



Budget Committee Meeting  
Town of Gorham  
Medallion Opera House

MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2021

Members Present: Douglas Gralenski, Diane Bouthot, Abby Evankow, Patti Stolte, Lee Carroll, Reuben Rajala, and Adam White, Selectmen's Representative

Absent: Greg O'Neil

Town Staff Present: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Kathy Frenette, Finance Director; Judy LeBlanc, Selectmen;

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

AGENDA ITEMS & DISCUSSION

1. Call to order: 6:03 PM by Diane Bouthot

2. Minutes of January 21, 2021

**Motion to approve minutes of January 21, 2021 from Patti Stolte, with a second from Abby Evankow. Voted by roll call vote in the affirmative. Evankow – yes, White – yes, Gralenski – yes, Rajala – yes, Stolte – yes, Bouthot – yes, Carroll - yes**

3. Old Business

**4. New Business – Non-profit Agency Reviews**

**a. Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce**

Mark Belanger and Paula Kinney were present to discuss the request for funding from Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce. Kinney advised that they did not have a marketing plan in place, but now they are able to get Joint Promotional Program funding from the state, which will fund this. The state will match \$6,145. Their marketing program this year will be focused on visiting the valley safely. Kinney advised there are 55 businesses in Gorham represented by the Chamber, 170 in Berlin, and 239 in all. Kinney advised that Gorham businesses do get the most benefit of their marketing, as they have the restaurants and hospitality. Abby Evankow advised that when she tries to search for where to eat or stay in Gorham, the Chamber does not come up on Google. Kinney tried to search and found that they do come up 8<sup>th</sup> in the search, but this is partly due to the fact that they have not been spending money on marketing since last March. Evankow asked about the assets listed on their financial statement, and was advised that several accounts, such as Heritage Park and Riverfire, are under the Chamber's tax ID but the money is not available for the Chamber to use. Reuben Rajala noted that very little marketing is done by the town, and the relatively small amount of money spent to support the Chamber goes much further. Denise Valley pointed out that the Medallion Opera House and Gorham Recreation Department are both non-profit members of both AVCC and White Mountain Valley Chamber of Commerce, as they get customers from both areas. Kinney advised they also work with the Great North Woods Chamber of Commerce, which covers Colebrook and Lancaster.

## **b. Family Resource Center**

Lucie Remillard was in attendance to present information for the Family Resource Center. Remillard advised that in the past they have requested \$15,000 from the town, but have reduced the request to \$10,000 this year. Remillard advised that the FRC maintains the building on Main Street for the town, and this year did an elevator repair, AC repair, plumbing work, lock replacement, paid for insurance, heating and electricity, and changed emergency lighting. This summer, they are planning to replace an oil tank, get estimates and work done on the roof and eaves, and add lighting. The FRC provides services to many in the area, as well as providing meeting space for Vet to Vet, the United Way, and a Zoom room in the community room. Doug Gralenski asked if the budget was affected negatively and Remillard advised they had added expenses for PPE and technology needs. Patti Stolte advised that the \$60,000 shortfall was due to building costs in Berlin, administrative costs of a larger audit, and the lack of revenue in a few programs. The after-school program at EFS accounted for \$18,000 of the \$60,000. Stolte advised the building in Berlin is at full capacity, and is used for a program to help reunite families broken by addiction. Adam White asked if Littleton was supplying their office in that town and Remillard advised they were not. Remillard noted they now have offices in Littleton, Colebrook, Lancaster, Berlin, and Gorham. Remillard advised they currently receive funding from Randolph, Shelburne, Gorham, and Berlin, and have put in a request in Littleton this year for the first time. White asked about rent received from the SAU and GCLC, and Patti Stolte advised the SAU has ownership in their portion of the building, but rents additional space for \$1,100 per month. GCLC pays \$1,900 per month, and FRC pays \$3,300 per month. White stated he thought the in-kind services from the town were understated, as in addition to garbage pickup and plowing, they also should include the price per square foot for the building. Remillard advised this is not how the leases have been figured, as the GCLC would not be able to afford the rent this way. However, Remillard advised that she has been working on figuring a price per square foot. Diane Bouthot noted that on page 4, the application should say 2021, and the amount on page 8 should be \$10,000.

