

TOWN OF GILL

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



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SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 20, 2009

Called to Order

Meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m.

Present

Ann Banash, John Ward, Nancy Griswold, Selectboard members; Tracy Rogers, town administrator; Carl Ladd, Gill Montague Regional School District superintendent; Claire Chang, Finance Committee member; Ray Steele, town moderator; Joe Graveline.

Selectboard Retreat

Ray asked for details on the recent Selectboard retreat, particularly questioning why it was not held in open meeting. Ann replied that the Northwestern District Attorney's Office had provided a written opinion that it was acceptable to hold such a retreat in a closed session (Tracy provided Ray with a copy of the opinion and the agenda for the retreat). Ann also stated that the next phase of the retreat will be held during the Board's August 3 meeting in open meeting and the public will be invited to comment.

Phase II Archaeology Report on Mariamante

Ray asked that the UMass report be made public. People should be able to comment on the preliminary report before it is sent on to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). He asked if it could be placed on the town website for anyone to access for free. Tracy expressed concern for putting information up for artifact hunters to access that easily. John replied that people already know there are artifacts on the site, so perhaps it's not something to be concerned about.

The Board instructed Tracy to ask UMass for a pdf copy of the report to put online. If they do not provide one by Wednesday morning, Tracy will scan in her paper copy and put it up. A disclaimer should accompany the document stating that is only a preliminary copy.

Ann asked to table further discussion on this issue until later in the meeting, given other pressing items on the agenda.

Schuetzen Verein Public Gathering Permit Hearing

Tracy presented the Schuetzen Verein's application to hold public gatherings on several dates throughout the summer (some of which had already passed) and reported that all necessary departments had signed off on the application. John made a motion to grant the permit. Nancy seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote. The Board instructed Tracy to request from the Schuetzen Verein club president to get the application in in a timelier manner next year.

Introduction to the New Superintendent

Carl Ladd introduced himself as the new superintendent for the Gill Montague Regional School District. He discussed school advisory committees, which members of the School Committee have

requested be put back in place as they were outlined in the District Agreement, versus school community councils, which exist now. Education Reform limited the authority of school advisory committees, especially with regards to budgeting. He proposed possibly combining the functions of both councils into a single council and writing into the regional agreement a stronger role for community councils. Ray asked if he should appoint anyone to the advisory committee given this information. The Board suggested waiting until the Town's committee that will review the Agreement has finished its work.

Firefighters Stuart Elliott, Gene Beaubien, and Jason Edson joined the meeting.

Regarding the issue of the school making requests for capital purchases, the Board requested more communication in general. The recent request to upgrade the electrical panel at Gill Elementary came in the form of a price quote with no prior communication that an upgrade was necessary. Carl agreed communication needs to be better and discussed talking with his staff about internal and external customer service.

Ann mentioned that the Quintus Allen Fund could be used to upgrade the panel. She spoke with Principal Detweiler about this today.

Superintendent Ladd left the meeting.

Fire Department Update

Gene presented two employment applications for new firefighters. One for Eric Vassar and one for Dylan Tanner, both pending physical exams. Dylan would be a junior firefighter.

Engine 1 has gone to Hopkinton to have the pump repaired.

Six firefighters need SCBA training, which will come around again in September. 16 on the force currently have been trained. Training costs \$180-\$200 per person. Ann asked whether, for that amount of money, we could have someone come to Gill to conduct the training. Gene responded that it takes two years to get on the waiting list to sponsor a training. Gene agreed to talk with Deerfield about using their facilities, however, to sponsor an in-house training.

Collector-Treasurer Ronnie LaChance joined the meeting to ask the Fire Department and Selectboard if it was alright for the Friends of Gill to hold their annual picnic at the Fire Department if it should rain again on July 26. Both groups agreed it would be alright. Ronnie left the meeting.

Nancy made a motion to appoint both Eric Vassar and Dylan Tanner to the Department, contingent upon satisfactory physical exams. John seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Review Minutes

Minutes from the Board's June 23, 2009 meeting were approved by a unanimous vote.

Riverside Municipal Building Study Committee

Tracy presented the following list of seven residents who either volunteered or agreed to serve on the Committee:

1. Nancy Griswold
2. Jenn Waldron
3. Claire Chang
4. Leland Stevens
5. Jeff Suprenant
6. Pam Shoemaker
7. Jim Tomasi

Nancy made a motion to appoint all those on the list. John seconded the motion. Claire questioned having a member of the Selectboard on a committee that makes recommendations to the Selectboard. Tracy pointed out other such committees that currently have, or formerly have had such membership. Nancy and Ann voted aye; John abstained.

Ann asked Claire to call the first meeting of the Committee together.

Committee to Study and Recommend Possible Changes to the Current District Agreement and Regional School District Planning Committee

Ann suggested appointing Doff Storrow and Jenn Waldron, the only two residents who have come forward thus far, and ask Doff to see if she can get other members of the former Commission for Education to serve as well. She also instructed Tracy to put another article in the town newsletter asking for members.

Nancy made a motion to appoint Doff and Jenn to both committees. John seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Election Worker Appointment

Tracy explained that she had mistakenly left Jim Greenleaf on the list annual appoints as an election worker, though Jim has moved to Florida. Instead, she removed Joe Naida from the list. John made a motion to appoint Joe Naida as an election worker. Nancy seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Anti-Harassment Policy

The Board had previously voted to appoint Tracy as the Town's Anti-Harassment Officer. Tracy presented a revised policy, which now includes her name, for the Board to sign.

