



SELECTBOARD AGENDA & MEETING NOTICE

Mon., March 25, 2024

***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)

Old Business

- Update – Jenkins' bequest of 19 Boyle Road – correspondence from Sue Kramer re proposal for property. May include a vote on accepting or disclaiming the bequest (joint meeting with Historical Commission)
- FirstLight & FERC Relicensing – draft of Motion to Intervene
- 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, 1/2, 2/12, 2/26, 3/11

New Business

- Board of Assessors – pay rate for Assistant to the Assessors
- 2024 road sweeping bids and award
- Digital Equity Plan and application to Mass Broadband Institute to develop Digital Equity Charrette
- Four Winds School – will be closing after this school year and will not be leasing space at Riverside Building after 6/30/24
- Resignation – Amy Gordon from Conservation Commission effective 4/3/24
- Appointments
 - Evan Fox, 8 South Cross Rd, to Conservation Commission through 6/30/26
 - Tracy Dowd, 266 Main Rd, as Alternate Member of Zoning Board of Appeals through 6/30/26
 - Board of Fire Engineers for 5/1/24 – 4/30/25
- Annual Town Meeting – Monday, May 6th @ 7:00 PM.
 - Deadline for petition articles is Monday, April 15th at Noon.
- Other business as may arise after the agenda has been posted.
- Public Service Announcements, if any
- Warrants
 - FY24 #19 Vendors (\$31,396.17) & Payroll (\$36,557.33) – reviewed & signed on 03/11/24
 - FY24 #20 – review & sign

Adjournment

Other Invitations/Meetings:

Date	Time	Event	Location
Mon 4/8	5:30 PM	Selectboard Meeting	Town Hall
Mon 4/22	5:30 PM	Selectboard Meeting	Town Hall

Dear Selectboard,

I know that Renee Jenkins' generous gift to the town - of her historical home - has been problematic. Before you disclaim the gift, a number of people in town would like you to pursue other avenues. Cliff Hatch and I are particularly concerned about what happens to Renee's property because we are the abutters. We will be attending your next meeting, along with my real estate lawyer. The town is in a unique position to clear up a non-conforming house lot, end a long-standing boundary dispute, and - at the same time - receive a substantial financial gift. We appreciate the chance to talk to you.

Historical Background of Cross Road

The land I own next to Renee was owned by John Arms in 1840, when the town built a schoolhouse on a small corner of his land. The schoolhouse property was sold for the first time in 1875. A number of families lived in the house over the years and used land around it. The first legal deed was a quit claim deed in 1911. In 1946 Renee Parody and her husband got title to the house and ¼ acre of land. Their parcel of land shrunk when Boyle Road was widened.

In 1987, my late husband, Tony Mathews, and I bought the 16 acres on two sides of Renee's house. We put the land under Chapter 61b. It is used by many people for recreation. Tony created a sugarbush on the east side of the brook and our son hopes to build a sugarhouse there. Our daughter and her family now live on a 2-acre parcel in the woods right above Renee's house. I want the remaining land to remain in a natural state for continued public use. Dick French is approaching the state about turning the Unadilla Brook, which runs through the center of my property, into a Greenway.

Cliff owns the land on the third side of Renee's house. It is protected farmland under the APR program.

There are two historical sites on my piece of land: the Grisley sawmill [the first mill built in Gill, according to Dick French] from the 1700s, and the Arms Tavern from 1820. I have a strong interest in preserving this historic section of Gill, with its many stone foundations, the 1827 Methodist Church and the 1840 schoolhouse.

The Boundary Dispute

Right after Tony and I bought the Arms Lot, Tony visited the Parodys to introduce himself and talk about our boundary. He told them we had no problem with them continuing to use our titled land as a backyard (land we were also paying taxes on.) He offered to let them throw brush into our woods. But he also said, "Please don't use any more of our land without talking to us."

In the early 1990s, we noticed that some of our trees had been cut down along the edge of the backyard, and Mr. Parody had put up a fence in the woods. We immediately approached the

family, suggesting they buy the land they were using, at below market value. The family refused to deal with us, saying they already owned the land through adverse possession.

In 2009, Tony found out he didn't have long to live and wanted to take another shot at clearing up this messy situation so that our children would not have to inherit it. We had a survey done. It showed our boundary line running through Renee's garage. Not wanting to appear aggressive, we did not install the boundary pin right next to the house.

Tony and I again offered to sell the backyard. Renee [now Jenkins] would have received a legal claim to the land for a lot less money than filing for an adverse possession claim in Land Court. Clear title to the backyard would have made it possible to convey the land more easily. (Tony and I were not going to make any money on this deal, since we offered to pay all legal and surveying expenses, but we would have profited from peace of mind.)

Our offer was rejected. In 2017 I communicated with Renee's daughter and her husband about settling things once Renee died. Renee's heirs could either buy land they needed from me, or I would consider buying the house from them. Cliff recently approached Renee's son, saying he would be very interested in buying the house as well.

I was surprised when Renee left the house to the town of Gill. Yes, it once was a historic red schoolhouse, but now it was an extremely rundown, altered building on a miniscule lot, with an ancient well and septic system clearly violating Board of Health Regulations. Maybe Renee thought the town would fix up her property, but maybe she knew it wasn't realistic. Many people who have been inside the house have called it an obvious "tear down."

