

Gorham NH Selectmen Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2019

Selectmen: Michael Waddell, Judy LeBlanc, Adam White

Town Manager Denise Vallee, Finance Director Kathy Frenette, Assessing Clerk Michelle Lutz, Minutes taker Paul Robitaille

Berlin Sun Edith Tucker, York Land Services Burke Yorke

Public: Sandy Lemire

Meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. The Chair announced that no action was taken in the non-public session.

Authorization for Signature: Authorization for an application to apply to the Town of Randolph for a lot line adjustment to allow the sale of 205 acres of Gorham Town Forest land to the Town of Randolph.

Selectman LeBlanc made a motion that said authorization be given to the select board Chair Michael Waddell to sign the application once completed. Selectman White seconded, all in favor.

The selectmen were present when they were informed by Mr. York, who presented maps to the select board of the area to be transferred. Mr. York then described the areas where pins were located, and the boundaries are. Mr. York will represent the Town of Gorham at the Randolph planning board meeting on January 7th. 2020. **Selectman Waddell signed the application to be presented to the Town of Randolph.**

Public Hearing: The public hearing began regarding the changes to parking on Union Street. Town Manager Denise Vallee gave a brief overview of the changes to the no parking zone on Union St. and Main St. The select board verbally approved of the changes. Edith Tucker asked when the no parking would take effect. Town Manager Denise Vallee said the change would be in effect as soon as the signs were mounted. **Public hearing adjourned.**

Abatements: Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk, presented to the select board the properties whose tax assessment were to be abated.

40 Exchange St. was listed as having an elevator when it only has a chair lift. Inadvertently, \$100,000 was added to the property value. Codes were changed and the value was reduced by \$97,800 for an abatement of \$86,890.00 value for 2019. **Selectman LeBlanc made a motion to accept the assessor's recommendation, seconded by Selectman White. All in favor.**

Gorham Land Co. 0 Lancaster Rd.: A portion of a right of way lot that seems to have been absorbed into other adjoining lots. **Motion made by selectman White, seconded by selectman LeBlanc to accept the assessor's recommendation for an abatement of \$470.71. All in favor.** The records regarding this lot will be dismissed from the record.

40 Evans St.: During the cyclical pick, up a 24-foot sauna was added to the assessment. The system listed it as 24 saunas' which gave it a value of \$63,200 dollars. Assessors recommend a reduction of \$61,800 and an abatement of \$2,073.00. **Selectman White motioned to accept the assessor's recommendation. Selectman LeBlanc seconded it. All in favor.**

10 Lary St.: A quality control check found that a construction code had been changed to zero that meant the construction was completed although it was not. The assessors recognized that it was wrong with a 14% reduction. Data was entered incorrectly. The assessment has been dropped. Recommendation that the value be dropped \$4,100.00 and an abatement of \$138.40 be granted. Selectman White recused himself from any discussion or voting. **Selectman LeBlanc made the motion to accept the assessor's recommendation. Selectman Waddell seconded the motion and both voted in favor.**

During the cyclical pick up a building was picked up as being listed on both a Pike property and a Gorham Sand & Gravel property, so the building was listed twice on two different parcels. A reduction in value of \$247,800 dollars is recommended and an abatement of \$8,361.27 is recommended by the assessors. **Motion made by selectman White and seconded by selectman LeBlanc to accept the assessor's recommendation. All in favor.**

Town Manager Budget: Town Manager Vallee reviewed the Town Manager budget: Selectmen stipends are level funded. \$10,000 for competitive salary is level funded. Selectman conference added \$150.00 for North Country Council attendance. The Town Manager salary is according to contract. \$1,800.00 is budgeted for Selectmen minutes. Workmen's Comp down \$34.00. Subscriptions is down. Postage is up \$150.00, now \$300.00.

Finance: Kathy Frenette, Finance Director, reviewed the Finance & town hall budget. Discussion regarding the 20-hour part time position. Printing, phone, postage, internet small increase. Increase in the Finance position. Discussed Health and other benefits, and the elected official's stipends are level funded. Increase in the full-time position by 2%. IT Maintenance is down as it is now spread out over all the departments. Updates and support for software is up by \$1,748.00. That may come down eventually. Budget is up \$19,000. Discussion regarding the part time position, hour increase between the Selectman and the Finance Director Kathy Frenette. If the ABLE volunteer now on a trial basis, works out, then the money for the part time position will not be budgeted. The matter will be revisited in early February. Discussion regarding the finance salary and the 2% COLA increase.

Legal: Town Manager Vallee reported that the legal line has increased by \$25,000 to \$75,000. Mostly due to the OHRV case. The legal team says it will cost \$45,000 to prepare the case to go to trial. Selectman Michael Waddell said Town will have spent \$100,000 on this case by the time the trial is done. Edith Tucker asked if mediation worked. Selectman Waddell said it did not. Selectman Waddell said the case is expected to go to trial and that no date has been set yet.

Town Hall Budget: Town hall cleaning, there is a decrease in cleaner salary but there is a 2% COLA for the new cleaner. Electricity is level funded. Clock tender level funded. Water is level funded. Inspections level funded. Tax deeded property line lowered by \$1,000.00. There is an Increase in insurance for the town buildings and vehicles, as has public official's liability. If there is a surplus at the end of the year, then a reduction in insurance costs might take place during 2020. Advertising and regional associations level funded. North Country Council dues \$3,304.00 for 2020. Town Office printing level funded.

Building inspections: Building inspector salary is level funded at \$16,000. \$600.00 for new code books as State is now using 2015. Benefits are based on the current wages. 2% COLA increase is included in building inspector wages. Discussion regarding workmen's compensation increase and costs for all departments.

