



Town of Gorham New Hampshire

PUBLIC MEETING OF THE GORHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN Gorham Town Hall Public Meeting Room 2nd Floor Monday, December 6, 2021 6:00 p.m.

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Michael Waddell; Judy LeBlanc; and Adam White.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Kathleen Frenette, Director of Finance; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk; Adam Marsh, Police Chief; and Philip Cloutier, Fire Chief.

OTHERS PRESENT: Edith Tucker, Reporter, Berlin Sun.

1) Public Session Call to Order - 6:00 p.m.

Chairperson Waddell called the public session to order at 6:02 p.m.

2) New Business

Budget Review:

a. Assessing Department / Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustment

Michelle Lutz presented the Planning & Zoning Board of Adjustment budgets to the Board. A few of the items she discussed were:

- **01-4191-1-690-0 Pl Develop Other - Misc:** To be reduced to \$400, and reallocated to the 01-4191-2-390-0 Pl Zoning Other - Consultants, which will reflect \$1,500.
- **01-4191-2-620-0 Supplies Office:** Reflects \$240, which is a new charge due to paper and envelopes being separated out to individual budgets.

The following questions were posed to Ms. Lutz:

- Q. The change discussed on the first bullet item is not reflected on the sheet distributed to the Board?
A. Correct, as it was just amended today.
- Q. What is the budget variance?
A. \$1,140.
- Q. Is the increase to \$1,500 under consultants to cover Tara Bamford?
A. That's correct.
- Q. Do you expect the anticipated revenue to offset the budget variance?
A. It should, for the most part.

- Q. The 01-4191-2-690-0 Pl Zoning Other - Misc. line is for ZBA ads and postage?
A. Yes.

Discussion was had regarding what expenses incurred by Ms. Bamford are reimbursed. Further discussion was had regarding the current Zoning Board of Adjustment and its membership.

Ms. Lutz presented the Assessing Department budget to the Board. A few of the items she discussed were:

- **01-4152-1-312-0 Ar Assess Property Assessing:** Large reduction of \$11,250 due to update on values this year.
- **01-4152-1-690-0 Re Revaluation:** Increase of \$50,000 to cover KRT's Contract to do the update in all residential values.
- **01-4152-1-110-0 Ar Assess Perm Position:** Increase of \$2,629, related to the morphing of Ms. Lutz's position and the training she's going to have to take in the upcoming year.

She continued to go over the rest of the proposed budget. Discussion was had regarding the commercial revaluations and appeals being addressed in the omnibus contract, which is not reflected in the budget before the Board, and where exactly it should be reflected in the upcoming budget. Further discussion was had regarding Ms. Lutz's position and how her role will be changing in the coming year. Additional discussion was had regarding the Town's current standing in terms of tax rate and the rationale for that.

The following questions were posed to Ms. Lutz:

- Q. Anything else for us?
A. No, we will have, probably within the next day or two, the preliminary sales report for the month.

Discussion was had regarding where the Town ended up with DRA on the EQ.

b. Fire/EMS Department

Chief Philip Cloutier presented the EMS Department budget to the Board. A few of the items he discussed were:

- **01-4215-2-110-0 Am Service Perm Positions:** Increase of \$95,501, which is to cover nightshift personnel from 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.
- **01-4215-2-120-0 Am Services Part Time Positions:** Decrease of \$33,000 that coincides with night staffing of the fulltime crew.
- **01-4215-2-140-0 Am Services Overtime:** Decrease of \$1,471 that coincides with the night staffing of the fulltime crew.

He continued to go over the rest of the proposed budget. The following questions were posed to Chief Cloutier.

- Q. You made a comment about diesel's on the way out?
A. Our second ambulance is diesel, but our new one is going to be gas.
- Q. Are the actual calls for service increasing?
A. Last year, we saw a decrease due to COVID, mostly, but this year there was an increase, and the rate is anticipated to be above 2019's rates by the end of the year.
- Q. With the fulltime staffing at night, actually that should end up saving the Town money, because it's going to increase the revenue, right, because you'll be able to take the call?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a cost benefit in the increases in wages versus the increase in revenues?

