



SELECTBOARD AGENDA & MEETING NOTICE

Mon., December 18, 2023

***Indicates item added after the 48 hour posting
bold underlined time = invited guest or advertised hearing
(all other times are approximate)

Location: Town Hall, 2nd floor meeting room, 325 Main Road, Gill

5:30 PM Call to Order (If the meeting is being videotaped, announce that fact. If remote participation will occur, announce member & reason, & need for roll call voting)

5:30 PM Dangerous Dog Hearing for canine Max licensed to Travis Johnson, 239 West Gill Rd

Old Business

- Review of Minutes: 8/29/22, 9/12/22, 10/11/22, 11/21/22, 12/5/22, 12/19/22, 1/30/23, 2/13, 2/27, 3/13, 3/28, 3/30, 4/10, 4/24, 5/8, 5/22, 6/5, 6/20, 7/3, 9/11, 9/25, 11/06, 11/27, 12/4

New Business

- Discussion about Six Town Regionalization Planning Board presentation from Nov. 14th regarding potential merger of Gill-Montague and Pioneer Valley Regional School Districts; Feedback and recommendations to STRPB
- Car Dealer License Renewals for 2024
 - A-J Cycle Shop
 - Engine Up Automotive
 - Arrow Auto Sales
 - LSA Auto
 - Atlantic Wholesale
 - TEK Cycle
 - Doug's Auto Body
 - Town Line Auto Repair
- Liquor License Renewals for 2024
 - Turners Falls Schuetzen Verein
 - The Gill Tavern
 - 23 French King Highway LLC
 - The Spirit Shoppe
- Food Concession Trailer License Renewal for 2024: Cielito Lindo
- Sewer Commitment - \$145.87 for bill date of 12/4/23 (related to sale of 5 Walnut St)
- Request from Conservation Commission to appoint Chris Polatin of 334 Mountain Road as an Associate Member for a term through 6/30/2025
- Other business as may arise after the agenda has been posted.
- Public Service Announcements, if any
- Warrants
FY24 #12 Vendors (\$493,465.09) & Payroll (\$28,877.33) – reviewed & signed on 12/04/23
FY24 #13 – review & sign

Adjournment

Other Invitations/Meetings:

| Date | Time | Event | Location |
|-----------|---------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Mon 12/25 | | Christmas holiday | |
| Mon 1/1 | | New Years Day holiday | |
| Tues 1/2 | 5:30 PM | Selectboard Meeting | Town Hall |
| Mon 1/15 | | Martin Luther King holiday | |

| | | | |
|-----------|---------|---------------------|-----------|
| Tues 1/16 | 5:30 PM | Selectboard Meeting | Town Hall |
| Mon 1/29 | 5:30 PM | Selectboard Meeting | Town Hall |

TOWN OF GILL

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



www.gillmass.org

December 11, 2023

Travis Johnson
239 West Gill Road
Gill, MA 01354

Dear Mr. Johnson:

This letter is to inform you that at the request of Animal Control Officer Kyle Dragon the Selectboard of the Town of Gill will hold a public hearing regarding a complaint of your dog Max being a dangerous dog.

Pursuant to the requirements of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 140, Section 157, the hearing is scheduled for Monday, December 18, 2023 at 5:30 PM in the second floor meeting room of the Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill. Please be advised the Selectboard meetings are usually covered by newspaper reporters and video recorded for later broadcast on a local cable access television channel.

You have the right to bring witnesses and to be represented by legal counsel.

In accordance with the law cited above, the possible outcomes from a dangerous dog hearing are for the Selectboard to A) dismiss the complaint; or B) deem the dog a nuisance dog; or C) deem the dog a dangerous dog.

If your dog is deemed a nuisance dog, the Selectboard may further order you to take remedial action to ameliorate the cause of the nuisance behavior.

If your dog is deemed a dangerous dog, the Selectboard shall order one (1) or more of the following measures:

(i) that the dog be humanely restrained; provided, however, that no order shall provide that a dog deemed dangerous be chained, tethered or otherwise tied to an inanimate object including, but not limited to, a tree, post or building;

(ii) that the dog be confined to the premises of the keeper of the dog; provided, however, that "confined" shall mean securely confined indoors or confined outdoors in a securely enclosed and locked pen or dog run area upon the premises of the owner or keeper; provided further, that such pen or dog run shall have a secure roof and, if such enclosure has no floor secured to the sides thereof, the sides shall be embedded into the ground for not less than 2 feet; and provided further,

that within the confines of such pen or dog run, a dog house or proper shelter from the elements shall be provided to protect the dog;

