



SELECTBOARD AGENDA & MEETING NOTICE

Mon., September 11, 2023

***Indicates item added after the 48 hour posting

bold underlined time = invited guest or advertised hearing
(all other times are approximate)

Location: Town Hall, 2nd floor meeting room, 325 Main Road, Gill

5:30 PM Call to Order (If the meeting is being videotaped, announce that fact. If remote participation will occur, announce member & reason, & need for roll call voting)

Old Business

- Review of Minutes: 8/29/22, 9/12/22, 10/11/22, 11/21/22, 12/5/22, 12/19/22, 1/30/23, 2/13, 2/27, 3/13, 3/28, 3/30, 4/10, 4/24, 5/8, 5/22, 6/5, 6/20, 7/3, 7/17, 8/28

New Business

- Invasive Plant Management Plan for Center Cemetery – Joan Pillsbury, Chair of Cemetery Commission
- Assistance to Firefighters Grant (FFY 22) – awarded \$26,095.23 in Federal funding, with \$1,304.77 Town match. Award is for 1.5” combination nozzles (10), thermal imaging cameras (2), MSA Altair 5X gas detectors (2), and battery-powered vent fans (2)
- Resignation – Chris Polatin from Conservation Commission effective 9/3/23
- Appointment – Brian Donahue, 71 Bascom Road, to Conservation Commission through 6/30/25
- Municipal Aggregation of Electricity & proposed new guidelines from Mass. Dep’t of Public Utilities
- Other business as may arise after the agenda has been posted.
- Public Service Announcements, if any
 - Hazardous Waste Collection Day – Sat., Sept. 23 @ GCC. Pre-registration required
 - Rec Committee Square Dance – Sat., Sept 23, 7-10 PM @ Town Hall
 - Gill Fall Harvest Festival – Sun., Sept. 24, Noon – 3 PM @ Town Common
 - MA Community Health Equity Survey
- Warrants
FY24 #5 Vendors (\$30,379.64) & Payroll (\$35,092.29) – reviewed & signed on 8/28/23
FY24 #6 – review & sign

Adjournment

Other Invitations/Meetings:

Date	Time	Event	Location
Mon 9/25	5:30 PM	Selectboard Meeting	Town Hall
Mon 10/9		Columbus Day holiday	
Tues 10/10	5:30 PM	Selectboard Meeting	Town Hall
Mon 10/23	5:30 PM	Selectboard Meeting	Town Hall

TOWN OF GILL

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



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

July 17, 2023

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM in the 2nd floor meeting room at Gill Town Hall.

Members Present: Greg Snedeker, Charles Garbiel and Randy Crochier

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Ray Purington, Town Administrator; Chris Redmond, Bill Kimball, Gene Beaubien, Jeff Suprenant, Chris Pelletier, Maurice Dumas, Peter Conway, Kate Savage, Janet Masucci

Amendment to Police Chief's Contract: Police Chief Chris Redmond met with the Selectboard. In June 2022 the Selectboard and Redmond executed an amendment to his contract that dealt with compensation for police details, grant-funded duties, and other assignments outside the normal course of his work. That amendment, contained in section 4.A(a), was valid until July 1, 2023. It is felt the language in the amendment has worked and can be incorporated into the contract for the remaining two years. Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to sign a modification to the Police Chief's contract that removes the one-year term and annual review provision from section 4.A(a). The motion was approved by a unanimous vote, and the modification was signed by the Selectboard and Chief Redmond.

Fire Department Annual Purchase Orders for FY2024: The Selectboard reviewed a list of purchase orders for annual, budgeted expenses for the Fire Department for Fiscal Year 2024. Fire Chief Gene Beaubien noted the items and services in the list in unchanged from last year, although prices may have changed. The Selectboard approved the purchase orders by consensus.

Recap of River Rescue: Chief Redmond, Chief Beaubien, and Deputy Fire Chief Bill Kimball gave the Selectboard of summary of the activities that occurred during a July 12, 2023 multi-agency rescue of a swimmer stranded on the boat barrier in Barton Cove. Approximately a dozen agencies participated in the rescue, and an after-action debrief has already been conducted by those involved.