I wrote to Ray as soon as I heard about the gift and said I wanted to work with the town to finally clear up my boundary problem. Before I could think about how to proceed, I heard that Renee's heirs had already lined up a buyer for the house – before the town had even disclaimed it.

This raised a number of issues:

A non-conforming property is grandfathered to sell, but wouldn't it need a Title V inspection?

Grandfathered land allows for repairs to a septic system, but how would the new owner repair the septic system? Part of the present system could very well be on my land or town land.

What would happen if the old system failed? A new system would need a perc test and substantial acreage. Would the new owner have the interest/resources to buy land from me?

Most worrisome, would the new owner assume the backyard came with the property? Instead of trying to settle the boundary dispute, would he make things worse by using more and more of my land?

The Jenkins Estate

No one really knows what Renee's intention was when she gifted her property to the town. Maybe she left things vague on purpose, so that the town would have options. Renee did not put a stipulation in her will that, should the town have no use for the historical structure, it be turned back to her heirs. Why not?

I think that Renee was wanting to keep a terrible entanglement out of her estate. She had never gotten a titled claim to the backyard (through either a sale or court case) so she would have been leaving her heirs a barely-livable, possibly unsellable piece of property with a potential lawsuit hanging over it. She didn't want to pass on a headache to them.

This whole problematic land situation started the day the town closed the schoolhouse 150 years ago and left the property with unclear boundary lines. Maybe Renee thought it was time for the town to find a solution for this messy situation.

When it seemed apparent that Renee's heirs did not want the abutters to have the property, Cliff and I conferred and decided that it would be in our best interests - and the town's - if I were to try buying the land from the town. I'm the one who can create a conforming lot.

Here are some possibilities we came up with for the property, should I gain ownership:

- 1) I would create a conforming lot, then Cliff would buy the property from me (either before or after it got a new well and septic.) He would fix up the house and use it for family, or perhaps to house some of his farm workers.
- 2) I would choose to fix up the house myself. I would create an accessible, one-story home right next door to my daughter, where I could live in my old age.

My son Cory Mathews and contractor Toby Briggs (both of Boyle Road) would love to take on the challenge of renovating the house. We're in a unique position to do this because we have lots of lumber and other building materials left behind by Tony. In respect for the historical nature of the house, we would do our best to keep the house standing. If the only way to fix the house was to tear it down to its frame and rebuild it, both carpenters have experience doing this.

We would save any historical items we might uncover, and donate them to the museum.

Either of these scenarios would leave the town an attractive, valuable property added to the tax roll.

My Financial Claim

I plan to file a claim against the estate while it is in probate. I feel like I have no recourse, if the Jenkins family wants an acquaintance to move into the house with this boundary problem unsolved.

I have a proposal for the selectboard, which will honor Renee's basic intent of leaving something of considerable worth to the town. My lawyer has come up with tentative steps

whereby I could buy the property without a lot of expense and hassle on the town's part. I'm prepared to make a very generous offer for the house, knowing my money will be used for town projects. (Maybe more historical markers!) I would pay legal fees, appraisal costs and any other expenses incurred by the town.

I realize any proposal will have to be run by the town lawyer, and be submitted for a town meeting vote, but I am motivated to pursue my chance to finally clear up my boundary, even at substantial expense. I apologize for bringing this proposal to you at such a late date. It took a while for me to think through the matter and then find the right lawyer. My lawyer is a former selectman from Montague who has extensive experience dealing with land issues and municipalities. He'll answer any questions you may have when he comes to the meeting.

Let's see if we can all work together. We have time. Thanks for your consideration.

Sue Kramer

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

In re:

FirstLight MA Hydro LLC
Northfield Mountain LLC

) Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project No. 1889-085
) Northfield Mountain Project No. 2485-071

**MOTION TO INTERVENE
OF TOWN OF GILL, MASSACHUSETTS**

Pursuant to Rules 210, 212, and 214 of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's ("Commission") Rules of Practice and Procedure, 18 C.F.R. § 385.210, 385.212, and 385.214, the Town of Gill, Massachusetts ("Movant") hereby moves to intervene and request party status in this proceeding.

On April 29, 2016, FirstLight Hydro Generating Company filed a Final License Application for the Turners Falls Project and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project while several relicensing studies were still underway. On December 4, 2020, FirstLight MA Hydro LLC, owner of the Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project and Northfield Mountain LLC, owner of the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project, collectively "FirstLight," filed an Amended Final License Application ("AFLA"). FERC issued a letter of deficiency and additional information request on January 14, 2021 and an additional information request on April 19, 2021.

FirstLight then re-engaged interested parties in separate settlement negotiations starting in late 2021. On March 31, 2023, FirstLight filed a Flows and Fish Passage Settlement Agreement, which also included whitewater releases for recreation. On June 12, 2023, FirstLight filed a Recreation Settlement Agreement.