(iii) that when removed from the premises of the owner or the premises of the person keeping the dog, the dog shall be securely and humanely muzzled and restrained with a chain or other tethering device having a minimum tensile strength of 300 pounds and not exceeding 3 feet in length;

(iv) that the owner or keeper of the dog provide proof of insurance in an amount not less than \$100,000 insuring the owner or keeper against any claim, loss, damage or injury to persons, domestic animals or property resulting from the acts, whether intentional or unintentional, of the dog or proof that reasonable efforts were made to obtain such insurance if a policy has not been issued; provided, however, that if a policy of insurance has been issued, the owner or keeper shall produce such policy upon request of the hearing authority or a justice of the district court; and provided further, that if a policy has not been issued the owner or keeper shall produce proof of efforts to obtain such insurance;

(v) that the owner or keeper of the dog provide to the licensing authority or animal control officer or other entity identified in the order, information by which a dog may be identified, throughout its lifetime including, but not limited to, photographs, videos, veterinary examination, tattooing or microchip implantations or a combination of any such methods of identification;

(vi) that unless an owner or keeper of the dog provides evidence that a veterinarian is of the opinion the dog is unfit for alterations because of a medical condition, the owner or keeper of the dog shall cause the dog to be altered so that the dog shall not be reproductively intact; or

(vii) that the dog be humanely euthanized.

This is a serious matter and you are encouraged to give it your full and immediate attention.

Please contact me with any questions or concerns at 413-863-9347.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Purington', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ray Purington
Town Administrator

Cc: Kyle Dragon, Regional Animal Control Officer
Chris Redmond, Police Chief

To: Selectboards, FinComs and Town Officials
From: Six Town Regionalization Planning Board
Date: December 6, 2023
RE: Follow-up to November 14th Six Town Meeting/Forum

On behalf of the Planning Board (PB), we want to thank you for your participation, comments and questions. The Abrahams Group also wishes to express their appreciation for your careful review and involvement. They understood there was a lot of financial information presented and hope they were helpful in explaining the details behind the assessments.

Because of the abundance of information presented we did not expect an immediate response as to whether or not we should continue to move forward in crafting a regional agreement but we did appreciate you recognizing its members for researching the feasibility of regionalization.

An 18 month grant was awarded by the Department of Revenue which expires in June. The grant also includes money to hire consultants/attorneys to work with town officials on developing a new regional agreement. We believe this can be done in a timely manner with the expertise of outside help and your guidance. For this process to begin the Planning Board will have to deliberate and vote to proceed. We are hoping you will be able to discuss and provide feedback via email, phone conversation (or both) or invite us to attend a meeting by December 28th. In addition to the financial information, you will find extensive information about the educational benefits on our website: <https://sites.google.com/view/strpb/home> under the Reports/Surveys menu.

With the assistance of two consultants collating feedback from students, teachers, and administrators the additional educational opportunities for merging the two high and middle school students were significant and the Planning Board voted to acknowledge them. Reviewing the educational benefits for both teacher and students prior to the financial report would have provided a better understanding of the educational benefits that the assessments would support. We referred to this as a cost/benefit analysis. The PowerPoint that includes this information is [here](#).

Some of these opportunities include:

- A Program of Study (courses for students) that can be implemented, via more learning opportunities
- Opportunities to engage in more courses including honors, advance placement (AP), etc.
- Additional academic scheduling flexibility to offer student more electives
- Larger but still relatively small class sizes for students to engage, share, and learn together
- More opportunities for programs/services that address social, emotional and mental health
- Expanded arts (performing/visual) and athletic opportunities for middle/high school students
- More extra curricular opportunities, such as clubs, debate teams, student events, etc.
- More certified teachers in their content areas to develop curriculum, review student work, share best practices in real time at department meetings and throughout the day;
- More students and teachers available to share responsibilities, thus reducing the stress/burnout in supporting the middle and high school programs and services.

- More resources for special education

We would like to clarify some of the unsupported assumptions:

- Longer bus rides: We did two studies that revealed minimum impact on bus rides.
- Regionalization is only about finances - Towns understand that regionalization doesn't necessarily save money, but can preserve and/or increase programs and services. We have found in our studies that some savings are possible, but, more importantly, the educational opportunities (programs and services) would significantly increase!

Again, please visit our website for more information and also feel free to call us. We look forward to your response.

Wishing you the very best in this holiday season.

Respectfully,
Alan Genovese, Chair
Greg Snedeker, Vice Chair/Secretary/Treasurer
cc Planning Board Members

Attached are the November 14, 2023 Six Town Meeting Minutes.

