



THE

Gill Newsletter

Spring 2024 Issue

Disclaimer:

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editors, the organizing committee or town officials and should not be construed as such. Although we work to produce accurate and typographically correct copy, we and our advertisers cannot be responsible for errors or the accuracy of materials submitted to us.

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Annual Town Meeting

This year's annual Town Meeting is scheduled to begin on Monday, May 6th at 7:00 PM upstairs at the Town Hall. As the meeting warrant, motions, and explanations become available, they will be posted to the Town's website and on our Facebook page.

Town Meeting will be held in two parts this year. Part 1, on May 6th, will address non-financial and routine non-budget articles. Part 2, on Tuesday, June 11th at 7:00 PM upstairs at the Town Hall, will address financial articles and budget appropriations for the coming fiscal year beginning July 1st.

Besides the usual budget matters, this year's Town Meeting includes warrant articles on a variety of other important topics, including: converting the elected Tax Collector and Treasurer positions to appointed (must also be approved by ballot vote at the annual Town Election on May 20th); adopting Mass. General Law chapter 44 section 54(b) allowing town trust funds to be invested using the "Prudent Investor Rule;" adopting Mass. General Law chapter 59 section 5 clause 37A increasing the real estate tax exemption for legally blind persons from \$437.50 to \$500 annually; and a non-binding referendum advising the Selectboard on anticipated petition from the Northfield Mount Hermon School to discontinue the entire length of Mount Hermon Road

FirstLight Power Application for Hydroelectric Power Generation 401 Water Quality Certification

Notice of Public Hearing & Public Comment Period

(This article is available as a News Item on the Town's website. Visit the website for links and email addresses you can click on.)

Notice is hereby given that FirstLight Power has filed an application for a 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC application) with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). That application is required as part of FirstLight's pending application with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to relicense FirstLight's Connecticut River hydroelectric dam and associated facilities in Turners Falls and Montague and the pumped storage facility in Northfield, all under the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. § 797(e).

The WQC application is available on FirstLight's and MassDEP's websites at: https://www.northfield-relicensing.com/401-wqc-documents?per_



Check in with the Gill Website

www.gillmass.org

for up to date news,
announcements and
contact information!





page=1000 and <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/401-wqc-for-the-firstlight-hydroelectric-re-licensing-project>.

For additional information, please email FirstLight at relicensing@firstlight.energy or MassDEP at dep.hydro@mass.gov.

Public Comments and Hearings: MassDEP will conduct two public hearings on the WQC application. Registration is required in advance at the links below:

Remote Only, May 29, 2024 at 1:30 pm https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_n2c7s5dJQqSJZ1e-bMhWKNw

Remote Only, May 29, 2024 at 7:00 pm https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_TTGkjrLOT_qBnjx-tUiDWmg

After registering for the remote session, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. The purpose of the hearing is for members of the public to comment orally on the WQC application as part of the official record.

Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on June 3, 2024.

The Department encourages electronic submission by email to dep.hydro@mass.gov which must include FirstLight 401 WQC in the subject line. In lieu of electronic submittal, paper comments may be mailed to Elizabeth Stefanik, Attn: FirstLight 401WQC, MassDEP-BWR, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114.

For special accommodations for these hearings, please call the

MassDEP Diversity Office at 617-292-5751. TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370. This information is available in alternate format upon request. MassDEP provides language access interpreter/translation services to limited English proficient individuals free of charge. If you need an interpreter to participate in this meeting, translation services can be found at the following link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdep-language-translation-assistance>.

*By Order of the Department of Environmental Protection
Bonnie Heiple, Commissioner*

Recycling Bins, Compost Pails, & Backyard Composters

Recycling bins are available at the Town Hall for new-to-town residents and for residents who need to replace damaged bins. The first one is free, and additional ones are \$5 each. Kitchen compost pails are also available free of charge at the Town Hall, with a limocompost bins, and these are available to Gill residents for a discounted price of \$25 each (regularly \$65 each). Payment can be made by cash or check payable to the Town of Gill.

