



# **SELECTBOARD AGENDA & MEETING NOTICE**

## **January 12, 2026**

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

Location: Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 Senator Jo Comerford**

- **Welcoming remarks & Introductions**
- **Legislative updates**
- **Gill's priorities**
- **Q&A and comments**

### **Old Business**

- Review of Minutes: 3/24/25, 4/7/25, 4/22/25, 5/5/25, 5/20/25, 6/2/25, 6/16/25, 6/30/25, 8/11/25, 8/18/25, 9/8/25, 9/17/25, 10/6/25, 10/16/25, 10/20/25, 11/3/25, 11/17/25, 12/15/25, 12/29/25

### **New Business**

- Six Town Regionalization Planning Board – request for letter to Senator Comerford & Rep. Whipps in support of town election vote on proposed new regional school district
- FRCOG 2026 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Project Request – first look (will finalize request at 1/26 meeting)
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan – Community Input Sessions – food provided
  - #1 Tues, Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 5:30 PM @ Town Hall – define top hazards in Gill, identify vulnerabilities and strengths (infrastructure, societal, and environmental) with respect to climate change
  - #2 Wed, Feb 11<sup>th</sup> 5:30 PM @ Town Hall – identify & prioritize actions that reduce vulnerabilities and reinforce strengths
- Other business as may arise after the agenda has been posted.
- Public Service Announcements, if any
- Warrants
  - FY26 #14 – Vendors (\$70,337.13) & Payroll (\$31,967.46) – reviewed/signed on 12/29/25
  - FY26 #15 – review & sign

### **Adjournment**

### **Other Invitations/Meetings:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
Mon 1/19		Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday	
Mon 1/26	5:30 PM 6:30 PM	Selectboard meeting Selectboard/FinCom/Elem Roof mtg	Town Hall
Mon 2/9	5:30 PM	Selectboard meeting	Town Hall

# TOWN OF GILL

MASSACHUSETTS



January 12, 2026

The Honorable Senator Jo Comerford  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon St., Room 410  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Representative Susannah Whipps  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon St., Room 540  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Comerford and Representative Whipps:

As you are aware, the Six Town Regional Planning Board will be asking residents to vote in the Spring on a proposed new regional school district: the Great River Regional School District. It has come to our attention that some citizens may feel disenfranchised because Montague residents have a Representative Town Meeting, and therefore, have the opportunity to vote at an Annual or Special Town Election while the other five towns (Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Northfield and Warwick) are required to hold their votes on printed ballots at an Annual or Special Town Meeting (M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 15).

Although all six towns are voting on a proposed agreement as to whether a new regional school district should be formed, Chapter 71 Section 15 provides more flexibility to participate to voters in one of the towns. All registered voters in all the towns considering this important question should have an equal opportunity to vote. For towns with an Open Town Meeting form of government it is much less convenient, or even impossible, for many residents to cast their votes due to the specific and limited time of the meeting. Additionally, unlike an Election, there is no option for early or absentee voting at a Town Meeting. The outcome of this vote will have a long-term impact (whether voted in the affirmative or not), so it is important to have as many voters as possible participate.

It seems reasonable for all registered voters in the six towns of the proposed new school district to have the same opportunity to cast their votes at an Annual or Special Town Election. If this can be coordinated with town elections in the Spring it would likely draw more voters to the polls, ensuring democracy is served.

Time is of the essence, and it is our hope this could be brought forward through some legislative process in a timely manner. Amending Chapter 71 Section 15 would take a considerable amount of time and a Home Rule petition could potentially take even longer. We ask for your assistance finding and hopefully implementing other pathways to accomplish this given the unique circumstances noted above.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Charles J. Garbiel, II, Chair

John R. Ward

Gregory M. Snedeker

Selectboard, Town of Gill



Outlook

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## Response to 6 Town Regionalization Letter

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From Comerford, Joanne (SEN) <Jo.Comerford@masenate.gov>

Date Fri 1/9/2026 2:09 PM

To Freedman, Jared (SEN) <Jared.Freedman@masenate.gov>; Cooley, Jessie (SEN) <Jessie.Cooley@masenate.gov>; Klein, Rachel (SEN) <Rachel.Klein@masenate.gov>

All,

Sending you thanks for your work and service.

