



BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING  
TOWN OF GORHAM  
GORHAM TOWN HALL  
MEDALLION OPERA HOUSE

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2019

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

Absent:

Town Staff Present: Mark Shea, Town Manager; Denise Vallee, Finance Director; Carol Porter, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Jeff Stewart, Recreation Director; Buddy Holmes, Public Works Director; James Watkins, Fire Chief; PJ Cyr, Police Chief; Grace LaPierre, Deputy Town Clerk; John Scarinza, Code Enforcement; Jessica Jacques, Gorham Water and Sewer; Jeff Tennis, Gorham Water and Sewer; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk; Roger Goulet, Water and Sewer Commissioner; Shannon Buteau, Library Director; Michael Waddell, Selectman

Others present: Andrew Porter, Terry Letarte, Melinda Beaulieu, Raylene Beaulieu, Arthur Perry, Paul Robitaille, Paula Kinney, Ryan Somerfield, Patti Stolte, Sally Manikian, Tara MacKillop, Carol Roy, Michael Roy, and others

**1. Call to order: 6:31 PM**

**2. Public Hearing**

Doug Gralenski presented the Operating Budget comparison to the public in attendance and then presented the Warrant Articles. There was no discussion on Articles 2 through 6.

Michael Waddell spoke concerning Article 7, to discontinue the Multi-Modal Access Route CRF. Waddell explained that the town created the CRF in 1997 and had originally intended to create a bypass to Route 16S. They were unable to do this due to the cost involved. The multi-modal road that is currently in use does provide another access over the Moose River, but there is no intention of continuing this road in the near future. The Selectman would like to return the money to the general fund.

Selectman Waddell presented Article 8, which will authorize the Selectman to sell 200 +/- acres in the Town Forest to the Town of Randolph, and to purchase 2,000 acres, known as the Tinker Brook Parcel, from the Conservation Fund. Sally Manikian explained that the Conservation Fund is a national land and water conservation group and that several competitive grants were received to help cover the cost of the purchase. The total cost of the project is \$1,398,000, and will not cost the taxpayers anything on the tax rate. Grants received were from the USFS for \$450,000, the Open Spaces Community Forest Fund for \$75,000, the NH LCHIP grant for \$300,000, and the NH State Conservation Commission for \$18,000. The town has received all of these grants and they are still waiting on a grant from the Tillotson Fund for \$30,000. The Town of Gorham will receive \$225,000 from Randolph for the acreage they are willing to purchase. John Scarinza advised that the money for this purchase will come from the Randolph Area Conservation Opportunity Fund, which is managed by the NH Charitable Foundation. Gorham's purchase of the Tinker Brook Parcel will provide several benefits, including landscape protection, access to timber, Corridor 19, and protecting the town watershed and public drinking water. Conservation restrictions placed on the land will still allow for agricultural uses, such as timber harvesting and maple taps, and recreational use. A map of the land will be available in the town report and on the town website. Waddell advised that Article 9, to appropriate \$40,000 from the unassigned fund balance for the purchase of the parcel, will only be used if costs run over what has been estimated.

Selectman Waddell also spoke about the snow removal situation. Land that was purchased from Eversource that is adjacent to the town garage was intended to be used as a snow dump. Due to the buildup of sand and salt over the years, there is now a vernal pool on the land. They may be able to put permanent restrictions on land in the Ice Gulch Watershed in exchange for the land that they wish to use by the town garage in an agreement with DES. They will still need a drainage plan and will need to remove the debris pile. There is landowner who is willing to accept the material from the debris pile, and this agreement satisfies most of the abutting property owners.

Doug Gralenski read Articles 10, 11, 12, and 13. Abby Evankow asked about the monitoring at the East Milan Landfill. Denise Vallee advised that the landfill is closed and the environmental monitoring is required by the state.

Gralenski read through Articles 14 through 30. There was no discussion.

