

JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
April 3, 2013

Page 1 of 5

**Meeting Date:** April 3, 2013

**Called to Order:** 6:00 PM

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

**Finance Committee Members Present:** John Hanold, Michael Naughton, Lynn Reynolds, Greg Garrison and Sharon Kennaugh.

**Board of Selectmen Members:** Christopher Boutwell and Mark Fairbrother. Pat Allen was absent.

**Others Present:**

Town Administrator Frank Abbondanzio and Town Accountant Carolyn Olsen

**Minutes**

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 27, 2013.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To approve the minutes of March 27, 2013.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Items not Anticipated –**

The Zoning Board of Appeals requests a transfer of \$1,500 from the Reserve Fund for advertising. The board has received an unusually high number of requests for hearings and their advertising line item is currently showing a deficit of \$970. The board normally has about 12 hearings per year, but this year they've already had 23.

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend a reserve fund transfer of \$1,500 to ZBA Advertising.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Finance Committee Moved:

To approve the fund transfer of \$1,500 to ZBA Advertising (001-5-176-5345).

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Gill-Montague Regional School District Assessment for Fiscal Year 2014**

- The current assessment amount for Montague is \$7,965,557 based on the 4.2.13 (dated 3.29.13 but revised and voted on April 2, 2013) assessment sheet from the District.
- This assessment has different debt amounts from the previous assessment because three of the issues were paid off in Fiscal Year 2013.
- The Finance Committee and Selectmen received hard copies of the documents e-mailed from Joyce Phillips, including the previous 3.29.13 assessment sheet, Ms. Phillips written responses to the Finance Committee's questions, revenue and expenditure summaries showing actual amounts for Fiscal Years 2011 and 2012

and budgeted amounts for Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014, the T1/T2 report, 2 charts and grant information.

- Mr. Naughton said he supports this assessment, as it is within the range shown on the original Table B, but he noted that he has not felt the same spirit of cooperation between the district and towns as in recent years, and he doesn't know what that means for the future.

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend the Gill-Montague Regional School District's Fiscal Year 2014 assessment of \$7,965,557 with \$40,616 from Town Stabilization, \$125,000 from Free Cash and \$7,799,941 from Taxation.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend the Gill-Montague Regional School District's Fiscal Year 2014 assessment of \$7,965,557 with \$40,616 from Town Stabilization, \$125,000 from Free Cash and \$7,799,941 from Taxation.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Special Articles for May 4, 2013 Special Town Meeting**

**The Board of Assessors requests \$25,000 for utility appraisals.**

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend \$25,000 for utility appraisals, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend \$25,000 for utility appraisals, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**The Conservation Commission requests \$10,000 to increase the Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund.**

- Mr. Hanold asked what this fund is used for. Mr. Fairbrother explained that this fund is usually used for the local match to state funds to purchase preservation restrictions on open space land, mostly farm lands.
- There was a brief discussion of the Community Preservation Act, and Ms. Kennough offered to follow up on the previous request to have the Planning Board, Conservation Commission Historical Commission and Recreation Commission, with Planning Board taking the lead, look into Montague accepting the Community Preservation Act.

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend \$10,000 to increase the Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend \$10,000 to increase the Henry Waidlich Conservation Trust Fund, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**The Director of Planning and Community Development requests that the balance in Article #10 4/30/09 (Develop Millers Falls Industrial Park) be transferred to Article#24 5/7/11 (Turnpike Rd Industrial Park).**

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend that the balance in Article #10 4/30/09 (Develop Millers Falls Industrial Park) be transferred to Article#24 5/7/11 (Turnpike Rd Industrial Park).

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend that the balance in Article #10 4/30/09 (Develop Millers Falls Industrial Park) be transferred to Article#24 5/7/11 (Turnpike Rd Industrial Park).

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**The Police Chief request requests \$25,000 for the Fiscal Year 2013 Police budget.**

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend \$25,000 for the Fiscal Year 2013 Police budget, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend \$25,000 for the Fiscal Year 2013 Police budget, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**The Director of Parks and Recreation requests \$1,750 to install video surveillance at Unity Park.**

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend \$1,750 to install video surveillance at Unity Park, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend \$1,750 to install video surveillance at Unity Park, to be funded from Free Cash.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**A request to allow the town to place liens on property for various charges.**

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend acceptance of MGL Chapter 40 Section 58 which authorizes the town to place Municipal Charges Liens on real property.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Reconsider Annual Town Meeting Recommendations if needed.**

An article not previously considered would accept MGL Chapter 41 Sections 19K and 108P which provide a \$1,000 annual stipend to the Town Clerk and Treasurer respectively for being certified by their state associations.

- There is no requirement for certification by these officials.
- The certification process involves passing tests and attending future training on a set basis.
- Approval of these sections mandates payment to certified incumbents.

Finance Committee Moved:

To recommend acceptance of MGL Chapter 41 Sections 19K and 108P which provide a \$1,000 annual stipend to the Town Clerk and Treasurer respectively for being certified by the state.

Vote: 5 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

Selectmen Moved:

To recommend acceptance of MGL Chapter 41 Sections 19K and 108P which provide a \$1,000 annual stipend to the Town Clerk and Treasurer respectively for being certified by the state.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Topics not Anticipated**

Mr. Naughton suggested that someone reply to Ms. Phillips' letter of March 6, 2013 that was recently received via e-mail. Ms. Phillips had asked:

1. What the towns are doing to grow the tax base
  2. What the towns are doing to draw businesses to our communities
  3. What the towns are doing to encourage young families to buy homes in Gill and Montague, and
  4. What message the towns send the communities to promote our school or, conversely, suggesting that if people move here they will be drained of their income by the school budgets
- Mr. Abbondanzio offered to respond to Ms. Phillips' questions to the town at the end of her letter.
  - Ms. Reynolds suggested that an answer to the first question is the town's backing development of Montague Center School to add money back to tax rolls and to provide affordable housing to singles and couples.
  - Mr. Naughton said that he is surprised that as a town meeting member Ms. Phillips is not able to answer the first two questions herself.

- Mr. Hanold noted that the Town Planner spends a considerable amount of time on various properties encouraging successful reuse of vacant properties.
- Mr. Fairbrother said anyone who has read the newspaper will be aware of the town's efforts to sell the Montague Center School, clean up the Strathmore property, our projects in downtown Millers Falls, the 2-3 new businesses in the current industrial park, and the town's work developing a second industrial park.

**Board of Selectmen Meeting Adjourned at 7:14 PM**

Selectmen Moved:

To adjourn.

Vote: 2 In Favor 0 Opposed 0 Abstained

**Draft Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting and assign person to handle edits through the final version**

The first draft was distributed.

- Mr. Naughton will coordinate changes to the report.
- The Finance Committee decided not to meet next week since there will be no quorum.

**Mr. Naughton will be chair of the next two meetings in Mr. Hanold's absence.**

**Finance Committee Adjourned at 7:30 PM**

**List of Documents and Exhibits –**

- Minutes of March 27, 2013
- Reserve fund transfer request from ZBA
- GMRSD Assessment Sheet dated 3.29.13
- May 4, 2013 Special Town Meeting Warrant
- Special Article Requests for Special Town Meeting
- Annual Town Meeting Warrant
- Projected Use of Reserves for May 4, 2013
- Budget Schedule
- Draft Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting

**Next Meeting**

April 17, 2013

Finalize Finance Committee Report to Town Meeting