Key to making the rescue was receiving permission from the Environmental Police to use their boat that is moored on the far side of the cove near the Barton Cove Campground. The flow in the Connecticut River was elevated due to recent rainstorms, and no other agency, including the Gill Fire Department, Turners Falls Fire Department, and Northfield Dive Team, have a boat that could safely maneuver the river in those conditions. However, it took 45 minutes to receive permission from the Environmental Police, as the request had to work its way up and down the chain of command.

Kimball explained the event sparked renewed discussions about the lack of a fast-water rescue boat in the 22-mile section of the Connecticut River between the Vernon, VT dam and the Gill-Montague dam. The municipal agencies with boats all have flat bottom vessels that are severely underpowered for last week's flow conditions. He noted it has been more than five years that the Gill Fire Department has been on a Federal surplus equipment waiting list for a boat, and suggested it might be time to explore asking FirstLight to fund the purchase of a boat designed for fast-water conditions. The boat could also be equipped with a pump and necessary connections to be able to serve as a river-based water source for firefighting on and along the river.

Randy stated he is not opposed to exploring this further, but he has many questions regarding upkeep, moorage, off-season storage, and replacement costs, just to name a few. Greg noted that a propeller-driven boat can have problems in floodwater conditions due to the amount of heavy and hidden debris in the river. Kimball stated the cost of a jet-drive boat would likely be in excess of \$250,000. It was agreed the idea is worth further research and discussion, and Kimball will report back at a later date. Beaubien and Kimball left the meeting at 5:55 PM.

Expanding Membership on Sewer Commission: Jeff Suprenant, Peter Conway, Chris Pelletier, and Maurice "Zeke" Dumas, who all live in Riverside, met with the Selectboard for an update about ways to expand the makeup of the Sewer Commission in order to include members who live in the neighborhood. Currently, the members of the Sewer Commission are the three members of the Selectboard, and presently none of the Selectboard members reside in Riverside. (It's worth noting that as recently as 2010, all *three* members of the Selectboard lived there.)

The Riverside residents suggested adding members to the Sewer Commission could provide “invested and outside voices” to provide input on problems and ideas for solutions. It could be a way of bringing more attention to maintenance needs at the pump station, and the extra members could apply for grants to help pay for the improvements. Redmond left the meeting at 6:13 PM.

Ray presented a draft of possible changes to the Sewer Use Regulations that could provide for expanding the Sewer Commission to include residents, business owners, and/or property owners of properties receiving service from the Riverside sewer pump station. There was a question of the legality of having a public body with elected members and members who are appointed by the elected members, and a question of whether the Selectboard could appoint non-voting members on a short-term basis until the complete process for expanded membership has been determined and implemented. Both are questions for Town Counsel, and Ray will seek the answers.

There was a discussion about the number of appointed members, and several of the Riverside residents felt there should be four appointed members plus the three elected Selectboard members. However, it was pointed out if the four residents present tonight, for instance, were the appointed members, they would constitute a quorum of the 7-member Sewer Commission and any informal gathering to discuss the sewer pump station would be a violation of the Open Meeting Law. It was then agreed it makes more sense and provides more flexibility to have only two appointed members in addition to the three Selectboard members.

The topic was continued to the August 14th Selectboard meeting in order to provide time to get answers from Town Counsel. Suprenant, Conway, Pelletier, and Dumas left the meeting at 6:27 PM.

Review of Minutes: No minutes were ready for review.

Sewer Commitment: The Selectboard reviewed the sewer commitment # 2023-004 and user data for April - June 2023. Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to approve and sign the sewer commitment of \$51,916.73 with a bill date of July 18, 2023. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Town Hall Surplus Equipment: Ray requested the following items from the Town Hall be declared as surplus equipment of the Town and disposed of in the manner listed: two IBM Wheelwriter 5 typewriters, scrap; one desk of particle-board construction measuring 48” wide x 24” deep x 30” high with an attached bookshelf, Freecycle or similar giveaway; and one computer hutch or particle-board construction measuring 31” wide x 20” deep x 68” high, Facebook Marketplace or similar resale venue. Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to declare the listed items as surplus equipment and to dispose of them in the manner listed. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to participate in Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event: Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to sign a MOU between the Town and the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District that will allow Gill’s residents to participate in the District’s household hazardous waste collection event on September 23, 2023. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote and the MOU was signed.

