

Town of Gorham New Hampshire

PUBLIC MEETING OF THE GORHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Gorham Town Hall Public Meeting Room 2nd Floor

Monday, February 13, 2023

4:30 p.m.

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Michael Waddell; Judy LeBlanc; and Yves Zornio.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Bronson Paradis, Finance Manager; and Peter Gagnon, Per Diem Town Manager

OTHERS PRESENT: Eric Grenier, HEB Engineers; Vicki Hill, Resident; Bruce Hill, Resident; Chris Davies, Resident; Phyllis Davies, Resident; Rene Guay, Resident; Gary Aubin, Resident; Amanda Bradford, Resident; Adam White, Resident; Mary White, Resident; David Poirier, Resident; Russell Smith, Resident; Sue Demers, Resident; Melissa Elander, Clean Energy NH; Edwin and Victoria Giron, Residents; Lisa Connell, Reporter, Berlin Sun; Margo Sullivan, Androscoggin Valley Home Health Services;

1. Non-Public Session - 4:30 p.m.

Nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A:3, II(a) *The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted; (b) The hiring of any person as a public employee; (d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community; and defense Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled.*

2. Public Session Call to Order - 5:30 p.m.

Chairperson Waddell called the public session to order..

3. New Business

a. Announce action, if any, taken in nonpublic session.

None.

b. Public Bond Hearing - Clay Brook Road Project, \$900,00

Eric Grenier went over the scope of the Clay Brook Road project, as well as the plans on Evergreen and Hemlock. A few things he touched on were:

- Scope is the reconstruction of Evergreen Drive (base), Hemlock Road (alternate), and Clay Brook Road (alternate).
 - Reconstruction of Clay Brook Road will be very similar to the hill portion of Stony Brook Road.
- Chairperson Waddell requested of Denise Vallee to provide a background of the actual cost of the project. Ms. Vallee indicated that the cost would be \$205,000 a year for a 5-year bond, and that the interest would be approximately \$120,000. Discussion was had regarding the total interest calculations.

The following were some of the questions and comments that were made regarding the project.

- Q. In your introduction, you didn't want to say too much because the bids haven't come in yet. I'm not understanding what you mean by that.
- A. So basically, the way that we do these projects are we come up with the design and then we put it out to bid for local advertisement for private contractors to put bids on the contract. What we have is a set of documents for Contractors to pick up. In this document is an identification of all the quantities we anticipate being in the Contract, laid out in separate tables. The Contractors will be bid on the project as per our specs. The lag time allows for the bid to be reviewed, bid upon, and then to be opened publicly and awarded.
- Q. Is it my understanding that this will not be on this year's Warrant?
- A. No, the cost will be on this year's Warrant.
- Q. The cost will be. So it will be awarded as to whether it's not approved this year. If it's not approved on this year's Warrant, it will be dead?
- A. Correct.
- Q. It will only affect next year's taxes as part of the Warrant?
- A. Judy LeBlanc responded that it won't, because the payment will be made out of the \$250,000 Road Resurfacing Capital Reserve Account. Chairman Waddell added that it may, depending on how much can be appropriated to the CRF next year.

Discussion was had regarding how to address potential tax implications.

- Q. I just wanted to clarify additionally about the vote. Am I correct it takes a 2/3 approval vote?
- A. 3/5.
- Q. So, 3/5 approval rate has to be achieved by the vote that will be done at Town Meeting?
- A. Correct, by ballot.
- Q. Is it all of Clay Brook that you're going to repair or just bits-and-pieces?
- A. No, the section is currently out to bid, from where Mt. Carter Drive goes down, there's a cul-de-sac. From that intersection along Clay Brook Road past Evergreen Drive to where there's an old turnaround, so that section of Clay Brook Road is about 2,400 feet is included as part of this project. So, it's basically going to stop where the better section of Clay Brook Road is.
- Q. So, in the future, that'll be more borrowing and repairing every five years?
- A. So, some years ago now, the entire Town was mapped, the entire road system. And Horizons Engineering did maybe 20% of it, and HEB did roughly the other 80%. The Town then hired HEB to look at everything that had been done in aggregate, and we added Spring Road at this time, and requested that they bring the Town up-to-speed, which resulted in approximately \$14 million in costs.

