and Sergeant are not scheduled to work and coverage during vacations, court cases, and possibly during major investigations. Other police chiefs in the area have told the Chief that their towns will no longer provide coverage to Gill since we can't reciprocate at the same level. It was pointed out that the State Police could provide coverage, but then was also pointed out that the State Police is understaffed, covers a much larger territory, and their response time would be slow, if they responded at all.

At 7:20pm everyone agreed to take a break from discussing the Police budget, and switch to the Recreation Committee as they were scheduled for 7:10pm.

Recreation Committee: Deb Loomer reviewed a detailed handout of sport-by-sport expenses and fee income. Deb explained that there will not be a Red Sox trip this year, as their Revolving Fund needs to build up a larger balance. There were very few questions, and Committee was thanked for their hard work, successful programs, and for their financial turnaround from last year.

Police Department, part 2: Police budget discussions resumed at 7:30 p.m. Ann asked about the age of the cruisers, and if a leased vehicle was an option for next year. The Chief drives a 2004 Explorer with 74,000 miles, the Sergeant drives a 2005 Crown Victoria, and the 2008 Crown Victoria has 48,000 miles and is shared by the part-time officers.

When asked about the future of Community Policing grants, the Chief answered he does not expect that program to come back in the foreseeable future. There are no other similar grants available. Community Policing money was used to purchase the Town's last several cruisers.

If a new cruiser is purchased or leased, it likely would be a Ford Taurus, and would become the Chief's vehicle. The 4WD 2004 Explorer would be used by the Highway Department, but would still be outfitted as a police vehicle and could be used as a wintertime cruiser. The oldest cruiser, a 1999 Blazer currently used by the Highway Department, would be traded in or sold.

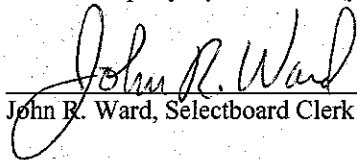
The Chief was asked about callout activity. He gave examples of recent callouts, and noted there have been 33 callouts this fiscal year, totaling \$4,236.71 in callout pay. There have also been 744 on-call hours amounting to approximately \$7,750.

The discussion of the Police Department budget ended at 8:30 p.m. Because of the late hour, it was agreed that the presentation of the Treasurer/Collector's budget would be done at the next budget meeting.

Ray was asked to invite Superintendent Ladd, Lynn Bassett, and the School Committee (especially the Gill reps) to present the GMRSD budget either June 9th or 10th at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.


John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk

Claire Chang, Finance Committee Secretary