

June 26, 2021  
Annual Town Meeting



**Please use the microphone  
when recognized to speak.**

It greatly improves the audio quality of the recording, which is kept as an archival record of the meeting.

**Volunteers Wanted**

The Town is always looking for residents who might be able to volunteer for one of Gill's many boards, committees, councils and commissions. If you think you might be interested in joining any of these groups, please contact the Chair, or contact Ray Purington at 863-9347.

Cable Advisory Committee (Tom Hodak, 863-4227)

Capital Improvement Planning Committee (Greg Snedeker, 863-8168)

Council on Aging (Bev Demars, 863-4792)

Cultural Council (Lynda Hodsdon Mayo, 863-9282 and Patricia Crosby, 863-2297)

Energy Commission (Vicky Jenkins, 325-5722)

Finance Committee (Claire Chang, 626-3620)

Historical Commission (Kit Carpenter, 863-2505)

Zoning Board of Appeals (Suzanne Smiley, 863-8174)

“GILLBILLY” t-shirts are available. All sizes (S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL) currently in stock. \$15 donation per shirt benefits the Agricultural Commission. Shirts may be picked up at Town Hall by appointment. Call Doreen at 863-8103.



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

FRANKLIN, SS.

TOWN OF GILL

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: JUNE 26, 2021

To any of the Constables of the Town of Gill in the County of Franklin,

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of said town, qualified to vote in elections and in town affairs, to meet outdoors at the Gill Elementary School, 48 Boyle Road in said Town on Saturday, the Twenty Sixth day of June, in the year Two Thousand and Twenty One (06/26/2021) at 10:00 AM then and there to act on the following articles.

The Massachusetts mask order has ended, but those who are not vaccinated for COVID-19 or are concerned about their vulnerability should feel free to wear one when closer than 6 feet to people. Masks will be provided by our Board of Health for those who may want one.

**Selectboard Recommendations:** *Except when noted in the explanation of an article, all articles are unanimously recommended by the Selectboard.*

**Article 1:** To elect the following officers: Two or more Field Drivers; Fence Viewers; Measurers of Wood, Bark and Surveyors of Lumber - all for one year; AND

To see if the Town will vote to accept and expend any sum of money that might be made available from State or Federal funds for roadwork or other purposes for the Fiscal Year 2022 and for the Chapter 90 type funds, authorize the Selectboard to enter into contracts with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and to authorize the Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard to borrow in anticipation of reimbursement; AND

To see if the Town will vote to accept any sum of money that might be made available from the Quintus Allen Trust during Fiscal Year 2022, and authorize the Selectboard to expend such funds in support of the Gill Elementary School, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved to elect Edward J. Golembeski and Clifford C. Hatch as Field Drivers and the Regional Animal Control Officer as Assistant Field Driver and elect the Selectboard as Fence Viewers; Measurers of Wood, Bark and Surveyors of Lumber - all for one year; AND

It is moved the Town vote to accept and expend any sum of money that might be made available from State or Federal funds for roadwork or other purposes for the Fiscal Year 2022 and for the Chapter 90 type funds, authorize the Selectboard to enter into contracts with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Highway Department, and authorize the Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard to borrow in anticipation of reimbursement; AND

It is moved the Town vote to accept any sum of money that might be made available from the Quintus Allen Trust during Fiscal Year 2022, and authorize the Selectboard to expend such funds in support of the Gill Elementary School.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The names and positions (Field Drivers, Fence Viewers, and etc.) are the same as last year.*

*Chapter 90 funds are given annually by the State to the Town, and are used for our road maintenance program – activities such as repaving asphalt roads, applying new oil & stone, grading gravel roads, and drainage and guardrail projects. The Town will receive \$147,099 for Fiscal Year 2022.*

*Quintus Allen was an original trustee of the Greenfield Savings Bank. Upon his death in 1884, he established a trust fund to be used for education-related expenses in Colrain, Gill, Leyden, and Shelburne. The interest earned by the Trust is distributed to those towns each year. The Town received \$2,740 from the Trust during Fiscal Year 2021, and there is a balance of \$9,827 in the Town's Quintus Allen account.*

*In recent years the School has used the Quintus Allen funds for:*  
 2018-19 Outdoor Learning Center (\$4,537.96)  
 2017 Chromebook Computers (24) & Storage Cart (\$6,050.00)  
 2016 Climbing Wall & Gear (\$1,329.21)  
 2015 Nature Program Coordinator & Equipment (\$2,915.60)

**Article 2:** To see if the Town will vote to accept Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 64N, Section 3 to impose an excise on the retail sales of marijuana for adult use at the rate of three percent (3%), or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved to accept Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 64N, Section 3 to impose an excise on the retail sales of marijuana for adult use at the rate of three percent (3%)

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*There are not currently any retail marijuana sales facilities in Gill. Several businesses have made initial inquiries in the past 18 months, but so far none have become a reality. Adopting this local option sales tax will provide potentially significant general fund revenue for the Town if and when such a business comes to Gill.*

**Article 3:** To see if the Town will vote to authorize the following revolving funds per the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53E ½, for which revenues will be deposited into the funds and expended to pay related costs under the authorization of the Selectboard, and total expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1 next will be limited to the amounts listed below, with all unspent money remaining in the fund at the end of each fiscal year, or take any action relative thereto:

<b>Department Authorized to Spend</b>	<b>Types of Receipts Credited</b>	<b>Program/Purpose for which Funds may be Expended</b>	<b>Maximum Annual Expenditures</b>
Fire Dept.	Oil Burner Inspection Fees	Inspector & Etc.	\$2,000.00
Town Clerk, Selectboard	Dog Fees & Fines	Licenses, Regional Animal Control Services, Dog Care & Control, & Etc.	8,000.00
Cemetery Commission	Opening Fees	Cemeteries & Caretaking	2,000.00
Conservation Commission	Consultant Fees	Project Review	10,000.00
Agricultural Commission	Farmers' Market & Ag Event Fees	Ag Programs	500.00
Energy Commission	Workshop and Program Fees	Energy Programs	1,000.00
Zoning Board of Appeals	ZBA Fees	Hearings & Expenses	2,000.00
Board of Health, Town Administrator	Recycling Program Revenue	Solid waste & recycling programs, Solid Waste District membership, recycled-content office products	5,000.00
Selectboard	User Fees from Electric Vehicle Charger	Operating & maintenance costs for Electric Vehicle Charger	4,000.00

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to authorize the listed revolving funds per the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, Section 53E ½, for which revenues will be deposited into the funds and expended to pay related costs as recommended by the Selectboard, and total expenditures for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021 will be limited to the amounts listed, with all unspent money remaining in the fund at the end of each fiscal year.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 3 in favor and 1 opposed.*

*A revolving fund allows program fees to be used within the fiscal year for the purposes listed by the "department" that collects the fees. This is the same list of revolving funds, purposes, and amounts that was approved last year, with the addition of a new fund to be used to receive user fees from the new electric vehicle charger and to pay expenses related to the operation of the charger. (The charger is located at the Riverside Building, aka Four Winds School. It was purchased and installed using a Green Communities grant from the Department of Energy Resources.)*

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to fix the salaries or compensation of the several officers of the Town as follows, or take any action relative thereto:

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to fix the salaries or compensation of the several officers of the Town as follows, plus any cost of living adjustment (COLA) that may be provided by the Town:

Constable(s) – Each Posting	\$21.50
Moderator – Annual Town Meeting	\$150.00
Special Town Meeting, Each	\$27.00
Selectboard Chair	\$2,742.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Member, Each	\$2,492.00
Board of Assessors Chair	\$3,330.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Member, Each	\$3,027.00
Board of Health Chair	\$1,502.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Member, Each	\$1,375.00
Town Clerk	\$22,527.00
Tax Collector	\$25,369.00
Additional As Sewer Fee Collector	\$714.00
Treasurer	\$22,875.00
Registrars – Three members, Each	\$64.00
Town Clerk, as Chair	\$103.00

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Except for rounding, all amounts are level funded from Fiscal Year 2021. A COLA, if approved in Article 5, would be in addition to the amounts listed above.*

**Article 5:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation or transfer from available funds any sum or sums of money to provide a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for Town employees and elected officials, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$8,185.00 (EIGHT THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY FIVE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) to provide a 1.3% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for all Town employees and elected officials.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The Personnel Committee recommended this year's COLA based on the 1.3% Social Security increase that went into effect in January 2021. In seven of the last eight years the Town has adopted a COLA percentage equal to Social Security.*

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide any sum or sums of money for the maintenance of the several departments of the Town (the "Omnibus budget"), and for other necessary charges, in accordance with the amount recommended by the Selectboard, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$1,743,703.00 (ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED FORTY THREE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED THREE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) and transfer \$100,000.00 (ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from Sewer Use Fees and appropriate \$73,500.00 (SEVENTY THREE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from Fiscal Year 2022 Estimated Sewer Receipts for a total appropriation of \$1,917,203.00 for the maintenance of the several departments of the Town (the "Omnibus budget"), and for other necessary charges, in accordance with the amount recommended by the Selectboard.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Please see the separate handout (legal-sized paper) for the Omnibus amounts and accompanying notes. The amounts in the motion come from page 3, Column D, lines 87 – 90 of the handout.*

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide \$1,724,635.00 (ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED THIRTY FIVE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) to provide \$1,711,376.00 for its Fiscal Year 2022 operating assessment and \$13,259.00 for its Fiscal Year 2022 debt service costs for the Gill-Montague Regional School District, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$1,724,635.00 (ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED TWENTY FOUR THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED THIRTY FIVE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) to provide \$1,711,376.00 for its Fiscal Year 2022 operating assessment and \$13,259.00 for its Fiscal Year 2022 debt service costs for the Gill-Montague Regional School District.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The GMRSD's total Fiscal Year 2022 "All Funds" budget increased by 2.9% over Fiscal Year 2021. The overall operating assessment to both towns increased by 1.2%, with Gill seeing a 4.2% decrease and Montague a 2.2% increase. Gill's assessment for the GMRSD's operating budget decreased by \$74,511 and the debt service for the high school/middle school renovation project increased by \$3,524.*

*Gill's enrollment in the District decreased from 99 to 86 students at the same time Montague's enrollment decreased from 684 to 632.*

*A handout from the GMRSD is attached (last page of Town Meeting handout).*

**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for a flooring replacement project at Gill Elementary School including removal and disposal of asbestos floor tiles, installation of new flooring materials, asbestos abatement testing and monitoring, and other incidental or related work, including borrowing costs that may be associated with said project and authorize the Town Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard, to borrow in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7; all or some of which may be contingent upon a Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion vote override, or take any other action relative thereto. (A 2/3 vote is required for authorization to borrow.)

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to appropriate \$300,000.00 (THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for a flooring replacement project at Gill Elementary School including removal and disposal of asbestos floor tiles, installation of new flooring materials, asbestos abatement testing and monitoring, and other incidental or related work, including borrowing costs that may be associated with said project and authorize the Town Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard, to borrow in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7; all or some of which may be contingent upon a Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion, and further authorize the Selectboard to apply for and use any state or federal funds that may be made available to offset the total cost of the project and amount to be borrowed.

*A 2/3 majority is required to authorize borrowing.*

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee recommends this project by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Gill Elementary School was constructed in 1955, with an addition built in 1986. Most of the 1955 building areas still have the original flooring, and, unfortunately, it is a product known today as asbestos vinyl tile (AVT). AVT is safe when properly maintained, and the Gill-Montague Regional School District has done a fine job keeping the floors in good condition. However, when the mastic (glue) holding the tiles to the concrete slab begins to weaken or fail, the tiles can flex or break. This creates a potentially hazardous condition where asbestos particles, known to be a cause of chronic lung disease and lung cancer, can become airborne.*

*Up until last year, the number of loose or cracked tiles was generally manageable, and those could be legally replaced with non-asbestos vinyl tiles. However, it is thought that coinciding with the closure of the school due to COVID-19, the failure rate of the mastic dramatically increased in the ensuing months. The adhesion of the mastic is directly related to moisture levels in the air and moisture coming up through the concrete. With the school closed due to COVID-19, the normal levels of heat and moisture changed. Doors opened and closed a fraction of the normal times, and gone was most of the heat and humidity generated by all the students and staff. Conditions changed, and the mastic began to dry out and fail at accelerated rates.*

As re-opening plans developed, increasing the flow of fresh air became a priority solution to safely returning to in-person learning. Ventilation systems were upgraded and windows were opened more regularly. The combination of months without students followed by new air flow patterns after they returned is thought to have hastened the failure of the mastic, including large areas in the All Purpose Room and half of Classroom 6.

The asbestos vinyl tiles need to be removed before a new floor can be put down, and this will involve an asbestos remediation project covering three classrooms, the Principal's office, the hallway and entryway, and the All Purpose Room. Once this work is complete, the non-asbestos vinyl composite tile in the other classrooms, which are also beginning to lift and curl from the concrete, will be removed, and a new epoxy floor will be applied. Except for the kitchen and bathrooms, all floors in the entire building will receive new flooring with this project.

The \$300,000 estimated cost of this project includes asbestos remediation (removal and disposal of the asbestos-containing flooring), air quality monitoring, removal and disposal of the vinyl composite tile, and installation of the new epoxy floor. It also includes a contingency factor due to the variable nature of the current construction climate. The project includes \$10,000 for moving costs and temporary storage, if needed, and for financial advisor services to structure any borrowing that may be necessary.

The Town is eligible for \$437,899 through the federal American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CLFRF), and has already received \$76,670 of the funds. Because the need to complete this project this summer is directly related to COVID-19, the Town believes the project qualifies to be paid for using the CLFRF. Federal guidelines on how to apply for and use the CLFRF are still evolving. Every effort will be made to finance this project completely through federal funds and avoid any cost to the taxpayers. However, given the uncertainties in the federal rules and the timing of the work, some borrowing may be necessary, and the project may end up using some Town funds supplied by taxation.

In the highly unlikely event of the worst-case scenario where no federal funds can be used and the Town must bear the full cost of the project, and at current interest rates, a 10-year loan (3.3%) would add roughly 24-cents to the tax rate and cause a \$53 increase to the annual tax bill of the average single family home in Gill. These figures are only estimates, as interest rates are expected to rise in the coming months. Any change in assessed property values will also change these calculations. If there is borrowing, the first year the project would impact the tax rate is Fiscal Year 2023 when the first loan payment would be due.

Gill's voters already approved the debt exclusion ballot vote as part of the May 17<sup>th</sup> annual town election. A debt exclusion allows the Town to raise the funds for any loan payments outside of the levy limit constraints of Proposition 2 ½.