On February 22, 2024, the Commission issued a Notice of Application Accepted for Filing, Soliciting Motions to Intervene and Protests, Ready for Environmental Analysis, and Soliciting Comments, Recommendations, Preliminary Terms and Conditions, and Fishway Prescriptions, requiring motions to intervene to be filed on or before April 22, 2024.

I. Communications and Service of Process

All communications, pleadings and orders with respect to this proceeding should be sent to the following individuals. In the event of personnel or board member changes, the person in the positions listed below will serve the same role.

Name:	Ray Purington, Town Administrator
Address:	Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354
Phone:	413-863-9347
Email:	administrator@gillmass.org
Name:	Randy Crochier, Chair, Selectboard
Address:	Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354
Phone:	413-863-9347
Email:	administrator@gillmass.org ghxydad77@yahoo.com
Name:	<u>Paul Sievert</u> , Chair, Conservation Commission
Address:	Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354
Phone:	413-863-9347
Email:	administrator@gillmass.org psievert@eco.umass.edu
<u>Name:</u>	<u>Kit Carpenter</u> , Chair, Historical Commission
<u>Address:</u>	<u>Town Hall, 325 Main Road, Gill, MA 01354</u>
<u>Phone:</u>	<u>413-863-9347</u>
<u>Email:</u>	<u>kitc16@comcast.net</u>

II. Position of the Town of Gill

Pursuant to the Commission's rules, 18 C.F.R. § 385.214(b)(1), requiring a statement of the Town's position, the Town seeks to have any license issued by FERC conditioned to assure that the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project does not cause erosion. The Town of Gill is deeply interested in project impacts on erosion upstream of the Turners Falls Dam. Erosion caused by the Pumped Storage Project degrades water quality in violation of state and federal clean water laws, harms fish and wildlife habitat, causes the loss of land along the river including prime agricultural land, threatens important transportation and municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, increases flood risks, and damages important historical and cultural resources. The FERC license for this facility should include conditions that will prevent these harms by erosion from occurring.

As a party to the recreation settlement agreement filed with FERC on June 12, 2023, the Town of Gill supports the recreation provisions in the settlement agreement and requests FERC to

accept the Recreation Management Plan. The recreation settlement agreement satisfies the Town's recreational interests with regard to the operation of both projects.

In accordance with Section 2.2 of the Recreation Settlement Agreement, ~~though~~although we were not a party to the flows and fish passage settlement agreement, the Town of Gill has agreed not to oppose any of the terms of the flows and fish passage settlement agreement. The Town has an interest in the Connecticut River being a healthy river ecosystem.

The filing of this Motion shall not be construed in any way as lack of support for the recreation settlement agreement or opposition to any of the terms of the flows and fish passage settlement agreement.

III. Interests of Movant

The Town has ample interest in participating in this matter to justify intervention as required by the Commission's rules, 18 C.F.R. § 385.214(b)(2).

A. Direct Interests

The Town of Gill is a duly incorporated municipality in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with the responsibility to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the community. The Connecticut River forms the southern and eastern boundary of Gill and is a vital part of the culture, history and economy of the Town. The River serves as a central recreational, tourism and natural resource for both the Town's 1,551 residents¹ and visitors. The Connecticut River floodplain continues to be utilized by diversified farms that grow fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and livestock for meat. The Gill side of Barton Cove draws visitors and residents alike for kayaking, birding, fishing, boating, and camping. Gill is also known for its excellent co-educational boarding and day school, Northfield Mount Hermon. Town residents regularly use and care about the area of the Connecticut River affected by the presence and operation of the Turners Falls Dam and Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project, owned and operated by FirstLight.

Town context and financial interest

The Town of Gill is directly impacted by operations of both projects and will be directly impacted by the proposed relicensing. More than half of the man-made portions of the~~The~~

¹¹ U.S. 2020 Census population

Turners Falls Dam structure lies ~~partially~~ in Gill, and the impoundment formed by the dam and used as the lower reservoir for the Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project affects the riverbanks in Gill. The Town of Gill interests include the Prime Agricultural land, recreational amenities, local and regional economies, wetlands, wildlife habitat including aquatic habitat, undeveloped riparian land, agricultural irrigation water, and the many significant archaeological, cultural, and historical sites within our town and the entire project boundary.

FirstLight is one of the largest landowners in the Town of Gill and is the largest taxpayer, accounting for 8.7% of the total assessed real and personal property taxes for Fiscal Year 2024. In addition to the actual infrastructure of the Turners Falls Dam, the power company owns most of the riverfront land along the Connecticut River upstream of the dam. FirstLight MA Hydro LLC owns 42 parcels encompassing 235 acres of land in Gill, and Northfield Mountain LLC owns 7 parcels encompassing 133 acres. Combined, the two power company entities own a total of 4.3% of the land area of the Town. FirstLight properties in Gill have a total assessed value of \$18 million, according to the Gill Board of Assessors.

