

TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 6, 2010

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:30pm.

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

Others Present: Rick James, Pam Lester, Claire Chang, Beth Greenblatt, Ronnie LaChance, Nancy Griswold, and David Detmold

Report from Energy Commission: Claire Chang (Chair) and Pam Lester from the Energy Commission presented their Commission's recommendations for an Energy Savings Performance Contract between the Town and Siemens Industry, Inc. Claire summarized the 4-years-long process to get to this point, and explained that the underlying principle is to make energy efficiency improvements to town-owned building and pay for those improvements using money saved on annual heating oil and electricity costs.

Annual Town Meeting approved up to \$430,000 for a project covering five town buildings, but the scope of work has been narrowed and refined and is now limited to just the Gill Elementary School. For the other town buildings, the potential energy improvements would not generate enough savings to pay for the work.

The recommended project has a total price of \$275,484, of which \$150,000 is paid by an EECBG grant the town has received, and \$4,250 is paid from lighting rebates from WMECO. The Town will need to borrow the \$121,234 balance, but the loan payments will be fully covered by energy savings over the 20-year term of the loan. A low-interest USDA loan is being investigated by the Treasurer, Administrative Assistant, and Energy Commission.

Beth Greenblatt, the Town's grant-funded technical advisor for the project, explained that the project budget includes \$4,000 for costs related to issuing bond and other financing costs. She has asked the Mass. Dept. of Energy Resources (DOER) to add financial advisor services to her contract; if the request is approved she would have advisors from UniBank available to answer financing questions.

Beth also noted that she has already met with the person who will be the Siemens project manager for our contract, and is certain that this next phase will be a better Siemens experience than we've had so far! Siemens has recently signed similar contracts with Leverett and Deerfield, and contracts with Orange and Charlemont are expected soon.

Although Gill's EECBG grant has an "expiration date" of June 30, 2011, Beth has already discussed this with DOER, and is certain that an extension into FY12 is possible. DOER is aware of the delays we have experienced and the school calendar impact on our project. They are most interested in having good, well-planned energy conservation projects take place. In response to a question about funds remaining in Gill's grant for her technical advisor services, Beth estimated that \$15,000 remains of our original \$25,000 allocation. She will help facilitate the construction phase of the project, especially with respect to communication between all parties, and keeping everyone on (or aware of) schedule.

Although the other town-owned buildings are not currently part of this energy conservation project, if other grant funds became available, they could be. A Phase 2 of the Energy Management Services Agreement (EMSA) could be added later.

The project's performance guarantee from Siemens costs \$2,000 annually (plus 3% increase yearly). Under state law the Town may not terminate the guarantee; however, the Town may terminate the EMSA at any time after 3 years. Once the EMSA has been ended, Siemens is no longer bound by the guarantee. The guarantee is based on a combination of measured performance (trend reports from the energy management system and annual boiler efficiency tests) and stipulated savings (lighting improvements).

The Board thanked the Energy Commission and Beth Greenblatt for their hard work and dedication to the project. The next three steps, which will be worked on simultaneously, are: final review of the EMSA, signing an energy savings agreement with the G-M school district, and arranging financing for the project.

Claire, Pam, Beth, Ronnie, and Nancy left the meeting.

Approval of Minutes: Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to approve the minutes from 11/22. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Tighe & Bond Sewer Pump Station Project: The Board reviewed the Engineering Services Agreement with Tighe & Bond for design, bid, and construction-related services related to pump upgrades at the Riverside Sewer System Pump Station. Tighe & Bond's cost for this work is \$12,500 (out of a \$65,000 estimated total for the project), and will be paid from the Franklin County Housing Redevelopment Authority's account for repayments on Gill housing rehabilitation loans. Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to approve the agreement with Tighe & Bond and authorize John to sign. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

MEMA Grant for Services Related to Vermont Yankee: The Board reviewed the contract and scope of services for the Town's annual \$7,500 grant from MEMA to perform emergency planning and preparedness activities relative to Gill's proximity to the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant in Vernon, VT. Gene Beaubien, Gill's Emergency Management Director, has recommended the Town accept this grant. Ann made a motion, seconded by Randy, to accept the grant and authorize John to sign. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Sewer Commitment: The Board, acting as Sewer Commissioners, signed a commitment to the accountant and the tax collector in the amount of \$12,500.44.