Given the time-sensitive nature of this critically necessary work, the project has already been advertised, and bids are due on July 7<sup>th</sup>. It is hoped the full project can be completed this summer and the school will re-open this fall with brand new floors.

**Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to support the resurfacing of the tennis courts at the Turners Falls High School, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$6,489.00 (SIX THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY NINE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to support the resurfacing of the tennis courts at the Turners Falls High School.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee recommends this project by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The tennis courts at the High School need to be resurfaced to provide smooth, solid playing surfaces. MIIA, the governing body of Massachusetts school sports, has advised the District the defects in the courts will become an issue in future seasons and may jeopardize the tennis team's ability to host home matches. The requested amount represents Gill's 10.3% share of the \$63,000 project cost. Montague has already approved its share.*

**Article 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to add to the account previously established to hire an Owner's Project Manager and Designer to provide a feasibility study and schematic design of a new roof for the Gill Elementary School, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$28,439.45 (TWENTY EIGHT THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED THIRTY NINE AND 45/100 DOLLARS) from the Gill Elementary School Well and Water project (account 001-300-5832) to add to the account (001-300-5842) previously established to hire an Owner's Project Manager and Designer to provide a feasibility study and schematic design of a new roof for the Gill Elementary School.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee recommends this project by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Every year since 2018 the School District has applied to the Massachusetts School Building Authority's (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Program for funding for a new roof at the Gill Elementary School. The current asphalt shingle roof was installed in 1995. While we have not yet been accepted into the program, with each year that goes by the roof gets another year older and our odds of getting accepted get better. When the project is accepted into the program, it is anticipated we will receive a reimbursement rate of approximately 75 percent.*

*The first required step for an accepted project is to hire an Owner's Project Manager and Designer, and in 2018 the Town set aside \$20,000 to begin saving toward the expense. The funds in this article should provide the extra amount needed to be able to move forward with the feasibility study and schematic design once we have been accepted into the Accelerated Repair Program.*

*The cost of the feasibility study and schematic design is reimbursable by the MSBA at the same rate (approximately 75%), even if the Town decides to not go forward with construction. However, if the Town decides to not go forward, we can never again apply to the MSBA for a roof replacement project at the Elementary School!*

**Article 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purpose of conducting a building condition assessment of the Gill Elementary School and developing a 15-year capital and action plan, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$7,500.00 (SEVEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) for the purpose of conducting a building condition assessment of the Gill Elementary School and developing a 15-year capital and action plan.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee recommends this project by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Although the District has a capital plan, there has never been an official facility assessment study of the buildings owned and leased by the Gill-Montague Regional School District, to create an action plan for required maintenance, repairs and improvements. Due to the finite financial resources available to maintain and/or improve its buildings, the school district and its member towns need to assess and prioritize the work that is done.*

*The intent of this project is to provide the Town of Gill and the District with an objective assessment of the Gill Elementary School. In addition to the 15-year action plan, the assessment will address required repairs as well as improvements that will extend the useful life of the building. In addition, energy conservation improvements that will reduce building operating expenses will be identified. The final report will include an evaluation and action plan of the site conditions, building infrastructure, building envelope, and mechanical and interior elements of the building.*

*The company that will perform the assessment, Potomac Capital Advisors (PCA), has already completed the assessments of Montague's two elementary buildings and will be starting the high school assessment later this year. In addition, Montague will be using PCA to evaluate two of its town library buildings.*



**Article 12:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Released Overlay \$4,000.00 (FOUR THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) to add to the account to be used toward the costs associated with a 5-year appraisal of the real and personal property in the Town of Gill owned by FirstLight Power and an appraisal of the personal property in the Town of Gill owned by National Grid, New England Power Company, and NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy; AND

Transfer from Released Overlay \$3,000.00 (THREE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) to add to the Board of Assessors Revaluation Account; AND

Transfer from Released Overlay \$5,000.00 (FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the Town Audit Account to be used toward a portion of the cost to conduct an independent financial audit of the Town; AND

Transfer from Released Overlay \$15,000 to add to the legal litigation account for legal and other expenses related to the defense, appeal, or settlement of cases at the Appellate Tax Board and other courts, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$4,000.00 (FOUR THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from the Released Overlay account to add to the account to be used toward the costs associated with a 5-year appraisal of the real and personal property in the Town of Gill owned by FirstLight Power and an appraisal of the personal property in the Town of Gill owned by National Grid, New England Power Company, and NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy; AND

It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$3,000.00 (THREE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from the Released Overlay account to add to the Board of Assessors' Revaluation Account; AND

It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$5,000.00 (FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from the Released Overlay account to the Town Audit Account be used toward a portion of the cost to conduct an independent financial audit of the Town; AND

It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$15,000.00 (FIFTEEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from the Released Overlay account to add to the legal litigation account for legal and other expenses related to the defense, appeal, or settlement of cases at the Appellate Tax Board and other courts.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Every five years the Department of Revenue requires the Assessors to obtain a new appraisal of the value of the Gill portion of the Turners Falls Dam, as well as other property in Gill owned by FirstLight. Appraisals are also needed to substantiate the valuation of the several electricity distribution companies with property in Gill. The first clause of this article adds to the existing account and saves toward the appraisals being done for Fiscal Year 2022.*

*Fiscal Year 2022 is the next recertification year for Gill, in which the Department of Revenue will review and certify property values town wide. Because of the added level of research and analysis, the Assessors incur extra costs during revaluation years. The second clause of this article continues saving toward the revaluation.*

*The third clause of this Article continues to set aside funds to pay for the next audit of the Town's finances, which is expected to be started this summer.*

*The last clause of this Article adds an additional \$15,000 to the Town's account for legal litigation at the Appellate Tax Board and other courts. Of the original \$20,000 set aside for this purpose in 2020, there is a remaining balance of \$4,712. While five years of Appellate Tax Board cases have been settled with FirstLight, the Appellate Tax Board is still acting on two years of appeals by Kearsarge Gill LLC (the owner of the solar electric installation located on the Northfield Mount Hermon School campus). Given the complexity of the Kearsarge cases and the fact the general Legal budget for Fiscal Year 2022 is only \$5,000, it is important to provide additional funds to see these cases to completion.*

**Article 13:** To see if the Town will vote to become a member in the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 252, §5A and other applicable sections of said law; and to meet this obligation, raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to fund the annual membership fee, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to become a member in the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 252, §5A and other applicable sections of said law; and to meet this obligation, raise and appropriate by taxation \$3,000.00 (THREE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) to fund the annual membership fee.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*There are more than 50 species of mosquitoes present in Massachusetts. Of those, at least 8 species are known carriers of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV), diseases which can be fatal to humans, pets, and livestock. In rare cases, the presence of mosquito-borne disease reaches a level where a declaration of a public health emergency is made by the Commonwealth. When there is a significant risk of humans contracting a mosquito-borne illness, the State Reclamation & Mosquito Control Board, working with other state agencies including the Department of Public Health, may then deem it is necessary to perform a wide-area aerial spray of adulticide, in response to a public health emergency.*

*Because of a law passed last year, 2021 is the first year Massachusetts towns can annually opt out of mosquito spraying conducted by the state. After hearing concerns from residents, our Conservation Commission, and our Board of Health, Gill's Selectboard voted in May to opt out of state spraying for 2021. During the discussion it was pointed out that while there have not been any recent cases of EEE or WNV in Gill, there also has not been any regular trapping and testing of mosquitoes in our town.*

