

Gorham, NH Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes of 11-25-19

Present: Michael Waddell, Judy LeBlanc, Adam White; Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Kathy Frenette, Finance Director; Carol Porter, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk; Paul Robitaille, Minutes taker; Edith Tucker, Berlin Sun

Meeting was called to order by Selectman Michael Waddell at 6:00 pm.

There was no action taken in the previous non-public meeting.

Assessing Budget: The meeting began with a review of the Assessing Clerk's proposed budget for 2020. Michelle Lutz presented the changes in her budget to the board. The first was a proposed 2% increase in the permanent position line. "There is a significant decrease in the overtime line, as the comp time issue has been resolved." Ms. Lutz has left 15 hours of projected overtime in that line in case. The DRA mini course line is level funded. No changes in the property assessing line but Michelle is waiting for some figures from Sansoucy Associates, so that line could change once Michelle has the figures.

Selectman LeBlanc asked about the differences between the cyclical assessing and the "pickups". Michelle explained the cyclical is when the assessors go out and assess 25% of the residential every year, pick-ups are acknowledged through the building permit process. Ms. Lutz explained the process as to how the assessors go to the residences, all assessors have their vehicles identified and carry official identification. Ms. LeBlanc asked if the residents are notified if there is a change to the tax card, Michelle said that she is preparing those letters but has not sent them yet.

\$52,000 must come out of the capital reserve fund for assessing, for next year's assessment. Michelle said that 25% of the town is done every year and then the commercial properties are done in the fifth year when all the assessments for the entire town are completed. The next complete assessment is due in 2022. Michelle has a work-to-career student from the school, who is helping her with organizing the maps.

The Internet line is a new expense line for funding the new internet system. The same line has been added to all the departments.

The tax mapping line has not changed. Subscriptions and the supply line have not changed. Conference line is up \$10.00 due to increased cost for the NHMA line. Equipment line is up \$1,100 dollars for the map racks in her office. Michelle hopes to have the student file all the tax maps. Selectman LeBlanc asked about the IT vendor and if support was an issue. Michelle is having a problem with uploading changes to the tax map, thinks it may be a setting issue between the various software programs. Discussed the issue further and problem is that when KRT is uploading the new assessment Michelle cannot use her computer. Michelle has been given a left-over laptop by the Police Department which KRT can access to do the property drawings.

Chairman Waddell started discussion over the fact that the tax map property lines do not match reality. Michelle said that the issue is that the town is still using maps based on the US Forest Service maps which are not digitalized and do not line up with Google maps. Michelle said to resolve that issue, we would have to have Cartographic Associates digitalize the maps. Mike said it might be possible to have a company do a flyover using LIDAR to make more accurate maps. Michelle said she could get a quote

from CAI Technologies. Mr. Waddell said he would also like her to get a quote from York Land Services. Mike would like to see those quotes added to this budget.

Discussion then followed regarding the Bi-weekly reports and why they are now only coming once a month. Michelle said that she meant to upload the report today but did not. Discussion followed regarding the town website and how it works. Michelle said she likes the web-site but is spending a lot of time trying to rectify other departments' mistakes. Ideally each Department head would upload their information directly to the town website, but not all are as familiar with it as Michelle so information has been going to the wrong places. Michelle has had to not only instruct other department heads but help to rectify those mistakes. Due to Denise's new duties, Michelle has taken on that role of helping other departments manage internet input. Some departments are using Word rather than a PDF to upload their documents which triggers a virus alert on people's computers. Denise said all documents uploaded to the town website should be in PDF.

Discussion followed regarding filing and record storage: Michelle said she has a new National ABLE volunteer starting tomorrow. Kathy Frenette explained how an ABLE volunteer works and that the program pays the 55 and older volunteers' wages and workmen's compensation. The volunteer can be here for three years then can apply for an extension or be hired by the town for a permanent position. Michelle hopes to use the volunteer to finally go through all the assessing and planning records, file or destroy what is no longer useful or needed and to file what is needed so the easy access can be made. Michelle was asked what can be destroyed. Michelle replied that most of the information that comes through her office is public information and, if no longer needed, can be shredded in office.

