

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
August 15, 2012

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**Meeting Date:** August 15, 2012

**Called to Order:** 6:03 PM

**Location:** 1 Avenue A, Turners Falls MA

**Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Michael Naughton, Roy Rosenblatt, Lynn Reynolds and Greg Garrison

**Board of Selectmen Members:** Pat Allen, Mark Fairbrother and Christopher Boutwell (Mr. Boutwell arrived at 6:41 PM)

**Others Present:** Frank Abbondanzio (Town Administrator) and Carolyn Olsen (Town Accountant)

**Minutes**

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of July 25, 2012.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of July 25, 2012.

Vote: 1 In Favor 0 Opposed 1 Abstained

**Clarus Group**

Mr. Naughton and Mr. Abbondanzio reported on their June Meeting with Clarus Group, which is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education consultant reviewing the Gill-Montague Regional School District's financial management and budgeting.

Mr. Naughton and Mr. Abbondanzio provided the consulting group with some financial history, noted their concern with the high per-pupil cost, stressed the affordability issue and noted the move towards a partnership between the towns and the district. A draft report is to be issued on Aug 24<sup>th</sup> and the final report will be discussed with the School Committee.

**Gill-Montague Regional School District Superintendent**

Interim Superintendent Mark Prince was introduced.

Mr. Hanold explained the general timeline for town's budget process and noted that we provide the School Committee and school district administration of the Affordable Assessment as soon as possible.

Mr. Prince reviewed the district's Accelerated Improvement Plan. Highlights of the plan are curriculum maps and guides, an assessment calendar, a restructured professional development calendar to align with the accelerated improvement plan, a new teacher evaluation tool, and data analysis to drive instruction.

Mr. Boutwell arrived at 6:41 PM.

Mr. Hanold briefly explained the town's affordable assessment calculation which is a percentage of the town's estimated revenue that is allocated to the Gill-Montague Regional School District assessment. Mr. Prince emphasized that his main goal was communication, and that while his priority is to appropriately fund education, he understands that the town may have issues with the affordability.

**Reserve Fund Transfer Request**

Ms. Olsen presented a request for an additional \$2,500 for the Fiscal Year 2012 Audit. The Town had additional federal grants in Fiscal Year 2012 that triggered the requirement for a second Single Audit. The regular audit fee only covers one Single Audit, with a cost of \$2,500 for each additional Single Audit.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend approval of the Reserve Fund Transfer Request of \$2,500 for the annual audit.

Vote: 3 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To transfer \$2,500 from the Reserve Fund Transfer to the Annual Audit budget.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Board of Selectmen Items**

**One Day Liquor License**

The Rendezvous is requesting a special 1 day liquor licenses for the Soap Box Derby on September 16, 2012. The request has been approved and signed by the Police Chief. Mr. Boutwell abstained from both the discussion and the vote.

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the Rendezvous's request for a special one day liquor license for September 16<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Unity Park for the Soap Box Derby.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 1 Abstained

**Disclosure of Financial Interest**

Two members of the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation have filed a Disclosure of Financial Interest and MGL c 268A sec 19 requires the appointing authority to determination whether the individuals will be able to act in a fair and impartial manner. Linda Ackerman is employed by the bank that is loaning money for the project, and Nathaniel Donovan is employed by the insurance agency providing insurance for the project.

Selectmen moved:

Based on the information provided in the disclosure of financial interest form, we believe that Linda Ackerman, as a member of the Montague Economic

Development and Industrial Corporation, will be able to act in a fair and impartial manner when deliberating and voting on the subject of 38 Avenue A.

Vote: 2 In Favor 1 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen moved:

Based on the information provided in the disclosure of financial interest form, we believe that Nathaniel Donovan, as a member of the Montague Economic Development and Industrial Corporation, will be able to act in a fair and impartial manner when deliberating and voting on the subject of 38 Avenue A.

Vote: 2 In Favor 1 Opposed 0 Abstained

### **Use of Public Property**

This item was approved at the Selectmen's August 13, 2012 meeting.

### **Special Town Meeting**

The Board of Selectmen has scheduled a Special Town Meeting at 7:00 PM on Monday, September 10, 2012. The deadline for article submission is noon tomorrow. There will be a warrant available Monday, August 20th evening.

Finance Committee will meet on August 22, 2012 6:00 PM to consider and vote on recommendations for special articles.

### **Proposed Change to Town Bylaw**

The Town Bylaw states that there are 9 members on the Finance Committee which means that 5 members (regardless of the number of people currently appointed to the committee) must be at a meeting to have a quorum. The options for changing the bylaw and reducing the number of people forming a quorum are changing the number of members or specifying that a quorum is a majority of the currently appointed members. Any requested changes need to be submitted as a special article tomorrow.

One suggested change is the addition of the sentence "A quorum of this committee shall consist of a majority of the current appointees." Mr. Hanold suggested that this sentence be added after the existing second sentence.

Mr. Rosenblatt is concerned that this change would allow as few as 2 people make a decision for the town. Someone quietly mentioned that this is already the case with the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Naughton would prefer to change the language to make the membership between 5 and nine and include the quorum language.

Mr. Garrison feels the language presented is expedient and makes common sense.

Finance Committee Moved:

To request that Article II Section 2 of the Town Bylaws be amended by inserting  
“A quorum of this committee shall consist of a majority of the current appointees”  
after the second sentence.

Vote: 4 In Favor 1 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To request that Article II Section 2 of the Town Bylaws be amended by replacing  
“consisting of 9 residents” in the first sentence with “consisting of a minimum of  
5 residents”.

Vote: 3 In Favor 2 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Unanticipated items:** none

**Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 PM**

**List of Documents and Exhibits –**

- Minutes of July 25, 2012
- Reserve Fund Transfer Request

**Next Meetings**

- August 22<sup>nd</sup>
- September 12<sup>th</sup> (Ms. Olsen will not be at the September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting)

**Town Bylaws, Article II, Section 2:**

The Moderator of the Annual Meeting of the Town shall appoint an appropriation committee consisting of 9 residents who have reached the age of majority, who hold no paid Town office, which shall meet and investigate the cost of maintenance and expenditures of the different departments of the Town and recommend in detail the amounts to be appropriated for each department for the ensuing year. They shall also consider articles in Town warrants requiring the appropriation of money and shall make a written report to the meetings considering such articles. The committee members shall be initially appointed as follows: 3 for three years, 3 for two years, 3 for one year, and for a three-year period thereafter, and shall have the power to fill vacancies which occur in their number during their term of office.