FirstLight is the largest taxpayer in the Town of Gill, accounting for 11.2% of the total assessed real and personal property taxes for Fiscal Year 2018. FirstLight owns 325 acres of land in Gill, which is 3.4% of the land area of the Town.²

The Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMH), a 650-student private, co-educational, college preparatory school for boarding and day students, is located within the Town of Gill ~~on~~ at the northern end of town. The school has its own wastewater treatment system that discharges to the Connecticut River. The NMH School has ~~a~~ very successful Boys' and Girls' Varsity Rowing Teams, and is dependent upon river access, stable riverbanks and adequate water levels to maintain the success of their rowing programs. NMH's spring boy's and girl's rowing teams are a draw to attracting students to enroll at the NMH School, and the regattas provide an economic boost to Gill's and other area businesses. In the spring of 2020, NMH opened the Draper Riverhouse, a new on-campus boathouse on the Connecticut River.

Recreation interests

Recreational amenities associated with the Projects are located within our town and are important to the regional and local economies and quality of life of our residents. Existing recreation facilities owned by FirstLight in Gill include Barton Cove Campground, Barton Cove Canoe and Kayak Rental facility, and the Franklin County Boat Club, which is a private club ~~that~~ is operating on riverfront land ~~owned by~~ rented from FirstLight. Relicensing Study 3.6.1,

² 2021 Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Recreation Use/User Contact Survey Study Report, found that of 945 survey responses, 69% were from 10 or fewer miles away. Local residents regularly visit and recreate on the Connecticut River.

The state-owned Barton Cove boat ramp is a public boat ramp in Gill, located within the Project bounds. Parking for this boat ramp is mostly set up for vehicles and trailers that transport motor boats. For this important recreational asset to function, the Project must provide adequate water levels during boating season (late April – early November) for boat passage through the channel in Barton Cove and into the Connecticut River.

Gill's 2021 Open Space and Recreation Plan included the following river-related items in its 7-year action plan:

- Take an active role in the FERC relicensing process for FirstLight's hydroelectric facilities and strongly advocate for riverbank stabilization and erosion mitigation measures to be included in the new 50-year operating licenses.
- Explore the feasibility of improving the Stacy's Ferry public land for use as park, picnic area and river access for kayaks and canoes, including ADA accessibility.
- Include FirstLight, the Gill-Montague School District, The Nature Conservancy, and Northfield Mount Hermon School as well as other entities on the mailing lists for meetings of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and the Recreation Committee as a way of communicating the town's interest in a mutually beneficial relationship with these organizations.
- Request FirstLight to host an annual outdoor education program at one of its Gill properties.
- Investigate with FirstLight the possibility of creating a public access park on land between Riverview Drive and the Connecticut River, similar to the walking path and picnic area on the Montague side.

Land uses along the Connecticut River

There are 20 landowners whose property boundaries include the riverbank of the Connecticut River. These landowners depend on the Town of Gill's Conservation Commission to take an active role in enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. c. 131 §40), mitigating riverbank erosion and sedimentation on lands under water during the operation of the Northfield Mountain Pump Storage Project and Turners Falls Hydroelectric Project along the 10.3 miles of river frontage in Gill. Over the years, the town's [conservation commission](#) [Conservation Commission](#) has issued Wetlands Protection Act permits for FirstLight's riverbank restoration projects to prevent additional erosion and loss of farmland.

Shortly after Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage became operational, landowners began complaining of bank erosion from project operations. Landowners have described losing up to 30 feet of land to erosion over the last 50 years. Terraces and beaches have been replaced by steep eroding banks.

Among the 20 landowners are eight with private homes located within the 100 Year Flood Zone. These landowners and homeowners depend on controlled water releases from the Turners Falls dam during high river flow situations in order to reduce the risk of personal injury and property damage caused by flooding.

Additionally, 10 seasonal or year-round private “camps” in Gill are located on land owned by FirstLight. These are held under revocable 5-year licenses with FirstLight, with the exception of three remaining “life licenses” (as of 2008) that will become 5-year licenses after the life licenses are transferred to a new owner.³ Many of these camps have private boat docks licensed through Massachusetts Chapter 91 regulations with FirstLight as landowner.⁴

The Emergency Action Plan for Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project produced by FirstLight Power [Resources Services, LLC](#) includes inundation maps for the Northfield Main Dam and the Northwest Dike of the Northfield Mountain Reservoir in Erving. Both the dam and the dike are classified as Significant Hazard Potential by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Office of Dam Safety. According to inundation maps included in the Emergency Action Plan, if the dike were to fail, floodplain areas in Gill along the Connecticut River south of Four Mile Brook in Northfield would be impacted. Upon failure of the dike, residents would have approximately 36 minutes to 1 hour and 24 minutes before flooding. Residences and businesses located in the Riverside residential neighborhood would be greatly impacted. Upon failure, residents would have approximately 39 to 48 minutes before flooding. There is currently no flood warning siren ~~in~~[serving](#) the Riverside neighborhood, [including the Franklin County Boat Club and the state-owned Barton Cove boat ramp](#). FirstLight has implemented a reverse call system for residences within the inundation area of the dam or dike, which would send a message to registered phone numbers within minutes of a failure.

Infrastructure interests

³ See FirstLight Hydro Generating Company Request for Authorization of Non-Project Use and Occupancy of Project Lands dated October 10, 2008. Accession Number 20081010-5144.

⁴ The camps are managed by FirstLight as non project use of project lands. See FERC Order Modifying and Approving Non-Project Use of Project Lands and Waters issued October 28, 2009, Accession Number 20091028-3034.

