

**MINUTES OF SELECTMAN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2017 7:40 PM
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

Gorham Selectman present: Terry Oliver, Patrick Lefebvre, Mike Waddell

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; PJ Cyr, Chief of Police; Sue Demers; Adam White; Mary White; Arthur Perry; Rachele Ouellet

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Oliver at 7:43 pm. Chairman Oliver advised those present that the meeting was being video and audio recorded.

2. Appointments:

There were no appointments scheduled.

3. New Business:

a) Police Study Options – Selectman Lefebvre shared some options with the Board concerning the police study. Lefebvre advised that he heard from residents after the last meeting asking why there was going to be a committee appointed to study police services, when the Board was elected to represent the town's interests. Lefebvre researched and found two organizations that do these studies professionally. One is called the Police Foundation and they are out of Washington, DC, and the other is MRI, which is based in NH. The cost for the Police Foundation came in at \$30,000, which is too high, but MRI gave a preliminary quote of \$6,000 to do the study, which would include looking at what Gorham would need for services and what Berlin would have to add to provide those services. Lefebvre noted that they have no stake in the outcome, so there is no bias, and that it eliminates any drama and puts the study in the hands of professionals. Lefebvre is concerned that if this study is not done correctly, we will not be able to pursue the option of combining any services in the future. Lefebvre stated that it is the most sensible and reasonable way to go. Waddell pointed out that when the Warrant Article was voted on at the town meeting, the taxpayers were told there would be no cost involved, as the study would be handled in-house. Waddell mentioned that he has a lot of respect for MRI, based on work they have done in the past and that a study like this should be handled by people who are qualified. Waddell again stated that to get a price from Berlin, we still need to tell them exactly what we want them to do and on the 15th we will get input from the public on what they expect for coverage. Waddell stated that there is not another town in NH that has regionalized their police coverage, and Lefebvre disagreed, stating that Greenville has done this. TM Frost advised that other town do contract for police services. Chairman Oliver stated that we should wait until the 15th to get the guidance they need, and Lefebvre responded that we already know the direction, we just need to know what is wanted for police coverage. Lefebvre again mentioned that the dispatch and police studies do not belong together, as you can do either without the other, and dispatch is pretty straightforward. Waddell stated that the layperson really has no idea what dispatch does beyond answering the radio, that there are other things to consider such as paperwork, security in the building, and who would greet people who came in after hours. Lefebvre stated that many public buildings are not open all night and the Board could sit down and make that list. TM Frost advised that if the Board decided to go with MRI, they could be at the public hearing on the 15th.

Selectman Lefebvre made a motion to contract with MRI to do the study for police services.

Waddell stated that because he had received nothing in writing and the idea was not shared before this meeting, he was not interested.

Chairman Oliver seconded the motion by Lefebvre.

Oliver asked where the money would come from and Frost advised it could be taken from the legal line. Oliver suggested that the town may not want to spend the money, since the public hearing may show that this is something the public does not want to pursue. TM Frost reminded Oliver that the vote was taken at the Town Meeting to pursue the study, and that any input received at the public hearing will not change that. Waddell mentioned that he would support the idea of contacting Berlin to see if they were interested in sharing the cost. TM Frost advised they might think it is worthwhile to have MRI do the study, but they may not be willing to help pay. Oliver advised he would like to see what Berlin thinks before voting.

Selectman Lefebvre rescinded his motion and Chairman Oliver rescinded his second on the motion.

Selectman Lefebvre made a motion to seek Chief Morency's opinion on using MRI for the police study and to see if Berlin PD would be willing to share the cost. The motion was seconded by Chairman Oliver. All voted in favor.

Mary White asked if MRI would come back with one option to the Board or several. Lefebvre stated that they would recommend the service that would best suit this town. It would put the best interest of the taxpayers and law enforcement together, with no stakeholders.

Sue Demers reminded the Board that even though people keep using the term regionalization, the vote was taken to study a contract with Berlin, and it was the same for dispatch services. Demers also asked what MRI stands for and was advised it is Municipal Resources, Inc. Demers stated that she thinks this is a fair idea. However she still believes it would be unfair to the taxpayers of Gorham to have committee members from other towns, unless they were professionals. Waddell advised that if MRI did the study there would be nobody from Gorham on the committee, and Demers advised nobody from Gorham, Randolph, or Shelburne.

