

**Gorham, NH Select Board Meeting
Monday September 23, 2019 Minutes**

Joint meeting with Gorham Board of Selectmen and Water & Sewer Commission was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Select Board chair, Michael Waddell.

Present: Select Board chair Michael Waddell, Select Board members Judy LeBlanc and Adam White.

Others Present: Town Manager Denise Vallee, Water & Sewer Superintendent Jeff Tennis, Water & Sewer Commissioners Lee Carroll, Roger Goulet and Theodore Miller.

Meeting was opened at 6:03 p.m. by Chairman Michael Waddell.

Mr. Waddell announced that the minutes would be taken off-site through use of the live stream video.

Mr. Waddell announced that the board had recessed from the previous non-public session and expected to go back into non-public after the public meeting. No action was taken in the previous non-public meeting and Mr. Waddell did not expect any action to take place in the next non-public meeting.

Town Manger Denise Vallee announced that Kathy Frenette had been hired as the next Director of Finance & Administration for the Town of Gorham to begin her duties Sept. 30th. Ms. Vallee introduced Ms. Frenette who thanked the town for the opportunity given her.

Discussion followed between the Select Board and the Water & Sewer Commission as to why another engineering firm was hired after the town had already had an engineering firm prepare the design for the Snow Storage Project. The water & sewer commission felt that it would be their due diligence to get another opinion as the water & sewer commission was worried about the main sewer line that crosses the Public Works property under the proposed snow dump. Discussion followed regarding whose responsibility it is to cover the cost of the work above/adjacent to the main sewer line. Mr. Tennis said that the 24" cover was not adequate to protect the pipe. Mr. Waddell felt that the second opinion for engineering held up the process for the project and made the project more expensive. There was also discussion regarding the possibility of using the Icy Gulch watershed in the mitigation process which the NH Bureau of Environmental Services did not allow. More discussion on communication ensued. Mr. Waddell proposed a Memorandum of Understanding between the two boards describing their respective duties and agreement on how to communicate in the future.

Discussion then followed regarding a plan for replacing the sewer lines if they leak. Mr. Tennis explained that the Water & Sewer Dept. is mandated to inspect the lines using a power brush and camera every year to identify possible issues with the lines.

More discussion followed regarding the possibility of cooperating on a capital improvement plan between the Public Works Department and the Water & Sewer Department to avoid conflicts with paving and replacement of water & sewer lines. Mr. Tennis said that he had gone through the highway plan the town has and said that he created a list of the town streets that would not need improvements and gave it to the previous town manager. Mr. Tennis said that he would send out the list to the town officials again. Mr. Waddell asked why the project on Alpine Street took so long and Mr. Tennis responded that a major break in the line on Smyth Street had caused the delay.

Another meeting with the Select board and the Water & Sewer Commissioners will be scheduled again in another two or three weeks. Other issues to be discussed between the boards are plowing and parking issues on Bellevue Avenue. A question was asked about the gliders who use the airport during the foliage season. Ms. Vallee replied that she had received a certificate of insurance from them. Lee Carroll said that usually the glider clubs just show up.

The Water & Sewer Commissioners left the meeting after agreeing to schedule another joint meeting in the near future.

A motion was made by Mr. Waddell and seconded by Judy LeBlanc to pass over the awarding of the bid for Phase II of the snow dump improvement project. All voted in favor of passing over.

Motion made by Judy LeBlanc and seconded by Adam White to sign the contract with new Town Manager Denise Vallee as written. All voted in favor of approving the contract and signed same.

Town Manager Denise Vallee told the board that she had been in contact with Matt Shapiro regarding an agreement with the NH State Police to contract for police services. "We would have to work with Troop F to schedule a time when troopers could fill a four-hour block or an 8-hour shift during the time when we are without a Police Chief and two other officers. In order to have this discussion with Troop F, the town must sign this letter of request. Selectman Adam White made the motion to sign the letter of request as printed, Selectman Judy LeBlanc seconded it and the entire board voted in favor of signing the agreement.

