



Budget Committee Meeting  
Town of Gorham  
Gorham Town Hall  
Public Meeting Room

Minutes of January 23, 2018

Members Present: Diane Bouthot, Chairman; Doug Gralenski, Vice-Chairman, Robert Demers; Lee Carroll; Dan McCrum; Abby Evankow; Judy LeBlanc; Todd Lamarque

Absent: Terry Oliver, Selectmen's Rep

Town Staff Present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Denise Vallee, Finance Director; Michelle Lutz, Assessing

Others present: Paul Bousquet, Superintendent

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

AGENDA ITEMS & DISCUSSION

1. Call to order: 6:00 PM
2. Approve Minutes 1/22/2017: **Motion to approve from Lee Carroll with a second from Judy Leblanc. Voted in the affirmative. Todd Lamarque abstained.**
3. Update on Prior Requests

Denise Vallee gave the committee the fund balance graph that was requested. Doug Gralenski asked what was recommended for a fund balance and Vallee advised 5-17% of the budget. Vallee advised it is under 5% now. Dan McCrum asked when we would know what is available to add this year and Vallee advised after the audit is done in March. Abby Evankow asked if the audit was done annually and was advised it is.

**4. School Department**

Paul Bousquet presented the school budget to the committee. He advised that the cost of out-of-district placements is up to \$225,800 which is for less than 10 students. He advised they are hoping to bring back 2 of those students this year. Bousquet also advised that transportation costs for these placements is up to \$90,000. Bousquet advised that Elaine Stockbridge is retiring in June and they will not be filling that position, they have also reduced the special education teachers at EFS from 3 to 2.5. They will be changing the physical education teacher's position from full-time to part-time at EFS, and will also offer one day in Milan, but this will no longer have retirement benefits, and a reduced amount for health insurance. They have purchased a 15 passenger van instead of a bus, which will fit groups that the 9 passenger van does not, like the ski team and the math team. Bousquet advised revenues are down this year. The Gorham adequacy amount went down \$76,631, there was no change in Randolph, and Shelburne went up \$24,521, for a net decrease of \$52,110. Bousquet stated that they currently have a "soft" budget freeze for the district, and are only purchasing things that are needed. Bousquet advised they estimate revenue of \$50,000 this year in tuition, and are hoping this may increase in the future. Todd Lamarque asked if HB193 will affect the SAU this year and Bousquet stated there were not many students homeschooled or in private schools here, so it shouldn't. Bousquet stated that they have added the warrant article for capital reserve in the amount of \$100,000, but will leave that up to the voters. The estimated increase on the tax rate is \$1.86, but may be less. Bob Demers

requested that they add the amount currently in the building maintenance account and the bus capital reserve on the warrant articles. Bousquet advised that they are looking at a possible preschool program at EFS, as they have some very involved 3-yr old students coming up. Bousquet stated the earlier they begin intervention, the better off they will be later. Demers asked about enrollment and was advised it is about 170 at EFS and about 250 at GMHS. Bousquet advised that Dave Goyette will be retiring, but will be staying on to do just the transportation piece, and someone else will be taking his place for building maintenance. Bousquet advised that Berlin has received grants to look at education in the valley, study the governance of the Berlin schools, and study the use of their buildings. Todd Lamarque asked when the cooperative district would expire and Bousquet advised that you can amend or withdraw after 10 years. He advised Randolph had a study to look at withdrawing, but voted not to. Bousquet advised that they are no longer contracting with AVH for OT services and will be hiring their own, which will save about \$70,000 per year. The budget hearing for the school is January 30 at 6:30 pm.

## **5. Assessing**

Michelle Lutz advised that the Assessing line is down considerably this year, as there is no revaluation. The committee asked if there would be extra charges if they had to come back for anything and were advised it should be part of the contract. The committee was assured that they will put every nuance in the next contract. Lutz advised that mapping is down \$800, as this was a one-time set up fee for AssessPro. Postage has been reduced based on usage. Lutz advised that the conference and meeting line appears to be overdrawn, but there is a charge in there that should have been in the travel line. Denise Vallee advised that there is a 5.9% increase in the health insurance this year. Abby Evankow asked about the software line and was advised this is for support. The \$7300 will be steady for the next 3 years, and then a new contract will be needed.

## **Planning and Zoning**

Lutz advised the postage line was reduced based on usage, and the conference line increased as there are more members taking advantage of training. Lutz advised that they are in year three of the master plan and the Selectmen voted to increase that by \$5500, however after reviewing it today, she is now requesting \$7500, as \$2000 of the money encumbered may not be able to be used toward it. If they can use it, the extra could be used for code revisions, which will be needed.