Cultural Council Appointments: Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to appoint Amy Gordon of 8 Setback Lane and Steve Budd of 90 North Cross Road as members of the Cultural Council for terms through July 17, 2026. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Savage left the meeting at 6:38 PM.

Warrant: As the Town Accountant had not finished the reports for the vendor and payroll warrants, Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to authorize Randy to review and sign the warrants as the Chair. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote. (Randy review and signed the warrants with Town Clerk Doreen Stevens on July 18th. FY 2023 warrant # 28 with a total of \$42,022.94 for vendors, FY 2024 warrant # 2 with totals of \$64,469.75 for vendors and \$36,130.84 for payroll.)

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Town Administrator

Signed copy on file. Approved on 09/11/2023

Greg Snedeker, Selectboard Clerk

TOWN OF GILL

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



SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 28, 2023

Called to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:34 PM in the 2nd floor meeting room at Gill Town Hall.

Members Present: Charles Garbiel, Randy Crochier, and Greg Snedeker

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Ray Purington, Town Administrator; Kate Savage, Janet Masucci, Bill Tomb, Joe Williams, Bonnie Powlovich, Dave Powlovich, Kyle Dragon, Judie Garceau, Heather Johnson, Robert Walker, Ann York, and Renee Robinson

Sumrall Accreditation: Bill Tomb, Chair of the Board of Assessors, shared the news that Diane Sumrall, the Assistant to the Assessors, recently received her designation as a Massachusetts Accredited Assessor from the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers (MAAO). Sumrall began working for the Town in May 2021. The Board of Assessors has placed an emphasis on providing training and professional advancement opportunities, and this designation is “recognition of the good work Diane has put in.” The Selectboard offered their congratulations to Sumrall and praised her for the fine job she is doing in the Assessors’ Office. Tomb left the meeting at 5:37 PM.

Nuisance Dog Hearing: Randy opened the nuisance dog hearing at 5:37 PM. Judie Garceau, Regional Animal Control Officer, summarized the circumstances that led up to this hearing. Complaints were received on June 23, 2023 from Ann York, Robert Walker, and Terri Braun, each alleging excessive and/or aggressive barking by two dogs owned by Bonnie and Dave Powlovich of 29 West Gill Road. Garceau noted both dogs are current with their licenses and rabies vaccinations. Regional Animal Control Officer Kyle Dragon was also present for the hearing.

Heather Johnson, who lives at 21 West Gill Road, spoke to the matter. She is the closest (by distance) neighbor to the Powlovichs’ house and back yard where the dogs are kept when they are outside. She has not had any issue with noise from the dogs.

Joe Williams, 53 West Gill Road, spoke to the matter. His property abuts that of the Powlovichs, located on the opposite side of the old road to Factory Hollow. He spends a fair amount of time outdoors, and hears dogs from all up and down West Gill Road. He doesn’t feel these dogs are any more of a problem than any other dogs in the neighborhood.

Robert Walker, 26 West Gill Road, spoke to the matter. He stated the situation has improved a lot since the complaints were first made in June.

Renee Robinson, from Greenfield, spoke to the matter. She is a friend of the Powlovichs and is familiar with the dogs. While the dogs will bark initially when someone arrives, they quickly settle down and become quiet.

Ann York, 117 South Cross Road, spoke to the matter. Her house is diagonally across West Gill Road from the Powlovichs. She works from home, and this spring the noise from the incessant barking made it impossible for her to sit outside on her porch or back deck. She agreed the situation has been a lot better as of late.

Bonnie Powlovich, 29 West Gill Road, spoke as the owner of the two dogs, which she described as both being six years old and Shepherd/Lab mix. She stated there is a lot of wildlife that comes through their yard, including bears, deer, and turkeys, and the dogs will bark at all of them. However, lately the bears are not coming by as often, which seems to help. Also, she is now putting the dogs in the cellar whenever an Amazon or other delivery driver comes to the door.

After confirming no one else wished to speak, Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to close the hearing. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote. During the discussion there was consensus that progress seems to have been made, and it is good that all of the involved parties are listening to each other. ACO Dragon advised the Selectboard they should either make a finding the dogs are a nuisance, or they should dismiss the complaint. Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to dismiss the complaint against the two dogs owned by Bonnie and Dave

Powlovich. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote. Dragon, Garceau, B. Powlovich, D. Powlovich, York, Walker, Johnson, Robinson, and Williams left the meeting at 5:55 PM.