Mobile Repeater Grant: The grant was to purchase four mobile repeaters so emergency personnel could communicate while in the dead spots on Routes 2 & 16. The project cost was \$45,564.00. The federal match is \$22,682.00. The Town of Gorham's match is \$22,682.00. However previous training hours for fire personnel can count as part of the matching funds as in-kind services of \$19,982.00 which leaves the cash amount now needed by the town at \$2,700.00. Motion was made by Adam White and seconded by Judy LeBlanc to accept the terms of the Emergency Management Performance Grant as presented in the amount of \$22,682.00 to purchase mobile repeaters. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be \$45,364.00, in which the town will be responsible for a 50% match (\$22,682.00)." All voted in favor. Motion made by Mr. White seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc to grant the Town Manager the authority to sign all documents related to this grant. All voted in favor.

Next item was Gorham Industrial tax abatement, Docket #28893-17PT and #29554-18PT Map #U3-Lot 66 to reduce value to \$550,000 for property owned by Dennis Tupick. Mr. Tupick also applied for an abatement on his Exchange St. property and as a result of this agreement, that case was dropped. Adam White made the motion to approve the settlement agreement, Judy LeBlanc seconded and all voted in favor.

Ms. Vallee informed the board that the bids for Phase II of the Snow Storage Improvement Project were received today. The only contractor who bid is Arthur Couture Construction. Mr. Waddell informed the board that it has the right to accept or reject any bids submitted.

Eric Grenier of HEB Engineering brought the board up to date on the Stony Brook Construction project. He reminded the board that an extension of 750 feet (Change Order #1) had been attached to the project. All the trees have been cleared and the box cut finished. They did find unsuitable materials

which had to be removed such as clay-like soil, stumps, roots and other organic material, however, the construction crew should still be able to stay within the original estimate of \$168,000. This section should be paved, and culverts replaced by next week. Grenier also discussed other culverts that may need to be replaced including a 15-inch culvert on Mt. Carter Drive, another at the fire pond and that while the road is open it might be a good time to replace the culvert at the Stony Brook Trail parking lot. Since the parking lot culvert was not part of the FEMA grant, the town would have to spend \$7,000.00 to replace that culvert. The Mt. Carter Drive intersection culvert is still in limbo waiting for a decision to see if that will be part of the FEMA mitigation. From what Mr. Grenier understood, that part of the project has been approved, and we are just waiting for the paperwork. The cost for the changes would be around \$26,000. FEMA has picked up 75%, so the cost to the town would be around \$6,500.00. We would want to change the fire pond culvert from an 18-inch to a 24-inch culvert. After examining the Rte. 16 culvert at the intersection, they discovered that culvert is in bad shape and should be replaced at \$7,500.00. This might be the right time to do it as the road is now open and before pavement is laid down. Adam White made a motion to approve spending \$7,500.00 to replace that culvert. Judy LeBlanc seconded it and all approved.

Mr. Waddell asked Mr. Grenier where the town stood on the progress of the project. So far about 10% has been spent, around \$21,000 to \$22,000. The original project did not include the Mt. Carter Drive culvert or the Rt. 16 culvert. HEB is waiting for approval for the Mt. Carter project form FEMA. Waddell asked if the select board could wait until their Oct. 7th meeting to decide on the Mt. Carter culvert or they could act on the October 1st nonpublic meeting if we had to. The board would have to go into public session to do so if necessary.

Ms. Vallee spoke to Mr. Grenier and said that we had agreed to keep the billing separate so we could identify what was paid so far for each project. She said that she was concerned as to what she has received as it is confusing and was worried that FEMA would have a hard time identifying which portions had been paid for so far for the Town's portion and for the FEMA portion.

Mr. Grenier replied that he sent two sheets with the subtotals on the bottom showing the town portion and the FEMA portion. Mr. Grenier said he will go back to the office and clean up the form and send it back to Ms. Vallee. Once she receives that, the Finance Department will cut separate checks for the various portions.

Libby Pool: The wetlands permit has been submitted and HEB has added their comments to the application. The comments have been received by FEMA and we are waiting to hear from FEMA within a week or two. Once that is received, then there is a 30-day waiting period for the Army Corp of Engineers to comment. HEB is hoping to start and finish that project in the spring before Libby Pool opens in 2020.