Newsletter Retirements

This issue of the Gill Newsletter will be the final one produced by the leadership team of Susan LaScala (editor), Barb Watson (advertising & assembly), and Harry van Baaren (layout), as they have collectively announced their retirement.

Susan, Barb and Harry were the stalwarts and bastions of the Town's longest running publication, and we can never say enough words to

adequately thank each of them for their many years of volunteerism. So, we will say it simply, with the heartfelt appreciation of the entire town cram-packed into these two words: Thank You.

With at least 47 years of combined service and dedication to the Gill Newsletter, they made a remarkable, well-oiled machine. Barb's tenure began around June 2002, Harry joined in 2007, and Susan assumed the reins as editor in 2016.

With their steadfast guidance and leadership, the Gill Newsletter has been and remains the Town's most effective and cherished method of communicating with our residents. Even in this ever-expanding digital age we're in, their hard work each quarter produced a robust and hearty document that informed and brought people together. It is the stuff of community, and they have made a lasting mark on the fabric of Gill.

On behalf of a grateful Town, we thank each of them for their years of service, and wish them all happy and prosperous futures.

Newsletter Volunteers Wanted

With the retirement of the leadership team, the Town is seeking volunteers to fill the roles of editor, layout, and advertising & assembly. If you have some time to give and want to learn more about what each position entails, please contact Ray Purington, Town Administrator, at 413-863-9347 or administrator@gill-mass.org.



From the Town Clerk's Office

Town Election

Vote by Mail for Gill Town Election on Monday May 20, 2024.

Gill's annual Town Election will be held on Monday, May 20, 2024 from 10AM – 6PM upstairs at the Town Hall. In-person early voting is not available for this election. Voters who wish to vote by mail may do so, and need to contact the Town Clerk at 413-863-8103 to request a ballot. Requests must be made to the Town Clerk by May 14th to allow adequate time to return completed ballots before the election. Vote by mail ballots must be returned to the Town Hall by 6 PM Monday, May 20, 2024.

Ballots can be mailed or put in the drop box at the rear door of the Town Hall. To mail your ballots place in the provided envelope and mail to: Town Clerk, Town Hall, 325 Main Rd, Gill, MA 01354

The Town Clerk will be glad to help explain the process if you have any questions, and more information will be posted on the Town website www.gillmass.org as it becomes available.

To register to vote, you must be a U.S. citizen, a resident of Gill and at least 18 years old on or before the date of the town election. Voter registration forms are available online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>.

Upcoming Town Meeting and Election Dates

Friday, April 26, 2024, 11AM-3PM
– Last day to register to be able to vote in the Annual Town Meeting (05/06/2024) and the Annual Town Election (05/20/2024). The Town Clerk's Office in the Town Hall will be

open 11AM to 3PM. You can register to vote in future elections online at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ovr/>

Monday, April 29, 2024 – Vote by Mail applications are available. Please call the Town Clerk 413-863-8103 for instructions.

Monday, May 6, 2024 – Annual Town Meeting, 7PM upstairs in the Town Hall

Tuesday, May 7, 2024 – Vote by Mail ballots available from the Town Clerk for the Annual Town Election

Monday, May 20, 2024 – Annual Town Election 10AM- 6PM upstairs in the Town Hall. If you need to use the elevator, please use the ADA accessible entrance located at the rear of the Town Hall.

Monday May 20, 2024 – Vote by Mail ballots must be placed in the drop box by 6PM sharp.

Tuesday, June 11, 2024 – continuation of Annual Town Meeting, 7PM upstairs at the Town Hall.

Dog Licenses

Dog licenses for 2024 are still available in the Clerk's Office. April 1, 2024 was the deadline to license all dogs in Gill. If you have not yet licensed your dog for this year, please do so ASAP.