Discussion followed regarding the Planning and Zoning part of the budget. The 802 line which is for Planning Board training, has been requested by the Planning Board to increase by \$300 for board training. The travel line has also increased \$500 due to more training. Code revision line now has \$5,000 in it but Michelle is waiting for a quote from Tara Bamford as to the cost of her expertise in helping the Planning Board look at the revisions of the Zoning map and the rewriting of definitions in the zoning ordinance. Paul Robitaille, Planning Board chair explained that the Planning Board is becoming aware of some new socio-economic issues and believes that with new information that the zoning map could be changed to allow some development in what timber and agriculture is now. The board also believes that there may be some issues coming to the forefront where the board may need legal advice from the town attorney. Initial quotes from Tara are \$5,000 for just the revisions to the ordinance and another \$4,000 for the revisions to the zoning map. Robitaille spoke about the vision of the Planning Board and some changes the board would like to see. Chairman Waddell brought up the fact that the Board can put parts of lots in different planning zones. Which would allow the board to zone some lots that are partially in what is now timber and agriculture for future development. More discussion followed regarding the future vision of the Planning Board. More discussion with the board regarding the possibility of a capital reserve fund started for the next 10-Year Plan.

Town Clerk / Tax Collector Budget: Carol Porter, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, is asking for a salary increase and two printers for vehicle registrations, one she inherited from the state and the other she purchased from state surplus, neither of which is going to be supported any longer by the state. Carol spoke to the other town clerks and they are recommending four printers three HP's and a Kurosowa. Cost would be about \$650 each including the extra tray and ink. Carol would like to have the support of the board to purchase two but could purchase one this year and one next year. Printers could come out

of the office supply line. Discussion regarding the vendor CollectPro. There is a jump in the IT line but that is the same as every other department. Carol said the vital statistics line could be decreased as she over-estimated the use of that line. **Elections:** Ms. Porter is budgeting for four elections plus one. Recommendations from the Town Clerks' Association is that they should budget for five elections in case of a special election. NH primary date has been set for Feb. 11th, 2020.

Denise Vallee said we will have to move the Town's Budget Public Hearing to another date.

Discussion began regarding the voting machines Carol informed the board that we have two, one for regular use and another for backup. Discussion continued regarding the Supervisors of the Checklist. All positions are filled but one is retiring from her current six-year position. Elections for supervisors are every two years the Town Clerk fills vacant positions.

Carol is asking for a salary increase based on other Tax Collectors' salaries. Mike asked about motor vehicle registrations. Carol registers motor vehicles as the Town Clerk. This year so far, they have collected \$1.7 million in motor vehicle registrations, last year \$2 million, 53 thousand. Carol attributes the high amount in registrations to the amount of people who are leasing cars rather than buying.

The Select Board discussed the possibility of motor vehicle decals for residents' vehicles to dump materials at the town transfer station and what it would cost the clerk's office to take over those duties. Since Carol is the only one bonded in town government to take cash, the Select Board wants her to take over those duties. Carol will get back to the board as to what it will cost her office to take over those duties. Discussion began regarding the \$5.00 fee that goes into the Transportation Fund. For this year, they have collected to date \$16,745.00 and last year's total was \$16,830.00. Ms. Vallee said there was \$42,685.00 in that fund at the end of 2018. Which combined with this year would be about \$58,000 total.

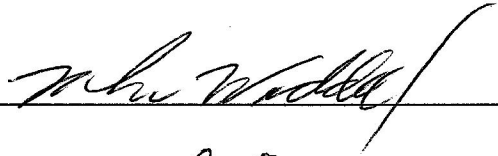
Mr. Waddell asked about tax deeding. Ms. Porter replied that she is waiting for authorization from the Select Board to proceed. Mr. Waddell said there are five properties ready: Cross St. one trailer, Washington St. house, a Spring Rd. property and the Gleason properties on Cascade Hill.

Discussion followed regarding record keeping and the town clerk vault. Ms. Porter said that there are some ballot boxes that could be destroyed, ballots need to be kept by statute 22 months or until a contest is settled. Mr. Waddell said that he would like to see a system installed where anything that has a terminal life period be marked with a destroy date and then destroyed when that date comes up. We should only keep what we have to. The town records are stored all over town. He would like to see all the town records stored in one spot and filed properly so we can find what we need. Then have a protocol so when someone does want to come in and research records, they can without a lot of disturbance to the staff. The vault on the fourth floor of the town hall is full but Mike thinks about a third of that could be destroyed. He suggested that each department put money in the budget to get rid of unnecessary documents. Mr. Waddell would like to see this done every year, rather than letting things pile up. Ms. Porter informed the board that personnel & termination files must be kept 50 years.

Public Comment: Edith Tucker asked about the snow storage area. Mr. Waddell informed her that the Snow storage area opened Friday. TM Vallee said the town received a letter from Paul Schmidt of CMA Engineers that the snow storage area was up to specifications and could be used. Final plantings will be done next year after the spring melt off.

A motion to adjourn was made by Selectman LeBlanc, seconded by Adam White, all in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Date Approved: 12/09/19

Michael Waddell 

Judy LeBlanc 

Adam White 