

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING MINUTES STRETCH CODE PUBLIC HEARING PRE-TOWN MEETING *June 15, 2010*

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

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

Finance Committee: Claire Chang, Tupper Brown, Timmie Smith, Leland Stevens, Colleen Sculley

(Note: In the following votes, if a motioner and seconder are not listed, it is because the names were inadvertently not recorded while taking notes of the meeting.)

The Finance Committee voted 5 in favor, none opposed, to recommend Article 4 (Revolving Funds).

The Finance Committee voted 5 in favor, none opposed, to recommend Article 6 (Amending FY10 GMRSD assessment).

The Finance Committee voted 5 in favor, none opposed, to recommend Article 7 (Salaries of the several officers of the Town).

The Finance Committee voted 5 in favor, none opposed, to recommend Article 8 (Omnibus Budget, with a total of \$1,327,359.45).

After a motion from Claire that was seconded by Timmie, the Finance Committee voted 3 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention to recommend Article 19 (Replacement Body for Highway truck). It was noted that 3 other members of the Finance Committee are absent tonight.

It was asked that articles 25-27 be reviewed to be certain the wording is legally proper. It was decided by consensus that it will be asked that Town Meeting take those articles out of order, and address 27 first, and 25 last.

The Selectboard and Ray (who was taking the minutes) left at 6:25pm to approve and sign an Agricultural Preservation Restriction on approximately 31 acres of land on Main and Boyle Roads, granted by Richard French and Emily Samuels to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Board did not sign as co-holders of the APR as it could not be determined if Town Meeting had ever granted either a specific or blanket authorization.

The Selectboard and Ray rejoined the meeting at 6:50pm.

Claire Chang, as Chair of the Energy Commission, opened the Public Hearing on the proposed Stretch Code Bylaw. She explained that if the bylaw is passed, voluntary compliance with the Stretch Code will begin on July 1, 2010, and enforced compliance begins on January 1, 2011. It is likely the State will enforce some version of the Stretch Code statewide in 2012. Presently there are 37 communities that have passed the Stretch Code; none are known to have turned it down.

In response to a question about a change in inspection costs, it was answered that building inspection costs would not change. However, there would be an added cost for an inspection by the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) program. Some of these added costs might be covered by the Energy Star program.

Someone asked if the Stretch Code will end up becoming like Title 5 is for septic systems – that homeowners could be required to bring a house up to code energy-wise before it is sold. It was answered that current law does not require this.

Someone asked if the Stretch Code applies to renovations, and if so, how large a renovation before the code applies.

Someone asked what benefit the Town receives by passing the Stretch Code. Answer: The primary advantage is it allows the Town to meet one of the requirements to become certified as a Green Community, and to become eligible for grants.

There was a lengthy discussion about By-Right Siting requirements of the Green Communities Act. The next step will be for the Energy Commission to meet with the Planning Board at their July 1st meeting.

Question: How much will the Stretch Code add to construction costs for a new home? Answer: Between 3-5%.

Question: Are any local banks factoring energy efficiency and reduced utility costs into their approval process for a home loan? Answer: Some are talking about it.

A concern was raised that for someone doing their own renovations, it might be confusing to deal with all the Stretch Code requirements.

The Public Hearing was closed at 7:50pm.


The pre-town meeting started with a lengthy discussion of the three warrant articles that propose changing the positions of Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Town Clerk from elected to appointed. Some felt that the articles should be addressed by Town Meeting early in the first night of the meeting. Several possible scenarios for re-arranging the order of the articles were discussed, but no compromise was reached. It will be left to the voters to decide.

There was also discussion about the number of towns that have those three positions as elected and the number with them as appointed. The most recent FRCOG survey shows 4 towns with appointed Town Clerks and 21 with elected. For the Tax Collector, 15 appointed and 11 elected. For the Treasurer, 15 appointed and 8 elected.

There was a general discussion of town finances for next year, the school budget, and the impact on this year's budget if the school committee reduces their budget in order to strike a compromise with Montague. It was proposed that any reduction to Gill's assessment be voted into Stabilization.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.


Kandy P. Crochier, Selectboard Clerk

Claire Chang, Finance Committee Secretary