Budget Committee Meeting

Town of Gorham

Gorham Town Hall

Public Meeting Room

Minutes of JANUARY 9, 2024

Members Present: Mary White (via phone), Adam White (via phone), Marie Duguay, Dio Thagouras, Judy LeBlanc, Paul Bousquet, Kathy Lutz-Corrigan, Stephanie Russell, and Greg O’Neil

Absent: None

Town Staff Present: Peter Gagnon, Town Manager; Bronson Paradis, Finance Director

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

AGENDA ITEMS & DISCUSSION

**1.** Call to order: 6:00 PM by Paul Bousquet

**2.** Review of Minutes of November 7, 2023

**On a motion by Dio Thagouras, seconded by Marie Duguay, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of November 7, 2023 as written.**

**3.** Budget Review with Gorham Public Works Director John Bijeau

Cemetery

John Bijeau advised that the only thing that changed in the cemetery budget was the rate of pay, everything else is the same. Health Insurance has increased due to demographics.

Peter Gagnon advised that the Selectmen want to make sure that we are not only maintaining but improving the cemeteries, as the Town has made a commitment to care for the plots. There is a trust fund that will be used to allow for more work in the cemeteries next year, while still keeping the budget flat.

Judy LeBlanc noted that the cemetery salary is split with the highway budget.

Highway

John Bijeau noted that the highway budget is the same on almost all line items. Salt has gone down due to pricing, and sand has also decreased some. Prices have gone up for paint.

Health insurance and wages have gone up. Judy LeBlanc noted that if you were to remove the increases for insurance and wages, the budget has only increased $20. There are 8.5 positions, as there is a part-time position on the garbage truck.

Street Lighting

John Bijeau advised street lighting has decreased due to the LED project.

Solid Waste

John Bijeau advised that the biggest change in this line is for vehicle repair. They need to buy tires for both garbage trucks, which is 20 tires, and have added $6,000 for this. Health Insurance and benefits have changed, however demographics change. License and Certification increased some, to allow for everybody to be certified in sanitation and recycling. Peter Gagnon advised that he was shocked at the cost of tires, and they need to be replaced every year or every two years.

Other Gas

John Bijeau advised this was kept level this year. Prices have started to go down, but may increase again.

Bronson Paradis advised that the not-to-exceed rate for the Health Insurance is at 9.9%. They will not know the exact rate until April. Peter Gagnon advised there were no added benefits, just changes in demographics. Paul Bousquet noted that hopefully the not-to-exceed rate will go down in April.

Mary White asked if everyone received the questions and answers for the public works department and they advised that they did.

Mary White asked about the increase of $27,044 in Permanent Positions and was advised that it is the proposed 3.5% increase in salary.

Mary White asked about the recent advertisement for a position in solid waste and was advised it is to replace someone who left.

Mary White asked about the hourly rate for Lee Corrigan, and was advised the $110 per hour is for the bulldozer, and the $65 per hour is for dump trucks to haul snow.

**4.** Budget Committee Work Session

Mary White advised that the work session is included to allow a review after each presentation, rather than saving it all until the end.

Members noted that it is nice to have the budget to review ahead of time.

Stephanie Russell asked about the change in meeting dates, and it was confirmed that it will be Monday, January 22, and Wednesday, January 24 due to the election and the School Meeting.

Marie Duguay asked again about the increase for the positions, and was advised it is a 3.5% COLA/CPI increase which was included for almost everyone.

**5.** Next Meeting Date

Thursday, January 11, 2024, from 6-8 pm for Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Library

**6.** Adjournment

**On a motion by Dio Thagouras, seconded by Judy LeBlanc the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Shelli Fortin