5:20 p.m. The Board reviewed and signed FY11 Warrant #12. Randy abstained from signing the payroll and the vendor warrants. The warrant was completed at 5:45 p.m. and the Board went into recess until the 6:30 p.m. joint meeting with the Finance Committee.

6:30 p.m. The meeting was called back to order. The Finance Committee meeting was also called to order.

Present: John Ward, Randy Crochier, and Ann Banash, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.
Others Present: Rick James

Finance Committee Present: Tupper Brown, Timmie Smith, Clair Chang, Ronnie LaChance, and Jim Poulsen.

Review of 12/20 Special Town Meeting: John read Articles 1 (GMRSD budget appropriation) and 3 (establishing education stabilization funds) from the warrant for the 12/20 Special Town Meeting. The accompanying remarks (attachment "Notes & FY11 Budget Scenarios") were reviewed and discussed.

6:40 p.m. Alden Booth (FinCom) joined the meeting. 6:44 p.m. Colleen Sculley (FinCom) joined the meeting.

There was a general discussion on whether there needs to be one or two education stabilization funds. If one, it would be for education needs in general. If two, there would be separate funds for the Gill-Montague district and the Franklin County Technical School. The following language was proposed for the motion for Article 3:

"Move the Town vote to establish an Education Stabilization Fund, said fund to be used for the payment of assessments from or otherwise in support of the Gill Montague Regional School District and/or the Franklin County Technical School.

For the Finance Committee, Tupper made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to recommend establishing a single education stabilization fund restricted to supporting expenses of the GMRSD and FCTS. The vote was 7 in favor, and 0 opposed.

For the Finance Committee, Claire made a motion, seconded by Jim, to recommend Article 1. The vote was 7 in favor, and 0 opposed.

John read Article 2 (veterans' benefits) and the accompanying explanation. There was consensus that this article should be passed over at Special Town Meeting. Instead of making an appropriation now, both groups support deficit spending this account (which is allowed) until later in the fiscal year. The account will be funded by year-end transfers or by appropriations at another special town meeting.

John read Article 4 (transfer from Free Cash to Stabilization) and the accompanying explanation. There was limited discussion.

For the Finance Committee, Timmie made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to recommend the passage of Article 4. The vote was 7 in favor, and 0 opposed.

John read Article 5 (accept MGL 138:33B) and the accompanying explanation. There was limited discussion.

Discussion returned to Article 3 (education stabilization fund). It was suggested that the motion be written raise and appropriate by taxation the entire amount of GMRSD budget savings (\$38,121) into the education stabilization fund. There was a vote by the Finance Committee to recommend that amount in the Article, and the vote passed unanimously. (The maker and second of the motion were not recorded.)

For the Selectboard, Randy made a motion, seconded by Ann, to support all of the recommendations of the Finance Committee with respect to the warrant articles of the 12/20 Special Town Meeting. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

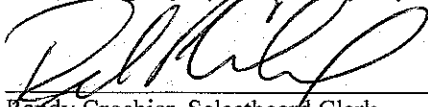
FY12 Budget Process: The Selectboard and Finance Committee discussed ideas, process, and procedures for the upcoming development of the FY12 budget. It was agreed to continue to hold joint meetings with the various departments to review and discuss their budget requests, and that at least one of those meetings should be held at the Public Safety Complex. The process of exchanging budget-related questions and answers with the departments prior to the review meetings will also be continued.

New for FY12 will be the formation of 3 subgroups that will each meet with one of the "Big 3" departments (police, fire, and highway). The purpose is to gather additional information that is relevant to each budget, and to gain a better understanding of the department's needs and equipment. This fact-finding needs to happen early on in the process, and should start soon. There will be one member from the Selectboard and two Finance Committee members on each subgroup.

Ray was asked to have the departments start preparing their budgets in early January. At this time it seems likely that the request will be for two budgets: level-funded and a 10% cut. Ray will also develop a budget timeline in conjunction with the Chair of the Finance Committee.

Adjournment: The Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.


Randy Crochier, Selectboard Clerk

Meeting Documents available at Town Hall

- Siemens project budget & scope of work
- Tighe & Bond engineering services proposal
- MEMA Vermont Yankee contract
- Sewer commitment
- STM & budget handouts