A. The increased revenues will not cover the increase in wages.

Q. What's the deficit?

A. There's about a \$95,000 budget for this year. There's about 57% deficit. It's unlikely that we could ever cover the increased cost the way things stand now.

Discussion was had regarding the pros and cons of going with gas trucks versus diesel trucks. Further discussion was had regarding the different calls for service. Additional discussion was had regarding the grant efforts made by Chief Cloutier and the impact that has had on the Department.

Chief Cloutier went over the current projects being worked on. Discussion was had regarding inspections being had, as well as permitting for short-term rentals.

Chief Cloutier presented the Fire Department budget to the Board. A few of the items he discussed were:

- **01-4220-1-110-0 Fi Admin Perm Positions:** Increase of \$1,759, which accounts for a raise in 2021 for Chief Cloutier which would make his salary amount accurate for the budget.
- **01-4220-1-341-0 Fi Admin Telephone / Internet:** Decrease of \$1,068; this would include paying the Chief's cellphone in full every month.
- **01-4220-1-560-0 Fi Admin Dues & Subscriptions:** Increase of \$1,500 for the State Fireman's Association and different organizations for mutual aid.

He continued to go over the rest of the proposed budget. The following questions were posed to Chief Cloutier.

Q. Does that wage increase include building inspection?

A. No.

c. Police Department & Dispatch Department

Chief Adam Marsh presented the Police Department budget to the Board. A few of the items he discussed were:

- **01-4210-1-110-0 PD Perm Positions:** Increase of \$15,019, which would reflect 7 fulltime Officers.
- **01-4210-1-210-0 PD Part Time Position:** Decrease of \$8,919, due to ability to utilize overlap time.
- **01-4210-1-140-0 PD Overtime:** Increase of \$1,467, which reflects 8 hours per week at average overtime rate.

He continued to go over the rest of the proposed budget. The following questions were posed to Chief Marsh.

Q. Court witness pay increased by \$4,187 because the Officer is going to be in court more?

A. Yes.

Q. Prosecution services increased by \$1,200 since court is open more?

A. Yes, and the rate for prosecution services went up.

Q. Is there a way to lock one set of entrance doors to Town Hall at night?

A. I don't see why not.

Q. You said seven (7) fulltime Officers. How many do you have right now?

A. Right now, we have six (6).

Q. How long have you had six (6)?

A. Not very long, since October.

Discussion was had regarding the need for two personnel to perform prosecution services, as reflected in the two line items corresponding to the court witness and prosecution services. Further discussion was had regarding ensuring there is a locking mechanism on the new doors being installed at the Town Hall, Railroad St. entrance, in addition to the current status of the doors that were ordered. Additional discussion was had regarding the status of officers and new hires, including why there are so many personnel for the size of the Town.

Chief Marsh presented the Dispatch budget to the Board. A few of the items he discussed were:

- **01-4299-2-110-0 Ds Serv Perm Position:** Increase of \$9,152.
- **01-4299-2-120-0 Ds Serv Part Time Position:** Increase of \$381, which reflects the flex day Dispatcher.
- **01-4299-2-145-0 Ds Serv Overtime:** Decrease of \$5,227, after taking an average over two years.

He continued to go over the rest of the proposed budget.

3) **Other Business**

The Board was provided a Cemetery Deed for Grave #5, Lot #72, for \$400 that's already been paid.

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to approve the Cemetery Deed, as presented. It was seconded by Selectman White.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

The motion carried. (3-0-0).

4) **Public Comment:** Those in attendance will have the opportunity for public comment of two (2) minutes or less.

None.

5) **Adjournment**

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. It was seconded by Selectman White.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

The motion carried. (3-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria O'Connor, Recording Secretary
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Minutes approved on December 27, 2021 by:



Michael Waddell, Chairman

Judith LeBlanc, Selectperson



Adam White, Selectman