A town-owned sewer pump station, which serves 115 homes and businesses in the Town of Gill's Riverside neighborhood, is located within 70 feet of the Connecticut River shoreline, and is adjacent to a stream and culvert maintained by FirstLight. The pump station sends wastewater under the Connecticut River to the Town of Montague's system for treatment at the Montague ~~Water Pollution Control~~[Clean Water](#) Facility. During high river flow situations, controlled releases at the Turners Falls Dam are critical to preventing flood damage to this vital piece of [Riverside](#) infrastructure. The Riverside Archaeological District and the Riverside Village Historic District in Gill in this section of town are both on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gill has a spectacular cantilever arch bridge over the Connecticut River at the French King Gorge between Erving and Gill on Route 2. The French King Bridge ~~was~~[was](#) completed in 1932, and that year received an Annual Merit Award as "the most beautiful steel bridge" from the American Institute of Steel Construction. Recently restored, the bridge is listed on the State Register of Historic Places. Safety barriers were installed in 2023 as a suicide prevention measure.

Indigenous, archaeological, and historical interests

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth indicates there are more than 30 recorded ancient Native American archaeological sites and at least 4 historical period archaeological sites along the Connecticut River in Gill. The upper Connecticut River valley in Gill has been used and inhabited by Native American groups for settlement, resource procurement and transportation from about 12,000 years ago through the historical period. Significant historic and archaeological resources are likely to be present within undeveloped archaeologically sensitive areas in proximity to the Connecticut River and other freshwater sources. These areas can provide important information for understanding Native American and settler-colonist history.

For these reasons, the Town has a direct and substantial interest in the outcome of the relicensing process for the Northfield Pumped Storage Project and the Turners Falls Project.

B. Public Interest

The Town's responsibility to protect the interests of its residents and respond to any potential adverse impacts to its residents associated with the relicensing of the referenced projects is, by its very nature, in the public interest. The Town of Gill is not just responsible for protecting its direct interests but also those of its residents and the public throughout the course of this relicensing.

The operations of the Turners Falls [Dam-Project](#) and Northfield [Mountain](#) Pumped Storage Project affect the public interest by operating recreation facilities in Gill along the Connecticut River, causing erosion and contributing to the loss of prime farmland, diminishment of aquatic and riparian habitat for rare and endangered species and decline in water quality. Such impacts would significantly affect the quality of life, economic well-being, and access to a clean environment for the Town's residents.

The Town has long demonstrated its interest in both matters through several years of active participation in proceedings before the Commission and negotiations with the Applicant involving both [the](#) Turners Falls [Dam-Project](#) and the Northfield [Mountain](#) Pump Storage Project. Over the past 50 years, the Town of Gill has submitted dozens of letters to FERC regarding matters related to both Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project (P-2485) and Turners Falls [ProjectDam](#) (P-1889). Most recently, in June of 2023, the Town of Gill signed on as a party to a recreation settlement agreement to both licenses. In 2019, the Town filed a Protest and Motion to Intervene regarding the transfer of both licenses to separate limited liability companies (LLCs). The Town of Gill, through its Conservation Commission, has submitted numerous letters related to license compliance, riverbank restoration, and erosion along the banks of the Connecticut River.

For all these reasons, the Town has a strong interest in the effective management and stewardship of lands within the Connecticut River watershed affected by the referenced projects.

IV. Conclusion

Granting intervenor status to the Town of Gill will allow the Town to present an important perspective and relevant information for the Commission's consideration. The Town is coordinating with other municipalities in Franklin County with the support of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and will, except where interests diverge, endeavor to coordinate the Town's participation with FRCOG and other similarly situated communities to minimize duplication and ensure the efficient presentation of relevant information to the Commission.

For these reasons, the Town respectfully requests that the Commission grant this Motion to Intervene as a party with full rights to participate in all further proceedings.

[Name] [Ray Purington](#)

Date

[Title] [Town Administrator](#)

[Address/contact info] [Town of Gill](#)

[325 Main Road](#)

[Gill, MA 01354](#)

[Telephone: 413-863-9347](#)

[Email: administrator@gillmass.org](#)

DRAFT 3/25

Position Title: **Assistant to the Assessors**
Department **Board of Assessors**
Reports to: **Chair, Board of Assessors**
Status: **Regular part-time employee**

Statement of Duties

Position consists of clerical and administrative functions in support of the day-to-day operations of the Assessor's Office including valuation of real and personal property within the Town of Gill.

Supervision

The employee works under the general supervision of the Chair of the Board of Assessors. Work is done independently, in accordance with town policies and applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws, and regulations of the Department of Revenue. The employee has substantial independence in planning and organizing the work activities, including determining the work methods to meet the desired objectives, deadlines and priorities.

Supervision Responsibility

Employee is not responsible for the regular supervision of any town employees. There is, however, a responsibility for monitoring and/or overseeing the work of contracted services.

