

TOWN OF GILL
M A S S A C H U S E T T S



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES
July 22, 2013

Minutes of an Executive Session

Present: John Ward, Ann Banash and Randy Crochier, Selectboard members; Ray Purington, Admin. Assistant; Mark Fairbrother, Chris Boutwell, and Mike Nelson, Montague Selectboard members; Frank Abbondozio, Montague Town Administrator; Wendy Bogusz, Montague Administrative Secretary; Jeff Singleton.

The executive session convened at 6:36p.m in the Selectboard's Meeting Room, Montague Town Hall, 1 Avenue A, Montague.

The two Selectboards met with Jeff Singleton, their appointed representative to the Gill-Montague Regional School District's contract negotiations with the District's various collective bargaining units. Jeff reported that the old contract expired at the end of June 2013.

Negotiations are being conducted using the "interest based bargaining" methodology, formerly known as "win-win" negotiations. It is designed to be a less contentious approach, without lawyers and negotiators at the table. A contract is developed between the two parties reaching consensus on the various issues. There was concern, however, that this method may lessen involvement by the School Committee as a whole in formulating a strategy for their side of the negotiations.

At the School Committee's last executive session for updates on negotiations, Jeff made a case for the importance of not signing a new contract unless it first has been costed out and found to be "budget friendly" for all of its years. Setting aside the costs of any other negotiated changes, any contract is likely to produce budget increases due to COLAs, step raises, and benefits/health care costs. Jeff has tried to get cost projections for contract scenarios from Management Solutions' Mark Chapulis, but Mark has been unavailable.

Jeff also alerted the two Selectboards that the way the District accounts for School Choice has been changed in the last year or two since Management Solutions took over business operations for the District. Previously, School Choice charges (offsets against state aid) and income (additions to state aid) were netted to a bottom line amount that was built into the budget. In the new "all funds" accounting, charges and revenues for School Choice are separated, and Jeff is concerned that this may develop into problems down the road. He recommended that during the FY15 budget process, the Towns should be asking questions about how School Choice funds are tracked and spent.

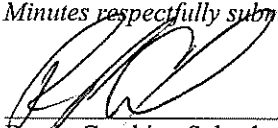
In terms of any contract settlement, Jeff suspects that the District's budget for FY14 has adequate funds to cover the first year of the new contract. He re-emphasized that the School Committee should not vote for a contract that has not been costed out.

The Selectboards discussed that the Technical Panel's Compact and Table B financial plan have achieved buy-in and strong support from the Selectboards, Finance Committees, and Town Meetings of both Towns. It is an accepted tool for keeping school assessments in check.

Both Selectboards indicated a willingness to pass a motion during an open meeting that calls upon their appointed representative (Jeff) to only support contracts that have a viable financial plan.

Randy made a motion, seconded by Ann, to adjourn the executive session. A roll call vote was taken: Randy – aye; Ann – aye; John – aye. Motion carried by unanimous vote. The Selectboard left executive session at 7:05pm and returned to open session.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.



Randy Crochier, Selectboard Clerk