



THE

# Gill Newsletter

WINTER 2022 Issue

## Disclaimer:

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## NEW ADDRESS FOR TAX PAYMENTS

Please be sure to make a change to the address that you send payments to the Tax Collector's office. The new address is Town of Gill, Tax Collector, 325 Main Rd, Gill, MA 01354. PO Box 784 in Turners is going away.

You may also pay your bills via our secure 24/7 drop box located at the rear of town hall (HP Entrance). If you would like a receipt, please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Real estate & personal property bills will be mailed in early February and are due on Monday, May 2nd. Please note: if your taxes are held in escrow and paid via your mortgage company, we don't send bills to banks and mortgage companies. It is the taxpayer's responsibility to get the bill to whomever pays the taxes.

Note also that state law requires that tax bills must be received at town hall by the due date – the postmark has no bearing. Late payments are subject to a \$10 demand and 14% state mandated interest.

You may now make payments for current (NOT overdue) real estate and personal property bills via the Town's online payment system. This secure method is available at our website: Town of Gill MA. It is labeled "Online Bill Pay." If you use your checking account information, it costs less than the postage required to send your payment by mail! You will also receive a confirmation email that shows your payment was submitted on time.

*Thank You, Tom Hodak, Tax Collector*

## THE ENERGY COMMISSION

### Have an interest in energy-saving projects?

The Energy Commission is made up of volunteers Alden Booth, Tupper Brown, Claire Chang, Andy Cole, Vicky Jenkins, and Janet Masucci. There is currently a vacancy; if you are interested please send us an email at [encom@gillmass.org](mailto:encom@gillmass.org).

### Mass Save Rebates and Incentives

Mass Save is an initiative sponsored by our state energy providers, like Eversource, to promote energy saving awareness. These efforts have allowed Massachusetts to be one of the most energy-efficient states in the country, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE).

Support from Mass Save is available for homeowners, renters, and landlords. They provide no-cost energy assessments of your home (both virtual and in-person), and offer a wide variety of rebates and incentives for heating/cooling, lighting, weatherization, and utilities. They offer 0% financing for loans required for energy-efficient home improvements.



Check in with the Gill Website

[www.gillmass.org](http://www.gillmass.org)

for up to date news,  
announcements and  
contact information!





Check out their website here if you are reading online, or type in <https://www.masssave.com> if you're reading this on paper, and click on the "residential" link.

### **Gill Community Choice Electrical supply**

Do you want to pay less than Eversource Basic Service supply rates? Join the Gill Community Choice!

Currently Eversource Jan - June rates are 13.7 cents/kWhr, whereas Gill Community Choice is 10.2 cents/kWhr. If you use 600kWhrs in a month, you would save \$21 each month by switching to Gill Community Choice, AND you would contribute to clean energy choices.

We are a group of 13 towns mostly in Franklin County who group purchase electricity for 3 years. Colonial Power is our aggregator and manager of the program.

Use this link to sign up! <https://colonialpowergroup.com/gill/>

Check your electric bill to see if you are participating in the savings. Dynergy - Gill AGG will be listed as your energy supplier. Dynergy Energy Services won the lowest bid to supply electricity for 3 years. Or you may have a different competitive energy supplier. Check with your current supplier for penalties if you switch.

Those on the Eversource discount rate will remain eligible for the Gill Community Choice program.

Additionally, here is the link to the Eversource discount rate. If you qualify for SSI, WIC, fuel assistance, SNAP, MassHealth or others, check

the eligibility requirements! It can take 1-2 months to show on your electric bill.

<https://www.eversource.com/content/wma/residential/my-account/billing-payments/help-pay-my-bill/discount-rate>

### **Gill's Electric Vehicle Charging Station**

In January 2021 an EV charging station was installed in the parking lot at the Riverside Municipal Building on Rt 2 (home of the Four Winds School). For the first year the charging station was free to all users. After reviewing the usage, the Energy Commission has made a recommendation to the Selectboard that there be a \$.30 per kWh charge to help offset the costs to the town.