Discussion was had regarding the need to repair/remediate the roads in the Town and the importance of addressing Clay Brook Road as a priority.

Further questions and comments were fielded by the Selectboard and Mr. Grenier. Discussion was had regarding the utilization of the Road Resurfacing Capital Reserve Fund. Further discussion was had regarding the necessity of the bond. In-depth discussion was had regarding the current tax rate valuations locally, regionally, and nationally, and how that plays a role in the decision to move forward with the project.

Public Hearing closed at 6:37 p.m.

c. Town Manager Position

Ms. Vallee introduced Peter Gagnon to the Board. She announced that he will be taking over the Town Manager position part time in May 2023, and will take over full-time on June 19, 2023. Ms. Vallee noted that she is officially done on May 31, 2023.

Peter Gagnon expressed his interest in taking over the position. He responded 10 hours are budgeted to a question asked to him regarding the number of hours he would be working a week until April 1st.

d. Androscoggin Valley Home Health Services - Margo Sullivan

Margo Sullivan provided background of working with the Town of Gorham, as well as the warrant process being undertaken. She inquired whether they could remain as a Vendor or, if they have to go through the Warrant process, to be able to get the allocation in one amount.

Discussion was had regarding the Petition and the Town's responsibilities in terms of expending funds.

Ms. Sullivan went over who they serve in the Town of Gorham and what the petitioned amount of \$14,000 would cover. She went over the issues in sourcing manpower to serve the needs of the residents of Gorham in 2022. She added that they were encountering a learning curve with their new computer system, wherein they ended up misbilling throughout 2022.

Discussion was had regarding how much the Town pays for these services, as well as the confusion between the necessity to bill as a vendor and requesting a Warrant. Further discussion was had regarding the role of the Selectmen in the budget process, versus their role in the Warrant process.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc noted that there was poor communication between the Town and AV Home Health Services, regarding the Petitioned Warrant Article. Selectman Zornio stated his observations regarding the Grantees of Warrants Articles, and he noted the importance of transparency on how many residents AV Home Health Services actually assist in the Town of Gorham.

Discussion was had regarding when alterations to Petitioner Warrant Articles can occur.

e. Warrant Article for \$900,000 Bond

MOTION: Vice-Chair LeBlanc moved to support the Warrant Article for the \$900,000 Bond. It was seconded by Selectman Zornio.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman Zornio: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

f. Warrant Article for Solar Project - DPW Garage Roof

Ms. Vallee introduced Melissa Elander from Clean Energy New Hampshire and spoke about the different projects she has worked with the Town to accomplish. She went over the Public Works Garage project. A few things she touched upon were:

- \$89,000 has been awarded through Senator Shaheen's Office through a CDS Grant, and the Town has to come up with \$89,000 as a non-federal match, so only local funds.
- Project cost went from \$178,000 when it was first applied for with Senator Shaheen to \$219,344.
- Town is able to apply for \$41,344 in Federal Funds through USDA.

She continued to describe other funding options to assist in paying for the project and paying back the loan.

Ms. Elander spoke about the energy offset of the project. Chairperson Waddell inquired as to how much the Town would need to raise and appropriate. Ms. Vallee stated she does not have the figure yet from Scott Maslansky from CDFA. She added she has a call in to Jamie Dow to see if the Town has to have a payment in there, or if they can just approve the project with the financing to be determined by the Board of Selectmen, which is how it has been done in the past. Discussion was had regarding the loan process and when to begin it.

Discussion was had regarding the increase in electricity versus the payback of the project, as well as Warranties provided for the panels. Further discussion was had regarding next steps and what the timeline would be to get this moving forward as a Warrant Article to be considered at Town Meeting.

Discussion was had regarding the DPW Garage Roof and whether ground-mounted arrays were considered.

g. ARPA Grant - Water Treatment Facility Upgrades, \$250,000

MOTION: Vice-Chair LeBlanc moved to have Chairman Michael Waddell accept the ARPA Grant for \$250,000, and to authorize Jeff Tennis, Water & Sewer Superintendent, to execute any documents that would effectuate the ARPA Grant Agreement. It was seconded by Selectman Zornio.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman Zornio: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

4. Old Business/Updates, if any

a. Policy Against Harassment

MOTION: Vice-Chair LeBlanc moved to approve the Policy Against Harassment, as presented. It was seconded by Selectman Zornio.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman Zornio: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

5. **Public Comment:** Those in attendance will have the opportunity for public comment of two (2) minute or less. There were no comments from the public.