SIX TOWN REGIONALIZATION PLANNING BOARD
In Person & Virtual Meeting
Gill Town Hall
November 14, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.
MEETING MINUTES

STRPB Members Present: Alan Genovese, Chair (Warwick); Greg Snedeker, Vice Chair/Secretary/Treasurer (Gill); David Young, Member (Warwick); Renee Keir, Member (Bernardston)

Town of Warwick Present: Amanda Carey, Selectboard Secretary; Keith Ross, Selectboard Vice-Chair; Brian Snell, Selectboard Clerk; Diana Noble, Finance Committee Chair & School Committee Member

Town of Northfield Present: Sarah Kerns, Selectboard; Bernhard Porada, Finance Committee; Reina Dastons, School Committee; Heath Cummings, Selectboard

Town of Montague Present: Christopher Boutwell, Selectboard; Richard Kuklewicz, Selectboard; Francia Wisnewski, Finance Committee Chair; John Hanold, Finance Committee; Frederic Bowman, Finance Committee; Steve Ellis, Town Administrator

Town of Leyden Present: Katherine DiMatteo, Selectboard; Erica Jensen, Selectboard; Ginger Robinson, Finance Committee Chair; Michele Gairusso, Town Coordinator

Town of Gill Present: Peter Turban, Finance Committee & Treasurer; ReBecca Mandel, Finance Committee; Sandy Brown, Finance Committee; Tupper Brown, Finance Committee; Claire Chang, Finance Committee Chair; Charles Garbiel, Selectboard; Randy Crochier, Selectboard Chair; Ray Purington, Town Administrator

Town of Bernardston Present: Stan Garland, Selectboard Chair; Ken Bordewieck, Selectboard Vice-Chair; Brian Keir, Selectboard Clerk; Jane Dutcher, Finance Committee Chair

Others Present: Julian Mendoza, Greenfield Recorder; Russ Kaubris, FCTS Business Manager; Patricia Kinsella, PVRSD; Jordan Barns, PVRSD; Janet Masucci (technology), Jeff Singleton, Montague Reporter

Present via Zoom: Mark Abrahams, The Abrahams Group President; Matt Abrahams, The Abrahams Group

The following Boards and Committees called their meetings to order at 6:37

- p.m.:**
- Bernardston Selectboard
 - Gill Selectboard
 - Leyden Selectboard
 - Montague Selectboard
 - Northfield Selectboard
 - Warwick Selectboard
 - Gill Finance Committee
 - Montague Finance Committee

OVERVIEW:

Alan Genovese explained that the STRPB members were appointed by their respective towns to engage in researching the idea of regionalizing the six towns and their schools. Genovese gave recognition to all of the volunteers that have put time into this and thanked them for researching the potential merger of PVRSD and GMRSD to form a new district.

Genovese explained that the STRPB held their first in-person meeting in November of 2019. Both their meetings and progress slowed down during COVID. They have been assisted by five grants, four from DESE, and one from DOR. The Abrahams Group was hired to analyze the available options for regionalization.

PROJECT SCOPE/GOALS:

Mark Abrahams, President of the Abrahams Group, explained that they were asked to put together a merged district budget of the six towns to include a new salary schedule, a merged health insurance plan, and a combined central office for the merged district. They were then tasked with taking the merged budget and subtracting out common revenues to come up with an amount to be assessed to each of the six towns. The Abrahams Group was asked to determine assessments to five towns excluding Warwick, and also six towns including Warwick.

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS:

Matt Abrahams reported that they initially ran six assessments. The first two were run as statutory and the next four were run as alternatives. Matt disclosed that statutory is the preferred methodology from DESE. It begins with the local district contribution from each member town to the region. The alternative methodology does not begin with state district contribution from each member town. The statutory methodology requires a 2/3's vote of member towns whereas the alternative methodology requires 100% of member towns and an annual vote of the alternative assessment methodology.

SALARY SCHEDULE:

Matt presented the new salary schedule that they constructed. They put together a schedule for a combined district that is somewhat based on today's existing schedule. They based it on Gill Montague's FY24 teacher's salary schedule. They created additional steps to ensure that some highest paid PVRSD teachers would not make less than they currently are.

MERGED HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN:

Matt presented a merged health insurance plan. They reviewed the health insurance plans that employees have today and compared the different district's plans. Transferring PVRSD employees to Gill-Montague's plan resulted in about an increase of \$410,848. They also analyzed if Gill-Montague employees went to PVRSD's health insurance plans. That resulted in a decrease of about \$378,877.

COMBINED CENTRAL OFFICE:

The Abrahams Group created a cost analysis of a combined central office in a merged district. The results projected a decrease of about \$316,772.