We received letters from some of the municipalities engaged in the **Six Town Regionalization** Plan Board discussions to inquire about state legislation to allow residents to vote during an equitable period of time on a six town school district regionalization effort.

We understand that communities with Town Meetings want a greater length of time for their residents to vote during an annual or special town election.

Given the timeline for passing this legislation into law, if each municipality (Bernardston, Gill, Leyden, Warwick, Northfield) — were required to pursue a Home Rule Petition, the local Home Rule Petition process would preclude these bills from passing at the state level prior to the ballots for those local elections being printed. (Our understanding is that Montague has this ability already.)

Home Rule Petitions are required when the change is specific to one town only. However, in our due diligence we believe special legislation could be filed to stipulate that these six towns may include a question on their ballot regarding a school regionalization effort. Legislation that is regional or county-based is not subject to the Home Rule Petition amendment and this legislation would not be specific to a single town.

Our Senate belief is that home rule petitions would not be required in this instance, and Rep. Whipps has graciously offered to check with House Counsel to see if her colleagues concur.

If special legislation could be filed, it would be a "late-file" bill and would need to be admitted by both the House and Senate Clerks. It would then be sent to a Joint Committee where it would need to receive a public hearing. After that hearing, it would need to be favorably advanced out of the Joint Committee to either the Rules or the Ways and Means Committee of either the House or the Senate. It would then need to pass the full House and the full Senate before ballots for local elections are printed.

This is a significantly tight timeline and there is a possibility that we cannot pass the legislation within the required time frame.

With that said, we are committed working with Rep. Whipps and our communities to absolutely do what we can.

We'll be back in touch ASAP.

Jo and team

*Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester district*

SenatorJoComerford.org

@Jo\_Comerford

she/her

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## Franklin Regional Council of Governments

TO: Franklin County Town Officials  
FROM: Linda Dunlavy, FRCOG Executive Director  
DATE: January 5, 2026  
RE: **District Local Technical Assistance Project Requests**

The FRCOG has again received District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funding from the MA Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) to help municipalities.

### **What are the funds used for?**

Since 2006, DLTA funding has allowed the FRCOG to assist our member municipalities on projects that promote regionalization of services and local and regional planning.

### **What do we need from you?**

We need to know what projects your Town is interested in pursuing. Attached is a form that contains a list of potential projects. **Please share this form with your town or city's boards, committees and departments. We ask that the Select Board/Mayor compile one consolidated response on behalf of the municipality and email it back to us as soon as possible, but no later than January 30, 2025.**

### **We will prioritize the projects based on the following criteria:**

- Projects that meet the DLTA program's eligibility requirements.
- Projects that can be largely completed within the program's time period (by 12/31/26).
- Projects that have the demonstrated support of the municipality.
- Projects that result in implementation.
- Projects that, in total, serve as many municipalities as possible.
- Projects that meet demonstrated regional needs and priorities.

Thank you for your help and input in this process. We are looking forward to working with you. Please contact us with questions and **please submit your completed form to the FRCOG by January 30, 2026, by emailing Jessica Atwood at [jatwood@frcog.org](mailto:jatwood@frcog.org)**. If you need to mail or fax the form instead, or need more time to complete it, please reach out to Jessica to make arrangements.

Thanks,

  
Linda Dunlavy  
Executive Director



## 2026 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Request Form

Municipality: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Board/Department: \_\_\_\_\_

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Review form with Town/City committees, boards, and departments, and **compile one consolidated request form**.
2. Check the column or box for each project your Town/City is interested in. Provide a contact name and email for each project.
3. Rank your top 3 priorities at the end of the form.
4. Email completed form to Jessica Atwood ([jatwood@frcog.org](mailto:jatwood@frcog.org)) by **no later than the close of business on Friday, January 30, 2026**.

