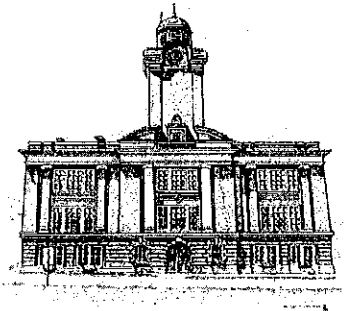


Town of Gorham New Hampshire



VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE GORHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN Gorham Town Hall Public Meeting Room 2nd Floor Wednesday, December 30, 2020 4:30 p.m.

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Michael Waddell; Judy LeBlanc; and Adam White.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Kathleen Frenette, Director of Finance and Administration; and Shannon Buteau, Director, Public Library.

OTHERS PRESENT VIA VIDEO: Edith Tucker, Reporter, Berlin Sun; Claire Fox; and Paul Bousquet.

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; and (e) 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. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with any body or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph.*

2. Public Session Call to Order - 6:00 p.m.

Chairperson Waddell called the public session to order at 6:08 p.m.

3. New Business

a. **Announce any action taken in Non-Public Session**

Unanimously voted in favor of the negotiated union contract with Police and Dispatch.

b. **Budget Review: Library**

Paul made the Library budget presentation to the Board. He indicated the budget was pretty much flat. A few things that he noted were:

- Internet and telephone costs went up.
- Maintenance repairs - need additional funds because they have to get a new boiler.
- No salary increases for any of the Staff.

The following questions were posed to Paul Bousquet and Shannon Buteau:

- Q. Why don't you just talk about any significant changes?
A. We had to increase the budget due to the telephone and internet. Money's dropped in other lines to make up for those increases in other lines.
- Q. So have there only been 3 people working? I see that there's the Director, Assistant Director, and On-Call Aides. So have you been fully staffed all year?
A. Not fully staffed, no. We have had the Assistant Director and Director, as well as the Custodian. There was a portion of time which the On-Call Aides (4 people), where they were not working. For the past about 3 months, they have been back on.
- Q. So how much money do you have left over, as we cross over to 2021?
A. It looks like we have about \$30,000 left. But we've spent about \$127,448.
- Q. Understanding the situation, particularly now that COVID seems to have finally caught up to Coos County, talk to us a little bit about how the library functions today under those circumstances.
A. So, how the library functions today is we have slightly decreased our open hours to allow for 2 hours at the beginning or the end of the day for cleaning, sanitizing books, and re-shelving them. So we do have curbside book pickup services for anyone who would prefer not to enter a public building. We also are open to the public, but masks are required inside the building. We do not let more than 20 people inside the building at the same time. We have bins around the library for if anyone looks at a book but doesn't want to check it out, they put it in the bin. Then, the book is sanitized and quarantined before returning to the shelf, which is the same for all materials that are returned to the library. We have sanitizing stations throughout the building and signing for social distancing, as well. We've removed all of the toys from the children's area and we've removed any cloth that can't be easily sanitized.

Ms. Buteau discussed the library programming, and differences that she experienced due to COVID. The following questions were posed to the Director:

- Q. Are you doing anything with the School District and the Learning Center at this point?
A. We are offering books to the Learning Center. They are choosing not to come to the library. They want to keep it closed, because they don't want to risk any exposure for their students. I have worked with the school on a few occasions.
- Q. Do we have any planned capital for the structure, for this summer of 2021?
A. They're hoping to get our -- any of our steps or walkways, sidewalks, anything that might be hazardous taken care of. We do want to put our capital reserve aside, because the person who cleans our furnace has said that probably within the next few years we'd want to look at replacing that. Looking at that for spring of 2022.
- Q. How much do you have set aside now?
A. I believe we just have \$5,000 now.
- Q. How much of David Murphy's money do you have left?
A. It was about \$80,000 or \$90,000. \$81,400.
- Q. You last year talked about the Friends becoming more active. Is that happening?
A. No, they had definitely started to group and seemed like they were going to take off a little bit more. COVID-19 and everything that's going on with the pandemic definitely has put a hold to that for the time being.

- Q. It looks as though you're going to be spending money on new materials for making up for other increased costs. But that's sort of the heart of the library.
- A. In looking at what we've spent on books and other materials in the past years, we feel confident that we can still provide the materials that our patrons are used to and that they enjoy with this amount of money.

c. COLA and Other Benefits

Chairperson Waddell indicated that the Board received a spreadsheet reflecting the cost of living increase of 1.5%, which would increase the budget by \$18,246, and another spreadsheet at 2%, which would increase the budget by \$23,670. He noted that Social Security is giving 1.3% this year and the School District went with 2%.

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to select the 2% COLA increase. It was seconded by Selectman White.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

Chairperson Waddell informed that the Board earlier this year approved on-call pay for the Public Works Department, which amounts to \$50/week for Town Employees on the call-up/standby list, which can run for 28 weeks (November 15th to April 15th).

Chairperson Waddell stated that the Board received a proposal to do dental, which would have amounted to a little less than \$8,000 a year, and would have been an enhancement on the medical. Kathleen Frenette went over another proposal she just received today, which reflected a rate of \$35.52/person per month, rather than the cost of the other plan, which was \$46.96/person per month, totaling \$5,541.12 with 26 Employees participating, saving almost \$2,000 annually.

Chairperson Waddell summarized the increases in medical benefits for this year. Discussion was had regarding the increases and whether or not to move forward with the dental benefits. Consensus was reached that the Board would not be approving the addition of dental benefits for this year.

Denise Vallee discussed the changes in the Longevity budget.

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to increase the longevity, as presented by Denise Vallee. It was seconded by Selectman White.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

Chairperson Waddell went over the health insurance options. Discussion was had regarding which plan to go with, including the pros and cons of each plan.