*By joining the Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District, Gill will be able to collect the data needed to make informed decisions regarding the levels and locations of mosquitoes in our town, and take appropriate steps to help prevent disease outbreaks. District staff and volunteers trap mosquitoes weekly during the peak season (early June until the first killing frost). Staff separate the key species and send them to the University of Massachusetts Amherst for testing. Records are kept on the number of mosquitoes of concern, test results and health of residents. The District has 15 member towns and at least 4 new towns voted to join at their town meetings this year.*

**Article 14:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the purchase of a new electronic vote tabulator to be used by the Town Clerk in the conduct of certain elections of the Town, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$2,200.00 (TWO THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for the purchase of a new electronic vote tabulator to be used by the Town Clerk in the conduct of certain elections of the Town.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The Town's current electronic vote tabulator was purchased used for \$2,000 in 2006. The manufacturer stopped production on our model in 2007, and certain repairs are beginning to use parts cannibalized from out-of-service machines. The current cost of a new tabulator is approximately \$5,200. By beginning to set aside funds now, the Town Clerk hopes to be able to purchase a new tabulator in time to use it for the next presidential primary election in 2024.*

**Article 15:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for Animal Control services for Fiscal Year 2022 including assessments for the Regional Animal Control Officer and the Regional Dog Kennel, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$1,754.00 (ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY FOUR AND 00/100 DOLLARS) for Animal Control services for Fiscal Year 2022 including assessments for the Regional Animal Control Officer and the Regional Dog Kennel.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*In Fiscal Year 2020 the Town joined the Regional Animal Control Officer program that also serves the towns of Buckland, Colrain, Gill, Heath, Monroe, Northfield, and Shelburne. Gill has been a member town of the Regional Dog Kennel since Fiscal Year 2014. The annual assessment for the Animal Control Officer is \$4,976 and the annual assessment for the Kennel is \$350. Up until now, these costs have been paid using dog license fees and fines that had accumulated in the Dog Revolving Fund.*

*Dog license revenue averages \$1,600 per year, which is not enough to cover the yearly expenses for Animal Control. Changes to Gill's license fees will need to be considered at a future Town Meeting.*

*The Animal Control Officer responds to more than just dog issues, so it is reasonable for some of the costs of Animal Control to be borne by the Town's operating budget and general taxation. This article shifts approximately 25% of the costs for Animal Control into the operating budget. In future years, Animal Control will be a line within the Omnibus budget.*

**Article 16:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to add to the account previously established to provide for PEG Access operations and other municipal cable-related expenses (account 001-159-5846), or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$6,000.00 (SIX THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund (account 256) to add to the account (001-159-5846) previously established to provide for PEG Access operations and other municipal cable-related expenses.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The Town annually receives in excess of \$14,000 in PEG (Public, Educational, and Governmental) Access funds from Comcast as part of its cable license. There is currently a balance of \$121,026 in the PEG Access and Cable Related Fund. The money can only be used for public access broadcasting, educational media and broadcasting, government access television, and/or the capital costs of PEG facilities, and must be appropriated by Town Meeting before it can be spent.*

*In Fiscal Year 2019 \$12,000 was appropriated for PEG Access operations including equipment upgrades, improvements to the Town Hall sound system, and stipends for those who video record Selectboard meetings, Town Meetings, and other public events. Approximately \$6,000 has been spent in the last two years, and this appropriation will "refill" the balance to the \$12,000 recommended by the Cable Committee.*

**Article 17:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to purchase a single-axle dump truck with a plow, wing plow, all-season body and related accessories for the Highway Department, including borrowing costs that may be associated with said purchase and authorize the Town Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard, to borrow in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44, Section 7; all or some of which may be contingent upon a Proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion vote override, or take any other action relative thereto. (A 2/3 vote is required for authorization to borrow.)

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to appropriate \$205,000.00 (TWO HUNDRED FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS), with

\$43,715.15 (FORTY THREE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTEEN AND 15/100 DOLLARS) to be transferred from the Gill Elementary Electrical Service project fund (001-300-5833)), and

up to \$161,284.85 (ONE HUNDRED SIXTY ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY FOUR AND 85/100 DOLLARS) to be borrowed by the Town Treasurer

to purchase a single-axle dump truck with a plow, wing plow, all-season body and related accessories for the Highway Department, including borrowing costs that may be associated with said purchase, and

authorize the Town Treasurer with the approval of the Selectboard to issue any bonds or notes that may be necessary for that purpose as authorized by General Laws Chapter 44 § 7 or any other general or special law, contingent upon passage of a Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion referendum.

*A 2/3 majority is required to authorize borrowing.*

*The Selectboard recommends this article by a vote of 2 in favor and 1 opposed. The Finance Committee does **not** recommend this article by a 3 – 1 vote. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee recommends the purchase of a new dump truck by a vote of 3 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 absent.*

*The Town purchased the 2009 Sterling dump truck (our yellow truck) used in 2015 for \$33,400 including the trade in allowance for a 1990 dump truck. The Sterling had 34,000 miles and 3,200 engine hours on it when it was purchased. In addition to the purchase price, over \$72,000 has been*

spent in the past 6 years on repairs and equipment for the truck, with the majority of the expense related to problems with the diesel emission system, including exhaust fumes in the truck cab and engine error codes that put the vehicle into a low-powered "limp mode." For the Highway Department, the truck has become unreliable, and it was parked for the last few storms this winter.

The Highway Department has requested a new 2022 International with an 11-foot power-angle snow plow, 11-foot wing plow, and an 8-yard stainless steel, all-season body that converts easily between sander mode and hauling/dump mode. The truck will have a gross vehicle weight (GVW) of 46,000 pounds and can legally carry almost 7 ½ yards of winter sand.

The total cost of the new truck is estimated at \$202,000. The additional \$3,000 in the motion is for financial advisor services related to processing a multi-year loan. Because of the cost of the new truck, the purchase is contingent upon a debt exclusion ballot vote scheduled for July 12<sup>th</sup>. A debt exclusion allows the Town to raise the funds for the loan payments outside of the levy limit constraints of Proposition 2 ½.

If this article and the debt exclusion are both approved, the Town will likely receive the new truck in early January 2022, in time to use it for much of the 2021/2022 winter season. The 2009 Sterling could be traded in on the purchase of the new truck, or could be sold or auctioned.

At current interest rates, a 3-year loan (1.6%) would add roughly 33-cents to the tax rate and cause a \$76 increase to the annual tax bill of the average single family home in Gill. A 5-year loan (2.2%) would add roughly 21-cents to the tax rate and cause a \$48 increase to the annual tax bill of the average single family home. These figures are only estimates, as interest rates are expected to rise in the coming months. Any change in assessed property values will also change these calculations. The first year the purchase will impact the tax rate is Fiscal Year 2023 when the first loan payment will be due.

**Article 18:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to make necessary repairs to the Highway Department's 2009 Sterling dump truck, or take any other action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved to pass over Article 18.

