



Budget Committee Meeting  
Town of Gorham  
Gorham Town Hall  
CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES OF JANUARY 14, 2020

**Members Present:** Douglas Gralenski, Diane Bouthot, Dan McCrum, Abigail Evankow, Robert Demers, Mary White, Jessica McCreedy, Lee Carroll, Judith LeBlanc, Selectmen's Representative

**Absent:** None

**Town Staff Present:** Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Kathy Frenette, Finance Director; Chief Adam Marsh, Police; Carol Porter, Town Clerk/Tax Collector

**Minutes Taker:** Shelli Fortin

1. Call to order: 6:00 PM

2. Approve Minutes 1/9/2020: **Motion to approve as submitted from Diane Bouthot with a second from Robert Demers. Voted in the affirmative.**

3. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

4. New Business

a. Review of Police Department proposed budget

Chief Marsh advised that there is an increase in the permanent position line due to the 2.5% COLA per the union contract, in addition to a \$250 bonus and a retention bonus for 2 officers. This is the last year of the contract, which ends in December of 2020. Negotiations for a new contract will begin in June and they should have something in writing by August. The part-time position is budgeted at \$23.19/hour for 16 hours/week. The auxiliary roster currently has 5, of which 3 work regularly. The part-time position is used to reduce overtime costs as well as to provide additional staffing for patrol. Chief Marsh stated that one of his goals is to increase the department's proactivity. The committee asked about patrols at the OHRV trailhead and Chief Marsh advised that even though they were not awarded a grant for OHRV patrols this year, they will still be spending time on this. Chief Marsh stated that the budget is for 24/7 police coverage. Bob Demers asked about the increase in the OT line and was advised it is due to having two officers who are not certified attend the academy. They will each need 4 hours of OT per week for travel. The committee asked about new hires signing a 3-year contract and Chief Marsh advised that he will be looking at and using that model. The current contract includes a uniform allowance of \$1000, which is allotted at the beginning of the year. Chief Marsh advised that he would like to see the wages be more competitive, but it is not a realistic goal for this year. Currently Berlin pays approximately \$2

more per hour, NHSP is comparable to start, but provides better pay over time along with better benefits. New hires are paid \$1 less per hour until they are certified, and Chief Marsh would like to see this eliminated to make the pay more competitive to start. Court Witness pay has been over budget, so this line has been increased to reflect that. Abby Evankow asked if this is due to an increase in crime and Chief Marsh advised it was not. The committee asked about the increase in phone and internet and Denise Vallee advised that the town previously had Spectrum through a reseller and the speed and quality were limited. The new fiber optic network provides increased security as well as quality and speed. The contract was awarded to the lowest bidder, and the bids were all reviewed by Carol Miller. The cost in the budget is a yearly recurring cost, and the installation was covered in the 2019 budget. Mary White asked if the computers are able to handle the new system and Chief Marsh advised he has budgeted for new laptops. The Chief advised they do not have laptops in the cruisers, as purchasing MDT's would be an added cost. The next purchase he is hoping to make for equipment would be body cameras in 2021, to use for both prosecution and transparency. He does not have a quote for these yet, but the cost will include both the equipment and the cloud storage. Jessica McCreedy asked about accountability when something is budgeted for and the money was not spent, and was advised that the money allocated for body cameras is in the Police Equipment CRF. Demers suggested that the CRF should be increased to budget for the cost and Chief Marsh advised he will also be looking into grants for funding. Chief Marsh advised that they were awarded some Highway Safety grants this year, but not as much as in previous years. In reviewing the Prosecution line, which is new this year, Chief Marsh advised this is for Wendy Roberts to work alongside Cpl. Turgeon so that he can get more acquainted with court procedure and rules. This is the minimum monthly fee for Roberts, and if it is not busy, it may be adjusted. White asked if the town should just hire Roberts to prosecute the cases which would free up the officer for patrol, and asked about the number of hours required of the officer each week to prepare for and attend court. Chief Marsh advised the hours vary depending on case load. Both Doug Gralenski and Judy Leblanc spoke in favor of continuing to train Cpl Turgeon to do the prosecution, as this helps the department with retention and gives the officers a vested interest in staying with the town. One of the reasons the department has lost officers in the past is due to lack of training and advancement opportunities. Gralenski asked about the decrease in the health insurance and was advised it is a change in demographics. The open position has been budgeted at a single plan rate. Demers asked about the rate for gas, and was advised it is budgeted at \$2.60 per gallon. Chief Marsh advised that the mileage on the two cruisers currently in use is high; the 2016 has 123,000 miles, and the 2017 has 114,000 miles. The new 2020 cruiser is in the process of lettering and should be ready by the end of the month. The 2013 cruiser will be retained as a travel car. Chief Marsh is hoping to replace the 2016 next year. When a new cruiser is purchased, he would like to include molded plastic seats in the rear for sanitary reasons. The cost of a new cruiser is approximately \$44,000; \$34,000 for the vehicle and \$10,000 for the radar, equipment, and decals. The current budget includes \$35,000 to be added to the \$7,000 that is in the CRF. The Committee pointed out that this would not be enough to cover the cost of a new cruiser and should be updated.