Doreen Stevens

Town Clerk

townclerk@gillmass.org

Office hours:

Monday 9AM to 4PM

Wednesday 9AM to 3PM

Tuesday 9AM to 1PM

Thursday 3PM-6PM

The Town Clerk is also available by appointment 413-863-8013

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Doug Smith - Owner



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Fax: (413) 863-0120

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Janet Masucci 413-863-8694 JanetMasucci.com
64 French King Highway, Gill, MA



Town Forest Committee

The Forest Committee is seeking interested individuals that might like to: 1. serve formally as a member or, 2. assist informally with activities like trail clean-up events or related tasks. Our small Committee is looking to diversify its membership and is a great way to meet and serve the town in a limited, flexible capacity. Please contact Ken Sprankle to learn more about either of these options at spranklek1@gmail.com.

Slate Library News

Spring has finally arrived, which means summer must be right around the corner! In June, it is time to begin playing the summer reading game. Designed to engage kids throughout the summer months, the summer reading game records daily reading goals (set by you and your child), and rewards them each week with fun prizes from our prize basket. Stop by the library and pick up a game board!

While you are visiting consider checking out an item from our library of things. Did you know that the library has a croquet set that you can check out? We also have bocce and karaoke and a large sized projector screen for backyard movie night. All the things you need for a summer of fun! We'd love to hear from you regarding what items you'd like us to acquire for our community. Let us know how we can support local meetings, community groups and ideas for library events.

We hope to see you soon!

FRCOG Public Health

COVID vaccine – are you up to date?

In late February 2024 the CDC added a new recommendation that people aged 65 years and older should receive 1 additional dose of any updated (2023–2024 Formula) COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., Moderna, Novavax, Pfizer-BioNTech). This additional dose, given at least 4 months after first dose of 23-24 formula vaccine, is to boost protection during the summer months.

Cooperative Public Health Nurses are providing Moderna COVID vaccine in home visits, and at drop-in nursing hours through the spring and early summer by appointment only.

If you would like to receive this additional dose, or if you still need a first dose of the 2023-24 formula that came out in Sept 2023, please contact:

Lisa White, RN
Franklin Regional Council of Governments Cooperative Public Health Service
413-774-3167 x-156

Tick Season

Spring is here and so are ticks! Ticks can transmit diseases to humans when they bite; the longer a tick remains attached to the skin, the higher the likelihood that it may spread bacteria that cause illness.

In 2023, over 250 ticks from Franklin County were tested for tick-borne illness. Lyme disease was found in ticks from 65% of Franklin County towns. Two other illnesses, babesiosis and anaplasmosis,

were found in ticks from 25-30% of Franklin County towns.

Although only deer ticks (black-legged ticks) can transmit Lyme and anaplasmosis; other ticks should be avoided because they can transmit less common diseases.

Luckily, there are many things we can do to prevent tick-borne diseases:

- When outdoors, stick to hiking trails, wear light-colored clothing (to see ticks) and tuck in socks and loose ends.
- Make a habit of checking yourself, your children, and pets for ticks after coming inside. Think like a tick: ticks often hitch a ride after physical contact with brushy plants. Start by checking feet, ankles, legs and groin, then work your way upwards.
- Use tick repellents. DEET can be used on skin. Pre-treat clothing, including socks and shoes, with permethrin (not to be put on skin). Permethrin is invisible, odorless and stays effective in fabric through many washings. Using both repellents together is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Defense (DOD).

Want to identify a tick? Send a photo to Tick Encounter (tickencounter.org), to learn about the tick and your risk level.

Gill residents can test ticks for pathogens that cause disease for reduced price of \$15 (regular price \$50) from Tick Report. Directions on how to mail in a tick for testing can be found at tickreport.com.



The last newsletter mentioned a listening session to hear how opioids have affected our local communities and potential solutions. This is one important step for using opioid settlement funds. Read the summary of the listening session at <https://frcog.org/opioid-settlement-updates/>

LifePath Volunteers

Volunteer drivers needed to help others get to and from medical appointments

LifePath has a program to help older people get to medical appointments. We match local volunteers with individuals in need of transportation or medical advocacy. We have a waiting list of people with no other way to get to their appointments. We need your help to help those in your area! All LifePath Volunteers receive training, supervision, and mileage reimbursement. Call us today to learn more or visit lifepathma.org/volunteer.