*Article 18 is an alternative to the purchase of a new dump truck proposed in Article 17. On the basis of its recommendation in favor of Article 17, the Selectboard recommends passing over this article. The Finance Committee took no action on the motion to pass over. This article developed after the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC) had completed its meetings and the CIPC did not review or make a recommendation on this article. The following alternate motion may be presented in the event Article 17 is defeated.*

**Alternate Motion, depending on the outcome of Article 17:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$43,715.15 (FORTY THREE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTEEN AND 15/100 DOLLARS) from the Gill Elementary Electrical Service project fund (001-300-5833) to be used to make necessary repairs to the Highway Department's 2009 Sterling dump truck.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 3 in favor and 1 opposed.*

*New information presented at this week's Selectboard meeting (June 21, 2021) suggests it may be possible to rebuild the engine on the 2009 Sterling for significantly less than the \$20,000-\$30,000 estimated by local repair shops. In addition, it is believed longstanding issues with the emissions control system can be successfully resolved by cleaning the exhaust gas recirculator (EGR) and diesel particulate filter (DPF), and cleaning the DPF on a yearly or other regular basis. Those advocating for making the repairs believe the 2009 Sterling still has useful life left in it, and giving up on it now would be throwing away all of the other work we've had done to it. The truck currently has 46,000 miles and 4,200 hours of engine time. While it is acknowledged the repairs may not resolve the problems with the truck, it is believed the risk is acceptable and worth the additional expense.*

*Because this article makes use of already available funds, it would not have any additional impact to the tax rate and would not require any borrowing.*

*What the repairs will not address is the gross vehicle weight (GVW) of the truck. With the snow plow and wing plow mounted on the truck, the truck weighs 23,480 pounds and is rated for a GVW of 33,000 pounds, leaving 9,520 pounds available to carry winter sand in the truck body. At*

*approximately 2,700 pounds per yard of winter sand, this is only 3 ½ yards of sand in a body designed to hold 8 yards. This will mean doubling the number of trips when sanding the full route, which will take more time and use more fuel.*

**Article 19:** To see if the Town will vote to repurpose the account (001-422-5838) and the funds therein approved at the June 19, 2018 Town Meeting for the repair and refurbishment of an existing snow plow for the Highway Department, to include the purchase of a new snow plow, including any and all incidental and related costs, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to repurpose the account (001-422-5838) and the \$10,000.00 (TEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) therein approved at the June 19, 2018 Town Meeting for the repair and refurbishment of an existing snow plow for the Highway Department, so the account may also be used to purchase a new snow plow, including any and all incidental and related costs.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*This article simply expands the list of allowed uses for a sum of money appropriated three years ago. Since 2018 it has been determined the Highway Department does not have a spare plow worth this level of repair and refurbishment. In addition, the old plows were straight plows from the 1970s and not as effective or efficient as a new power-angle plow. By repurposing the account, the \$10,000 can be put to use purchasing a piece of equipment the Highway Department needs. If Town Meeting and the subsequent debt exclusion ballot both approve the new truck proposed in Article 17, this \$10,000 could be put toward the plow portion of that expense, further reducing the amount of money to be borrowed.*

**Article 20:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money to add to the account previously established for the purpose of remediating water, humidity and mold from the basement of the Town Hall, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$20,000.00 (TWENTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to add to the account (001-192-5822) previously established for the purpose of remediating water, humidity and mold from the basement of the Town Hall.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed. The Capital Improvement Planning Committee recommends this project by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*This article adds to the fund established in 2015 to deal with a wetness problem in the Town Hall's basement. Of the original \$35,000 appropriation, \$33,418 remains, and this article will add to that amount.*

*The Town Hall has two sump pumps that run year-round to help cope with a very high water table. In addition, a Shop-Vac must be used after every heavy rain to vacuum up water that leaks in through the foundation and flows across the floor in the Assessors' Office. The dampness and humidity in the basement is not conducive to a healthy work environment or to the proper storage of permanent records. In 2019 the Assessors' Office was moved to the first floor of Town Hall.*

*Once the cause of the foundation leaks is determined and corrected, there will need to be renovations to the basement office space. The water on the floor has caused the floor tile to loosen and come up, and portions of the wood wall paneling will need to be replaced due to rot.*

**Article 21:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate by taxation, transfer from available funds, or otherwise provide a sum or sums of money for the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to raise and appropriate by taxation \$8,738.00 (EIGHT THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED THIRTY EIGHT AND 00/100 DOLLARS) and further transfer \$5,000.00 (FIVE THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash), for a total of \$13,738.00 for the Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*This article continues to set aside money to meet future expenses of the Town's obligation to provide health insurance for future retirees. The Town's Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) liability will*

*be updated later this year as part of the next financial audit. The unfunded liability is still expected to be a very large number, but hopefully less than the \$620,000 figure from the last update in 2016 due to the Town's progress in contributing to the OPEB fund.*

*By placing money into its OPEB fund, the Town demonstrates to banks and other potential lenders it recognizes the financial liability and is doing its best to save for it. In turn, the Town receives slightly better loan rates when it borrows money for building maintenance, vehicle and equipment purchases, and other purposes. The current balance in the fund is \$83,553.*

**Article 22:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer \$2,000.00 (TWO THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the Energy Stabilization Fund and further transfer \$15,000.00 (FIFTEEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs Stabilization Fund and further transfer \$90,000.00 (NINETY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the General Stabilization Fund, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$2,000.00 (TWO THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the Energy Stabilization Fund and further transfer \$15,000.00 (FIFTEEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs Stabilization Fund and further transfer \$90,000.00 (NINETY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the General Stabilization Fund.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Both Articles 22 and 23 involve transfers of Free Cash into several of the Town's stabilization funds. Article 22 is intended to fulfill transfers approved by voters for Fiscal Year 2021 at the November 2020 Town Meeting, votes later nullified by the Department of Revenue because they occurred after June 30<sup>th</sup>. Unlike just about everything else, there was no automatic COVID-19 extension on the deadline to take votes using Free Cash. Article 23 can be considered as the stabilization fund votes for Fiscal Year 2022, and the recommended amounts are intended to contribute toward the fiscal stability and financial reserves of the Town.*

*There is currently \$54,293 in the Capital Stabilization Fund, \$119,119 in the Education Stabilization Fund, \$26,210 in the Energy Stabilization Fund, \$15,751 in the Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs Stabilization Fund, and \$163,538 in the General Stabilization Fund. (Totals do not include amounts voted in or out by other articles considered today.)*

*The \$2,000 in this motion for the Energy Stabilization Fund represents the Fiscal Year 2021 contribution of a portion of the savings created when the Town converted its streetlights to energy-efficient LEDs in 2015.*

*The \$15,000 in this motion for the Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs Stabilization Fund represents the Fiscal Year 2021 contribution to continue the savings program established in 2019 to set aside funds for the future replacement of the air packs used by the Fire Department. The 20 air packs were purchased new in 2017 using \$144,500 in grant and donated funds, and have 15-year certifications for use.*

*Here's where it gets a bit "wonkish." When the Department of Revenue nullified the Free Cash votes last year, it recognized several of those votes were of a critical nature, and the loss of funding would be detrimental to time-sensitive projects and financial planning of the Fiscal Year 2021 tax rate. Accordingly, in a one-time exception made possible by COVID-19 emergency regulations, the Department allowed the Selectboard to approve the use of the General Stabilization Fund as the replacement funding source for the critical funding.*

*Under the one-time exception the Selectboard voted to use the following amounts from General Stabilization Fund (article references are from the November 2020 Town Meeting):*

- \$15,000 Building maintenance projects for the Slate Memorial Library (Article 10, 11/21/20)*
- \$15,000 Heating system replacement for the Town Hall (Article 11, 11/21/20)*
- \$60,000 Reduce the tax rate and stabilize the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2021 (Article 14, 11/21/20)*

*The three listed amounts total \$90,000, which is the amount recommended to be transferred into the General Stabilization Fund by this article.*

