



BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
GORHAM TOWN HALL
PUBLIC MEETING ROOM

MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2019

Members Present: Diane Bouthot, Co-Chairman; Douglas Gralenski, Co-Chairman; Robert Demers; Abigail Evankow; Mary White; Dan McCrum; Jessica McCreedy; Judith LeBlanc, Selectmen's Representative

Absent: Lee Carroll

Town Staff Present: Mark Shea, Town Manager; Denise Vallee, Finance Director; Carol Porter, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Grace LaPierre, Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk

Others present:

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

AGENDA ITEMS & DISCUSSION

1. Call to order: 6:01 PM

2. Approve Minutes 1/15/2019: **Motion to approve from Abby Evankow with a second from Bob Demers. Voted in the affirmative.**

3. Old Business

Abby Evankow mentioned that there is money needed in the Fire Truck CRF and that \$19,000 is a lot of money to spend on the Fourth of July. Evankow stated that she looked at the Fourth of July Committee's financial report in the town report, and they currently have \$19,000 in their account. They may be able to help cover the cost of the police service. Mary White suggested that the fire department members be used for traffic control, as it would not be overtime pay. White also suggested that New England Security may be an option. Denise Vallee advised that \$10,000 of the Fourth of July expenses is a petitioned warrant article that the taxpayers vote on at town meeting. The committee decided to discuss the issue again at a work session.

4. New Business

a. Review of Town Clerk-Tax Collector Budget

Carol Porter advised that the only real change in the budget is the change in the Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector position from full-time to part-time. The budget is about \$8,000 less than last year. Porter advised that Grace LaPierre is working 24 hours per week. LaPierre is there to cover lunch some days, and on other days Porter advised she puts a sign up that she will be back soon. Abby Evankow asked about supplies, which only \$200 was spent last year. Porter advised that she is expecting to replace toner cartridges this year, and may need to replace the state printer, which will be about \$1000. Evankow asked about the overage in the software line and Denise Vallee advised this was a calculation error on her part. Election printing was more than expected. Porter advised the town has two voting machines, and both have to be serviced and have memory cards. Diane Bouthot asked about the age of the machines and if they will need to be replaced. Porter advised they should be adequate at this point. Mary White asked about the

2.5% COLA and if this was across the board. Vallee advised it is for all non-union, except for seasonal help. However, the library adjusted their rates instead of the 2.5%.

The committee asked about tax collection and Porter advised they are doing well. Of the \$9.7 million commitment, they have only not received \$814,000 in payments. Porter advised the mill is paying \$15,000 each week. They are paying interest and fees on the balance owed. They currently still owe about \$56,000 for 2016, \$450,000 for 2017, and \$814,000 on the 2018 bill. Michelle Lutz advised that the value had been settled through 2018, and will be revalued this year. Mary White asked if the current agreement with the mill was a signed contract and was advised it is not. Porter advised that Interim Manager Berkowitz did meet with them and was able to get them to begin making payments on the agreement that they defaulted on.

Review of Assessing Budget

Michelle Lutz advised that the Assessing cost is budgeted in the line item, but some of the cost will be transferred from the Assessing CRF. This year \$20,000 was budgeted and \$50,000 was spent, so the difference will be transferred from the CRF. Lutz advised that an OT line was added, as there will not be any comp time allowed going forward. Lutz advised that the OT line this year includes comp that that was owed to her and was paid. Tax mapping went up a little in cost, along with postage and printer supply. Equipment is over for last year, as Lutz ordered new racks for rolls of maps and plans. The committee asked which businesses would need to be assessed by Sansoucy, and Lutz advised that the mill and Portland Pipeline will be this year, and Great Lakes Hydro next year. The cost may go down if they can settle some of the cases he is working on. Assessing costs for cases come from the Assessing line, but attorney fees come from the legal line. There is \$60,000 available in one legal line, and \$10,000 in another. The proposed cost for Sansoucy for the upcoming year is \$25,000. KRT will be doing spring pickups, which will be \$4,000, and Michelle will do the calling to arrange times for inspections. Lutz advised a Certified NH Assessor comes once per month to look at lot line adjustments, help with sales ratios for equalization rates, and can meet with residents to answer any questions. KRT will be doing the cyclical data, one quarter of the town, at a cost of \$11,250. Carol Porter advised that she would like to see the values from the spring pickups in the system before the first half billing for taxes, as that is easier on the taxpayers. Lutz advised that they would have to get the work done between April 1 and May in order to be included.

