

TOWN OF GILL

M A S S A C H U S E T T S



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SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 13, 2016

Call to Order: The Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings were called to order at 6:45 PM.

Selectboard Members Present: John Ward, Greg Snedeker, Randy Crochier

Selectboard Members Absent: None

Finance Committee Members Present: Timmie Smith, Nancy Griswold, Ronnie LaChance, Jacob Rau, Fred Chase, Claire Chang

Finance Committee Members Absent: Tupper Brown

Others Present: None

The draft warrant articles and motions were reviewed for the June 28, 2016 Special Town Meeting.

Article 1 – PEG Access – this article was passed over during the Annual Town Meeting due to questions about the use of PEG Access funds for other purposes besides PEG Access. Ray has consulted with Town Counsel and the Special Counsel used during the recent cable license renewal with Comcast. Both attorneys explained that the Mass. Department of Revenue has extended its deadline to adopt MGL 44-53F^{3/4} until July 1, 2017 and both recommended the Town should take no action until next year. Taking no action will keep the status quo for one more year, which means that money in the PEG Access Fund can be spent on PEG-related purposes by the Cable Committee with the approval of the Selectboard. On the basis of Counsel's advice, Ray asked for the Selectboard and Finance Committee to recommend a NO vote on this article.

By consensus, the Selectboard decided to recommend a NO vote. Claire made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to recommend a NO vote on Article 1. The motion (for a NO vote) passed by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 absent.

Article 2 – Backhoe – this article will provide funding, up to \$60,000, to purchase a used backhoe for the Highway Department. \$29,400 will be transferred from the unexpended balance in the FY16 Snow & Ice budget and \$4,100 will be transferred from the Road Machinery Fund. Another \$6,500 will be transferred out of the FY17 budget for the Highway Department – an amount corresponding to most of what is spent by the Department each year to rent a backhoe. The motion will authorize borrowing up to \$20,000, which would be repaid in future years using the same \$6,500 from the Highway budget.

It was noted that this is the first time, in recent memory at least, of financing a loan from within the tax rate and not doing a debt exclusion. There was also discussion that by owning a backhoe, it could result in less wear and tear to the front-end loader, and would provide a second piece of equipment capable of filling sand trucks, in case the front-end loader breaks down in the wintertime. There were concerns about having another machine to maintain, and a suggestion that possibly the old Kubota tractor could be traded in or sold as part of the backhoe purchase.

Fred made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to recommend Article 2. The vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions (Claire, Ronnie), and 1 absent.

Article 3 – Safety Complex Roof Loan – this article funds the first of three annual loan payments for the Safety Complex Roof project. The total principal of the loan will be \$47,200, with a paydown of \$15,734 in year 1 and \$15,733 in years 2 and 3. The interest rate is fixed at 1.90% APY, and the interest for year 1 will be \$896.80. The

total payment for FY17 will be \$16,636.80. The loan was approved as a debt exclusion, so the payments will add to the tax rate, but not permanently.

Claire made a motion, seconded by Jacob, to recommend Article 3. The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 absent.

Article 4 – GMRSD to Energy Stabilization – this article has become a routine piece of end-of-year business, and transfers funds from the GMRSD operating budget to the Energy Stabilization Fund. The funds are generated on the basis of energy savings realized by the School District due to the boiler replacement and lighting improvements at the Gill Elementary School in 2011. The Town uses the Energy Stabilization Fund to make to annual payments on the Town’s bond & interest for the project.

Claire made a motion, seconded by Jacob, to recommend Article 4. The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 absent.

Article 5 – Gill Elementary Well – it has become the Town’s financial practice to transfer any funds left in the annual Building Maintenance budget to a specific building project. There is currently \$2,150 remaining, although Ray warned that amount could change if unexpected needs arise between now and June 28th. The \$2,150 is expected to be a small fraction of what will ultimately be needed for a treatment system for the well, but it’s a start.

Fred made a motion, seconded by Jacob, to recommend Article 5. The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 absent.

Article 6 – Police Cruiser – this article would provide funding, subject to passage of a debt exclusion, to purchase a new police cruiser. According to the Police Chief, no newer pricing information is available than the January 2016 quotation of \$38,825, so that was the figure used for the motion.

Fred made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to recommend Article 6. The vote was 5 in favor, 1 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 absent.

Article 7 – PILOT Agreement with Borrego Solar – this article asks voters to approve and authorize a 20-year Payment In Lieu Of Taxes agreement between the Town and Borrego Solar Systems, Inc. for a 2.77 megawatt (DC) solar array planned for land that Borrego will lease from the Northfield Mount Hermon School. The payment in the first year is \$14,938.86 and will increase by 2% annually. Over the course of the 20 years, the total payments will be \$362,974.99. The project will encompass 11.37 acres, and that land, which is currently tax exempt as an educational use, will become taxable. There was a suggestion that perhaps Borrego would be willing to pay to provide a data kiosk for the Gill Elementary School so that the solar project could be incorporated into the curriculum and students could monitor its output.

Jacob made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to recommend Article 7. The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 absent.

Article 8 – Year End Transfer for Fire Department – this article provides the opportunity to make a significant (more than \$5,000) year-end transfer to supplement the Fire Department’s budget. Although Town Meeting approves a single figure for the Department’s annual budget, the Fire Chief keeps track separately of the labor costs versus other expenses. As of today, the amount that was internally budgeted for labor is in deficit by \$694.01. The expense side of the department’s budget is in the black.

Ray recommended that the Selectboard and Finance Committee approve a year-end transfer of \$700 from the Town Insurance budget to cover the current deficit. It is hoped that there will be no major calls for service (fires, searches, mutual aid calls, other disasters), and that Article 8 can be passed over. Since there is no way to predict an amount to be recommended, or to predict if the Article will even be acted upon, the Finance Committee took no action on the Article.

Ronnie made a motion, seconded by Claire, to approve a transfer of \$700 from the Property Insurance budget to the Fire Department budget. The vote was 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 absent.

Randy made a motion, seconded by Greg, to approve a transfer of \$700 from the Property Insurance budget to the Fire Department budget. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed.

Date for Debt Exclusion for Police Cruiser – It was decided that the debt exclusion referendum for the police cruiser will occur at the same time as the Massachusetts State Primary on September 8, 2016. It was noted that the date is a Thursday, not a Tuesday like state elections usually are.

Ronnie LaChance left the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Review of Minutes – Randy made a motion, seconded by Greg, to approve the minutes of 4/4/16 and 4/19/16 with a date correction in the header section of the 4/19 minutes. The vote was 3 in favor, 0 opposed. Fred made a motion, seconded by Nancy, to adopt the Selectboard's 4/4 and 4/19 minutes, with the same date correction, in lieu of separate Finance Committee minutes. The vote was 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 2 absent.

Fred Chase left the meeting at 7:35 PM.

The Selectboard signed the warrants for the June 28, 2016 Special Town Meeting.

Adjournment – The Selectboard and Finance Committee adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington.

Approved on 04/19/2017. Signed copy on file.

Randy Crochier, Selectboard Clerk

Adopted by the Finance Committee in lieu of separate Finance Committee minutes on 04/19/2017.