

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 9, 2018

Called to Order: The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM.

Selectboard Members Present: Randy Crochier, Greg Snedeker, John Ward (6:38 PM) Members Absent: None

Finance Committee Members Present: Timmie Smith, Ronnie LaChance, Sandy Brown (6:20 PM), and Claire Chang (6:38 PM) Members Absent: Tupper Brown

Others Present: Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant; Bill Tomb, Pamela Lester, and Lynda Hodsdon Mayo

Fire Department PO for Hard Drive Data Recovery: The Selectboard reviewed a request from the Fire Chief to spend \$1,469.92 for data recovery services on a failed hard drive from the Fire Department's records computer. Backup files from the hard drive were inadequate to restore the information. Proven Data is a company that specializes in hard drive data recovery, and the Town will not be charged for the work if no data can be recovered. The purchase order was approved by consensus.

Sandy Brown joined the meeting at 6:20 PM.

Review of Minutes: Greg made a motion, seconded by Randy, to approve the minutes from 3/26/18 and 4/3/18. The motion was approved by a 2-0 vote.

Members of the Fire Department – Gene Beaubien, Steve Connell, Ken Sears, Scott Nicholas, Mitch Waldron, Andrew Howell, and Marcus Aucoin – joined the meeting at 6:30 PM. John Ward and Claire Chang joined the meeting at 6:38 PM. The Finance Committee was called to order at 6:38 PM.

Review of FY19 Budget Requests:

1.06 Board of Assessors: Board of Assessors Chair Bill Tomb, Assessor Pamela Lester, and Assessors' Clerk Lynda Hodsdon Mayo presented the Assessors' budget request for FY19. It was noted FY22 is the year of the next revaluation of property values by the Department of Revenue. There are several years of tax abatement appeals by FirstLight still pending before the Appellate Tax Board (ATB). The ATB only just decided on the appeal from FY14, leaving appeals from FY15, FY16, and FY17 still in process. There are questions of how future appraisals of FirstLight's property will be handled. Previous appraisals were done jointly with Montague, with both towns sharing the cost in proportion to the value of the appraised assets. Montague's Board of Assessors has recently expressed disinterest in partnering with Gill again. It was suggested Gill's Selectboard and Board of Assessors should meet together after Town Meeting is completed to further inform the Selectboard about appraisals, cost-sharing, and outstanding ATB cases.

The Assessors requested \$2,000 in FY19 for the 5-year revaluation account, and \$2,000 in FY19 for the FirstLight appraisal account. Both amounts are level-funded from FY18.

With regards to the FY19 budget request of \$43,214, it is an increase of \$1,053.48 over FY18. Most of the increase, \$1,050, is for additional services from the consultant used for the annual interim valuations. The consultant will now be doing most of the cyclical property inspections that were previously handled by the Assessors. Both Tomb and Lester stand by the FY19 request, although both have doubts about its adequacy. Lester questioned whether the salary and hours of the Assessors' Clerk are realistic for the job that needs to be done. Randy suggested for next year, when developing the FY20 budget request, the Assessors should propose a "usual" budget, and an "adequate" budget.

Hodsdon Mayo requested to have the Assessors' Clerk's salary and the Assessors' Expenses separated from each other in the Omnibus budget that is presented to Town Meeting. Having separate figures will allow the Accountant to include both figures on the bi-weekly budget report, which will make expense tracking easier in the Assessors' Office.

Sandy made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to approve the budget request. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed. Lester, Tomb, and Hodsdon Mayo left the meeting at 7:15 PM.

2.2 Fire Department: Fire Chief Gene Beaubien and other members of the Fire Department presented the FY19 budget request. It is a "level services" budget of \$85,381, an increase of \$4,625 over FY18. The increase includes an additional \$935 for step raises for various firefighters, \$1,000 increase for vehicle maintenance, \$1,000 increase for vehicle repair, and \$500 increases each for communications, dues/subscriptions, and equipment repair.

Beaubien reported the 20 new air packs, which were funded by a \$118,000 FEMA grant and \$26,000 from the NMH Donation account, were received last week. He recommended starting in about five years with a replacement program to purchase a few air packs each year, in order to spread out the cost. As part of the air pack purchase, the Gill Firemen's Association donated \$856 toward the purchase of a second thermal imager.

The requested increases for vehicle and equipment maintenance and repairs is needed to keep pace with the Department's aging inventory. The Department is actively looking for two used vehicles, to be paid for by a \$300,000 donation from NMH. Other equipment coming due for replacement include the two standalone thermal imagers and the Jaws of Life, which was bought new about 10 years ago and will cost \$5,000-\$10,000 to replace. More of the Fire Department's fire hose needs to be tested. Beaubien will reach out to Fail Safe Testing for a quotation.

Recently signed legislation will have the Mass. Department of Labor using OSHA's safety regulations, and these regs will apply to municipal employees. Much is still unknown as to how the regs will be implemented with respect to fire departments.

Beaubien ended on a high note – things are in better shape this year than in the past. Connell, Sears, Nicholas, Waldron, Howell, and Aucoin left the meeting at 7:35 PM.

2.3 Emergency Management: Beaubien, in his role as Emergency Management Director, presented the Emergency Management budget request for FY19. Beaubien requested the EMD's stipend be increased from \$2,500 to \$3,500 in FY19, to return it to the level it was a year or two ago when it was paid entirely from MEMA-supplied funds related to the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant. It was decided the stipend would be \$3,500 for FY19, with \$2,500 coming from the EMD budget and \$1,000 coming from the VY account. Beaubien pointed out the \$1,500 budgeted for the CodeRED emergency notification system is the full cost for one year, but an EMPG grant will hopefully cover about half the expense.

Sandy made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to approve the requested budgets for 2.2 Fire Department and 2.3 Emergency Management. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed. John made a motion, seconded by Greg, to approve the requested budgets for the Assessors, Fire Department, and Emergency Management. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative. Beaubien left the meeting at 8:00 PM.

1.10 Information Technology: Ray reported Montague WebWorks will be able to honor their quoted price for email accounts (\$3/month per address) for the first five years.

1.18 Town Hall & Riverside Building Operating Expenses: Ray presented an FY19 request of \$23,113, which is a \$643 decrease from the current year. Some of the reduction is from fine-tuning the budget line for oil heat, and the rest is due to elevator testing returning to an every-other-year schedule. Sandy made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to approve the requested budget. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed.

3.5 Solid Waste & Recycling, FCSWMD, and Hazardous Waste Collection: The combined requested budget for all three lines is \$74,899, an increase of \$1,348 over the current year. There will be a 2.5% increase (\$1,749) to the annual cost of the trash & recycling collection contract with Alternative Recycling. The operating budget's 50% share of the annual assessment for membership in the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District will increase by \$99 to \$2,149. The other 50% of the assessment is funded by the Solid Waste & Recycling revolving fund. The Town's contribution toward residents' disposal of household hazardous waste will increase from \$500 to \$750, as collection costs have increased sharply. If necessary, the \$750 will be matched by an equal amount from the Town's Recycling Dividend Program fund.

Timmie made a motion, seconded by Ronnie, to approve the requested budget. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed. The Selectboard approved the budget by consensus.

The Finance Committee and Selectboard adjourned their meetings at 8:20 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Administrative Assistant.

Signed copy on file. Approved on 07/09/2018

Greg Snedeker, Selectboard Clerk

Adopted by the Finance Committee in lieu of separate Finance Committee minutes on _____.