Mitch Berkowitz prepared a checklist to follow for properties to be deeded. Mr. Waddell asked if the list had ever been sent to the town's attorneys. Ms. LeBlanc stated that the board was working on it last year but was caught up with the issues at the "trailer park" and the task was never completed. Mr. Waddell said that the board wants policies and procedures written so that this task in the future would have guidelines to follow. That basically the code enforcement office could do a drive-by and make a determination to the board. If a property is in danger of being auctioned off, would there be a way for the town to intervene to take the property without having to do an assessment or an abatement. That is a question for the town attorneys to answer. Mr. Waddell stated that as for the Gleason properties

there is no structure, but we do need to do a level one study. The town had to issue a stop order because Mr. Gleason was taking solid waste at the time. If it is inert debris, then it should not be much of a problem. Ms. Vallee said that the code enforcement officer had not been up to inspect the property yet but that it is on his list to do so. Another question regarded a lot with a house and trailer on it and could we take it and sell it as is without having to do an assessment? That would also be a question for the attorneys. Ms. LeBlanc asked what would be the vehicle we could use to turn the property over to someone if the town did not own it? The board discussed the possibility of going through the bid process before taking possession of the property? Is this possible? The owner of record has the right to come into the process. Would need some sort of deposit process. The town wants to not have to do the abatement process on properties taken by tax deed by the town. Judy said the process was difficult because the property taken did not have the land with it. The board will wait until they hear from the attorneys and the code enforcement officer.

Public Comment: Edith Tucker asked if the contract with the new Finance Director included a salary? Ms. Vallee replied that the salary was \$58,000.

Selectmen Updates: Mr. White asked about the crosswalk and traffic markings and when they would be done. Ms. Vallee replied that she had met with Mr. Belenz of North Country Council but that he was in the middle of the 10-Year Highway plan hearings and would begin work on the map right after that project was completed so the town should be hearing from him shortly. No other updates from the other town selectmen.

Town Manager's Report: Ms. Valle reported on the Solar project, Go Solar has prepared a project outline as to the cost, but it has not gone out to bid yet. Ms. Vallee, Superintendent David Backler and the energy circuit rider met with the Tillotson fund last week to discuss how the town is working with the school on this project. Ms. Vallee said that she hoped to have a proposal to go before the town meeting next year, but if we are not ready to proceed, we would wait until the next year. Ms. LeBlanc replied that with the change in attitude towards climate change that she thought there will be a lot more opportunities to apply for wind and solar power grants and subsidies soon. Mr. Waddell said that "none of this can happen without the subsidies and to try to implement without guaranteed subsidies would be a mistake." Ms. Valle said that we will need an engineering study regarding the roofs before any solar panels can be added. The school is not planning on adding panels to the building roof but will have a solar array at the airport. With the Public Works Garage and the Fire Station and the array at the airport 100% of the town and school electrical needs would be covered. This does not include Water and Sewer. Water & Sewer is looking at their property to install solar panels in order to cover the water pollution plant. Melissa Eldridge the energy circuit rider has been working with the town on another project. Energy audits have been completed of the Town Hall and the Fire Station. Another audit on the Public Works garage is a work-in-progress. The cost for this project would be \$19,574.00 but there is an Eversource incentive of \$9,345.00 which would leave the town with a cost of \$10,529.00. This cost would be paid back within three years with the savings in electric cost.

The rebuilding of the retaining wall on Rt. 16 by Libby pool has been added to the State of NH 10-Year Highway plan and is one of the top-rated projects on NH Department of Transportation important list. Ms. Vallee also said that at the NHDOT 10-year plan hearing, Paul Robitaille spoke about the importance of Rt 2 as the east-west highway and David Morin from the Berlin Planning Board reiterated the same

highway concerns. The highway commissioner was pleased with the representation from all the towns in the area.

Internet/Phone Project Upgrade: Fiber optic cable has been run into the town hall and the technicians went to the fire station to do the same thing but found a blockage about four to five feet out from the building in the conduit. The project electricians have met with Consolidated and have inspected all the buildings to see what needs to be done.

Motion was made to pass over the previous meeting minutes by Mike Waddell, seconded by Judy LeBlanc, all in favor.

At 8:20 pm, a motion was made by Adam White to go back into Non-Public session, seconded by Ms. LeBlanc, all in favor.

Submitted for approval by Paul Robitaille



Michael Waddell



Judith LeBlanc



Adam White