

TOWN OF GILL

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



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SELECTBOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2017

Call to Order: The Selectboard and Finance Committee meetings were called to order at 6:15 PM.

Selectboard Members Present: John Ward, Greg Snedeker, Randy Crochier

Selectboard Members Absent: None

Finance Committee Members Present: Timmie Smith, Ronnie LaChance, Fred Chase, Claire Chang

Finance Committee Members Absent: Tupper Brown, Jacob Rau

Others Present: Lynda Hodsdon Mayo, Bill Tomb

Timmie Smith reported that at 6:00 PM the Finance Committee held its reorganizational meeting, with the same four members present as are listed above. There was motion by Fred, seconded by Ronnie, to keep the same Chair and committee representatives (Timmie Smith as Chair, Jacob Rau as representative to Personnel Committee, and Ronnie LaChance as representative to Capital Improvement Planning Committee). There was discussion, and if Jacob is not able to continue on the Personnel Committee, Fred will, so long as there is no conflict of interest for Fred. The motion was approved by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions.

Review of Minutes: Randy made a motion, seconded by Greg, to approve the minutes of 4/10/17, 4/27/16, 5/4/16, 5/5/16, and 6/13/16. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Fred made a motion, seconded by Claire, to adopt the Selectboard minutes for the five dates listed above, in lieu of separate Finance Committee minutes. The vote was 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

1.06 Board of Assessors: The requested budget has a negligible decrease of \$0.40, to \$40,336.00. There was discussion of the \$575 requested for Training, which is enough to send one person to one of the Assessors classes offered each summer at UMASS. The first priority for training is always to send any new assessor who needs the required "Course 101." (There will be a new assessor in FY18, as Ray is not seeking re-election, and Pam Lester is running for the vacancy.) When there is no new assessor, Assessors' Clerk Lynda Hodsdon Mayo attends and take the next course in a professional development series. There was a general feeling that if the Town has funds available this year, adding more money to this Training line should be a priority. Ray was asked to increase the Assessors' training request by \$1,150 and increase the Travel request by \$250, in order to provide sufficient funds to also give training to existing assessors and the Assessors' Clerk.

1.11 Town Clerk: Town Clerk Lynda Hodsdon Mayo presented her budget request for FY18, noting that it is very much the same as FY17's, but that she will be asking Town Meeting voters to approve an increase to the compensation provided to the Town Clerk. She suggested two figures, \$21,205.60 and \$24,843.00. The current compensation is \$17,764.76. Both suggested figures have their origins in the Town's wage scale, although it is recognized that the Town Clerk position is not on the wage scale. The \$21,205.60 is based on Level 4 of the wage scale, which is the same level as the Assessors' Clerk position that Lynda also holds. Lynda explained that the Town Clerk is much more of a Department Head type position, with many more responsibilities than the Assessors' Clerk. The \$24,843 amount is based on Level 5 of the wage scale.

Several Selectboard and Finance Committee members supported the idea that the Town Clerk position is worth more than we currently pay. However, it was expressed that it is difficult to make any connection to the wage scale, as the Town Clerk has no oversight except from the voters of the Town. It was also felt to be problematic that

because the position is elected, a newly elected Town Clerk with no experience or training will make the same amount as someone who has held the position for many years.

Members of the Selectboard expressed a desire to work further with Lynda on this matter, and to present a workable figure to Town Meeting, and hopefully eliminate the need for Lynda to appeal directly to the voters by way of amended motions. Lynda also mentioned that the compensation of the Tax Collector and Treasurer positions needs to be addressed as well.

There was a general discussion of differences between elected officials and hired employees, and the stipends paid to elected officials versus wages paid to hired employees. The requested increase for the Town Clerk will be revisited during this year's budget meetings.

1.12 Elections: Lynda explained that FY18 will be a quiet year for state elections, and recommended some of the savings on elections be used for preservation of the Town's old minute books of town elections and other important records. The preservation work would treat the pages of the books to remove acid from the paper, and then seal each page in an acid-free sleeve. There are fewer than 10 books that need to be preserved. For the largest of the books, she received an initial estimate of \$2,600. To digitize the materials would cost \$75 - \$200 extra per book.

There was some support for the document preservation, but it was felt that it should not be included in the Elections budget, but instead presented as a special article. Lynda will compile a list of all the books that need to be preserved, along with a cost estimate for preservation and digitization.

Lynda also warned that while the current voting booths are still functional, they will not last forever. She recommended the Town should begin setting aside funds for their replacement. There was discussion about a yearly set-aside versus a lump-sum single article. Lynda Hodsdon Mayo left the meeting at 7:40 PM.

6.2 Mariamante Loan: The interest rate on this loan has increased to 0.88%. Ronnie recommended paying down this loan at a faster rate, but with the still relatively low interest rate, there was little appetite to do so. It is a debt exclusion.

6.3 Safety Complex Roof Loan: FY18 is the second year of this 3-year loan. It is a debt-exclusion, and the interest rate is fixed at 1.90% for all three years.

6.4 Energy Bond: It was suggested the Town should examine the continued need for the Performance Audit that keeps in place Siemens' guaranteed energy savings. It is worth looking at the Energy Savings Agreement between the Town and Gill-Montague Regional School District to see if energy savings (which are used to make the payments on the bond) will still be provided to the Town by the District if the Siemens audit is discontinued.

6.7 Backhoe Loan: FY18 will be the first year of the 3-year, \$20,000 loan for the used backhoe. As explained when the backhoe purchase was approved by Town Meeting, the FY18 Highway Budget will be reduced by the loan payment of \$7,360.

Town Meeting Warrant: The Selectboard reviewed and signed the warrant for the May 1st Annual Town Meeting.

Fin Com Adjournment: The Finance Committee adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Selectboard Adjournment: The Selectboard adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington.

Signed copy on file. Approved 04/24/2017

Randy Crochier, Selectboard Clerk

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