COMBINED BUDGET:

Matt presented what it would look like with all of these adjustments together (teacher salaries, health insurance, central office). There would be a total cost increase of about \$295,967 with the option of transferring PVRSD employees to the Gill-Montague health plans. The five town (excluding Warwick) estimated total would be about \$38,667,712. The Six Town (including Warwick) estimate total would be \$39,392,536.

Matt explained that the amount to be assessed to each town would be calculated by taking the budget and subtracting revenues. They based revenues off of what the districts have currently. (Five town district revenue is about \$16,044,287. Six town district revenue is about \$16,132,564.)

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS:

Genovese pointed out that all of this information can be found on the STRPB Facebook page. All of this would be contingent upon collective bargaining. Genovese recognized that a lot of information has been shared so they may want to have follow-up meeting after everyone has had a chance to go back and discuss with their respective town's boards.

Montague asked if there is any sort of timeline in place and what the next steps would be if it is decided to move forward with this project.

Genovese explained that if the respective towns wish to pursue this next step would be the towns working together to create a new regional school agreement to see if we could establish something that everyone agrees on. If that doesn't happen this can not move forward. If they can find something that everyone agrees on then it would go to town votes. If all of the participating towns vote in favor of it then there will be a transitional agreement to work through.

Brian Snell asked if any of the collective bargaining units had any feedback during this process. Genovese responded that this is just an exercise of what we know at this time and the collective bargaining units have not been approached as of yet.

Genovese pointed out that there could be significant additions and opportunities at the middle school and high school levels with regionalizing.

Heath Cummings, Northfield BOS, transportation costs, Alan – have looked at that very closely, maybe need an additional bus, can change year to year depending on where students are,

Heath Cummings expressed concerns with cutting central office staff and making more work for

less people.

Richard Kuklewicz suggested all six towns vote on the same day on a new regional agreement if the choice is to move forward with forming a new district.

Christopher Boutwell questioned how the staff and students feel about this. Genovese and Snedeker disclosed that they have received mixed results. Some could see the benefits of becoming larger to include more class offerings, JV teams at the high school, and current programs expanding.

Ginger Robinson expressed concerns with closing schools. Snedeker assured that they were not tasked with closing schools. The idea would be to move all middle schoolers to one school and all high schoolers to another school.

A Gill Finance Committee member requested more information on the mission and the educational opportunities and benefits, not just the finances. Snedeker stated that there is comprehensive information on the website.

Tupper Brown questioned what the next phases would be for the construction of a regional agreement. Genovese explained that they currently have grant money available to implement the next phase going forward to hire someone to work with the towns to establish details of what the new agreement would be that everyone can agree on. They hope to establish different task forces for each area of the agreement.

Snedeker confirmed that the STRPB has funds from DOR already that have been budgeted to send out RFP's. There is also funding set aside for legal aspects.

John Hanold feels that the protection of teachers, salaries and health insurance has been carefully covered, where the merging of a central office seems to be built up from scratch. Hanold just wants to make sure it is looked at as to what residual effect this will have on elementary schools.

All the towns will have their own discussions and then reach out to the STRPB to let them know if the Towns would like to have another all-six town meeting of officials or would they would like representatives from the Planning Board to meet individually with them to discuss the next steps, or the Town officials can send their responses by email or phone.

The following Boards and Committees moved to adjourn their meetings at 8:22

- p.m.:**
- Bernardston Selectboard
 - Gill Selectboard
 - Leyden Selectboard
 - Montague Selectboard
 - Northfield Selectboard
 - Warwick Selectboard
 - Gill Finance Committee
 - Montague Finance Committee

Respectfully submitted, Amanda Carey

TOWN OF GILL

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



**OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SEWER COMMISSIONERS
Sewer Use Charges and Inspection Fees**

To: Town Accountant

You are hereby notified that COMMITMENT(S) as shown below has (have) this day been made by the Board of Sewer Commissioners to Thomas Hodak, Tax Collector (Town Collector) and Collector of Sewer Charges. Bill date is December 4, 2023.

To: Thomas Hodak, Tax Collector (Town Collector) and Collector of Sewer Charges for the Town of Gill in the County of Franklin:

You are hereby required to collect from the several persons named in the list dated December 4, 2023, herewith committed to you the amount of the sewer usage charges assessed therein to each such person, with penalties, the sum total of such list being One Hundred Forty Five and 87/100 Dollars (\$145.87).

Given under our hands the 18th day of December, 2023.

Randy P. Crochier, Sr.

Gregory M. Snedeker

Charles J. Garbiel II

Board of Sewer Commissioners of the Town of Gill