**b. Review of Town Clerk/Tax Collector proposed budget**

Carol Porter reviewed the Town Clerk budget with the Committee. Porter pointed out that the only real increase is in her salary line, which was increased by the selectman last year to make her pay comparable with other towns. Porter advised that she was able to purchase both of the new printers needed for DMV work this year. In the Tax Collector budget, the internet cost was added, and postage was increased due to postal rates going up for certified

mail. The committee asked about the decrease in vital records and was advised that this fluctuates depending on what is requested. Porter advised that there at least 4 elections scheduled this year, and there may be 5. Porter stated that she would like the town to consider a full-time position for the Deputy Clerk, however this was not included in the budget this year.

c. Review of Dispatch proposed budget

Dispatch salaries include the 2.5% COLA in the contract. Chief Marsh advised that the permanent positions and OT lines were over last year due to the dispatch supervisor leaving. The dispatch contract also expires at the end of this year and will be negotiated along with the police contract. Overtime was budgeted at the 4-year average. In 2017, there were 296 hours of OT, in 2018 there were 199, and in 2019 there were 449. There are currently 4 full-time dispatchers and 3 part-time. Chief Marsh advised they would like to build their part-time roster. The committee asked about the dispatch contracts with surrounding towns and Denise Vallee advised they have already met with Shelburne and are negotiating a new contract based on population rather than the number of calls received. They are discussing a contract based on 10% of the cost, along with 10% of the revenues. The one contract would cover both ambulance and dispatch and would be a 5-year agreement. The first and second years would be approximately \$30,000, which would go up to about \$40,000 at the end of the second year, and to \$52,000 the year after. A meeting with Randolph is planned. The town is still talking with the County. The contracts last year were \$16,800 with Randolph, \$21,900 with Shelburne, and \$30,599 with the County. Mary White asked about having Lancaster Highway dispatch for Gorham and was advised that the belief was that they were not taking on any more towns. There has been talk in the past of regionalizing dispatch services, but this would need to originate from the State and all towns would need to be on board. The committee reviewed the Dispatch CRF, which includes \$161,000 for the dispatch console that has been ordered and will be installed by the end of February. Phase 2 of this project would include new portable and car radios and Phase 3 would be the replacement of the repeater. The other towns and county contribute \$1200 per year for the repeater. Chief Marsh advised that he has a quote for the replacement of the portable and car radios at a cost of \$25,000 from Tac 1 Communications. The quote received from Ossipee Mountain was significantly higher. Chief Marsh advised that the current Motorola radios are a safety concern, as they are more than 15 years old and at the end of their life. The new radios would be Kenwood, which both Lancaster and Berlin are using. With the total amount needed to replace the console and radios at \$187,000, and \$162,000 currently in the CRF, and additional \$25,000 would be needed to replace the radios now. The Committee requested Chief Marsh get them a copy of the exact numbers from the quote and agreed that they would vote on increasing the amount for the CRF from \$3,600 to \$25,000 at the meeting next week when they review the Capital Reserve Funds.

5. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, January 16, 2020

8. Adjournment – **Dan McCrum made a motion to adjourn at 7:47 PM, seconded by Diane Bouthot. Voted in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted  
Shelli Fortin