



Budget Committee Meeting
Town of Gorham
Town Hall Public Meeting Room

MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2023

Members Present: Patti Stolte, Mary White, Lee Carroll, Marie Duguay, Greg O'Neil, Judy LeBlanc, Adam White, Abby Evankow, and Paul Bousquet

Absent: None

Town Staff Present: Denise Vallee, Town Manager; Bronson Paradis, Finance Director; Christina Zornio, Town Clerk; Cindy Cole, Tax Collector; Jeff Stewart, Recreation Director

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

1. Call to order: 5:30 PM by Patti Stolte

2. Review Minutes of January 12, 2023

On a motion by Paul Bousquet, seconded by Judy LeBlanc, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of January 12, 2023 as presented. Evankow-abstain, Adam White-abstain

3. Old Business

There was no old business.

4. New Business

a. Review Recreation Budget

Jeff Stewart advised that the Temporary Position is down, from \$22,620 to \$12,615, as they have moved all of the salaries for summer help to the Revolving Fund. The total budget is \$192,425, which is a variance of \$34,078. Heat is up by \$2,250. Maintenance and Repair is up \$800 due to IT support and software. The supply line is up, as the cost of everything went up. Patti Stolte mentioned the Revolving Fund, and noted that as the revenues increase, the more they can pay for from the Fund. Mary White asked about money in the Revolving Fund that is designated for projects. Jeff Stewart advised that they have money in there to replace a van, for the inclusive playground, and other things. Stewart advised that when he started in 2009, the tax burden was \$260,504, and it is less now than it was then. Patti Stolte commented on the equity in all the things that the Recreation Department does to make the community vibrant. Stewart noted the increase in the Senior Program Position, for both Health and Salary, as they are hoping for the part-time position to be full-time this year. The position is currently 34 hours, which qualifies for health insurance, but not NHRS. Adam White commented that they could use the Revolving Fund to pay the difference between the part-time and full-time position, but stated he was not in favor of the full-time position due to the cost. Adam White noted that the Recreation Department budget is more than the Fire Department. Patti Stolte noted that the more the Recreation Department can do, the more they will raise. Mary White asked about the buses, and Stewart advised that each holds fourteen passengers, and on trips Ms. Kenison drives the first bus, and the second is driven by another person. Mary White noted that the fee charged for the trip does

not cover the cost, and that many of the people signing up are not from Gorham. It was noted that the trips are about a 50/50 split between Gorham residents and other towns, and the emails are about a 60/40 split. Stewart stated that they have looked at the fees for senior programs, but don't want people to not go on trips due to the cost. Stewart advised that they do gift certificates for the senior programs. Stewart advised that they were hoping to replace one of the buses this year, but the current cost would be about \$90,000, which is up significantly from the \$60,000 they paid for the one they have. They are going to plan to invest money in repairs for the one they have. Stewart advised they need two buses, in case one breaks down on a tour. Stewart advised maintenance costs for the buses come out of the Revolving Fund.

In reviewing the Parks Maintenance budget, Stewart advised that the Overtime line is down. Maintenance and Repair is up \$2,000. Other increases are due to wages and benefits.

Stewart then reviewed the Recreation Revolving Fund with the committee. The salary line has increased, due to moving the summer employees to the Fund. Patti Stolte noted that they currently have a good balance after many years of doing fundraisers. Stewart advised that they plan to do the inclusive playground this spring, to be open for the summer. They will be using Miracle, which is a company they have worked with before. Patti Stolte noted what a great project this is for diversity, equity, and inclusion. Stewart noted that the benefits have increased \$1,530, Program Expenses are up \$15,000, as they are doing more things, and the Senior line is up \$2,000. Abby Evankow asked if revenues have increased along with expenditures and Stewart advised they were up \$44,800.89 from last year. They added the auto show this year, and it was the second year of the lumberjack show. Stewart advised that they are trying new programs all the time, as he sees the Department as the Chamber of Commerce for Gorham. Stewart advised that the AVCC does a great job, but the things they plan are at the Heritage Park in Berlin. The Recreation Department plans events in Gorham. Abby Evankow asked if the Farmer's Market brings in money, and was advised that they made \$2,052.87 last year, and more so it is a great thing to have. Stewart advised that the only program they lost money on this year was the lumberjack festival, and he is hoping to get more sponsorships for this as it costs a lot to run. Mary White asked about the concerts in the park, and Stewart advised that they used to get sponsors, but do not anymore as he would rather use sponsors for the events. Stewart advised that two \$20,000 donations received from AVH are included in the Revolving Fund, and have been used to pay for grant writers. They have used \$26,000 of this money so far, and have used it to get over \$300,000 in grants. They will receive another \$20,000 for the grant again in 2023. Mary White asked about the current balance in the Revolving Fund, which is \$133,651.76. Of this money, Stewart advised \$78,900 is set aside for the grant match for the playground and bathroom renovation at the information booth, and \$10,000-\$20,000 for the bus repairs. Although this will make a dent in the balance, revenues will replace it. Stewart advised the goal is to keep working at creating revenue, to keep the cost of programs out of taxation. Stewart advised that Ms. Kenison has done a fabulous job, and that she tried to get a grant for flooring for the building, and started the flag football league with Berlin that has been popular.