### **Notes from the Gill Cable Advisory Committee**

You can easily be a part of your local government! We encourage you to attend Selectboard meetings (see Town of Gill Website Calendar), but in the event that you can't attend, you may watch them prerecorded. You can find the links for viewing on the Town of Gill website and under "TV Schedule" at <https://montaguetelevision.org>

The ability to create this programming comes from a fee on Comcast Cable TV customer bills which funds PEG (Public Educational Government) access. A focus of PEG access is to provide formats to allow citizens to see how decisions are made in town government.

In addition to recording Selectboard meetings at Town Hall we also

recorded meetings and events on location, such as this year's annual town meeting which was held at the Gill Elementary School <https://vimeo.com/568533549> and the Gill Pig Roast 225th Celebration which was held in 2018 <https://vimeo.com/283966974>

The Gill Cable Advisory Committee negotiates a cable license with Comcast every 10 years, which helps implement PEG access. Comcast's other offerings, including internet, telephone, cellular phones, and home security, are not part of the negotiated cable license.

*Members are: Tom Hodak, Chair; Charles Garbiel and Janet Masucci*

### **Slate Library News**

Winter is here, and although our event planning has been put on hold for the time being we still have lots of materials to keep you engaged and entertained during our coldest months. Stop by and check out some of our newest New York Times best-selling titles. *State of Terror* by Hillary Clinton and Louise Penny will have you glued to your seat, as will *The Last Thing He Told Me* by Laura Dave. We have the latest titles by Jonathan Franzen, John Le Carre, John Grisham, Jodi Picoult and Elena Ferrante, as well as award winners such as Damon Galgut's *The Promise* and *The Shadow King* by Maaza Mengiste.

Curl up in a big chair and listen to an audiobook. We have many titles for both children and adults and we are always happy to hear your sugges-



tions for additions to the collection.

In March, a new program will be offered at the library. "Learning Embroidery Together" will be a six-week series of embroidery techniques based on the popular patterns of Dropcloth Samplers. This program will be run by local fiber enthusiast Kim Sprankle on Thursday evenings. Please stop by the library to register for the program or for more information. We'd love to hear from you regarding what kind of programming you would like to attend at your local community hub and library in the center of town!

Slate Library hours: Tuesday 2 -6, Wednesday 3:30 - 7:30, Thursday 2 - 8, and Saturday 10 a.m. -2 p.m.

*Jocelyn Castro-Santos*  
 Director, Slate Library  
 (413)863-2591

## Gill Neighbors

Gill Neighbors is a group that began in 2019 with the objective of providing local seniors with services and companionship. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced this group of volunteers to temporarily abandon some of their services. Once COVID is in our rearview mirror we plan to resume offering rides to appointments or to the Senior Center, picking up medications at the pharmacies or books and movies from the library, and helping out in a variety of ways.

For more information, or to volunteer your time, please contact Emily Samuels at 863-9446 or Susan LaScala at 863-2435.

## Free Food

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts distributes free groceries on the 3rd Wednesday of every month from 1:30 to 2:30 in the Gill-Montague Senior Center parking lot (5th & K Street, Turners Falls).

**This food is for EVERYONE:** no income or age requirements, no ID necessary. Please bring 2 or 3 shopping bags to be filled. Helpers are there to assist carrying these to your car.

Upcoming distributions are: Feb 16, Mar 16 and Apr 20.

If you are house-bound, please call or text Barb Watson at 413 325-3652 or email bwatson1066@gmail.com to arrange a home delivery.

## Gill Fire Department

### Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant

The Gill Fire Department received a Massachusetts Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant of \$10,500, the maximum amount awarded to small towns. This grant program is designed to help fund equipment replacements that will make firefighters more effective while enhancing safety. This year, the grant funds will be used to update hydraulic rescue tools, commonly known as the "Jaws of Life."

### Open Burn Season

Starting this year, Gill residents must apply online for a single-day burn permit. Phone applications will no longer be accepted by Shelburne Control. Online burn permit applications must be submitted at [www.fcburnpermits.com](http://www.fcburnpermits.com) between 8:30 AM and 1 PM on the day you wish to burn.