**NOTE:** For planning purposes, the 2026 DLTA year is January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026. Projects could commence as early as February 1; projects involving fieldwork likely won't commence until May.

✓ YES	CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE/ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT	Contact for Project: Name & email or phone #
	<b>Northfield Mountain Pumped Storage Project/Turners Falls Dam FERC relicensing and MassDEP 401 Certification of Water Quality process.</b> Provide technical assistance, advocacy, testimony, and analysis, and participate as an intervenor and stakeholder on behalf of impacted towns.	
	<b>Planning to Protect Public Drinking Water Supplies.</b> Assist towns with creating plans, such as a Wellhead Protection Plan, to manage and protect their water supply, including drought management planning.	
	<b>Pollinator Habitat Plan.</b> Develop materials and conduct an informational meeting about local pollinator habitat plans; and/or provide technical assistance to prepare a proposal to apply for funding to create a local pollinator habitat plan. Available to: Charlemont, Erving, Gill, Hawley, Leverett, Leyden, Monroe, New Salem, Northfield, Rowe, Sunderland, Warwick and Whately.	
	<b>River Corridor Management Best Practices.</b> Identify opportunities for managing flooding and erosion hazards along rivers, including mapping the River Corridor, updating land use regulations, updating municipal planning documents and coordinating reviews with Conservation Commissions for projects in the mapped River Corridor.	
	<i>See Zoning and Comprehensive Planning for zoning-specific technical assistance.</i>	

✓ YES	COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Contact for Project: Name & email or phone #
	<b>Broadband and Digital Equity.</b> Provide technical assistance to access resources to improve broadband access and/or digital equity, such as through MassBroadband Institute (MBI) and other agencies.	
	<b>Business and Industry Assistance (please specify):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support access to small business development/entrepreneurship assistance resources.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide industry specific support to advance or strengthen an important economic sector, such as agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, or another industry.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>	
	<b>Community Asset Inventory (please specify):</b> Create a digital inventory and conduct GIS mapping of assets for use by the municipality for purposes of planning, coordinating maintenance and/or making information available to the public. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery graves.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Historical properties (listed at local, state and/or federal levels).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor recreation assets.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public art and historical/cultural assets.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>	
	<b>Community Economic Development (please specify):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a survey to understand what residents, businesses and visitors want for economic activity in their downtown/village center or community.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct an analysis of a defined area (i.e. village center, corridor) to assess current economic activity and identify opportunities.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide technical assistance to create or expand an industrial park, business park, or other space for multiple businesses.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support municipal implementation of the MA Vacant Storefront Program.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support municipal pursuit for Chapter 43D: Expedited Local Permitting designation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>Development/Redevelopment Assistance for a Specific Site (please specify):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide technical assistance to advance the redevelopment of an underutilized property (with property owner support), such as reuse visioning or identifying pre-development resources, including brownfields.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide technical assistance to promote a site available for redevelopment to the developer community property, such as drafting a Request for Information or preparing promotional materials.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul> <p>Proposed site for assistance: _____</p>	
	<p><b>Downtown District Support.</b> Extend the Rural Development Fund grant received to pilot a Downtown District Coordinator for Northfield Center (Northfield), Shelburne Falls (Buckland and Shelburne) and Turners Falls (Montague).</p>	
	<p><b>Farmland Planning.</b> Conduct farmland mapping, prioritization and action planning to support implementation of the MDAR Farmland Action Plan.</p>	
	<p><b>Floodplain Map Changes.</b> Assist town with determining and communicating FEMA flood hazard area map changes, in coordination with FEMA finalizing the updated maps. (Depending on timing of FEMA finalizing maps, task may be delayed to 2027.)</p>	
	<p><b>Historic Preservation Planning.</b> Provide technical assistance on identifying potential National Register nominations, or evaluating other preservation related tools (such as local historic district guidelines) or advising on the creation of a town historic preservation plan.</p>	
	<p><b>Housing Production Review.</b> Conduct an assessment of municipal regulations, zoning bylaws, and other conditions; and make recommendations to foster more housing production and implement best practices.</p>	
	<p><b>Outdoor Recreation/Open Space Planning Support.</b> Provide technical assistance to support outdoor recreation planning (such as mapping a preliminary trail route) or municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) creation/update (such as identifying plan funding, or a mapping or action plan update)</p>	
	<p><b>Public Art/Cultural Planning.</b> Provide technical assistance to support cultural/public art planning, such as helping to develop a public art project or pop-up park.</p>	
	<p><i>See Zoning and Comprehensive Planning for zoning specific technical assistance.</i></p>	

