

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

April 24, 2017

Call to Order: The Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings were called to order at 6:35 PM.

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

Selectboard Members Absent: None

Finance Committee Members Present: Timmie Smith, Ronnie LaChance, Fred Chase, Claire Chang

Finance Committee Members Absent: Tupper Brown, Jacob Rau

Others Present: Gene Beaubien, Ken Sears, Jason Edson, Steve Connell, Scott Nicholas

2.2 Fire Department: Fire Chief Gene Beaubien presented the Fire Department's budget request for FY18, noting it is a level services request with a \$1,200 increase (1.5%). He explained the Department plans to eliminate their \$1,700 subscription to the online NFPA fire codes, but will be adding a \$1,000 subscription to IamResponding, a software program & phone app. When Gill Fire pagers are activated for a call, a firefighter who responds to the call will use the app to let the Department know. IamResponding will allow the Fire Chief and several other officers to know immediately who is responding to a call, where they are responding, and when they will be responding.

There was discussion of the FEMA grant the Department applied for this year. The application was for approximately \$185,000 and would be used to replace the air packs and air bottles. FEMA has started making award announcements; Gill is still in the running, as far as we know. If the grant is awarded, the Town will be responsible for providing matching funds of at least 5% of the award.

Most of the Department's air bottles became out of spec (no longer meet current NFPA standards) in March, 2017. Of the 56 bottles, it is estimated that 10-15 are new enough to still be in compliance. The components that make up one "air pack" are: face mask, harness, regulators, air bottle, and spare air bottle. Current codes call for one air pack for each seated position in a vehicle that responds to a fire call. For Gill, that means 20 air packs.

The \$15,953 of vehicle repair costs for FY17 were discussed. Engine 1 and Engine 2 were both brought to KME for a complete "go through" of repairs and maintenance. It was also mentioned that all three engines passed their pump tests this year.

The \$8,000 requested for Equipment Replacement in FY18 is not targeted for any specific needs at this time.

The FY17 labor budget is tight, but still ok. The Department has responded to more out-of-town mutual aid calls this year, but so far has not had any major brush fire calls.

2.3 Emergency Management: Beaubien, who is also the Emergency Management Director, reviewed the FY18 budget request for Emergency Management. While the Town has had emergency management functions for many years, there has never been a town-funded budget. In the past, expenses were paid using state funds received for planning and preparedness due to the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Plant. The plant is now shut down, and Beaubien does not anticipate receiving any further funds. There is approximately \$17,000 remaining in the Town's VY fund.

A Finance Committee member suggested that by pooling money from the VY fund, NMH donation account, and other accounts, the Town might be able to purchase five air packs right now. Beaubien, Sears, Edson, Connell, and Nicholas left at 7:30 PM.

Review of Minutes: Greg made a motion, seconded by Randy, to approve the minutes of 4/19/17. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Ronnie made a motion, seconded by Fred, to adopt the Selectboard minutes for 4/19/17 in lieu of separate Finance Committee minutes. The vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

1.06 Assessors: An updated budget sheet dated 4/24/17 was distributed.

6.4 Energy Bond: The requested budget is up \$568 due to scheduled increases in the pay down on the bond (\$500) and the Siemens performance audit (\$68). It was discussed that officials from the Gill-Montague Regional School District have concerns about the “energy savings” being reported by the Siemens audit. Upon a request from the District, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss the issue.

6.5 Retirement: The assessment from the Retirement System will increase by \$7,354 (8.3%). It was noted that the Town has little control over this. FY19 will be the final year the Town must contribute an extra \$12,116 to fund two early retirements in 2005.

6.6 Health Insurance and OPEB: Health insurance rates will increase by 9.4% next year. The line for OPEB will be kept “open” for now, and a final decision of the FY18 contribution will come later.

7.0 FRCOG: The FRCOG assessment was reviewed. Randy disclosed he is an employee of the FRCOG, but he is paid from grant funds, not the town assessments.

There was a brief discussion about the outdated and often poorly functioning county radio system used to provide emergency communications to all first responders in Franklin County. Assessments to the Police and Fire Departments for the radio systems will increase in FY18 in order to provide funds to continue to band-aid the current system. A new system is being studied, but cost estimates and funding plans are not yet complete.

8.0 Education: The FY18 assessments for the Gill-Montague Regional School District and Franklin County Technical School were reviewed. Randy disclosed his daughter-in-law is an employee of FCTS.

Fin Com Adjournment: The Finance Committee adjourned at 8:00 PM.

FirstLight Settlement Meeting Ground Rules: We have not received advice from Town Counsel on the Settlement Ground Rules that must be signed in order for John Ward (Selectboard) and Phil Gilfeather-Girton (Conservation Commission) to represent the Town at the negotiations with FirstLight and other agencies over a potential settlement agreement related to parts of FirstLight’s relicensing by FERC. John will attend tomorrow’s (4/25) settlement meeting without signing the Ground Rules.

2009 Sterling Truck: Fred Chase requested time on the Selectboard’s 5/1 agenda to discuss his recommendation that the 2009 Sterling be brought to Patriot/Freightliner in Westminster, VT to get computer updates, have the idle time shutoff restored to 5 minutes, and get a printout of computer code activity. Chase also reported the windshield on the truck was already broken when he picked up the truck at the Safety Complex last week. He has modified the exhaust stack in order to direct exhaust fumes away from the cab and truck body, and he was able to loosen the clutch adjuster enough to make adjustments.

Selectboard Adjournment: The Selectboard adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington.

Signed copy on file. Approved 05/08/2017

Randy Crochier, Selectboard Clerk

Adopted by the Finance Committee in lieu of separate Finance Committee minutes on 05/08/2017.