Street Lighting: It was estimated there would be a 40% decrease in costs, but it is not quite that amount. Discussion regarding street lighting. Did save quite a bit, but not as much as estimated saving about \$15,000 per year with the new LED lights.

Welfare Administration: Workshops & travel reduced from \$25,00 to \$20,000. Susan Bolash is doing an excellent job with the Welfare Administration.

Long-Term Debt: Debt is broken down between principal and interest and debt is scheduled out for the future.

DARE: Discussion regarding the DARE Program and why it is not part of the Police Department budget. After discussion, the Select board decided to leave the DARE Program as a separate warrant article as it is a transfer to a Special Revenue Fund.

Capital Reserve Funds: There is an increase of \$25,000 to replace the 2009 Ambulance. Selectman Waddell asked if all the department heads agreed with the changes to the capital reserve funds? Finance Director Kathy Frenette assured Selectman Waddell that the department heads agreed with the changes. Ambulance Equipment line has an increase of \$15,000. Cates Hill and East Milan Landfill Monitoring are level funded. Assessment is \$40,000 for Gorham's cost of BTLA cases. Dispatch has \$3,600 added to maintain repeater and radio equipment. Selectman Waddell asked if we have \$136,000 in that fund, why have we not made any progress in finishing that project? Town Manager Denise Vallee replied that the Police Chief was in contact with another vendor and had received a cost estimate that was half of the previous quote. Ms. Vallee assured the select board that the Police Chief is acting on this issue. River Maintenance trust fund is down to \$15,000 from \$25,000 from the previous year. Fire Equipment is \$20,000, an increase of \$5,000. Fire Truck increased from \$39,000 to \$50,000. Highway Heavy Equipment is up to \$120,000. Information Technology is at \$48,000, up ten thousand. A server upgrade will be needed as soon as possible. We will begin saving for the project next year. Servers usually only last five years and one of Gorham's is seven years old. The cost is expected to be \$30,000 to replace the servers. Discussion regarding the server's replacement, proposed plan.

Special Insurance Trust is up \$3,000. Library Maintenance is included at \$10,000 (pending a request by the Library Trustees). Longevity/Severance Trust Fund is at \$6,000, up \$3,000 for potential retirements. Five potential retirements within the next three years. \$1,400 for Theater Maintenance, which is the rental fees received in 2019. Police Cruisers is level funded. \$35,000 is added to the cruiser line to replace the 2017 cruiser. Police Equipment is up to \$3,000. Road Resurfacing & Reconstruction line is at \$271,800. \$10,000 is in Solid Waste to replace recycling truck. Town Building Purchase & Repair fund is at \$50,000. Overall decrease in the Capital Reserve funds of \$10,068.

Selectman Waddell asked about the funds for \$11,000 for fire house floor drain. Will need \$2,000 for clock tower. Selectman Waddell said those costs are outdated. The clock tower cost needs to be revisited. Will need a high lift to repair tower. May need to look at new numbers for that project. Town Manager Denise Vallee said we will have \$96,000 in that line with the 2020 appropriation for these projects.

Solar Project: Discussion regarding the solar project. Town Manager Denise Vallee said that we are only going through with the array for the town garage for now. An engineering assessment is going to be done for the Public Works Garage and a walk-through assessment will be conducted for the fire station

roof. Calculation for the project is at \$180,000, not \$370,000 and does include a grant of \$75,000. If the town does proceed with Fire Station, we can apply for another \$75,000 grant. \$30,000 of the grant is at the state level and \$45,000 would be at the federal level for a total of \$75,000 for the town garage. Selectman LeBlanc asked is the \$180,000 for the whole project? Town Manager Vallee said, no the \$180,000 is just for the town garage portion. We would apply for the full 180,000 then borrow whatever we need to receive. Mr. Waddell said then the turn-key price for both projects is \$326,000. The grant estimate is \$75,000, the net price is \$251,000 and the \$75,000 is just for Public Works. The estimated cost is down from \$370,000 to \$326,000. Selectman LeBlanc said then the \$326,000 figure is not right. The cost is \$180,000 is just for the town garage. Town Manager Vallee replied, If the fire station is done then the town can apply for another \$75,000. **Motion by Selectman LeBlanc that the select board authorize the select board Chair, Michael Waddell, to sign the grant application documents once Ms. LeBlanc 's question is answered as to the full cost of the town garage roof.**
Second by Selectman White. All in favor.

Public Comment: Sandy Lemire of Lancaster Rd. complained about the condition of the sidewalk in front of her home. Ms. Lemire complained about the snow and chunks of pavement from the sidewalk being plowed into her driveway.

Selectman Waddell said the sidewalks in that part of town have been an issue for many years. Selectman Waddell said that sidewalk repairs are expensive, and we have roads all over that need repairs. Discussion between the select board and Ms. Lemire continued. Selectman Leblanc said the Town of Gorham applies for sidewalk grants every year and has received none. Town Manager Vallee said the village of Groveton received a TAP sidewalk grant but was told by State of NH DOT that it will be 2027 before funding will be available. Gorham Public Works will develop a filing system profile of the conditions of all the roads and sidewalks all over town. The town has spent \$100,000 for an engineering study for an overview of all the town streets. The town is putting together a plan to begin taking care of these issues.

Edith Tucker asked about the proposed highway plan and a 53-week payroll. Town Manager Vallee assured Ms. Tucker that the Town of Gorham is not affected, as the town is on a bi-weekly payroll schedule so there will be only 26 weeks of payroll for 2020.

Motion made by selectman Adam White to approve the minutes of November 25th and Dec. 2nd.
Seconded by selectman LeBlanc. All in favor.

Motion to adjourn by selectman White, seconded by selectman LeBlanc. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Date Approved: December 16, 2019

Michael Waddell



Judy LeBlanc



Adam White 

Respectfully submitted:

Paul Robitaille