



BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING  
TOWN OF GORHAM  
GORHAM MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 10, 2021

Members Present: Douglas Gralenski, Diane Bouthot; Lee Carroll; Abigail Evankow; Patti Stolte; Reuben Rajala; Greg O'Neil; Adam White, Selectmen's Representative

Absent:

Town Staff Present: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Kathleen Frenette, Finance Director; Jeff Stewart, Recreation Director; Buddy Holmes, Public Works Director; Phil Cloutier, Fire Chief; Adam Marsh, Police Chief; Jimmy Willhoite, GPD; Jessica Jacques, Gorham Water and Sewer; Jeff Tennis, Gorham Water and Sewer; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk; Ted Miller, Water and Sewer Commissioner; Shannon Buteau, Library Director; Michael Waddell, Selectman; Judy LeBlanc, Selectman; Bronson Paradis

Others present: Terry Letarte, Melinda Beaulieu, Raylene Beaulieu, Melissa Couture, and others.

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

**1.** Call to order: 6:33 PM

**2.** Public Hearing

Doug Gralenski reviewed the operating budget, noting changes from 2020 to 2021. Gralenski noted the increase in fixed costs, such as health insurance, and the increase in the Police Department due to the addition of a seventh officer. Gralenski reviewed the non-operating budget, and the tax rate impact of a decrease of \$0.14. Gralenski explained that this is due to using money from the unexpended fund balance for the Road Resurfacing CRF, the Assessing CRF, and the River Maintenance CRF.

Doug Gralenski read the Warrant Articles. Article 7 is to raise \$4,095,397.00 for the general municipal operations.

Article 8. Gralenski explained this is to ratify the contract that was agreed upon between the Selectmen and AFSME-Local 3657, the contract with Police and Dispatch.

Article 9. Gralenski advised this is included in case Article 8 is defeated, in which case they may need to call a special meeting.

Article 10 is to appropriate money for the Gorham Public Library.

Articles 11 and 12 raise and appropriate money for the Sewer and Water Department. This has no affect on general taxation.

Gralenski read Articles 13-21. There were no questions.

Article 22. The Road Resurfacing and Reconstruction CRF has been increased back to \$250,000, and money from the unassigned fund balance will be used to fund it. There will be no tax rate impact.

Article 23. Gralenski explained that \$92,000 is to be added to the Assessment CRF, with funds coming from the unassigned fund balance. There will be no tax rate impact.

Gralenski read Articles 24-26. There were no questions.

Article 27. Gralenski advised this to appropriate \$15,000 to the River Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund, with funds coming from the unassigned fund balance. There will be no tax impact. Gralenski noted that the purpose of this article is also being redefined to allow planning, grant writing, and administrative costs for Flood Control work to be allowed.

There were no questions on Articles 28-40.

Diane Bouthot thanked the non-profits for their hard work this year and noted that almost all went down on their budget requests. Bouthot also stated that the town also needs to look at what the school portion and county portion of the tax rate will be. Bouthot stated that the school is still working on their budget. Bouthot thanked the department heads for their work and noted that if cuts need to be made, the cuts have no reflection on the good work the departments do.

Doug Gralenski closed the Public Hearing at 6:56 pm.

### **3. Approve Minutes of January 27, 2021**

**On a motion by Abby Evankow, seconded by Reuben Rajala, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of January 27, 2021 as presented.**

### **4. Work Session on Budget Recommendations**

**Diane Bouthot made a motion to reduce the amount of Article 7 by \$300,000. Bouthot noted that taxpayers cannot afford a \$3.50 tax increase per thousand, which is what it may be with the school and county taxes. The motion was seconded by Abby Evankow.**

Abby Evankow asked how much \$1 on the tax rate was, and Denise Vallee advised it is \$274,857. Denise Vallee advised that it was not fair to place the responsibility for cutting this amount from the operating budget of the town, when it is the school amount that is increasing. Judy LeBlanc agreed with Vallee. Mike Waddell advised that the original budget presented to the school board had a tax increase of over \$5.00, and they have brought it down to about \$3.30. They are still working with the union on looking at alternative health plans. The State has reduced the adequacy grant by about \$219,000 and they do have a situation with Special Education with an out-of-district placement, which the Board has no flexibility with. Waddell advised that the Selectmen have been working on this budget for 6 months, and the Budget Committee for over a month. Waddell stated there were obvious things in the budget to attack, including the police department increase, which functionally needs the seventh officer to provide consistent services, and the Assessing CRF, which is needed to fight cases at the BTLA to preserve valuation. Waddell stated that this cut would not be a small change in town government. Evankow asked if they are only able to change the bottom line, and Waddell stated no.

**The Committee voted on the motion to reduce Article 7 by \$300,000. Seven members voted against, one for. The motion failed.**

**On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Reuben Rajala, the Committee voted to recommend Article 7 as presented with a vote of 6-2.**

On a motion by Diane Bouthot, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 8.

On a motion by Adam White, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 9.

On a motion by Diane Bouthot, seconded by Abby Evankow, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 10.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 11.

On a motion by Patti Stolte, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 12.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 13.

On a motion by Reuben Rajala, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 14.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 15.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Greg O'Neil, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 16.

On a motion by Adam White, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 17.

On a motion by Diane Bouthot, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 18.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Adam White, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 19.

On a motion by Adam White, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 20.

On a motion by Adam White, seconded by Patti Stolte, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 21.

Diane Bouthot asked about the amount of \$250,000 in Article 22. Mike Waddell advised that they had taken \$50,000 out, but have put it back in, and are using existing funds so it will have no impact on the tax rate.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Greg O'Neil, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 22.

On a motion by Diane Bouthot, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 23.

On a motion by Greg O'Neil, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 24.

On a motion by Adam White, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 25.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Greg O'Neil, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 26.

On a motion by Adam White, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 27.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 28.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 29.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 30.

On a motion by Patti Stolte, seconded by Greg O'Neil, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 31.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 32.

On a motion by Greg O'Neil, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 33.

On a motion by Greg O'Neil, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 34.

On a motion by Diane Bouthot, seconded by Patti Stolte, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 35.

On a motion by Greg O'Neil, seconded by Reuben Rajala, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 36.

On a motion by Greg O'Neil, seconded by Reuben Rajala, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 37.

On a motion by Diane Bouthot, seconded by Greg O'Neil, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 38.

On a motion by Patti Stolte, seconded by Reuben Rajala, the Committee voted 7-1 to recommend Article 39.

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted 8-0 to recommend Article 40.

**5. Date of Next Meeting:** Town Meeting March 9, 2021 at GMHS gym.

**6. Adjournment – Abby Evankow made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 PM, seconded by Lee Carroll. Voted in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted  
Shelli Fortin