Review of Minutes: Charles made a motion, seconded by Randy, to approve the minutes from August 14, 2023. The motion was approved by a vote of 2 in favor and 0 opposed. Greg abstained from the vote.

Expanding Membership on Sewer Commission: Ray provided another update to the Selectboard regarding the process to expand the makeup of the Sewer Commission by adding two appointed members to serve with the three members of the Selectboard. Based on a conversation with Town Counsel, expanding the Sewer Commission will require a Town Meeting vote and a ballot question at the annual town election. The Town Meeting vote must happen at least 60 days prior to the town election. Ray provided sample wording for the possible article for the Town Meeting vote, and will keep the topic “on the radar” for any special Town Meeting that may be scheduled.

MOU with FRCOG for Legal Services: Randy disclosed he is an employee of the FRCOG and recused himself from any discussion and vote. Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to authorize Ray to sign the Amendment #1 to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FRCOG and the Town for legal services related to the FERC relicensing of the Northfield Mountain and Turners Falls hydroelectric facilities owned by FirstLight. The amendment extends the original MOU through September 30, 2024 and increases Gill’s total financial contribution from \$2,500 to \$5,000. The motion was approved by a vote of 2 in favor and 0 opposed. Randy abstained from the vote.

Northfield 350th Parade: Ray reported the Police, Fire, and Highway Departments all plan to participate in the Town of Northfield’s 350th Parade on September 30th with one or two vehicles each, depending on the availability of personnel and, in the case of the Highway Department, if the newest truck arrives in time. A couple of members of the Energy Commission have expressed an interest in riding bicycles as part of the parade. The Selectboard’s involvement will be determined later this week, as members needed to check their personal calendars.

Ending State of Emergency: Greg made a motion, seconded by Charles, to end the State of Emergency that was declared on July 21, 2023 due to the heavy rains and flooding throughout Gill. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

Savage left the meeting at 6:10 PM.

Warrant: The Selectboard reviewed and signed the FY 2024 warrant # 5 with totals of \$30,379.64 for vendors and \$35,092.29 for payroll.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Purington, Town Administrator

Signed copy on file. Approved on 09/11/2023

Greg Snedeker, Selectboard Clerk



LAND STEWARDSHIP, INC.

May 26th, 2023

Joan Pillsbury
Gill Cemetery Commission
325 Main Road
Gill, MA 01354

Recommendations for Invasive Plant Management at Center Cemetery Gill, MA

Outlined below are recommendations for managing Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) at the Center Cemetery in Gill. At your request, I conducted a site visit and assessment on September 22, 2022 and May 18, 2023 to evaluate the site conditions which inform my recommendations. I am hopeful that these recommendations can serve as a management plan that the Gill Conservation Commission may approve to have this work completed by another licensed contractor with a specialty in invasive plant management.

The main concern is the bittersweet growing around the chain link fence growing along the western boundary of the cemetery. Prior to work, flagging should be placed to delineate limits of work and property boundaries. To manage this area, I recommend the following management sequence:

Year 1

- Task 1. Clearing and Cut Stem Treatment. Summer. The contractor should use a combination of string trimmer, chainsaw, brush saw, and/or brush mower to clear the back side of the chain link fence and allow for unobstructed access to the project area. Bittersweet vines within the project area and growing into trees should be cut and treated with a 50% herbicide solution of Rodeo herbicide, Vastlan, or Garlon 3A herbicides.
- Task 2. Herbicide foliar application. The contractor should carefully apply a foliar application of a triclopyr based herbicide to the bitterweet foliage. Recommended products include Vastlan and Garlon 3A, which are both labeled for use in wetland buffer areas such as the cemetery project area.
- Monitoring. Site should be monitored 2 weeks after treatment to evaluate results. Reapplication may be needed in the same season if results are poor following Task 2 protocols.

Year 2

- Task 3. Follow-up herbicide foliar application. June. The contractor should carefully apply a foliar application of a triclopyr based herbicide to the bitterweet foliage.
- Task 4. Follow-up herbicide foliar application. August.
- Monitoring. Site should be monitored 2 weeks after Task 4 treatment to evaluate results.

