Gorham Public Library

Public Hearing

6July22

6:30pm

Gorham Town Hall

Trustees Present: Nicole Eastman, Victoria Hill, Tim Deschamps, Melissa Laplante

Also present: Attorney representing the Gorham Public Library Board of Trustees Brenda Keith, Library Director Shannon Buteau, Assistant Director Kaitlyn Sirois, Mike Waddell, Denise Vallee, Maxine Merrick

* Nicole Eastman made a motion to begin the hearing as requested by Maxine Merrick at 6:30pm
* Attorney Brenda Keith stated that pursuant to RSA 202-A:17, there is a jurisdictional issue that Ms. Merrick failed to timely request a hearing within 30 days of the effective date of the removal and therefore the day’s hearing is not a RSA 202-A:17 hearing.
* Nicole Eastman made a motion that despite the fact that the board may not have jurisdiction, and because the board noticed the event as a hearing, to proceed with the hearing as a courtesy to Maxine Merrick. Melissa Laplante seconded the motion. While this motion was on the floor, Ms. Keith was asked to clarify her statement.
* A review of the correspondence between Maxine Merrick and the board occurred.
* At 6:45 pm Nicole Eastman tabled the motion for the board to seek counsel
* The hearing resumed at 6:49pm
* Nicole Eastman withdrew her initial motion and made a new motion that despite the fact that the board may not have jurisdiction as a 202-A17 hearing, and because the board noticed this as a hearing, to continue with the hearing as a courtesy to Maxine Merrick. Victoria Hill seconded and all were in favor.
* After a review of the evidence including letters of correspondence and United States Postal Service certified mail receipts, it was found that there is no record of a letter written by Maxine Merrick to the board of trustees requesting a trial, dated before May 23rd. On May 23, a 20-page letter written by Maxine was mailed to Denise Vallee, Gorham Town Manager. This letter did clearly state Maxine’s concerns about the library but did not specifically request a public hearing.
* Maxine Merrick addressed the board with her statement about the events of April 5th.
* Kaitlyn Sirois ’s statement concerning the events on April 5th was read aloud.
* Maxine Merrick responded to Kaitlyn’s statement and proceeded to ask board several questions regarding concerns as outlined in her May 23rd 20- page letter.
* Nicole Eastman asked clarifying questions of Maxine Merrick.
* Ms. Keith confirmed that all trustees have access to and have read Ms. Merrill’s 20-page letter dated May 23rd, 2022, which clearly states her concerns of past incidents at the library.
* Legal counsel recommended to the board that although they need not deliberate on a reinstatement for Maxine that it is up to the board to take information Maxine gave to make decisions as they move on.
* After several more statements from Ms. Merrick, Ms. Keith concluded that the testimony had become repetitive and the that the board may from here decide in a non-public session if they want to continue to investigate Ms. Merrick’s claims, but will not be deciding whether to reinstate.
* At 7:27pm Nicole Eastman called to end the public hearing.