Honor Roll

Franklin County Technical School

Grade 12

Honors: Britney Zager

Grade 11

High Honors: Josiah Little

Honors: Zachary Zilinski

Grade 10

High Honors: Ashlyn Chapin and Emma Little

Honors: Lydia MacMunn-Seaman and Ella Vassar

Grade 9

High Honors: Vincent Craig

Pioneer Valley Regional School Semester 2

Grade 8

Highest Honor: Daein Kim

Turners Falls High School

Second Quarter

Grade 12

First Honors: Owen LaValley

Third Honors: Noah DeLorenzo

Grade 11

Second Honors: Sheni Ovalle

Roblero

Grade 10

First Honors: Ella DeLorenzo, Lily

DeLorenzo and Vaughn LaValley

Second Honors: Christopher Halla and Kainen Stevens

Third Honors: Rojelio Galvez

Mendez and Caleb Lincoln

Great Falls Middle School

Second Quarter

Grade 8

First Honors: Maison Haight

Second Honors: Jonathon Holmes and Jocelyn Ovalle Roblero

Grade 7

First Honors: Allison Raymond,

Santiago Buri Rosales and

Owen Zilinski

Pioneer Valley Regional School

Semester 3

Highest Honor: Daein Kim

Turners Falls High School

Third Quarter

Grade 12

First Honors: Noah DeLorenzo

Second Honors: Owen LaValley

Third Honors: Regan Marshall

Grade 11

Second Honors: Sheni Ovalle

Roblero

Grade 10

First Honors: Ella DeLorenzo, Lily

DeLorenzo and Vaughn LaValley

Second Honors: Kainen Stevens

Third Honors: Christopher Halla and

Caleb Lincoln

Great Falls Middle School

Third Quarter

Grade 8

First Honors: Madison Haight,

Alaina Halla and Jonathon Holmes

Third Honors: Jocelyn Ovalle

Roblero

Grade 7

First Honors: Santiago Buri Rosales

Second Honors: Owen Zilinski

College Dean's List

Julie Sprankle, a marketing major, was named to the Dean's List for the fall semester at Endicott College.

Gill Elementary School

This year, a few members of GES staff along with local farmers, Sorrel Hatch and Faith Rand, started a Farm to School program with the focus of teaching the students where our food comes from as well as encouraging them to make healthier choices when it comes to their food. After attending a three-day workshop at Shelburne Farms in Vermont, as well as a conference sponsored by the Massachusetts Farm to School program, the team created a year-long plan which



included visits to local farms, revitalizing the school's gardens, and making food with students. We hope to expand the program more next year by connecting with more local farmers in the area and providing healthier choices in the school lunch program. To help with the funding of this project, the school received a \$500 grant from the Mobil/Exxon Corporation to focus on math/science initiatives. Our Farm to School program was a perfect fit. Gill's local Mobil station (a.k.a The Mill) recommended the school. Thank you for your support!

The school also held their annual Vernal Pool Day on April 30, 2024. The school is blessed to have such a large and fertile pool on its grounds. The students found many unique and special creatures that can only be found in vernal pools. We thank our local volunteers - Paul Sievert, Jennifer Jones, Sorrel Hatch, and Colleen Sculley. Their patience and enthusiasm make the day special for everyone as well as a wonderful and memorable learning experience.

Finally, this year, each elementary school in the district sponsored a family curriculum night. Hillcrest Elementary sponsored a literacy night in November, Sheffield Elementary sponsored a math night, and Gill Elementary is sponsoring a science night on May 16 from 5:30-7:00pm. Families from all three schools will be coming to GES to enjoy some fun science activities, both inside and outside the school building. Although we are trying everything to reduce the number of cars on Boyle Road, we predict there will be many parked along the side

of the road. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this might cause our neighbors or anyone accessing Boyle Road.

Gill Cultural Council News

A Gathering Of Gill Artists

Artists and crafts-persons in many media and fields - both professionals and those who create for personal satisfaction - live in Gill. We thought it might be fun to meet each other in a casual informal setting. To that end we invite all those who identify as artistic makers and practitioners to meet up at the Gill Slate Library on Thursday May 23 at 6:30 for camaraderie and networking. Refreshments will be served. One topic will be the possibility of hosting an artist showcase featuring our local artists at the library as part of this year's Harvest Festival in the Fall.

