

**Gorham Select Board
Meeting Minutes 8-26-2019**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by chairman Michael Waddell.

Motion was made by selectman Adam White to seal the minutes of the previous non-public session. Motion was seconded by selectman Judy LeBlanc. Unanimous vote to seal the minutes was approved.

The board met with Town Clerk Carol Porter to discuss properties that are in danger of being tax delinquent for non-payment of taxes.

1. This property has been paid up and is a non-issue
2. The owners of this property had received the tax notice but have not replied
3. This property owners have been making payments to catch up but missed the August payment
4. The owner of this property is deceased, and the town and hospital have not been able to locate a next of kin. This property is located on Cross Street and is in bad shape and the board directed the town manager to have the code enforcement officer inspect the property. Assessment value for the property is for the lot and is assessed at \$17,000.00.

Discussion followed regarding the town's liability when it takes over a property for environmental issues such as asbestos and when the town needs to do a Level One environmental study.

5. A property owned by John Gleason on Cascade Hill was the next topic. Apparently, there is a stump dump and construction debris has been dumped on the land. The board directed the town manager to send the code enforcement officer to inspect and to order a Level One environmental study if needed.
6. There is another property in the Spring Rd. area where the owner is unknown.
7. The next property appears to be a county problem and not a town issue
8. This owner is trying to get up to date with their taxes and the property should be a non-issue soon.
9. A home is up for a lien behind the Cumberland farms property. It will need an environmental review before being put up for auction or sale.
10. The code enforcement officer will visit the next three properties for review before any determination will be made.
11. A property on Washington St. has had a letter delivered to the owner. They have not contacted the town clerk.

Discussion was held with the Town Clerk regarding RSA 77:17 and when the time begins for an abatement, it is approved and a refund check is issued. According to the RSA, the date is when the selectman vote to approve the abatement and the refund check must be sent within three or four days from that date.

The town manger announced the board's decision on salary adjustments for department heads. The board had requested \$10,000 to be appropriated at the town meeting to make competitive salary adjustments which had been approved. The adjustments were made with \$3,500 going to the Fire Chief, \$2,500 to the Parks & Recreation director and \$3,000 going to the Town Clerk. \$ 9,000 has been used out of that line item, leaving \$1,000 remaining. According to the town manager, these adjustments should bring those department heads on par with the average of their peers in like-sized communities.

The town manger then said that a request for proposals had been sent out for Phase I of the project to remove the inert debris pile, trees and stumps, and to deliver new material, in order to prepare the site for snow storage. Four contractors attended the meeting and bids are due August 29th.

The town manger then updated the board on other ongoing projects: FEMA is waiting for Approval from the army corps of engineers and alteration of terrain permits before beginning their portion of the Stony brook project, however the town portion had begun. The road will be closed while construction is ongoing but re-opened for resident use each night. The Libby Pool project is on hold while more information is provided by HEB Engineers to NHDES for the Wetlands Permit Application.

The selectmen then voted to approve an abatement to Arthur Couture, Map U6, Lot 37, at 230-232 Main St. to change his assessment to the requested value of \$225,000.

Mr. Waddell then reported that the Town of Randolph was assessing the Gorham Town Forest land at the highest rate possible instead of at the current use rate. He mentioned that HB 700 would allow a town forest to be assessed at current use levels, but that HB 700 might need to go through court before that provision could be used.

The town manger then reported she had received a letter of resignation form Police Chief P.J. Cyr who will retire on October 1st after 24 years of service. Chief Cyr then thanked the board for allowing him to serve the townspeople for 24 years. Elaine Norman who has cleaned the Town Offices is also retiring and the town is trying to find someone to fill her 24-hour position.

Ms. Vallee told the board about a meeting with Alex Belensz, transportation planner with North Country Council, about a request for help from North Country Council for a municipal parking lot map, crosswalk map, culvert map and traffic study.

The town hall air conditioner is currently working, but the coil is in bad shape and cannot be replaced as the company that made the original air conditioning unit 14 years ago no longer manufactures this model and parts are unavailable. Ms. Vallee had received an estimate for \$18,000 to remove and replace the current unit. Ms. Vallee felt that the town hall could limp along for the rest of the season and then order the new unit in January of 2020 to be ready for the installation before summer. It will take 12 weeks for the unit to come in and a crane will have to be used to remove the old unit from the roof and to install the new unit.


The town manger reported on the solar project: The town could add 170 panels on the Public Works Garage roof and 205 on the fire station roof. The total cost for installation would be \$370,500. The cost for electricity over 25 years, if nothing is done, would be \$1,130,157. The savings over 25 years would be \$759,658. The select board told the town manger to proceed with gathering more information and estimates.

Mrs. Vallee had received a letter from resident, Esther Gilbert, thanking the town for replacing her father's head stone which had been damaged by the Town burial crew while they were doing a close-by burial.

The board then discussed with the town manger their previous approval at ^{Selectmen's} Town Meeting for the police department to purchase new hand guns. The Sig Sauer 320 they wished to purchase for the department were over \$5,900 in aggregate, so the department purchased Glock hand guns instead. The board also previously approved that the officers purchase their old Berretta hand guns from the Police Department for \$200 per hand gun. A motion was made and passed to allow the officers to purchase the Berretta hand guns for \$200 apiece and to pay a \$25.00 processing fee so the guns can be sold through a local, Federally licensed dealer. All hand guns not purchased by the officers within 30 days will be disposed of.

A motion was made by Adam White, and seconded by Judith LeBlanc to approve the minutes of July 29th, 2019. Selectman White, yes; Selectman LeBlanc, yes; Chair Waddell, yes. Motion approved.

On a motion by Selectman Judith LeBlanc and seconded by Selectman Adam White, the selectmen's meeting of August 26th was adjourned at 7:26 pm.


Mike Waddell, Chair


Judy LeBlanc


Adam White

Date approved: _____

Respectfully submitted, Paul Robitaille