MOTION: Selectman White moved to accept the Health Plan, ABSOS 20/40/1K Deductible Plan with the bigger deduction for mail-order prescription. It was seconded by Selectman LeBlanc.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

d. Budget Review: Legal & Capital Reserve Funds

Ms. Vallee discussed the legal budget. Some of the things she pointed out are:

- Adjusted back up to last year's amount
- \$49,805.71 expended as of yesterday, including the ATV lawsuit

Ms. Frenette went over the capital reserve funds. Some of the things she pointed out are:

- Ambulance Capital Reserve should be over the anticipated goal once they add the \$20,000.
- Appropriations for December 2021 had been discussed previously and had not been changed, except for the ambulance capital reserve fund.
- Change of banks from Citizen's Bank to Bank of New Hampshire.

Ms. Vallee went over the CAI Technology proposal, which would be \$12,000/year for three years for the contract. Discussion was had regarding the necessity of the map digitization services.

MOTION: Selectman White moved to accept the CAI Technology proposal. It was seconded by Selectman LeBlanc.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

e. Encumbrances for 2020

Ms. Vallee went over the 2020 Encumbrances. She indicated they are looking to encumber four different amounts, to total \$53,866.09:

- Monies in health reimbursement arrangement account - \$27,765 (plus \$5,802 from '19/'20)
- \$3,230 - Already encumbered - Airbnb regulation and consultation
- \$7,067.34 - Competitive Wage Review
- \$10,000 - July 4th Celebration

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to sign the encumbrances for the year, 2021. It was seconded by Selectman White.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

f. Contracts for DTC Lawyers - BTLA Cases

5 Contracts to engage DTC Lawyers to defend the Town's interest at the BTLA on 5 different land appeals were handed to Chairperson Waddell.

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to accept all 5 contracts, as written, to engage DTC Lawyers for the 5 BTLA cases. It was seconded by Selectman White.

**Selectman LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman White: Aye
Chairperson Waddell: Aye**

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

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to authorize Michael Waddell to sign the 5 contracts on behalf of the Town of Gorham Board of Selectmen. It was seconded by Selectman White.

**Selectman LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman White: Aye
Chairperson Waddell: Aye**

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

4. Old Business/Updates

Chairperson Waddell informed that the Chair of the Planning Board, Paul Robitaille, has made a plea to him to have someone on the Board of Selectmen to back him up on the State's Transportation Committee.

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to appoint Adam White to the Transportation Committee, as an alternate. It was seconded by Chairperson Waddell.

**Selectman LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman White: Yeah
Chairperson Waddell: Yes**

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

Ms. Vallee discussed the Capital Improvement Committee nominations: Denise Vallee, Kathleen Frenette, Paul Robitaille, Peter Gagnon, and Dan Buteau (?). Selectman LeBlanc volunteered to take part in the Committee.

MOTION: Selectman White moved to accept the nominations of the volunteers, as listed by Denise Vallee. It was seconded by Selectman LeBlanc.

**Selectman LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman White: Aye
Chairperson Waddell: Aye**

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

5. **Public Comment:** There will be a 5-minute recess so that Public Comments can be sent in via email to townmgr@gorhamnh.org or by commenting during the Zoom session. Any comments received will be read.

Edith Tucker inquired if the Board was going to clarify the holiday policy. Ms. Vallee responded that the only change was for Christmas Eve.

Ms. Tucker asked if there are too many things in the air to discuss if there's going to be a proposed tax increase. Ms. Vallee averred that that is correct, and that there won't be an estimate until the public hearing on it.

Ms. Tucker inquired regarding the public works department. Chairperson Waddell responded that the Board is supporting the Town Manager's recommendation and that they will be hiring a fulltime person, and the two part-times will be reduced to one part-time.

Ms. Tucker asked if there was any further information received from the Bankruptcy Court regarding Gorham Paper. Ms. Vallee indicated that the transfer would be coming in the first couple weeks of January 2021.

Ms. Tucker inquired as to when they would be meeting with the Budget Committee, to which Ms. Vallee responded January 7, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

6. **Other Business**

a. **Town Manager's Report**

- Ms. Vallee indicated that during nonpublic, there was a vote to support the union contract that goes from January 2021 through December 31st, 2023. Motion was made in nonpublic, so the Selectmen signed the contract in public session.
- Ms. Vallee noted that the Federal Mandate for towns to cover two weeks of pay for anyone who had to quarantine or had to be out due to COVID illness ends tomorrow.

MOTION: Selectman LeBlanc moved to extend the COVID-related payments until the end of March 2021, provided the Employees do everything they can remotely. It was seconded by Selectman White.

Selectman LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman White: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

Discussion was had regarding the ability for Employees to telecommute while quarantining or ill, once the new server is received in January 2021.

- Ms. Vallee spoke about the FairPoint appeal. Chairperson Waddell instructed that she seek direction from Skip regarding the Town's position.
- Ms. Vallee informed the Board that she would have next year's meeting schedule ready at the next meeting, which would be January 11, 2021.

b. Non-Public and Public Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2020

MOTION: Selectman White moved to accept the minutes of December 14, 2020, non-public and public sessions. It was seconded by Selectperson LeBlanc.

**Selectman LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman White: Aye
Chairperson Waddell: Aye**

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

7. Adjournment

MOTION: Selectman White moved to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Selectman LeBlanc.

**Selectman LeBlanc: Aye
Selectman White: Aye
Chairperson Waddell: Aye**

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria O'Connor, Recording Secretary
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Minutes approved on January 25, 2021 by:



Michael Waddell, Chairman



Judith LeBlanc, Selectperson



Adam White, Selectman