Article 31. Gralenski advised that the \$10,000 requested for fireworks has been greatly debated in past years, but the town has been in favor at the meetings.

Article 32. Tara MacKillop advised that she was there to represent AV Home Care if there were any questions. There were none.

Article 33. There was a representative in attendance from The Mental Health Center. There were no questions.

Article 34. Paul Robitaille introduced Ryan Somerfield, who is the new program manager for Tri-County CAP. There were no questions.

Article 35. Melinda Beaulieu was available to answer any questions about the Gorham Community Learning Center. There were none.

Article 36. There were no questions.

Article 37. Patti Stolte was in attendance for the Family Resource Center. There were no questions.

Article 38. Terri Letarte was in attendance for the Androscoggin River Athletes. There were no questions.

Article 39. Paula Kinney was in attendance for the Chamber of Commerce. There were no questions.

Article 40. Carol Roy was in attendance for North Country Home Health and Hospice. There were no questions.

Carol Porter asked those in attendance who submit petitions for Warrant Articles to be sure that those that sign the petitions print legibly and include their street address. This makes it easier to verify them on the voter registration list.

Doug Gralenski closed the Public Hearing at 7:33 pm.

**3. Approve Minutes 1/24/2019: Motion to approve from Lee Carroll with a second from Diane Bouthot. Voted in the affirmative. (Abby Evankow abstained)**

**4. Work Session on Budget Recommendations**

Bob Demers mentioned the purchase of the land for the town forest and what a great thing it is for the town.

Abby Evankow requested that Articles 31 and 39 be separated from the rest for discussion.

**On a motion by Doug Gralenski, seconded by Diane Bouthot, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Articles 2 through 30 as written.**

Article 31. Abby Evankow shared concerns that \$10,000 was a lot of money to spend for fireworks when the town is trying to save money on the budget. Judy LeBlanc advised this was not a petitioned article this year, it was added by the Selectmen.

**On a motion by Doug Gralenski, seconded by Abby Evankow, the Committee voted 7-2 to approve Article 31 as written. Opposed were Abby Evankow and Jessica McCreedy.**

Articles 32 through 38. Jessica McCreedy mentioned that the paperwork that was filled out by the groups requesting funds did not justify their requests. McCreedy advised that in some cases Gorham is paying more than other municipalities, even though Gorham uses less of the services. Judy LeBlanc advised that representatives were at the meeting and available for questions. Mary White mentioned that each of the organizations does wonderful work, but when you combine the cost of off of the requests, it adds up. LeBlanc suggested that next year the representatives be invited to the budget committee meetings to present and to answer questions. Denise Vallee advised that according to statute, petitions are due by the first Tuesday in February, and that she had requested them earlier this year to be included in the budget information.

**On a motion by Doug Gralenski, seconded by Abby Evankow, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Articles 32 through 38 as written.**

Article 39. Abby Evankow shared a concern that the Chamber of Commerce should use more private funding, instead of public. Evankow felt it is not the best use of taxpayer money. Judy LeBlanc stated that supporting the chamber is an inexpensive way to market the town. Bob Demers asked what the cost was to become a member and Denise Vallee advised it is based on the number of full-time employees that you have.

**On a motion by Dan McCrum, seconded by Judy LeBlanc, the Committee voted 8-1 to approve Article 39 as written. Opposed was Abby Evankow.**

**On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Judy LeBlanc, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Article 40 as written.**

#### **5. Old Business**

There was no old business.

#### **6. New Business**

Diane Bouthot thanked the members and stated that she felt it was the best budget year ever. Bouthot also thanked the department heads for their time in working with the committee. Bouthot reminded the group that three members will be needed for the committee next year.

**6. Date of Next Meeting:** Town Meeting March 12, 2019 at 7:00 pm at GMHS gym.

**7. Adjournment – Lee Carroll made a motion to adjourn at 8:07 PM, seconded by Judy LeBlanc. Voted in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted  
Shelli Fortin