**Article 23:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate from taxation or transfer from available funds a sum or sums of money for one or more of the Stabilization Funds of the Town (Capital, Education, Energy, Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs, or General), or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$2,000.00 (TWO THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the Energy Stabilization Fund and further transfer \$15,000.00 (FIFTEEN THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs Stabilization Fund and further transfer \$40,000.00 (FORTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the Education Stabilization Fund and further transfer \$122,489.00 (ONE HUNDRED TWENTY TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED EIGHTY NINE AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be placed into the General Stabilization Fund.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*The general purpose of this article and the current balances in the various stabilization funds can be found in the introductory paragraphs of Article 22.*

*The \$2,000 in this motion for the Energy Stabilization Fund is a portion of the savings created when the Town converted its streetlights to energy-efficient LEDs in 2015.*

*The \$15,000 in this motion for the Fire Department SCBA/Air Packs Stabilization Fund continues the savings program established in 2019 to set aside funds for the future replacement of the air packs used by the Fire Department.*

*The \$40,000 in this motion for the Education Stabilization Fund replaces the identical amount used from the fund last year to support the operating assessment of the Gill-Montague Regional School District.*

*The \$122,489 in this motion for the General Stabilization Fund takes the remaining balance of unallocated Free Cash and directs it into a savings account that may be used for any purpose upon a favorable two-thirds majority vote by Town Meeting. The Selectboard and Finance Committee recognize there are several significant vehicle replacement and building maintenance projects on the visible horizon, and the reserves in the General Stabilization Fund could be used to reduce the amount of borrowing for those projects.*

*If any of the articles of the Annual Town Meeting are amended or defeated, it is anticipated the amounts in this article will be adjusted accordingly in order to maintain a balanced budget that does not require an override.*

**Article 24:** To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum or sums of money from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) or other available funds to be used to reduce the tax rate and stabilize the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2022, or take any action relative thereto.

**Motion:** It is moved the Town vote to transfer \$50,000.00 (FIFTY THOUSAND AND 00/100 DOLLARS) from unappropriated funds (Free Cash) to be used to reduce the tax rate and stabilize the tax levy for Fiscal Year 2022.

*The Finance Committee recommends this article by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.*

*Free Cash is the money that remains unspent in department budgets from the previous year, plus any revenues in excess of what was anticipated when the tax rate was set. The Department of Revenue nullified the November 2020 Town Meeting votes using Free Cash because those vote occurred after June 30<sup>th</sup>. This meant a significant amount of Free Cash from Fiscal Year 2019 was carried forward into the next year. The Free Cash from Fiscal Year 2020 was certified by the Department of Revenue to be \$375,478, roughly double the \$181,150 certified for 2019. The following are the recommended uses of this year's Free Cash:*

\$6,489	Article 9	High School tennis courts
\$7,500	Article 11	Gill Elementary School building condition assessment
\$20,000	Article 20	Town Hall basement wetness remediation project
\$5,000	Article 21	Other Post-Employment Benefits ("OPEB")
\$107,000	Article 22	Various stabilization funds to replace amounts nullified by Dept of Revenue

\$179,489 Article 23 Fiscal Year 2022 contributions to various stabilization funds  
\$50,000 Article 24 (this article) to reduce the Fiscal Year 2022 tax rate

Depending on the outcomes of the other "money" articles considered earlier in this meeting, a different amount may be recommended to be used to reduce the Fiscal Year 2022 tax rate.

And, you are directed to serve this Warrant, by posting up attested copies thereof at the Town Hall, Main Road; Post Office, Mt. Hermon; The Gill Store & Tavern, Main Road; and Riverside Municipal Building, Route 2, in said Town seven days at least before the time of holding said meeting.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at the time and place of meeting, as foresaid.

Given under our hand this 17th day of June in the year Two Thousand Twenty One (06/17/2021).

**Selectboard of Gill**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Gregory M. Snedeker, Chair

*(signed)* \_\_\_\_\_  
Randy P. Crochier, Board member

*(signed)* \_\_\_\_\_  
Charles J. Garbiel II, Board member

A true copy Attest:

*Doreen J. Stevens* \_\_\_\_\_, Town Clerk                      Date: *June 17, 2021* \_\_\_\_\_

Individuals who may need auxiliary aids for effective communication for this meeting should call the Gill Town Hall at (413) 863-9347, or Telecommunications Relay Service at 711, or MassRelay at (800) 439-2370 for TTY devices.

Pursuant to the within Warrant, I have notified and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Gill by posting up attested copies of the same at Town Hall, Main Rd.; Post Office, Mt. Hermon; Gill Store & Tavern, Main Rd.; and Riverside Municipal Building, Route 2, seven days before the date hereof, as within directed.

*Fred O. Chase II* \_\_\_\_\_, Constable of Gill                      Date: *June 17, 2021* \_\_\_\_\_



**Article 6 - Omnibus Budget**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
				FY22			
	Omnibus Budget for 06/26/2021 Annual Town Meeting	FY20 Approved with COLA	FY21 Approved with COLA	Selectboard & Finance Comm. Recommended	Increase / (Decrease) ( D - C )	% Change	Notes
1	<b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>						
2	Moderator (Stipend & Expenses)	447.19	403.61	404.00	0.39		
3	Selectboard Stipends	7,626.72	7,726.20	7,726.00	(0.20)		
4	Selectboard Expenses	4,241.44	3,924.05	4,012.00	87.95	2.2%	
5	Town Admin & Admin Clerk (Salary&Exp.)	83,993.99	82,150.90	88,097.00	5,946.10	7.2%	Step increase for Town Admin; restore Clerk hours cut in '21
6	Finance Committee	150.00	185.00	185.00	-		
7	Reserve Fund	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	-		
8	Accountant Expenses	200.00	150.00	150.00	-		
9	Assessors Stipends	9,261.24	9,383.40	9,384.00	0.60		
10	Assessors Clerical Salary	22,686.93	22,977.88	29,000.00	6,022.12	26.2%	Position moved up on wage scale; increase to 26 hrs/wk
11	Assessors Expenses	13,040.00	12,715.00	9,500.00	(3,215.00)	-25.3%	Revaluation expenses moved to separate account
12	Treasurer Salary	22,581.00	22,874.54	22,875.00	0.46		
13	Treasurer Expenses	9,425.00	8,405.00	8,105.00	(300.00)	-3.6%	Savings from payroll services
14	Tax Collector Salary	25,042.16	25,368.46	25,369.00	0.54		
15	Tax Collector Expenses	9,104.00	8,584.00	10,412.00	1,828.00	21.3%	Cloud access for new tax collection software
16	Legal	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00	-		
17	IT Committee	4,260.00	3,535.00	3,535.00	-		
18	Town Clerk Salary	22,236.76	22,526.14	22,527.00	0.86		
19	Town Clerk Expenses	2,204.00	1,904.00	1,904.00	-		
20	Elections/Registrars	9,417.00	9,469.00	7,217.00	(2,252.00)	-23.8%	Reduction will go toward new vote tabulator in Article 14
21	Conservation Commission	668.00	634.00	634.00	-		
22	Agricultural Commission	400.00	380.00	380.00	-		
23	Planning Board	745.00	685.00	685.00	-		
24	Zoning Board of Appeals	200.00	185.00	185.00	-		
25	Energy Commission	500.00	475.00	475.00	-		
26	Town Hall/Riverside Bldg Operations	23,413.10	21,562.42	26,587.00	5,024.58	23.3%	Electricity costs for electric vehicle charger; state testing of both elevators; annual service for mini-splits at Town Hall
27	Building Repairs & Maintenance	18,500.00	16,650.00	17,500.00	850.00	5.1%	Restore some funds cut in FY21
28	Garage/Public Safety Bldg Operations	20,677.00	18,767.00	19,150.00	383.00	2.0%	Higher cost of heating oil in FY22
29	<b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>317,520.53</b>	<b>308,120.60</b>	<b>322,498.00</b>	<b>14,377.40</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	
30							