Nature and Purpose of Relationships

Relationships are primarily with co-workers and the public involving frequent explanation, discussion or interpretation of practices, procedures, regulations or guidelines in order to render service, plan or coordinate work efforts, or resolve operating problems. Town officials, realtors, property appraisers, developers, attorneys, bank officials, representatives of the Department of Revenue, consultants contracted through the Assessor's office for mapping and valuations, as well as the general public are frequent project companions and communication and assistance with these individuals is part of the daily work. Contact usually occurs in person, in writing, or on the phone. More than ordinary courtesy, tact and diplomacy will be required.

Work Environment

Employee performs work in a municipal office setting subject to frequent interruptions and moderate noise levels. Noise or physical surroundings may be distracting, but conditions are generally not unpleasant. Employment is based upon a fixed number of hours per year. The work week has an established posted number of open office hours each week and a posted meeting of the Board at least alternate weeks in the evening

Position responsibilities follow well-defined or detailed rules, instructions and procedures covering most aspects of work. Judgment is needed to choose the appropriate practices, procedures, regulations, or guidelines to apply to each case. Work consists of simple, routine, or repetitive tasks and/or operations with few variations in established procedures.

Errors can result in a delay of service or monetary loss.

Confidentiality

The employee has access to confidential information such as legal proceedings, client and/department records, including personal financial information and tax exemption and

abatement applications. Accordingly the employee must ensure the confidentiality and security of sensitive information.

Productive Work Environment

The employee is required to work in a manner that is positive, productive, respectful, and encourages teamwork at all times.

Occupational Risk

Duties generally do not present occupational risks to the employee.

Position Duties and Responsibilities

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustration of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to, or extension of the position. This list is not in any specific order of importance, and the work is to be performed as prioritized and directed by the Chair of the Board of Assessors.

1. Verifies that all deed, excise and building permit information is accurate and entered into the database system.
2. Reviews preliminary lists of all motor vehicle and boat excise tax bills, identifies exempt accounts, prepares commitments for Collector and Accountant, and prepares all related reports.
3. Receives all incoming calls, emails, and visitors to the office; responds to inquiries or requests for assistance or directs customers to the appropriate personnel for assistance.
4. Inputs and updates property record card information and other data into computer as required, and generates reports as requested.
5. Performs clerical duties for the department; prepares correspondence; copies documents; maintains and updates files and records; and prepares mailings.
6. Processes vendor invoices for payment; submits information to the Accountant for payment; maintains records of expenditures.
7. Receives real estate exemption applications and motor vehicle excise tax abatement applications; reviews applications to ensure proper documentation is submitted; determines eligibility of applicants according to established requirements; present application to Board of Assessors for determination; notify applicant, Collector, and Accountant of Board's determination, as appropriate.
8. Receives real estate and personal property tax abatement applications; starts and tracks timeline for Assessors to act on each application; communicate decisions to applicant, Collector, and Accountant as appropriate; maintain record of action.
9. Prepares Appellate Tax Board case documents for Board of Assessors and/or legal counsel.
10. Collects information for updates to tax maps, including deeds and plans filed at the Registry of Deeds.

11. Drafts request for Proposals for Assessing services including Consultants, mapping services and appraisals.
12. Assists in the online filing of the forms for the Department of Revenue for the interim and quinquennial revaluation processes.
13. Attends meetings of the Board of Assessors; prepares the agenda in consultation with the Chair; takes and writes meeting minutes.
14. Assists town departments, boards, committees and the public with research of deeds, plans, ownership information, as needed.
15. Prepares abutters lists for town departments, boards, committees and the public.
16. Maintains database for Overlay account; and keeps account balanced with Accountant.
17. Prepares monthly reports for Collector and Accountant; maintains database and file copies.
18. Prepares and processes Chapter 61, 61A & 61B applications, liens, and rollback calculations, and maintains the database.
19. Maintains an adequate level of office supplies, orders additional supplies as required.

Education and Experience

Associate's degree or beyond with strong computer and bookkeeping skills and at least one to three (1-3) years of office experience, municipal or appraisal experience preferred, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

Employee is required to complete online Conflict of Interest Law training provided by Massachusetts State Ethics Commission. Employee is required to successfully complete online *Course 101, Introduction to Assessment Administration* training provided by Department of Revenue Division of Local Services. There is annual training supported by the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officials (MAAO), held the first full week of August and paid for by the town (subject to appropriation). There are additional opportunities for training presented by local professional associations throughout the year. Employee will attend job-related training as required.

Knowledge, Abilities and Skills

Knowledge: Working knowledge of Microsoft Office software applications including email, word processing, and spreadsheets

Abilities and Skills:

- Plan and prioritize work, perform multiple tasks within a timely manner, and be self-motivated
- Communicate clearly and concisely verbally and in writing
- Interact appropriately and effectively and establish and maintain effective working relationships with Assessors, committee members, town employees and officials, and the general public

- Use the internet effectively to obtain information in support of department operations
- Operate Windows-based computers and other office equipment in an efficient manner
- Organize and maintain accurate and detailed electronic and records
- Compose meeting minutes, hearing records, town reports, and other documents
- Review and edit documents of self and others
- Perform work accurately and efficiently despite frequent interruption

Physical and Mental Requirements

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals to perform the position's essential functions.