We hope to see you there!

Upcoming Events:

Several events receiving partial 2024 funding from the Gill Cultural Council will occur in the next few months. We hope you are able to enjoy some or all of the following:

FRANKLIN COUNTY PRIDE.

June 15 in Greenfield.
Free event

Parade at Noon, followed by the Pride Festival at Energy Park

LGBTQIA folks, plus youth, adults, families and allies are welcome.

The Parade begins at the Greenfield Middle School, proceeds down Federal Street, turns onto Main

Street, and then continues into Energy Park.

CIRCUS MINIMUS Saturday July 13.
Free event for all ages

11AM to Noon at Gill's Slate Library

Kevin O'Keefe performs his one man Circus in a Suitcase

ON THE BOARDS '24. A Festival of New Plays by Local Playwrights

Performances of individual shows the weekends of June 15, June 22, June 29, July 13, July 20, and July 27 at LAVA (Local Access to Valley Arts) in Greenfield.

For more information: www.thelavacenter.org

ANTENNA CLOUD FARM has an exciting season planned with events on June 29-30, and July 5-7. The full lineup will be announced and tickets will go on sale on their website in early May. www.antennaclooudfarm.com.

POCUMTUCK HOMELANDS FESTIVAL

Sat. August 3 10-7;
Sun. August 4 10-5.

Organized by Nolumbeka Project. At the Unity Park Waterfront in Turners Falls.

Indigenous artists, authors, storytellers, musicians, dancers, craftspeople, food vendors, and much more. For information nearer the event visit the Pocumtuck Homelands Festival Facebook page, or the Nolumbeka Project website. <https://nolumbekaproject.org>



Save The Date
For The Great

Annual Gill Harvest Festival

September 29, 2024

Rain Date 10/6/24
from 12-3 p.m.

The Common, Town Center, Gill

All those interested in displaying
farm or farm-related products
or presenting Crafts for Sale
please call an Ag Commission
member or go to the town website.

Ag Commission Members
are Tom Chalmers, Gary Stevens
Ed Golembeski, Roger Augustine,
Dick French, Hannah Sol
And Zoe Fox

Memorial Committee

The Gill Memorial Committee is
planning their annual Memorial Day
service for Sunday,

May 26, 2024. Ceremonies will begin
at the Gill Church and continue with
a service, gun salute and taps at
the Gill War Memorials across the
street. In anticipation of Memorial
Day weekend, we plant geraniums
and replace gravesite flags in each
of the four cemeteries in Gill. If
anyone is interested in participating,
please contact one of the committee
members:

Gary Bourbeau (413)768-9543
Merri Bourbeau (413)863-8613
Doug & Elaine Smith (413)863-3115
Tony Zager (413)522-6915

We meet approximately 4-5 times
each year to prepare for the Memorial

Day service, place flags for Memorial
Day and Veteran's Day, and keep
records updated of our Gill veterans.
If you are interested in becoming a
member, we would be glad to have
you join us.

Roadside Trash Pick-Up

Over twenty-two families responded
to the call for a Gill Community
Roadside Trash Pick-Up between
April 20th and 28th. Ranging in age
from 6 to 70-plus, they fanned out
over the community and picked clean
approximately 80% of Gill's highways
and byways. If the area around their
homes was clean, some volunteered
to clean up other stretches of road
where littering is particularly bad.

The most frequent items continue to
be nip bottles. Some Massachusetts
towns have banned the sale of nip
bottles in their towns. In others,
liquor retailers have stepped up to
help by offering a ten-cent refund on
nip bottle returns.

Thanks to those who joined us for a
concentrated week of de-littering this
year. We know many of you police
your neighborhoods year round
as well. You help to make walking,
jogging, and biking Gill roads a lot
more pleasant for all of us!



Larry Palumbo on Center Rd.

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