

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 May 3, 2017

Call to Order: The Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings were called to order at 6:24 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: Ray Purington, David Hastings

2.1 Police Department: Police Chief David Hastings presented the Police Department's budget request for FY18. He noted a correction to the budget spreadsheet – the amount for Part Time Officers' Salaries for FY18 (column G) should be \$23,901 and not \$23,000, in order to present a level-funded budget request. (It was discovered the following day the original \$23,000 amount was correct, and the figures presented already provide level funding. The confusion was created by comparing columns F and G, instead of columns E and G.)

The \$776 increase in the Radios/Pagers line is due to a higher assessment from the FRCOG for the county-wide emergency communications (radio) system. The current system is not adequate. The higher assessment will partly cover more repairs to the current system and begin saving funds for a new system.

The cruiser cameras are in service, but full functionality of the download and retrieval software is still in progress due Sergeant Redmond being out on a medical leave of absence. (The Sergeant is the computer guru for the Department.) The FY18 budget request does not include any additional money for repairs and maintenance for the body cameras and cruiser cameras. All the equipment is still fairly new and covered by warranties. While the video recordings are currently stored on a department computer, the plan is to have most storage on the "cloud."

It was reported that the MassDOT has installed six surveillance cameras on the French King Bridge, but that the Gill and Erving Police Departments do not yet have access to view the images. It is unknown if the cameras have been activated, and it is believed the project is "stuck" in Boston.

Chief Hastings left the meeting at 6:40 PM.

Review of Minutes: Minutes from 4/24/17 were not available.

Surplus Shelving at Riverside Building: Ray reported one bid was received for the surplus wooden shelving units from the Historical Commission's museum. Randy made a motion, seconded by Greg, to award the shelving units to Brickett Allis and Danielle Marie for the \$50 bid amount. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

3.4 Street Lighting: The FY18 request shows a \$1,000 reduction from FY17, as the Town gains more experience in costs to own and operate street lights. It was suggested that the \$1,000 reduction be considered for appropriation into the Energy Stabilization Fund.

3.5 Solid Waste & Recycling, FCSWMD, Hazardous Waste Collection: There was discussion of ways to increase composting by Gill residents. Curbside compost collection was suggested. Ray noted that Jan Ameen and Amy Donovan from the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMD) would be available to work with

any volunteers who want to explore a composting program for Gill residents. There was support for adding \$500 into the budget for the FCSWMD's annual collection of household hazardous waste. It is expected the money would be assigned to Gill residents on a first-come, first-served basis as the residents sign up for the collection event. While there is concern that \$500 might not provide free disposal of hazardous materials for all residents, it's a place to start.

3.6 Sewer: The proposed budget for FY18 is up by \$3,480, driven mostly by the 17% increase in sewer rates charged by Montague for the disposal of sewage from the Gill system. The entire sewer budget is funded by residents and business that are connected to the sewer system. The \$96,065 budget is felt to be adequate so long as Montague does not increase its rates again. If Montague's rates go up, Gill's will likely need to follow suit.

3.8 Memorial Committee: Level funded request of \$834 for FY18.

4.2 Council on Aging: \$136 increase in Gill's 20% share of the Senior Center Director's salary.

4.3 Veterans Services and Veterans Benefits: The FY18 assessment for the Upper Pioneer Valley Veterans' Services District is up by \$533. Ray explained the increase is likely due to a retirement and to the phase-out of startup funds the District received during its first two years. The Town has been fortunate with respect to expenses for veterans' benefits, spending under \$800 in each of the last three years. It was decided to reduce the Benefits line from \$5,500 to \$5,000 to offset most of the increase in the District assessment.

5.3 Historical Commission: Level funded request of \$860 for FY18.

5.4 PEG Access: Ray reported the Mass Department of Revenue announced today it would allow another 1-year extension to implementing accounting changes that would require PEG Access funds be expended only with a Town Meeting appropriation. Given the amount of confusion this topic caused during the 2016 Town Meeting, it was decided to take advantage of the extension, and postpone any action on PEG Access to next year. Because of the late notice from the Department of Revenue, articles related to PEG Access funds are already on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. Those articles will be passed over, with the simple explanation that the Town should postpone any action until the Department of Revenue figures out what it wants to do.

6.1 Town Insurance: It was discussed if the Town decides to purchase Northfield's share of the bucket truck that Gill and Northfield bought in 2010, insuring the truck would cost \$681 next year. It was decided to revisit the Insurance budget once the fate of the bucket truck has been decided. The Highway Department will be reminded they need to provide more information about the truck, including maintenance records, its current state of repair, and the activity and balance in the truck's shared maintenance fund held by Northfield.

GMRSD Staffing & Budgets: There was discussion of news that the 5th grade teacher at Gill Elementary will be laid off for FY18 and the 5th and 6th grades will be taught as a combined classroom due to total class size of the two grades. Reportedly, the decision is being driven by Medicaid reimbursements being \$160,000 less than expected, as well as another \$160,000 for unplanned/unexpected out-of-district SPED costs. There were concerns expressed about the layoff's impact on the quality of education, as well as concerns about the District's fiscal planning.

Highway Department Diesel Tank: Fred Chase reported on a conversation with Highway Dept. employees about truck engine problems that led him to suspect contamination in the diesel tank. There is a sludge layer on the bottom of the 1,000 gallon tank, and it is most likely contaminated with a type of bacteria that can live in and feed on diesel fuel. Randy made a motion, seconded by Greg, to authorize Fred to further explore the possibility of bacteria buildup and contamination in the diesel tank at the Public Safety Complex and to take reasonable corrective action. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Fin Com Adjournment: The Finance Committee adjourned at 7:52 PM. Fred and Ronnie left the meeting.

FirstLight Settlement Meeting Ground Rules: We have not received any wording from Town Counsel to include as a disclaimer 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. The deadline to

submit signed Ground Rules is May 8th. Ray will email Mark Wamser, a representative of FirstLight, and notify him that the Town hopes to receive input from Town Counsel in time to approve the Ground Rules at the Selectboard's budget meeting on May 8th. The next settlement meeting is not until May 25th.

Selectboard Adjournment: The Selectboard adjourned at 8:30 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.