

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING MINUTES May 19, 2010

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Selectboard: Ann Banash, Randy Crochier and John Ward, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant

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

Others Present: Nancy Griswold; Peter Conway; Lynda Hodsdon Mayo

Treasurer/Tax Collector: Ronnie LaChance, Treasurer and Tax Collector, presented FY11 budgets for both positions. She explained that expenses have increased, resulting in higher budget requests; and that she doesn't see any place to make cuts.

The Deputy Tax Collector has notified Ronnie that he is going up on his fees. She will meet with him next week to review the proposed increase. On the Tax Collector side, the annual fee for the Muniware software has increased by \$119, and the increase is non-negotiable. Ideally, we should investigate getting different software that will better automate the link between the Assessor's data and that of the Tax Collector.

As for supplies, Ronnie needs 15 plastic storage bins to keep records in (5 others have been donated), and also needs a new rubber stamp to date-stamp payments.

Timmie offered her opinion that the Town ought to increase the salaries for the elected positions of Tax Collector, Treasurer, and Town Clerk.

Ronnie asked to have the Treasurer and Tax Collector salaries increased to match a position on Grade 7 of the wage scale. She noted that this is in line with the recommendation made by the consultants from Human Resources Services earlier this year. She listed a number of her accomplishments since becoming Tax Collector: has sold 3 tax title properties, has reduced the number of tax title properties from 10 when she started the job down to 2 today; has 4 delinquent taxpayers on successful payment plans; has recovered more than \$20,000 in back taxes during the last 4 years, and has one more property that will be starting tax-taking proceedings.

Ronnie also asked that the proposal to construct office walls in Town Hall be given funding this year. Having a real office for the Treasurer/Collector would mean improved security, especially when handling cash tax payments, and would provide greater privacy. With the current wide-open space, it's difficult to have private discussions with taxpayers about personal situations. Overflow noise from other offices and Town Hall visitors can make it hard to concentrate. Lastly, the walls could improve energy efficiency, as the offices might be better heated and space heaters won't need to be used.

General Discussion of Budget Topics: The meeting agenda contained a numbered list of 13 budget-related topics that were discussed until the meeting adjourned. For item 1 (FY10 Budget Adjustments), it was noted that both items would be articles on the warrant for Annual Town Meeting. Items 2 and 3 (Mariamante Loan and Building

Maintenance Account) were presented for informational purposes. Items 4 – 7 (Personnel, Police, Fire, and Highway) will be discussed on Thursday, May 20th.

Item 6 (Fire Needs) was briefly discussed. The Fire Department will be asked to provide more details about the type of new fire truck they are asking for. Is it 4-wheel-drive, and will they be able to get to where they need to go? Ray was asked to find out if Town Meeting needs to vote to accept the pickup truck that is available at no cost as surplus equipment from a federal or state agency. (It was later determined that the Selectboard could accept the pickup truck on behalf of the Town.)

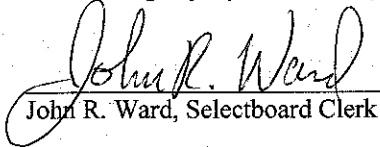
For item 8 (GMRSD), it was suggested that the school district's assessment be its own article, as it has been in recent years. Ray noted that the assessment for the Franklin County Technical School is included in the Omnibus budget, also following past tradition. School officials will be meeting with the Selectboard and Finance Committee on June 9th at 6pm. Ray will ask that they plan a 10-15 minute presentation that outlines the fiscal position of the district, how they arrived at their current budget, their assumptions on revenues, and the effect of DESE's involvement in the district. They should also discuss the current status of their budget process and projections, if any, for next year.

On the topic of school budgets, Ray was asked to find out if the Tech's per-student cost is in line with that of similar vocational schools.

Item 9 (Capital Planning) will be discussed on Thursday. Item 10 (Building Needs) – the list of potential projects was reviewed. Items 11 (Assessors Needs) and Item 13 (Available Funds) were also reviewed.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.


John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk

Claire Chang, Finance Committee Secretary