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Open burning is allowed from January 15 until May 1 with a permit. State fire wardens determine each day whether conditions are safe for open burning. Weather and air quality can change rapidly, especially in the spring, and fire departments can rescind permits when that happens.

Open burning must be done between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. from January 15 to May 1. Fires must be tended at all times by a responsible adult and at least 75 feet from all dwellings. You are allowed to burn brush, cane, driftwood and forestry debris (but not from commercial or industrial land clearing), agricultural materials including fruit tree and bush prunings, raspberry stalks, and infected bee hives for disease control, trees and brush from agricultural land clearing, and fungus-infected elm wood, if no other acceptable means of disposal is available. You may not burn leaves, brush, trees, cane or driftwood from commercial or industrial land clearing, grass, hay, leaves, stumps or tires, construction materials or demolition debris, or household trash.

### **Join Your Community Partners at the GFD**

The Gill Fire Department is always looking for community-minded members who want to help their neighbors. Our members receive training in all aspects of firefighting and basic first aid, including CPR and defibrillation. If you are interested in becoming a member, please call the fire station at 413-863-8955 for more information, or stop by the station at 196A Main Road on any Thursday evening during our weekly

drill sessions. Check it out. It's one of the most rewarding ways a citizen can help our community.

### **Visible Street Numbers**

Gill's new street number signs make it easier for first responders to find you in an emergency. Please try to keep your signs visible this winter. Try to fix any signs that are bent or damaged by plows this winter. If you are unable to repair a number sign, please call the fire station at 413-863-8955 and firefighters will fix it for you.

### **Keep Warm. Keep Safe.**

Heating is the second leading cause of fires in the home in Massachusetts. Home fires peak from December through February when the cold weather drives people indoors, heating systems are in regular use, and people turn to alternatives such as space heaters and wood or pellet stoves.

No one thinks fire will happen to them, but it is more important than ever to consider safety when heating your home. Give furnaces an annual check-up because efficiently running furnaces save money and prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Certified professionals will check chimneys for cracks in the mortar and clean accumulated creosote to prevent chimney fires.

Heating is also the leading cause of carbon monoxide poisoning in homes, so make sure you have both working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on each floor of your home. Carbon monoxide is an invisible killer because it has no color, taste, or smell, and the symptoms are just like getting the flu. Test

all the alarms once a month and change alkaline batteries twice a year. Replace smoke alarms that are older than ten years and CO alarms older than seven years. When replacing alarms, look for models with a ten-year, sealed, non-replaceable, non-rechargeable battery.

Store wood outdoors and pellets for stoves indoors, but away from heat sources. Dispose of the ashes in a metal container, with a secure lid, away from the house. A single ember can stay hot for days without being detected and easily fanned back to life. So many fires have started when ashes were placed inside cardboard boxes, paper bags or plastic containers, and then stored inside the garage, the breezeway, or under the porch.

Have a safe, comfortable heating season. For more information on winter heating and fire safety, visit [www.mass.gov/keepwarmkeepsafe](http://www.mass.gov/keepwarmkeepsafe).

### **Ice Safety Tips**

Ice on moving water in rivers, streams and brooks is never safe. The thickness of ice on ponds and lakes depends upon water currents or springs, depth, and natural objects such as tree stumps or rocks. Daily changes in temperature cause the ice to expand and contract, which affects its strength. Because of these factors, no one can declare any ice surface to be absolutely safe.

For your safety, never go out onto the ice alone. A companion may be able to rescue you or go for help if you fall through the ice. Always keep your pets on a leash. If a pet falls through the ice do not attempt to rescue your



pet, go for help. New ice is usually stronger than old ice. As the ice ages, the bond between the crystals decays, making it weaker, even if melting has not occurred. Beware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it strong, but can also insulate it to keep it from freezing. Snow can also hide cracks, weak, or open ice. Slush is a danger sign, indicating that ice is no longer freezing from the bottom and can be weak or deteriorating. Ice formed over flowing water is generally 15% weaker than ice on still water. Finally, ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate. It can be one foot thick in one spot and be only one inch thick only ten feet away. Stay safe and think twice before you step out on the ice.