- Physical Skills: Little or no physical demands are required to perform the work. Work effort principally involves sitting to perform work tasks (approximately 2/3 of the time), with intermittent periods of stooping, walking, and standing (approximately 1/3 of the time). The employee is occasionally required to lift, push, or pull objects such as office equipment, office supplies, and/or printer/copier paper, generally weighing 10 pounds or less.
- Motor Skills: Duties may involve assignments requiring application of hand and eye coordination with finger dexterity and motor coordination such as the operation of a computer and other office equipment, filing of papers, and stuffing envelopes.
- Vision and Hearing Skills: The employee is required to constantly read printed and electronic documents and reports for understanding and analytical purposes. The employee is rarely required to review non-written materials or to determine color differences. The employee is required to make and receive telephone calls.

This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee, and the employer may exercise its employment-at-will rights at any time. This job description is subject to change by the employer, as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.

FY24 WAGE COMPENSATION PLAN

Adjusted to reflect Annual Cost of Living Adjustment percentage approved by Annual Town Meeting.

	Through Year 2	Yearly Salary	3-4 Years	Yearly Salary	5-6 Years	Yearly Salary	7-8 Years	Yearly Salary	9-10 Years	Yearly Salary	Max Year 11	Yearly Salary
Grade Level	A		B		C		D		E		F	
1	11.50	24,150.00	11.96	25,116.00	12.42	26,082.00	12.92	27,132.00	13.44	28,224.00	13.99	29,379.00
2	14.07	29,547.00	14.65	30,765.00	15.22	31,962.00	15.81	33,201.00	16.45	34,545.00	17.11	35,931.00
3	16.58	34,818.00	17.23	36,183.00	17.90	37,590.00	18.61	39,081.00	19.37	40,677.00	20.15	42,315.00
4	20.69	43,449.00	21.52	45,192.00	22.35	46,935.00	23.27	48,867.00	24.18	50,778.00	25.14	52,794.00
5	23.99	50,379.00	24.95	52,395.00	25.95	54,495.00	26.99	56,679.00	28.05	58,905.00	29.17	61,257.00
6	28.85	60,585.00	30.01	63,021.00	31.22	65,562.00	32.45	68,145.00	33.77	70,917.00	35.12	73,752.00
7	30.18	63,378.00	31.40	65,940.00	32.62	68,502.00	33.94	71,274.00	35.31	74,151.00	36.72	77,112.00
8	32.25	67,725.00	33.54	70,434.00	34.87	73,227.00	36.28	76,188.00	37.70	79,170.00	39.25	82,425.00

COLA	FY2006	3.10%	FY2007	2.50%	FY2008	2.75%	FY2009	4.15%	FY2010	0.00%
	FY2011	3.00%	FY2012	1.30%	FY2013	3.00%	FY2014	1.70%	FY2015	1.50%
	FY2016	1.70%	FY2017	0.00%	FY2018	2.00%	FY2019	2.00%	FY2020	2.80%
	FY2021	1.30%	FY2022	1.30%	FY2023	6.00%	FY2024	6.00%		

Dept.	Position	Grade	Dept.	Position	Grade	Dept.	Position	Grade	Dept.	Position	Grade
Fire:			Police			Highway			Town Hall		
	Firefighter	3		Part-time	4		Laborer	4		Custodian	2
	Engineer	4		Full-time	5		Mech/Oper	5		Clerical	3
	Chief	8		Sergeant	7		Foreman/OP	5		Administrative Clerk	4
				Chief	8		Superintendent	7		Asst. to Assessors	5
Library:										Adminstrative Asst.	7
	Assistant Director	3								Town Administrator	8
	Director	4									

Name

Ray Purington

Name of Municipality, Municipalities, or Regions

Town of Gill

Which county is your community or communities located in?

Franklin

Are you applying for a short term (1-3 month) Digital Equity Charrette or a longer term (6 - 8 month) Digital Equity Plan?

Charrette

What is your desired start date?

4/1/2024

What is your desired end date?

07/1/2024 UTC

What is the total population of the geography?

1550

Name and Contact of Lead Staff from all Applying Municipalities

Ray Purington, 413-863-9347 or administrator@gillmass.org

Please list the qualified census tracts, as defined by HUD, that fall within your geography

402.03

Please list the school districts within your geography that receive universal free lunch

Gil-Montague School District

Please indicate the % of households at or below 300% the poverty line

Based on 2020 Census, the poverty rate in Gill is 9.2%

Please indicate the % of households at or below 185% the poverty line

Based on 2020 Census data, the poverty rate in Gill is 9.2%

Please provide a brief overview of why you are applying for a digital equity planning grant at this time. How is the issue manifesting in your community, what knowledge do you hope to gain through the process, who will benefit from the plan, etc