**On a motion by Todd Lamarque, seconded by Doug Gralenski, the committee voted unanimously to accept the Assessing and Planning and Zoning budgets as presented.**

## **Finance**

Denise Vallee advised that they have included \$3000 in the budget to cover the recording of the meetings. Diane Bouthot asked if they were still looking into doing it on our own and TM Frost advised they are. Frost advised that WMRHS has a class that does the recording of the meetings. Lamarque suggested partnering with the school here. Judy Leblanc suggested also having a camera in the Medallion Opera House to record public hearings. Vallee advised that the telephone cost is down, as the town switched to a different provider to save money. Office supplies and conference and meetings are also down. The audit line is up due to a new auditor this year. The legal line has been dropped \$10,000. The wellness line was increased by \$100 to allow for a few more wellness programs for the employees this year. The town also received a \$500 grant for this from the health insurance trust to encourage healthy choices. Bob Demers asked what health insurance is costing the town and was advised it is \$377,482.85. Demers suggested that the town only provide insurance for the employee, and not for a family. Cost for the family plan could be paid by the employee if they want it. Doug Gralenski asked if insurance would be a contract issue and was advised only with police and dispatch. Judy Leblanc asked if there were any raises this year for employees and was advised there are not. TM Frost advised the only raises may be in the contract with police and dispatch, but that is still in negotiations.

Demers asked how many full-time employees take the town insurance and was advised there are 23. Six employees take the insurance buy-out which is \$1000 per year. Dan McCrum mentioned that personnel is a large part of the budget, totaling \$2,660,000, or 58%. Todd Lamarque requested that the budget be broken down into a pie chart, which would be helpful to see. Vallee advised that the electricity is down by \$3000, and they will be looking again this year for a contact. She will do electricity and the school will do heat for both. Demers asked what the stage lift was and was advised it is the handicap accessible elevator for the stage, which was required, as the building renovation used USDA funds. Vallee advised that she has been in contact with the school about having all of the elevators inspected at the same time to save on mileage. Vallee advised that property and liability insurance saw a small decrease. The Family Resource Center pays their cost of the insurance and they will be meeting soon to discuss the lease agreement, as the lease is up this year. Judy Leblanc stated that she would like to see how much they have put into the building over the last 20 years, as it is probably significant. Vallee advised that there is only one option for the insurance, which is Primex. It is a risk pool and is all that is offered. Abby Evankow asked what advertising was for and was advised it is used for bid notices and meeting notices. Vallee advised that the Welfare budget has dropped to \$25,000, and is down for workshops, as they have budgeted for a couple less. Vallee advised that Sue Bolash has done a great job directing people to other agencies that can assist them. Vallee reminded the committee that the information booth was moved to the revolving fund last year.

For long-term debt, the backhoe is the third of five years. The LED upgrade will be on the warrant as a \$40,000 loan to finish the project. There is money included for a TAN if needed, and the \$13,000 budget for the PD contract is estimated. The warrant for the contract will state the cost each year once negotiations are done. The committee asked how many people the PD contract covers and was advised it is for 5 officers and 4 dispatchers. There is nothing budgeted for DARE again this year, but Leblanc suggested that there are grants available for this if needed.

Vallee advised that for capital improvements, the Assessment CRF request has decreased from \$45,000 to \$25,000 this year, the current balance is \$70,000. Information Technology has increased \$10,000. This is year three of the contract, and there are two years left. The Medallion Opera House is up \$284, as rental fees are up this year. The police cruiser was removed this year, as they are reducing the fleet. The Police Equipment was reduced from \$5,000 to \$2,500. The Road Resurfacing fund is the same at \$100,000, and there will be a separate article in the amount of \$274,000. Solid Waste/Recycling is at \$10,000 this year, and no new truck will be needed until 2023. Town Building Purchase and Repair was reduced from \$60,000 to \$40,000, which will be used for the repair of the corner of the clock tower, floor drains at the fire department, a hot water heater at the town hall, and to have the bricks sealed on the town hall. Vallee advised the Health Insurance Maintenance Trust has not been used for years and it was suggested that this be closed out. Vallee advised that there are only three employees who are entitled to sick time under the Longevity Trust, one can get up to 60 days and the other 2 up to 30 days. The committee asked if vacation time accrues like sick time and was advised it does not, it must be used or a letter given to TM Frost to carry it over, but then must be used during the first few months of the next year.

## 5. New Business

Abby Evankow asked about a PILOT agreement with CCFHS and TM Frost will look into this.

**6. Date of Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 25 at 6:00 pm at the Town Hall Conference Room.

**7. Doug Gralenski made a motion to adjourn at 7:57 PM, seconded by Todd Lamarque. Voted in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted  
Shelli Fortin