## Four Winds School

We had a great fall semester at Four Winds School. Students and faculty alike have enjoyed the freshly renovated building and attending classes fully in-person again. Thanks to weekly pooled testing through CIC Health, our vaccination and mask policy, and our state-of-the-art/surgical-quality air filters, all of our students and teachers have remained entirely COVID-free for the whole pandemic!

In addition to their regular studies in English, Math, Latin, and Geography, this fall students studied Prehistory, Human Evolution, and Cells in our science and humanities classes. This spring we will be studying Ancient Civilizations, Anatomy, and Psychology as well as having Health Class with Brian Melanson from Whole Children/ Milestones.

We are currently accepting students in grades 5-8 for the spring semester, and are expecting a large class of 5th and 6th graders for the 2022-2023 school year. You may contact us at [fourwindteachers@gmail.com](mailto:fourwindteachers@gmail.com) if you are interested in setting up an interview or school visit. Stay safe and enjoy the winter!

*Becca Lipton Danielson, Four Winds School, 54 French King Hwy, Gill*

## Gill Elementary School

We love our new floors! The staff and students truly appreciate the support of the town in the removal of the asbestos tiles and the installation of the new floors. The first part of the project was completed last summer and all of the asbestos tiles were removed. For the second part of the project, the remaining tile floors (non-asbestos) will be replaced. As they are beginning to age, it is important that we replace them as well. The new floors have brightened up the school considerably and look great.

This has been an incredibly challenging time in public education. Gill Elementary continues to experience daily the effects of students and staff who need to be out, are in quarantine, or are ill. It has been difficult to find substitute teachers, so if you are interested in becoming one, please reach out to me. Despite this, the staff at Gill Elementary are incredibly dedicated and we all step up to help each other out to ensure that the instruction continues, and everyone is healthy and safe.

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Given the disruption of the learning in the past few years, we are focusing on learning gaps and making decisions about what interventions to provide to students. Beginning this month, we are adopting a new social-emotional curriculum and will be piloting the Second Step curriculum for the next year. This is the one area in which we've observed students have experienced the most challenges.

If you are interested in working as a sub at the school, please contact me at [Lisa.Desjarlais@gmrsl.org](mailto:Lisa.Desjarlais@gmrsl.org)

*Lisa Desjarlais, Principal*

## College Dean's List

Althea Tierney was named to the fall semester Dean's List at Connecticut College.

## Honor Roll

### Pioneer Valley Regional School First Quarter

#### Grade 12

Highest Honor: Isaac Damon

#### Grade 11

Highest Honor: James Staelens

#### Grade 8

Highest Honor: Anthony McNamara and Charlotte Reylea-Strawn

High Honor: Taj Diaby

### Turners Falls High School First Quarter

#### Grade 11

First Honors: Adeline Riley

#### Grade 10

Second Honors: Owen LaValley

#### Grade 9

Second Honors: Maren Batchelder

### Great Falls Middle School Second Quarter

#### Grade 8

First Honors: Lincoln Coleman, Shayla Freeland, Vaughn LaValley, Emma Little, Miles Riley and Kainen Stevens

Second Honors: Christopher Halla and Olivia Hastings

Third Honors: Hunter Pratt

#### Grade 6

First Honors: Madison Haight and Jocelyn Ovalle Roblero

## Gill Historical Commission

### News: GHC Website

Both the wintry weather and the pandemic have slowed down GHC plans for re-opening the collection at Riverside Municipal Building and for hosting several public events. Our hope is to return safely to those plans by spring or summer. In the meantime, GHC has developed a Gill Historical website with information, articles, and pictures that change monthly. A current entry details a memory of ice harvesting on the Connecticut River. The site also provides an archive of previous articles. For instance, Robert Herbert's article on Gill's Roswell Field and his letters. Order forms for both the Riverside and the Jennie books are available at this location. The GHC members and meeting schedule is also posted.

### News: GHC Facebook

By mid- February, GHC will have a Facebook page thanks to member Charlene Currie. You will find pictures and historical information about Gill. We will also include photos of items in the Gill historical collection at Riverside. The goal is to inform readers about Gill history and sites as well as to receive readers' comments and memories that add to understanding our history.