Digital equity issues have manifested in Gill, as internet access and technological literacy have proven requisite to conducting business, completing assignments and research at all levels of education, participating in civic meetings, and engaging in personal communications. The town of Gill is familiar with some of the common issues that residents face, but have not had the capacity to understand the source or depth of these challenges in order to plan how best to resolve them. Through expert guidance, peer learning, and community engagement, the town hopes to understand how best to serve residents, particularly those with low and moderate incomes, seniors, and students. The key areas of learning the communities would like to explore include: 1) Affordable Access to Devices. We are looking to understand the types of devices most in-demand and by whom, and to determine whether existing library-based and school-based lending services are sufficient or need to be supplemented by other services; 2) Affordable broadband access. Gill is a cable town, with Comcast as the main provider. While much of the town received good service, there are still some areas that are underserved and residents who lack access. The town seeks to better understand access issues to learn whether barriers to internet access are financial in nature (particularly now, with the end of the ACP), due to the lack of available internet infrastructure, or exist for other reasons; 3) Digital Literacy. The Slate Memorial Library and Gill-Montague Senior Center are a central resource for access to technology and internet. In particular, the Senior Center currently is offering assistance through a six-week computer laptop class, and drop-in tech assistance. We hope to learn how best to enhance the lives of residents by equipping them with skills for participation in today's society, and to understand the best and most feasible opportunities for the town to pursue.

Are there any specific processes or activities that you want to make sure are a component of the planning activity?

- Determine how many households have ACP, and options for those households now that ACP is going away
- Identify the households have yet to be connected and determine reasons why they aren't connected
- Conduct a needs assessment about digital literacy and device access through a town-wide survey.

Are there any specific outcomes your community hopes to achieve upon completion of this plan?

- Make sure that every household that wants an internet connection has one and that cost is not the barrier to getting connected.
- Find out where the digital literacy gaps are in our community and create a series of educational events to close that gap.
- Analyze the technology being used by our residents and determine if devices are adequate and current.

Who are the key stakeholders or organizations in your municipality or region that you think should be involved in this effort?

Town of Gill; Gill-Montague School District; Gill-Montague Senior Center

To your knowledge, are there any ongoing digital equity activities occurring in your community?

Through the Gill-Montague Senior Center, a 6 week laptop course is being offered, as well as tech help. These are primarily geared towards seniors.

Please describe how this planning effort will complement or support other concurrent or existing planning activities (Master Plan, HPP, OSRP, etc)

We don't have the personnel and expertise to execute a comprehensive digital equity needs assessment. The planning effort will complete the assessment so we can learn where best to focus resources to achieve better digital equity in our community.

Please describe how municipal staff will support the effective execution of the digital equity planning activities, including any support in connecting with community stakeholders, facilitating events, engaging public officials, etc.

Our town administrator and support staff, select board members, school administrators, librarian, senior center and dozens of citizen volunteers will support efforts on behalf of digital equity.

Are you applying as an individual municipality or as a regional applicant?

Individual

TOWN OF GILL

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



March 25, 2024

Massachusetts Broadband Institute
75 North Drive
Westborough, MA 01581

To Whom It May Concern:

The Town of Gill is excited to write this letter in support of an application to the Massachusetts Broadband Institute to develop a Digital Equity Charrette. Gill is interested in closing the digital equity gap by analyzing the current needs of our residents. We are also interested in analyzing the strengths of our digital equity assets, and assessing where there might be gaps.

By submitting this application, Gill's town leadership hopes to promote increased digital access by identifying and building capacity to address areas for growth. The creation of this plan will allow for efficient and equitable municipal decision-making in a time where digital access is increasingly critical.

Please contact Ray Purington, Town Administrator for the Town of Gill at 413-863-9347 or administrator@gillmass.org.

Sincerely,

Ray Purington
Town Administrator



Gill Fire Department

196A MAIN ROAD • GILL, MA 01354-1605 • (413) 863-8955 • FAX: (413) 863-0126
Chief Gene M. Beaubien E-mail: firedept@gillmass.org

21 March 2024

Board of Selectmen
Town of Gill
325 Main Road
Gill, MA 01354

Dear Selectmen,

Today, the Board of Fire Engineers nominated the following candidates for appointment as members for the 2024-25 fiscal year:

Gene Beaubien
William Borcy
Stuart Elliott
Andrew Howell
William Kimball
Greg Parody
Mitchell Waldron
Forester Menson
Jake Whitney

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stuart Elliott, clerk

TOWN OF GILL

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



TO: All Boards, Committees, and Departments
FR: Ray Purington
DATE: March 22, 2024
RE: Annual Town Meeting & Article Request Form

The Annual Town Meeting will begin on **MONDAY, MAY 6TH at 7:00 PM.** The plan is to address routine and non-financial articles that night and continue the meeting to Tuesday, June 11th at 7:00 PM for the budget and other “money” articles.

The deadline for submitting articles by petition for this meeting is Tuesday April 16th at Noon in order to allow enough time to compile the articles, present them to the Selectboard, and have them reviewed by Town Counsel. Please use the accompanying form.

If you have an article you would like the Selectboard to consider adding to the warrant and do not want to go through the petition process, please contact me to discuss next steps.

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



To see if the Town will vote to _____,

_____, or take any action relative thereto.

TOWN OF GILL
MASSACHUSETTS



Signature of Registered Gill Voter

Street Address **(NO PO Boxes!)**

1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____
11 _____
12 _____
13 _____
14 _____
15 _____

This form was received on _____, 2024 by _____.

I certify that 10 or more of the signatures submitted with this petition are of registered voters in the Town of Gill.

Doreen J. Stevens, Town Clerk

Date