Year 3

- Task 5. Follow-up herbicide foliar application. June. The contractor should carefully apply a foliar application of a triclopyr based herbicide to the bitterweet foliage.
- Task 6. Follow-up herbicide foliar application. August.
- *Monitoring*. Site should be monitored 2 weeks after Task 6 treatment to evaluate results.

Success Criteria

Objective: 95% invasive plant control resulting from 2023 - 2026 series of treatments. Photomonitoring points will be established prior to the beginning of work. I will monitor the results of treatments to make sure the project has been completed to these standards.

Maintenance & Stewardship

Successful invasive plant management requires an ongoing commitment to protect your investment in this project. Invasive plants can be reintroduced to the project area by wind, birds, and other animals. To keep invasive plants out of the area for the long-term it will be necessary to monitor the area by scouting for new patches and individual plants even after two years of treatment. Options for managing invasive plants after the initial three years usually include hand-pulling, spot herbicide application, and/or repeated cutting. Arrangements should be made for continuous stewardship of the property on an annual basis.

Successful long-term maintenance is ultimately the responsibility of the landowner who must actively manage the property to take appropriate preventative management actions.

If you have any questions, please call me at 413-863-6333 or email me at chris@landstewardshipinc.com.

Sincerely,

Chris Polatin

Christopher Polatin, MS, CERP
Principal & Restoration Ecologist



Award Letter

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20472

Effective date: 08/25/2023



William Kimball
GILL, TOWN OF
TOWN OF GILL 325 MAIN RD
GILL, MA 01354

EMW-2022-FG-06983

Dear William Kimball,

Congratulations on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security. Your application submitted for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Grant funding opportunity has been approved in the amount of \$26,095.23 in Federal funding. As a condition of this grant, you are required to contribute non-Federal funds equal to or greater than 5.00% of the Federal funds awarded, or \$1,304.77 for a total approved budget of \$27,400.00. Please see the FY 2022 AFG Notice of Funding Opportunity for information on how to meet this cost share requirement.

Before you request and receive any of the Federal funds awarded to you, you must establish acceptance of the award through the FEMA Grants Outcomes (FEMA GO) system. By accepting this award, you acknowledge that the terms of the following documents are incorporated into the terms of your award:

- Summary Award Memo - included in this document
- Agreement Articles - included in this document
- Obligating Document - included in this document
- 2022 AFG Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) - incorporated by reference

Please make sure you read, understand, and maintain a copy of these documents in your official file for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pam. Williams".

PAMELA WILLIAMS
Assistant Administrator, Grant Programs

Summary Award Memo

Program: Fiscal Year 2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grant

Recipient: GILL, TOWN OF

UEI-EFT: H63BCXDRM7R8

DUNS number: 957904493

Award number: EMW-2022-FG-06983

Summary description of award

The purpose of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program is to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel against fire and fire-related hazards. After careful consideration, FEMA has determined that the recipient's project or projects submitted as part of the recipient's application and detailed in the project narrative as well as the request details section of the application - including budget information - was consistent with the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program's purpose and was worthy of award.

Except as otherwise approved as noted in this award, the information you provided in your application for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Assistance to Firefighters Grants funding is incorporated into the terms and conditions of this award. This includes any documents submitted as part of the application.

Amount awarded table

The amount of the award is detailed in the attached Obligating Document for Award.

The following are the budgeted estimates for object classes for this award (including Federal share plus your cost share, if applicable):

Object Class	Total
Personnel	\$0.00
Fringe benefits	\$0.00
Travel	\$0.00
Equipment	\$27,400.00
Supplies	\$0.00
Contractual	\$0.00
Construction	\$0.00
Other	\$0.00
Indirect charges	\$0.00
Federal	\$26,095.23
Non-federal	\$1,304.77
Total	\$27,400.00
Program Income	\$0.00

Approved scope of work

After review of your application, FEMA has approved the below scope of work. Justifications are provided for any differences between the scope of work in the original application and the approved scope of work under this award. You must submit scope or budget revision requests for FEMA's prior approval, via an amendment request, as appropriate per 2 C.F.R. § 200.308 and the FY2022 AFG NOFO.

Approved request details:

Equipment

Appliance(s)/Nozzle(s)

DESCRIPTION

TFT 1.5" Combination Nozzles with pistol grip handle.