b. FY 2018 Budget Review

In reviewing expenses, the town manager and travel line increased this year due to having an interim manager and paying for travel from Maine. The audit was more than budgeted for and there was more in the conference line than budgeted, as Carol finished her certification class this year. Town hall electricity increased, which may be due to the weather, as the HVAC system runs more when extremely hot or cold. Mary White asked about electric rates and Vallee advised that they have Eversource and Tradition Energy as the supplier. The tax-deeded property line was up due to the removal of the trailers from Gateway Trailer Park. The cemetery permanent position is over, as they had a retirement this year. The cemetery OT line is covered by revenue received for burials on the weekend. The PD Special Detail line overage is also covered by revenue received from Commercial Duty on Revenues. Ambulance OT was due to a full-time employee out on medical leave. Electricity for the Ambulance was not cross charged yet from Fire, along with oil. Vallee will check with Chief Cyr about the costs of the dispatch server and software support. Cost for snow removal is up and is driven by the weather. Snow this year is being dumped either at the town garage or on the leased land on Route 16. Vallee advised that streetlights still have a refund due that will be applied when the check is received. Gas usage is offset by revenue from the school. Solid waste disposal is up as the town had more tonnage this year, in part due to the debris from the trailers. Solid waste OT was discussed and the OT is paid in the summer on some Saturdays. The part-time worker covers Saturdays in the winter. Vallee pointed out the decrease in the Welfare line and commended Sue Bolash for her hard work referring clients to other agencies to help. Diane Bouthot asked if the Rec lights are LED and Vallee will check with Jeff Stewart. Vallee advised that the paperwork was done for a TAN this year, but was not needed, as

the school worked with the town to avoid the need. Vallee advised that AV Home Health had \$4,176.03 unused this year. The committee asked why the money was not used in the Road Improvement line this year and Vallee advised they were waiting on the Road Study to be completed. Dan McCrum asked about the FEMA projects and Vallee advised the grants have been awarded, but they do not have a check in hand yet.

Denise Vallee advised that if you subtract the property tax revenue, the revenue collected this year was \$188,819 more than budgeted. Interest and Costs- Property is up due to the mill payments. MV Registration was \$80,355.75 more than budgeted.

On a motion by Dan McCrum, seconded by Bob Demers, the committee voted unanimously to raise the 2019 Proposed MV Registration line to \$540,000.

Building permits are up this year, along with the Cable Franchise Fee, however Vallee does not want to increase the cable line since a lot of people are choosing to use other services. TM Shea advised the franchise contract has lapsed, but they do continue to make payments. Abby Evankow asked if there was any legislation pending concerning Rooms and Meals tax and the way money is allocated to towns and Vallee advised she was not aware of any. Bob Demers suggested that the town consider adding the additional 1% allowed, and Judy LeBlanc advised that she did speak with business owners about this and they were opposed. Fire Department revenue is up due to accidents on Route 16 that were reimbursed from the County. Bob Demers mentioned the dispatch and ambulance contracts and that they should be figured based on population. Judy LeBlanc requested that TM Shea add this to the agenda for the next Selectmen's meeting. Vallee advised the NSF/Bad Check line should not be there. Ambulance Revenue was up this year, and this may be able to be adjusted next year, if they are able to staff more transfers. Bob Demers asked about the gas revenue and was advised this is for gas and diesel. Jesse McCreedy asked about tipping fees and was advised it is money reimbursed to the town from Milan Container Service. Mary White asked if septic dump fees were handled the same way and was advised they were not. Vallee advised that the Interest on the Investment Account was the best in many years, and is currently at 2.37%. Money is invested in the NH Public Deposit Investment Pool. The Health Insurance Trust fund will be closed this year and money transferred to the general fund.

5. Date of Next Meeting: January, 22, 2019 at 6:00 pm for Finance and Capital Reserve and to finish any old business.

6. Adjournment – Abby Evankow made a motion to adjourn at 8:03 PM, seconded by Bob Demers. Voted in the affirmative.

Respectfully Submitted
Shelli Fortin