Thank You Card

Ann read aloud a thank you card from former Senior Center Director Bunny Caldwell.

Friends of Gill Insurance

Tracy reported that she checked with MIIA on whether the Friends of Gill needed to be insured when using Town facilities for events. MIIA replied that insurance was not necessary, but recommended a signed agreement stating that the Friends would indemnify Gill. The Request for Use of Town Facilities Form that the Friends submits to the Board does contain this language, so that should be sufficient. Ann also reported having a discussion with a member of the Friends who stated that they do have insurance anyway.

Recreation Committee

Ann reported that the Recreation Committee is \$1,163.28 overdrawn in its revolving fund and the accountant has \$848.10 in FY09 bills he hasn't yet paid. She stated that she and Tracy will meet with the Chair of the Committee tomorrow morning.

Ronnie LaChance rejoined the meeting.

The \$848.10 that has not yet been paid will have to go on the next special town meeting warrant for permission to pay.

Phase II Archaeology Report, Continued

The Board agreed not to submit the report to MHC until 8/31, by which point most people who want to comment should have had reasonable time to do so. The Board instructed Tracy to put a note in the newsletter that the preliminary report will be available online and that comments will be accepted until 8/31.

Joe Graveline read a letter from the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (see attached) requesting to get a copy of the document and stating that UMass has promised him one, but it has not yet arrived.

Joe suggested the Board research 950 CMR, sections 70-71.

The Board agreed to invite a representative from any tribe interested in the property to attend its 8/3 meeting. Tracy will get contact information from Joe for tribes other than the Narragansetts.

Ronnie and Ray left the meeting.

Clerical Staff

Tracy reported that Bonnie Welcome, clerical assistant to the Board of Health, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals has given her notice and will probably be gone by 9/1. Ann instructed Tracy to place an ad in the newsletter and the Montague Reporter. The Hiring Committee will consist of the chair of each board, including the Conservation Commission (which requested clerical assistance this year), Ann, and Tracy.

Stray Dogs

Tracy reported that Sergeant Redmond contacted her a couple of weeks ago to ask what to do with a stray dog found on Riverside. Tracy contacted the Montague Police Department, which agreed to house the dog in their kennel, and gave Tracy the number to the Greenfield Animal Control Officer to meet Sergeant Redmond at the kennel. Montague and Greenfield have an arrangement to use Montague's kennel and Greenfield's officer. Tracy asked the Board if it would like her to explore having Gill join that agreement on a per diem basis.

There was some discussion about asking Hickory Hill Kennel to take Gill's strays, given that it is a local kennel and has a policy against putting animals down if their owners can't be found. Given the current issues between the Kennel, Reverend Diemand, and the Town, all that it would be a better idea to explore the Montague/Greenfield agreement.

Joe Graveline left the meeting.

Police Grant

Tracy presented a grant opportunity from the state to hire an officer to replace any laid off since July 2008 for one year. The grant is up to \$50,000 and covers salary, benefits, overtime, and equipment. The Board decided it was against the Department's best interests to have its staffing levels jump up and down over the years, given the Town most likely will not be in a position to keep the officer on once the grant is complete.

Regionalization of Schools

Tracy presented a letter from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments asking if towns wanted them to continue pursuing the idea of regionalizing schools. The Board agreed it does.

Committee Resignations

Tracy presented a resignation letter from Tony Mathews, former Chair of the Conservation Commission. Tony said he would like to join a town committee in the future, once his health is better. Tracy reported that she believed the Commission has someone else in mind to fill Tony's seat.

Tracy also presented a resignation letter from Ernie Hastings from his positions on the Finance Committee and Building Committee. A notice about the Finance Committee vacancy was in today's Greenfield Recorder.

APR Notice

Tracy read aloud a notice from the state Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) stating that “the DAR is considering acquiring an interest in approximately 32 acres of land within the municipality of Gill for inclusion in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program as an Agricultural Preservation Restriction.” The lots being considered are on the Assessors’ map 211, lots 4.1-4.6, between Boyle and Main roads. John signed the Confirmation of Notice.

Sewer Abatement Request

Tracy presented a sewer abatement request from Cathleen Demars of 10 Walnut Street for the amount of water used to fill her pool. The abatement request was for \$33.32. Nancy made a motion to approve the request. John seconded the motion and it was carried by a unanimous vote.

Training for Tracy

Tracy reported to the Board that she would like to become certified as a Massachusetts Public Purchasing Official. There are three classes, each three days long, and each costing \$450 in order to receive certification. She is considering taking one class each year over the next three years.

Since the cost is exorbitant for the Town to bear, Tracy volunteered to pay for the cost of the class, but asked if the Board would allow her to take the class on paid time. The Board approved her request.

Update from the Agricultural Commission

Tracy presented a written update on the Agricultural Commission’s activities to the Board.

Gift for Ray Purington

Ann suggested Board members chip in to give Ray a gift for his many hours of work on the Board’s retreat. Tracy will purchase a gift certificate to the Great Falls Coffee Shop.

Green Communities Planning Grant

Tracy presented a grant opportunity to receive free technical assistance to help the Town qualify as a Green Community under state guidelines. The Board tabled the discussion until its 8/3 meeting when members will have had more time to read the materials.

Claire left the meeting.

Payroll and Bill Warrants

The Board approved the payroll and bill warrant number 28 for FY09 and number 2 for FY10.

Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Tracy Rogers, Town Administrator.

John R. Ward, Selectboard Clerk