	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL	BUDGET CLASS
Cost 1	10	\$725.00	\$7,250.00	Equipment

CHANGE FROM APPLICATION

Unit price from \$1,500.00 to \$725.00

JUSTIFICATION

This reduction is because the cost you requested for 1 1/2 combo nozzles exceeds the average price range calculated from market research and prior awards for the same item.

Thermal Imaging Camera (Must be NFPA 1801 Compliant)

DESCRIPTION

MSA NFPA 1801 Compliant Thermal Imager

	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL	BUDGET CLASS
Cost 1	2	\$1,100.00	\$2,200.00	Equipment

IDLH Monitoring Equipment

DESCRIPTION

MSA Altair 5x Gas with standard complement of O2, LEL, CO, H2S, and HCN sensors. To include one set of calibration supplies and a NFPA compliant charging dock for each.

	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL	BUDGET CLASS
Cost 1	2	\$3,575.00	\$7,150.00	Equipment

Electric/Gas Powered Saws/Tools

DESCRIPTION

SuperVac Battery Powered Vent Fan

	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL	BUDGET CLASS
Cost 1	2	\$5,400.00	\$10,800.00	Equipment

CHANGE FROM APPLICATION

Unit price from **\$5,500.00** to **\$5,400.00**

JUSTIFICATION

This reduction is because the cost you requested for Battery PPV Fans exceeds the average price range calculated from market research and prior awards for the same item.

Ray Purington/Gill Selectboard

From: Christopher Polatin <cpolatin@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 03, 2023 11:54 PM
To: Paul Sievert; Ray PuringtonGILL
Subject: Polatin resignation from Gill Conservation Commission

Dear Paul and Ray,

Please accept this email as my formal resignation as a voting member of the Gill Conservation Commission. I have enjoyed serving the Town for over 10 years in this capacity. I hope to continue to be involved as a non-voting associate conservation commission in the future so that I can be involved in other conservation commission business such as overseeing the Town's conservation restriction properties.

Best,
Chris Polatin



Virus-free. www.avg.com

SEP

6

2023

PUBLIC WORKS, ENERGY AND UTILITIES

DPU seeks feedback on municipal aggregation investigation through Oct. 6

[Home](#) → [News](#) → [Public Works, Energy and Utilities](#)

The Department of Public Utilities opened [an investigation](#) on Aug. 15 into municipal aggregation, with a goal to create a streamlined process for Massachusetts municipalities to establish new programs.

With an aggregation program, a municipality purchases electricity in bulk from an investor-owned utility on behalf of customers in the community, thereby being able to offer more competitive pricing, higher renewable energy content, and relative price stability.

Aggregation has become an important local option for Massachusetts municipalities since 1997. The number of communities with active aggregation programs continues to grow, and 19 new programs have been approved since the start of 2022.

Over the years, the DPU has developed a body of rules and requirements governing the creation and operation of municipal aggregation programs, but these rules were not made publicly available, so municipalities and their consultants needed to regularly review newly approved plans for helpful information they might need to include in future proposals.

complications including long delays in the approval process. Communities must remain on investor-owned utility service while awaiting approval, which delays potential cost savings.

The DPU has [proposed guidelines](#) setting forth filing requirements to create a new program, as well as rules governing programs after establishment. The guidelines, when finalized, would apply to any municipality that is aggregating electrical load. The guidelines include new timeframes for municipalities to use to gauge their proposed program launch date.

Municipal aggregation plans that follow the guidelines and all elements of the template plan will be prioritized through an expedited process, with an expected approval within 120 days of filing. For others, approval could be assumed within 180 days of filing.

Some details articulated in a [template plan](#) – which is required for expedited review – relate to the program offerings a customer may choose from. If finalized, expedited plans must include one product offering with energy content equivalent to basic service on an investor-owned utility plan. Such a proposal would only be able to offer one other product offering with additional renewable energy content.

Many communities offer three or more products for customers to consider in their existing municipal aggregation programs, with up to 100% voluntary renewable energy. Proposals that do not follow these provisions, among others, would not be eligible for expedited review.

The DPU is seeking public comments on the proposed guidelines and template plan through Oct. 6.

Public comments may be submitted to dpu.efiling@mass.gov, stephanie.mealey@mass.gov and lauren.morris@mass.gov. Comments should include the docket number D.P.U. 23-67. Submitted comments can be found in the [DPU File Room](#) under the investigation's docket number.

More [information can be found online](#).