A resident inquired regarding the solar panels at the school, and why the determination was made to go on the DPW Garage Roof rather than how it was done at the school. Ms. Elander responded the roof was analyzed as it is cheaper to work with, and noted that it was a metal roof, which typically last 40 years. Discussion was had regarding how much the school will generate.

Lisa inquired whether there was any chance that the AV Home Health Services Petitioned Warrant Article can fail at the Town Meeting. Discussion was had regarding the history of Town response to the Petitioned Warrant Article.

Lisa asked, relating to Berlin and Gorham, whether enough money has been reached so that the Town can apply for a FEMA Grant in conjunction with Berlin. Ms. Vallee indicated that the Town submitted some costs, but she's unaware if an official Declaration of Disaster has been announced.

6. **Other Business**

- a. **Review and Approve Meeting Minutes: January 9, 2022 (public and nonpublic, January 23 (public and nonpublic, and January 30, 2022, (public and nonpublic).**

MOTION: Selectman Zornio moved to approve the minutes of January 9, 2022 (public and nonpublic, January 23 (public and nonpublic, and January 30, 2022, (public and nonpublic). It was seconded by Vice-Chair LeBlanc.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman Zornio: Aye
Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

- b. **Abatements, if any**

- i. **Shooting Range, Gorham PD**

Ms. Vallee indicated that the bill went out for \$245.76, and that she seemed to recall that they were going to be abated annually, to which Chairperson Waddell concurred. She added that she will provide the Board with the form to sign regarding the abatement.

MOTION: Selectman Zornio moved to approve the abatement for the Shooting Range in the amount of \$245.76. It was seconded by Chairperson Waddell.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman Zornio: Aye
Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

Chairperson Waddell noted that the owners of the land is Gorham Land Company.

c. Town Manager Report

i. LCHIP Stewardship Grant

Ms. Vallee noted that Haven Neal submitted a Management Plan and Monitoring Report for the Town Forest, and they've received a \$1,200 LCHIP Stewardship Grant, which will go into the Town Forest Fund.

ii. Railroad Street Parking / HOP Grant

Ms. Vallee related issues regarding parking on Railroad Street. She added that the HOP Grant that they applied for may be able to address these issues.

iii. Town Report

Ms. Vallee indicated that it is a horizontal layout this year, rather than a vertical one, and that it has been sent to the printer. She noted that she is just waiting on the Warrant and the Budget to be finalized to go to the printer. Chairperson Waddell requested to get an electronic version of the proof.

iv. SB-114

Ms. Vallee stated that it was voted ought to pass this past week, which is to reestablish the 7.5% being paid by the State in contributions for Police and Teachers, and Firefighters.

v. 2022 By The Numbers Report

Ms. Vallee announced that they received the Report from the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce and that it's the result of the JPP, Joint Promotion Program, that the State runs. She went on to describe the program.

vi. Warrant Articles

Discussion was had regarding the grouping in terms of Departments, and whether the residents should receive a directory of the Warrant Articles.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: Selectman Zornio moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 p.m. It was seconded by Vice-Chair LeBlanc.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman Zornio: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

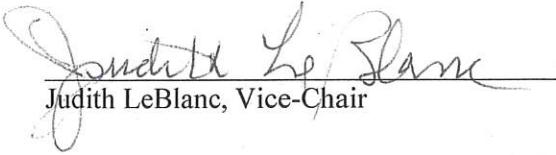
Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria O'Connor, Recording Secretary
O'Connor Legal, Medical & Media Services Inc.

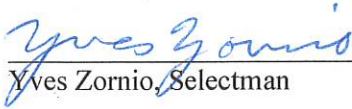
Reviewed and approved on February 27, 2023 by:



Michael L. Waddell, Chairman



Judith LeBlanc, Vice-Chair



Yves Zornio, Selectman