**Article 6 - Omnibus Budget**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
				FY22			
	Omnibus Budget for 06/26/2021 Annual Town Meeting	FY20 Approved with COLA	FY21 Approved with COLA	Selectboard & Finance Comm. Recommended	Increase / (Decrease) ( D - C )	% Change	Notes
31	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>						
32	Police Department	206,716.77	208,950.53	213,019.00	4,068.47	1.9%	Step increase for Sergeant; increase to cost of service contract for body & cruiser cameras
33	Fire Department	88,631.72	96,425.09	102,336.00	5,910.91	6.1%	Required change in reporting software; annual hose testing
34	Emergency Management	6,571.40	5,955.08	5,956.00	0.92		
35	<b>PUBLIC SAFETY TOTAL</b>	<b>301,919.89</b>	<b>311,330.70</b>	<b>321,311.00</b>	<b>9,980.30</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	
36							
37	<b>PUBLIC WORKS</b>						
38	Trees and Forestry	8,626.00	8,626.00	10,078.00	1,452.00	16.8%	Staff call-ins for downed trees, rate increase for contracted tree removal
39	Highway Department	250,616.06	252,729.01	260,133.00	7,403.99	2.9%	Street signs, culverts, truck & machinery repairs
40	Highway Dep't. - Snow & Ice Removal	63,970.00	63,970.00	63,970.00	-		
41	Bridges and Street Lights	2,000.00	1,950.00	1,950.00	-		
42	Solid Waste & Recycling	71,730.00	110,500.00	115,445.00	4,945.00	4.5%	Contractual increases for collection & trash disposal
43	Solid Waste District Assessment	3,675.00	4,164.00	4,164.00	-		
44	Hazardous Waste Collection	750.00	519.00	519.00	-		
45	Sewer	163,100.00	173,500.00	173,500.00	-		
46	Cemetery Commission	12,200.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	-		
47	Memorial Committee	874.00	830.00	874.00	44.00	5.3%	Higher cost of geraniums & flags that need to be replaced
48	<b>PUBLIC WORKS TOTAL</b>	<b>577,541.06</b>	<b>626,788.01</b>	<b>640,633.00</b>	<b>13,844.99</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	
49							
50	<b>HEALTH &amp; HUMAN SERVICES</b>						
51	Board of Health Salaries	4,196.32	4,251.56	4,252.00	0.44		
52	Board of Health Expenses	2,996.23	2,512.04	2,509.00	(3.04)	-0.1%	
53	Council on Aging	9,096.00	8,856.00	9,091.00	235.00	2.7%	
54	Veterans District Assessment	2,763.00	3,008.00	3,553.00	545.00	18.1%	Increased assessment
55	Veterans Benefits	5,000.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	-		
56	<b>HEALTH &amp; HUMAN SERVICES TOTAL</b>	<b>24,051.55</b>	<b>22,627.60</b>	<b>23,405.00</b>	<b>777.40</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	
57							
58	<b>CULTURE &amp; RECREATION</b>						
59	Library	29,676.97	29,414.09	31,197.00	1,782.91	6.1%	Restore Wednesday hours cut in FY21 due to COVID
60	Recreation Committee	2,700.00			-		There has been no interest in re-starting a Rec Committee
61	Historical Commission	895.00	850.00	850.00	-		
62	<b>CULTURE &amp; RECREATION TOTAL</b>	<b>33,271.97</b>	<b>30,264.09</b>	<b>32,047.00</b>	<b>1,782.91</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	

**Article 6 - Omnibus Budget**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
				FY22			
	Omnibus Budget for 06/26/2021 Annual Town Meeting	FY20 Approved with COLA	FY21 Approved with COLA	Selectboard & Finance Comm. Recommended	Increase / (Decrease) ( D - C )	% Change	Notes
63							
64	<b>FIXED COSTS</b>						
65	Town Insurance	43,061.00	42,000.00	41,680.00	(320.00)	-0.8%	
66	Mariamante Loan (debt exclusion)	32,015.00	26,501.00	25,138.00	(1,363.00)	-5.1%	Loan will be paid off in November 2021
67	Energy Bond	8,967.00	9,467.00	9,967.00	500.00	5.3%	
68	Retirement System	96,609.00	98,733.00	102,106.00	3,373.00	3.4%	
69	Group Health and Life Insurance	120,679.00	109,472.00	109,472.00	-		
70	Backhoe Loan	6,108.00		-	-	100.0%	Loan is paid off
71	Police Cruiser Loan (debt exclusion)	13,101.00		-	-	100.0%	Loan is paid off
72	<b>FIXED COSTS TOTAL</b>	<b>320,540.00</b>	<b>286,173.00</b>	<b>288,363.00</b>	<b>2,190.00</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	
73							
74	<b>FRCOG ASSESSMENT</b>						
75	Statutory & Reg'l Services Assessments	10,063.00	10,170.00	9,606.00	(564.00)	-5.5%	
76	Accounting Program	25,454.00	29,543.00	30,749.00	1,206.00	4.1%	Wages & benefits for Program staff
77	Health Agent/Cooperative Public Health	11,340.00	11,567.00	11,798.00	231.00	2.0%	
78	Cooperative Inspection Program	7,500.00	7,600.00	7,600.00	-		
79	<b>FRCOG ASSESSMENT TOTAL</b>	<b>54,357.00</b>	<b>58,880.00</b>	<b>59,753.00</b>	<b>873.00</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	
80							
81	<b>EDUCATION</b>						
82	Gill-Montague Reg. Sch. Dist.						To be discussed and voted under Article 7
83	GMRSD Bldg Loan						To be discussed and voted under Article 7
84	Franklin County Technical School	175,085.00	193,741.00	229,193.00	35,452.00	18.3%	Gill's enrollment increased 25% from 12 to 15 students
85	<b>EDUCATION TOTAL</b>	<b>175,085.00</b>	<b>193,741.00</b>	<b>229,193.00</b>	<b>35,452.00</b>	<b>18.3%</b>	
86							
87	<b>OMNIBUS BUDGET TOTAL</b>	<b>1,804,287.00</b>	<b>1,837,925.00</b>	<b>1,917,203.00</b>	<b>79,278.00</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	
88	Less Transfer of Sewer Use Fees	64,300.00	74,700.00	100,000.00			Sewer use fees offset 100% of Sewer Budget
89	Less Estimated Sewer Receipts	98,800.00	98,800.00	73,500.00			Sewer use fees offset 100% of Sewer Budget
90	<b>TOTAL RAISED BY TAXATION</b>	<b>1,641,187.00</b>	<b>1,664,425.00</b>	<b>1,743,703.00</b>	<b>79,278.00</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	