✓ YES	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	Contact for Project: Name & email or phone #
	<p><b>Cybersecurity Preparedness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an education program around cybersecurity for municipal officials.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a cybersecurity emergency response plan.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Emergency Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regional Sheltering Planning.</b> Update regional sheltering plans and hold a tabletop exercise to test them.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regional Evacuation Planning.</b> Analyze local evacuation plans to ensure that inter-town routes do not conflict. A countywide look at these evacuation routes has not been completed since 2012 and hazard risk profiles have grown since then.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regional Debris Management Plan Update.</b> The project will update the regional debris management plan from 2015. Debris management addresses woody debris, such as trees, and also demolition materials. The project will conclude with a tabletop exercise to test the revised plan.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Strengthen Emergency Preparedness and Response.</b> Support local emergency management through creation and maintenance of emergency plans, trainings, and exercises.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergency Management Director Sharing.</b> Assist municipalities in studying or implementing shared emergency management services.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Regional Dispatch/Emergency Operations Center.</b> Work with MA State Police to identify a new site and develop preliminary building concepts for a regional dispatch center and a regional emergency operations center for all Franklin County municipalities, including Greenfield and Montague.</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>Emergency Medical Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>West County EMS Regionalization.</b> Support the efforts of ten towns in West County to regionalize their ambulance service.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Montague EMS Regionalization.</b> Support Montague in exploring how it can regionalize its ambulance service.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergency Medical Services Sharing.</b> Assist municipalities not mentioned above in studying or implementing shared ambulance services.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Fire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fire Chief Succession Planning.</b> Identify which fire chiefs will soon need to retire based on age restrictions and work with them to develop a succession plan based on current department members and other firefighting resources in the county.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>ISO Rating Research and Advocacy.</b> Work with insurance companies, the ISO, and the state legislature to determine if there is a way to share fire services across municipalities without negatively affecting ISO ratings, and hence, insurance ratings.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fire Service Sharing.</b> Assist municipalities in studying or implementing shared fire services.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Police</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Police Service Sharing.</b> Assist municipalities in studying or implementing shared police services.</li> </ul>	

✓ YES	REGIONAL PLANS AND CAPACITY BUILDING	Contact for Project: Name & email or phone #
	<p><b>CPHS Member Town Abandoned and Distressed Property Inventory and Action.</b> Inventory abandoned and distressed properties and work with town stakeholders to prioritize action through receivership or other methods. <i>Based on staffing capacity, available only to CPHS member towns.</i></p>	
	<p><b>Training for local officials on using Artificial Intelligence (AI)</b> in local governments and developing municipal policies for AI use.</p>	
	<p><b>Local Official Continuing Education Workshops and 5th Wednesdays.</b> Continue to offer workshops to Select Board, Planning Board, Board of Health, Finance Committee members and other public officials and continue 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday series that have focused mostly on legislative advocacy.</p> <p><b><i>Please share your ideas for workshop topics:</i></b> _____</p>	

	<b>Municipal Succession Planning.</b> Consider how towns can prepare for retirements of long-term public servants in key municipal positions (appointed, elected and volunteer) through development of a Citizen's Academy, succession planning, participation in career fairs and expos, diversification of the municipal workforce, etc.	
	<b>Community Health Improvement Plan:</b> provide implementation support and evaluation of the 2024-28 regional Franklin County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which identified 13 health improvement priorities for our region.	
	<b>Rural Policy Plan (RPP) Implementation and Update.</b> Complete 2025 refresh of the 2019 Plan; identify top priority projects/policy for rural MA and for Franklin County; advocate for projects, programs and policies that benefit Franklin County.	