b. Town Clerk Budget

Christina Zornio advised that the biggest difference is in elections, as they only have one this year. Last year not enough was budgeted to cover all three. There was an increase in the salary line as the previous clerk worked 24 hours, and she was hired at 28 hours per week. There has also been an increase in hourly pay. Supplies and postage are up a little, as the

cost of everything has increased. Equipment and Machinery covers the cost of maintenance for the voting machine from LHS. Vital records is up, but this is offset by the revenues. Abby Evankow asked why the town pays for vital records, and Zornio explained that a portion of the fee for each goes to the state, the same as vehicle registrations and dog licenses. Conferences has been increased, as she is hoping to attend more trainings this year. Travel is budgeted the same, as they are able to use the old cruiser for travel. Zornio advised there are no benefits, since it is a part-time position. The Temporary Positions is for elections workers. Election Other covers the cost of food and training. Judy LeBlanc commented that she has heard from many residents about how smoothly the last election went, and how well organized it was. Zornio also thanked the Moderator, Paul Bousquet. Zornio advised the Election budget next year will be different, as there will be more elections. Zornio advised that the Town Clerk position is elected, and she will be running in March.

Cindy Cole advised that the tax collector salary line includes a proposed 5% increase this year. Telephone and Internet also has a 5% increase. Supplies has been increased due to the cost of paper, which has been \$50-\$60 per case. Postage is a big increase, as the cost of postage is increasing soon and they send out the tax bills and certified mail notices. Software Support has increased. Conferences and Meetings is the same, as she attends just the Fall Tax Collector Association Conference. Travel is down since they can use a town vehicle. Tax Liens and Cost is up to cover the cost of mortgagee search services. Cole advised that they had about 120 liens last year, which was up a little.

c. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Review

Bronson Paradis advised that they collected \$263,154.55 more in revenues than budgeted last year, which includes a one-time payment for the Rooms and Meals Tax. They had more registration revenue than budgeted. Short-term Rentals brought in \$735. Abby Evankow asked if they have considered raising the charge for short-term rentals, and Judy LeBlanc advised they were trying to get through one cycle to see how it went to see how it is working. Adam White stated that they are limited to the number of days they can rent, so that limits the income they can receive, so they should not be charged too much as they need to make a profit. Marie Duguay asked about Ambulance Revenue and why it is down, which is possibly due to less calls or money still owed for billing. It was suggested that they look at the book that Chief Cloutier prepared with the statistics on the number of calls.

In reviewing Expenditures, Paradis advised that they have \$210,555.33 remaining in the budget. Paradis stated that January 10 was the last day to pay bills and charge them to 2022, so there should not be many left that are outstanding. Marie Duguay asked about AV Home Care, and Paradis advised that they request a certain amount of funds, but only bill for what is actually used. Finance Permanent Position is up as it was for both Paradis and Kathy Frenette. Bank Services was up as they had a lot of NSF checks this year. They do collect on these bank charges which are listed in revenue. Audit Services has not been billed yet. Property Assessing is over budget, but this will be covered by the Assessing CRF. The Police Department was over for Part Time Positions due to personnel changes, and the same with the Ambulance Overtime line. Marie Duguay asked about Legal Expenses, which has \$20,797.43 left. Denise Vallee advised that they still have the OHRV case. Mary White asked where money will come from if there is a settlement against the town, and Vallee advised possibly from liability insurance. Paradis advised that Gas and Oil were up significantly for all of the budgets. Mary White asked about oil contracts for this year, and Paradis advised he has reached out to the school and has not heard back yet. Abby Evankow noted that

most departments were under budget, and Paradis replied that they did a good job staying under budget.

5. Other

Greg O'Neil asked about the part-time Town Clerk position. Denise Vallee advised that it used to be a combined Town Clerk/Tax Collector position, which was full-time. When Carol Porter and Grace LaPierre retired, the position was split into an appointed tax collector and an elected town clerk. This gives the Selectboard control over who is hired for the tax collector position, as they are responsible for collecting money for the town and need to have the qualifications necessary. The part-time Town Clerk is an elected position, and is in charge of elections and vital statistics. Both are trained to do everything, and are each other's deputies. It was noted that the part-time hours were at the request of the current clerk.

Lee Carroll asked if there were any call-backs for the next meeting, and there were none requested.

6. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is scheduled for Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 5:30 pm in the Medallion Opera House.

7. Adjournment

On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Judy LeBlanc, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shelli Fortin