

Town of Gorham New Hampshire

PUBLIC MEETING OF THE GORHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN Gorham Town Hall, Public Meeting Room, 2nd Floor Monday, December 12, 2022 4:30 p.m.

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk;
Bronson Paradis, Finance Director

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 (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.*

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. MS-535 & Tax Rate Setting

Denise Vallee and Selectman Zornio note the urgency needed for the auditor to finalize the state portal so Jamie Dow at DRA can set the tax rate. Follow ups continue daily. Expectations are all to be completed by week's end.

Related to this, a discussion concerning fund balance, tax reduction and Stony Brook needs to be scheduled between members.

c. Budget Review - Assessing

Michelle Lutz outlined the changes in 2023. Of significance were the costs from the Reval., Tax Mapping, software, and the final year of paying for the completed map conversion. Of much smaller outlay, Michelle established more funds for ZBA members

to attend virtual or online trainings about changing laws. Michelle will be central in the search for replacing Patriot Properties software.

Ms. Vallee mentioned conversations already had with Jim Wheeler and Cindy Perkins. Segueing to Legal matters, Ms. Vallee and Michelle noted the funds budgeted for 2023 will be \$85k including \$10k for Planning. Michelle hopes the BTLA cases, the OHRV case, and Great Lakes Hydro case resolve or at least stay on schedule.

Ms. Vallee has made calls to arrange a nonpublic meeting with the Town Attorney, Assessor and Board to discuss the Great Lakes Hydro case.

d. Budget Review - Town Clerk

Discussion centered upon the problematic operation of CollectPro. Michelle Lutz and the Board recognized the lack of support from developers and the system's current locked-up status. Agreed that change must be investigated sooner rather than later. A plan will be developed for learning needs and identifying possible vendors and demonstrations of systems compatible with the town's current affiliated finance programs.

e. Budget Review - Tax Collector

Cindy Cole forecast some increases, like 5% for phone and to buffer the 50% increase in supplies like paper and anticipated \$4,500 for postage including Certified letters. However, she also budgeted a decrease in travel because of the use of the town travel vehicle to cut the need for mileage reimbursements. Cindy and Christina are, of course, together in the search for software and support for collection of taxes.

The Motor Vehicles revenue line seems to be on par with previous years. A surprise refund from the Retirement System of \$11,375 and one-time increase in Meals and Rooms as reported by Jamie resulted in an unanticipated windfall of approximately \$108k, which will offset the increase in the overlay line.

Election costs will increase approximately \$3,800 in the upcoming year, but include training in Concord, associated election day expenses, and printing. All the voting machines are in good working order and the new support was outstanding in the last election.

A change in New Hampshire law has allowed requests from Vital Records to be made more accessible. The costs of these services are expected increase an additional \$1,400 in 2023.

f. Budget Review - Finance, Town Manager & Capital Reserves

Ms. Vallee completed the Competitive Salary Review, and most lines remained the same. Increase in Insurance for Town Manager assumed a change in demographics. Bronson stated IT support and subscriptions have increased to \$71/user/month, resulting in a 2023 overall budget of \$28,680.

Bronson Paradis reported that because of restructuring, there is no line item for Overtime. Printing fewer Town Reports, as many boxes of reports go unopened, will save some

printing costs. Accufund support, and a new server are reflected in 2022. The upcoming budget has increases for the Treasurer, Trustee, and full-time positions in 2023.

Still in progress are the updating of the website and the enforcement of the Transfer Station permits.

The General Government Building numbers from Bronson reflect a staggering increase of \$20,080 in Heating town-wide in 2023. Currently locked in through June, increases are expected in the new contract, effective July 1st. Electricity is locked in at \$0.07.54 until November 2024, aligning with an estimated cost of \$24k for 2023. The extra Cruiser is now available for use and \$2,000 has been budgeted for winter tires, and then, maintenance. The car will have a log, in which users will note the starting and ending mileage, and departments will be billed out at the end of the year for percentage of related maintenance.

Insurance increases in liability for Fire and Police each up over \$1,000, but that follows a three-year premium holiday.

There is a decrease of approximately \$13k in Solid Waste due to both a rate change and tonnage being down. As the Library presented recently, the line will reflect an increase of \$4,544.

Welfare will gain \$7,000 in budget to accommodate chance of severe weather expenses associated with short-term housing and the homeless. Long term debt is at zero. The LEADS program has already purchased needed supplies and has a balance of over \$3k and will not have a Warrant Article this year.

g. Planning Board - Alternate Position

This is not under the purview of this Board -- the item was passed over.

h. Purchasing Policy

Chairperson Waddell asked to pass over this topic.

i. Policy Against Harassment

Chairperson Waddell asked to pass over this topic.

j. Stony Brook Road Wetlands Permit

Ms. Vallee stated that NH DES determined the project will only require notifications, and the cost will be \$4,000.

MOTION: Selectman Zornio moved to authorize Denise Vallee to complete the project. It was seconded by Vice-Chair LeBlanc.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman Zornio: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

The GorhamNHOutdoors.org website project is chugging along and the website will be up soon. The Hazard Mitigation Plan needs to be finished by June Garneau so the town can apply for Federal funding through the BRIC Grants for the Libby Intake project.

The National Parks Service awarded Gorham approximately \$83k for the installation of a limitless playground and a contract has been entered into with NCIC to administer the grant and to handle the many bureaucratic hoops.

k. Town Warrant - Tax Credits for Veterans & Elderly Exemption Adjustment

A Warrant Article needs to be drafted concerning a lapsing tax credit for veterans that the State requires action on. The former town \$200 credit is being re-drafted in place of the State's \$50 floor. Similar actions are needed for an adjustment to the Elderly Exemption income limit. Inflation has impacted the income levels, causing elderly that now have exemptions to no longer be eligible for the exemption. This will be addressed in the Town Warrant.

4. Old Business/Updates, if any

None.

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.

No public comment. The next meeting will be on December 29, not the 28th as previously reported.

6. Other Business

a. Review and Approve Minutes: November 28th, 2022 (public and nonpublic) and November 30th, 2022 (public)

MOTION: Vice-Chair LeBlanc moved to approve the minutes of November 28th, 2022 (public and nonpublic) and November 30th, 2022 (public). It was seconded by Selectman Zornio.

Vice-Chair LeBlanc: Aye

Selectman Zornio: Aye

Chairperson Waddell: Aye

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

b. Abatements, if any

None.

c. Town Manager Report

None.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: Vice-Chair LeBlanc moved to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Selectman Zornio.

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

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Dennis O'Connor, Recording Secretary
O'Connor Legal, Medical & Media Services Inc.
www.oconnorlmms.com

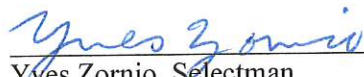
Minutes approved on January 23, 2023:



Michael Waddell, Chairman



Judith LeBlanc, Vice-Chair



Yves Zornio, Selectman