### Gill Cultural Council Grant

GHC is pleased to have received a 2022 grant from the GCC and the Massachusetts Cultural Council to help with our Robert Darr Wert Project. We continue to accumulate information and textile images from Wert's Country Prints (1949-1966) on River Road in Gill and are now planning for a traveling display, speaker, and community forum, financed in part by the GCC funding.

### Books

*Riverside: Life Along the Connecticut River in Gill, Massachusetts* and *Jennie Williams Bardwell: Life in Gill 1860-1950* are available for gift-giving. (Donations: *Riverside* \$45 and *Jennie* \$50 plus media postage). Order forms are at the Town Hall and on the website.

### Acquisition

A log boom is a barrier placed in a river and designed to collect or contain floating logs. GHC has recently received a drawing of proposed log boom in front of the Turners Falls Lumber Company at Riverside. We appreciate this addition to the Gill



Historical Collection, and thank David Allen of old-maps.com in Greenfield for his gift. Later in February, the GHC website will have a photograph of the plans and more information on the log boom.

### Armored Mud Balls

Gill is one of the few locations in the world where armored mud balls are found. Embedded in sandstone, they date from the Jurassic Period, Mesozoic Era. Details of their formation may be found in GHC's *Riverside* book on page 7. Given their rarity, GHC is supporting the recognition of the armored mud balls as an official Massachusetts State Geological Symbol. If you would like to sign a supporting petition to recognize the mud balls, you may sign a petition at <https://www.armored-mudballs.rocks>, which is part of a lobbying effort organized by Richard Little, GCC Professor Emeritus.

# Winter Vaccine Clinics in Franklin County



**Youth ages 5-18 are eligible to get a vaccine.**  
**Everyone age 12 and over is eligible for a booster shot.**

Adult community members without children are welcome at school-based clinics.  
*Adults without children, please select an appointment slot later in the day.*

Parents/caregivers who need a vaccination or booster are welcome to get a shot at the same time as their child is vaccinated.

**All three vaccine types (Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson) are available at each mobile clinic.**  
**Flu shots are also available at each clinic.**

## FRANKLIN COUNTY MOBILE VACCINATION CLINIC SCHEDULE

Click the school link below to register that that location and date

Monday, January 24	<a href="#">Turners Falls High School</a> (Turners Falls)	2:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 26	<a href="#">Dexter Park Elementary School</a> (Orange)	1:30 - 5:30 p.m.
Thursday, February 3	<a href="#">Mohawk Trail Regional School</a> (Buckland)	1:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Friday, February 11	<a href="#">Pioneer Valley Regional School</a> (Northfield)	2:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, February 16	<a href="#">Jon Zon Community Center</a> (Greenfield)	2:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 22	<a href="#">Franklin County Technical School</a> (Turners Falls)	2:00 - 6:00 p.m.

**Looking for other options?**  
 Visit [www.bhninc.org](http://www.bhninc.org) to find other clinic dates and locations in western MA

The Franklin County Mobile Vaccination Clinics are co-sponsored by the MA Department of Public Health, Behavioral Health Network, and participating local school districts, with support from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

## Gill Montague Senior Center Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>10:15 am – 11:00 am</b> Aerobics with Linda Allis	<b>12:00 pm – 12:30 pm</b> Tuesday Morning Knitters	<b>10:15 am – 11:00 am</b> Aerobics with Linda Allis	<b>1:00 pm – 3:30 pm</b> Cards and Games	<b>10:15 am – 11:00 am</b> Aerobics with Linda Allis
<b>11:00 am – 11:45 am</b> Chair Exercise with Linda Allis	<b>1:00 pm</b> Chair Yoga with Andrea Chesnes	<b>11:00 am – 11:45 am</b> Chair Exercise with Linda Allis		<b>11:00 am – 11:45 am</b> Chair Exercise with Linda Allis
<b>1:00 pm – 3:00 pm</b> Knitting and Needle- crafts Circle	<b>3:00 pm – 4:30 pm</b> Tai Chi with Mari Rovang	<b>1:00 pm</b> Bingo  <b>4:00 pm</b> Mat Yoga with Andrea Chesnes		

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