## **c. AV Home Care**

Tara MacKillop was in attendance for AV Home Care. MacKillop advised that they served 51 Gorham residents this past year, and were open through the pandemic to provide services. MacKillop also stated that they have petitioned more towns for funding this year. The amount they are requesting this year is \$14,000, lowered from the \$18,000 last year. Costs were down this year due to some clients choosing to not receive services in March, April, and May, when the pandemic started. Many clients also receive personal care services, which require an LNA and are more expensive. Reuben Rajala asked if the number of clients has risen in past year, and MacKillop advised in 2019 they had 37, and in 2018, 44. Rajala noted that more may choose to receive services in the future after Covid, as they will not want to go into nursing homes. Abby Evankow asked if there were any cases of Covid in patients or staff, and MacKillop advised none of the patients had it, and only one staff member. Diane Bouthot asked about staffing and MacKillop stated they have 48 caregivers on the payroll. MacKillop stated that staffing is an issue and they could serve more clients if they had more workers. MacKillop advised they have tried to raise the hourly rate to get more help, but they do still have some clients on a wait list. They also refer clients to GSIL or North Country Angels if they are unable to wait for services. MacKillop advised funding from the state has been level the last couple of years, however they provide more nursing services that their contract allows. Patti Stolte asked if they have assisted clients with getting food from the NH Food Bank and MacKillop advised they have kept clients informed and picked up food for them. MacKillop advised that they were not able to do their annual yard sale or fundraising for Dorothy's Gift this year due to Covid, which is a program to assist those who are not able to pay.

#### **d. Gorham Historical Society**

Reuben Rajala advised the Committee that they had a shortened season this year, and did not start to have visitors until mid-July. They did have a paid employee, but she decided to volunteer her time this year, as they were not able to afford to pay her. They were open Friday and Saturday, and some Sundays and holidays. They have occasionally used ABLE or RSVP workers when available. They are planning to apply for a grant to help with repairs to the building. They did have some vandalism done to the caboose this year, when a window was kicked out. Rajala advised they did have a couple volunteers this year to help with the model railroad. Rajala advised that Derek Palmieri originally set up the Facebook page, and Rajala now posts for the group. Diane Bouthot asked about membership, and Rajala stated they do not have an active membership, but the last time they did it was between 70-80 members. Patti Stolte offered to volunteer. Rajala stated that they have a high school student who is helping to set up a website, which is in its beginning stages. Rajala also noted that they have old newspapers, and have been in contact with a company who could scan and digitize them to make them available to the public. Rajala noted that GMHS students help with cleanup and landscaping in the spring, and also some painting and staining. Abby Evankow asked if Rajala could provide a copy of the bank statement, and Rajala advised he did send a tally sheet of their expenses, which will be forwarded to the Committee. Rajala will also send their 2019 taxes. Adam White asked if donations were needed for the model railroad, and offered to provide some.

#### **e. Gorham Community Learning Center**

Melinda Fauteux was in attendance for the Gorham Community Learning Center. Fauteux advised that they were closed from March 13 to September 8 due to Covid, and have had to close twice since then, once as a preventive measure and once due to positive cases. Masks are required for staff, but not for the children. If they have a positive case, they do have to close and provide DHHS with a list of those in contact. Fauteux advised they were able to get \$17,800 in the first round of funding for childcare, and received about \$3,800 in the second round. This assisted with extra staffing, supplies, PPE, and cleaning. Fauteux advised they are requesting \$2,000 less than last year, as they have less children this year. State regulations only allow them to have 20 in each group, including adults. They currently have 38 total; 29 from Gorham, 8 from Shelburne, and 1 from Randolph. Parents who already had children enrolled were given priority for available spots, and then it was first come, first served. They do have a waitlist. Abby Evankow asked about the tax return, and Fauteux advised they just finished it and she will forward to the Committee within the next couple weeks. Diane Bouthot asked if the infant room was still open and Fauteux advised they currently only have one, but are expecting new enrollments February 1.

#### **5. Other**

The School Budget Hearing will be held on Thursday, January 28 at 6:30 in the GMHS Cafeteria.

#### **6. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, January 27, 2021 at 6:00 pm.

**8. Adjournment – Doug Gralenski made a motion to adjourn at 7:47 PM, seconded by Lee Carroll. Voted by roll call vote in the affirmative. Stolte – yes, Gralenski – yes, Rajala- yes, White – yes, Bouthot- yes, Evankow – yes, Carroll – yes**

Respectfully Submitted  
Shelli Fortin