✓ YES	SHARED SERVICES	Contact for Project: Name & email or phone #
	<p><b>Municipal Service Sharing Feasibility, Matchmaking, or Other Technical Assistance (please specify).</b> <i>Find emergency management options above.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilities management of municipal buildings and grounds – explore options for shared hiring and procurement of vendor services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Floodplain Management “back office” assistance – assisting towns to understand guidelines, gather needed records and materials; provide planning assistance to local Floodplain Administrators</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Grant and contract administration/management, especially One Stop programs like Rural Development Fund and MVP.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Financial Services: <i>Please be specific:</i> _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> OSHA municipal requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Regional Wood Bank Development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>New Collective Purchasing ideas (please specify):</b> _____</p>	

	<p><b>Older Adult Services (please specify):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Age and Dementia-friendly community planning (development of an assessment and an action plan for the Town; assistance with implementing an existing plan)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Senior Center Expansion, Regional Sharing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Development and Piloting of a regional Dementia Risk Reduction and Brain Health Promotion Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Regional Opioid Settlement Spending.</b> Assist towns with development of an opioid settlement funds spending plan.</p>	

✓ YES	TRANSPORTATION	Contact for Project: Name & email or phone #
	<b>Complete Streets Improvements.</b> Assess local roads for potential for Complete Streets improvements.	
	<b>Roadway Speed Study.</b> Assess roadway speeds and prepare speed zoning study to provide guidance for new or revised regulatory speed limits on local roadways.	
	<b>Signs and Lines Assessment.</b> Assess signs and pavement markings for clarity, visibility and reflectivity. Assess for obstructions to visibility like overgrown vegetation at intersections and near roads.	
	<b>Unpaved Road Assessments.</b> Assess problematic sections of unpaved roads for potential improvements that can be funded with new state grant funding.	
	<i>Note: Roadway Culvert Assessment is not offered this year. Due to the high demand, the towns of Northfield and Whately are in the queue for culvert assessments in 2026. The wait list will be reopened in 2027.</i>	

✓ YES	ZONING AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANS	Contact for Project: Name & email or phone #
	<p><b>Comprehensive Plans (please specify):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide technical assistance and guidance in advance of a Comprehensive Plan, such as draft scope of work, grant research and application, form committee, etc.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a community-wide survey and/or other public outreach to inform the creation of a vision and goals for a new or updated Comprehensive Plan.</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>Zoning Bylaws (please specify):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with the state's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) model zoning bylaw</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with the state's <i>pending</i> model bylaw for Solar Photovoltaic Systems and Battery Energy Storage Systems</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with the state's model Floodplain Bylaw</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with implementing zoning changes to diversify housing options and/or address Short-Term Rentals</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with zoning related to stormwater management/flood resilience</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review current Subdivision Regulations to determine if they should be updated</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li></ul>	
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*[Form continues next page]*

<b>RANK</b>	<b>Of all of the projects you selected, what are your municipality's <u>top three</u> DLTA project priorities?</b>
<p><b>Your Municipality's Top 3 Choices:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. _____</li> <li>2. _____</li> <li>3. _____</li> </ol>	

	<b>GRANT ASSISTANCE</b>	
	<p>The FRCOG can assist municipalities with researching state &amp; federal grant opportunities, preparing grant application packages, and with grant, contract and financial management (once the contract is awarded). If you need help with an application or with project management, please provide a brief description of the project and identify the municipal contact (name and email).</p> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Contact Name &amp; Email: _____</p>	

	<b>SHARED HOUSING COORDINATOR</b>	
	<p>With separate funding pursued in response to municipal interest (i.e. not DLTA), the FRCOG is creating a Shared Housing Coordinator pilot program to assist towns with housing development site selection and moving housing projects through the development pipeline. (Participating towns need to provide an approximate \$5,000 match between 1/1/26 and 6/30/27.) If interested in being part of the pilot, please check here.</p>	