**Article 6 - Omnibus Budget**

Supplemental Info for Article 6 - Omnibus Budget		Financial Summary for Fiscal Year 2022				
	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
	Omnibus Budget for 06/26/2021	FY20	FY21	Selectboard & Fin. Comm. Fiscal Year 2022	Dollar Change	Percent Change
1	Omnibus Budget (Town Operations)	1,804,287.00	1,830,095.00	1,917,203.00	87,108.00	4.8%
2	Warrant Articles for Projects (Spending)	140,633.00	86,568.00	168,020.60	81,452.60	94.1%
3	Warrant Articles for Stabilization Funds (Saving)	17,000.00		286,489.00	286,489.00	100.0%
4	Miscellaneous (Overlay & Cherry Sheet Deducts)	79,485.32	71,964.31	80,859.00	8,894.69	12.4%
5	Total Town Budget	2,041,405.32	1,988,627.31	2,452,571.60	463,944.29	23.3%
6	GMRSD School Assessment (Operating & Debt)	1,642,995.00	1,795,622.00	1,724,635.00	(70,987.00)	-4.0%
7	<b>Grand Total Budget</b>	<b>3,684,400.32</b>	<b>3,784,249.31</b>	<b>4,177,206.60</b>	<b>392,957.29</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
8	State Receipts	288,644.00	289,418.00	298,722.00	9,304.00	3.2%
9	Local Receipts	232,400.00	233,600.00	235,200.00	1,600.00	0.7%
10	Available Funds	306,447.00	283,500.00	604,132.60	320,632.60	113.1%
11	Free Cash (Stabilization in FY21) to Reduce the Tax Rate	43,000.00	60,000.00	50,000.00	(10,000.00)	-16.7%
12	<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>870,491.00</b>	<b>866,518.00</b>	<b>1,188,054.60</b>	<b>321,536.60</b>	<b>37.1%</b>
13	Grand Total Budget	3,684,400.32	3,784,249.31	4,177,206.60	392,957.29	10.4%
14	Total Receipts (Excluding Property Taxes)	870,491.00	866,518.00	1,188,054.60	321,536.60	37.1%
15	Property Tax Assessment	<b>2,813,909.32</b>	<b>2,917,731.31</b>	<b>2,989,152.00</b>	<b>71,420.69</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
16	Town-wide Property Valuation (FY22 is in process)	163,125,178	168,752,534	168,752,534	(estimated)	
17	Tax Rate If All Articles Pass (per 1,000 valuation)	<b>17.25</b>	<b>17.29</b>	<b>17.71</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
18	Average Valuation of Single-Family Residence	218,070	225,468	225,468	-	0.0%
19	Average Annual Taxes of Single-Family Residence	3,762	3,898	3,994	95	2.4%

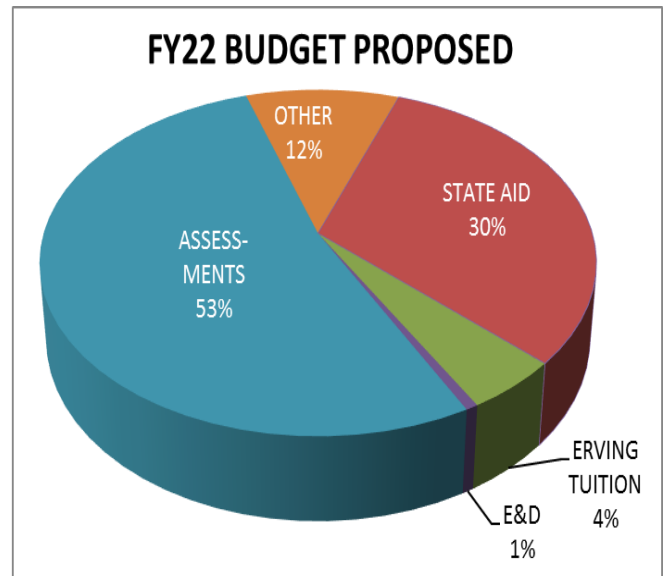
# Gill-Montague Regional School District FY22 Budget Proposal

GMRSD has developed an FY22 budget based upon Montague's affordable assessment. The total all funds budget for FY22 represents a 2.9% increase, totaling \$24,123,185.

Gill	Enrollment Percentage	Total Operating Assessment	Operating Assess Increase/ (Decrease)	% Increase	Share of HS Debt	Debt Assess	Total Operating & Debt Assessment	% incr from prior year
FY18	13.17%	1,616,443	41,450	2.63%	9.70%	14,294	1,630,736	2.37%
FY19	11.77%	1,619,622	3,179	0.20%	7.40%	10,548	1,630,170	-0.03%
FY20	11.64%	1,634,027	14,405	0.89%	6.50%	8,968	1,642,995	0.79%
FY21	12.64%	1,785,887	151,860	9.29%	7.30%	9,735	1,795,622	9.29%
FY22	11.98%	1,711,376	(74,511)	-4.17%	10.30%	13,259	1,724,635	-3.95%

↑  
**Number to Vote**

REVENUE SOURCES	FY21 BUDGET	FY22 BUDGET	CHANGE
Chapter 70 State Aid	7,049,318	7,129,856	80,538
Medicaid Reimbursement	100,000	100,000	0
Medicaid Contra Renue	(47,000)	(47,000)	0
Interest Income	6,000	7,000	1,000
Excess and Deficiency	150,000	150,000	0
Erving Tuition	1,088,800	1,150,000	61,200
Charter Reimbursement	159,379	161,840	2,461
Chapter 71 Transport. Reimburse.	266,000	270,000	4,000
TOTAL OPERATING ASSESS.	12,331,264	12,485,121	153,857
Capital Debt Assess. (TFHS)	133,350	128,730	(4,620)
Capital Debt Assess. (Sheffield)	63,276	61,638	(1,638)
Grants/Revolving Accounts	1,289,517	1,520,000	230,483
ESSER Grant Funds		196,000	
Circuit Breaker Revolving	304,370	210,000	(94,370)
School Choice Revolving	656,881	600,000	(56,881)
<b>TOTAL - ALL FUNDS</b>	<b>23,551,155</b>	<b>24,123,185</b>	<b>672,828</b>



FY22 EXPENDITURES	FY22 GENERAL FUND	FY22 CHOICE/ CB BUDGET	FY22 GRANTS/ REVOLVING BUDGET	FY22 ESSER GRANT	FY22 ALL FUNDS BUDGET
ADMINISTRATION (1000)	660,087	-	-	-	660,087
INSTRUCTIONAL (2000)	9,813,942	523,972	402,911	196,000	10,936,825
STUDENT SERVICES (3000)	1,353,715	-	772,714	-	2,126,429
OPERATIONS (4000)	1,932,017	-	-	-	1,932,017
BENEFITS & INSURANCE (5000)	4,757,045	-	27,005	-	4,784,050
COMMUNITY PROGRAM (6000)	26,082	-	-	-	26,082
TUITION (9000)	2,863,929	286,028	317,370	-	3,467,327
CAPITAL DEBT (8000)	190,368	-	-	-	190,368
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>21,597,185</b>	<b>810,000</b>	<b>1,520,000</b>	<b>196,000</b>	<b>24,123,185</b>

## **FY22 Budget Plans**

This budget enables the district to maintain current programs. Given the impact of the pandemic on academic growth and student social-emotional concerns, the district has adjusted staffing to address support needs. Pandemic funding allowed the district to accelerate our 1:1 computing program. The High School has added career-oriented programs in Healthcare & Social Assistance and will soon add Advanced Manufacturing. The following positions support programming and address pandemic-related instructional and facilities concerns:

- Elementary Science Teacher
- Special Education Teacher & District Speech Pathologist
- Adjustment counselor – for increased hours at Gill & Sheffield
- First grade paraprofessionals at Hillcrest & Gill
- School-Year Custodians