Arthur Perry asked if the study would go back to the Board or the taxpayers. Lefebvre advised the study would come back to the Board, but would ultimately be given to the people to vote on.

Sue Demers asked about the feasibility of the town being covered by State Police, and if MRI would also be looking at this. Lefebvre advised they would only be looking at police services by Berlin, as the Board could handle what is needed for dispatch.

Mary White asked if there was a Plan B, if in five years the cost goes through the roof. Lefebvre stated that is a consideration that MRI will look into, and he shares the concern that Gorham will end up paying for the infrastructure in Berlin.

Chief Cyr spoke and stated that this idea originally began with Richard McClure saying that we should look to Berlin for police services. Cyr agrees that looking into saving money for the taxpayers is a worthy effort, and that we owe it to the people to see if money can be saved while still providing the same service. However, he feels that the process has become more difficult than it needs to be. Cyr stated that he is capable of coming up with two or three options and presenting them to Berlin to get a price, and this was the original plan. However, to see a significant tax break, jobs will need to be cut. Cyr stated that the Board has veered away from what the study was originally intended to be. Lefebvre

stated that many have voiced concerns about who would be doing the study or on the committee. Demers stated that a lot of people have a problem with the Chief doing this alone, as he could lose his job and he lives in another town. Demers stated that the cost to have MRI do the study would be less than 1 cent on the tax rate.

Selectman Lefebvre asked if he could vote even though he will not be at the next meeting. TM Frost advised he could vote if he calls in.

b) Housing Standards Ordinance – 1st Draft – TM Frost advised that they have completed the first draft of the Housing Standards Ordinance. The wording was taken directly from the RSA. The draft has been send to John Scarinza, but he has not had a chance to review it. TM Frost suggested it be tabled until he has had a chance to look it over. Selectman Waddell shared a concern that the ordinance is driven by occupancy, and that the structure that caused the article to be on the warrant is an unoccupied building. TM Frost advised that she believes Paragraph 3 covers that with the wording that “conditions exist that are injurious to the health and safety of occupants of neighboring dwelling or other residents of the municipality”, but they will take a look at it.

c) Sign Shelburne EMS Agreement – All three Selectman signed the EMS agreement with Shelburne. TM Frost advised there are no changes to the agreement.

4. Old Business/Updates:

a) Munce Properties – TM Frost advised that she provided a spreadsheet in the packets listing the properties, the assessed value of each, and the taxes owed through the end of this month. Frost advised that the properties can be disposed of now. All of the properties are on upper Main Street, except for 437 Main, which is adjacent to the P&L property. TM Frost advised that Chip Bean had expressed interest in the property at 437 Main, and that there has been interest in some or all of the other properties. TM Frost advised that the Board will need to decide whether the properties are sold separately or as a block. Frost’s concern with selling them separately is that the town may get stuck with some of them. Selectman Lefebvre agreed that he would rather see them sold as a block, and then the person buying them could choose to sell off an individual piece if they did not want it. This way the town would be done with it. Frost also advised the Board that they would have to decide how the property is disposed of, whether by sealed bid, auction, or offering them to interested parties. Chairman Oliver stated that the bank tried to auction them off a couple of years ago. Selectman Waddell suggested that they should take sealed bids, with the right to accept or reject any or all bids, and the only cost to the town would be an ad in the paper. Selectman Lefebvre asked how you would compare offers if some were for the whole package and some were for individual lots. Waddell suggested comparing the total that the town would receive each way and going with the highest bid. TM Frost advised that the Board would also need to decide whether to set minimum bids for the property. Lefebvre stated that he does not want the town to get stuck with any that have dilapidated buildings, as the town would be responsible for that. Waddell stated that anyone buying the property would be factoring that cost into their offers, and TM Frost advised that it would not be cash out of pocket for them, but would be for the town. Selectman Oliver stated that there was one person interested in all but one of the properties and asked if we could get a price from him of what he would pay. Waddell asked who the interested party was and was advised it was Bob Chapman. Waddell mentioned that packets will need to be put together for buyers interested in submitting a bid, and they will need a map included. TM Frost will take care of these.

Rachele Ouellet asked if the town would be willing to sell a portion of the piece with the old car wash before the properties are sold, as she is not able to purchase the whole thing, or if the town would give her first option to buy as an abutter to the property. TM Frost suggested that if she wanted a boundary line adjustment, she would have to contact a surveyor to have the work done, and the town could fix a price for the piece of land. Oliver advised he did not have a problem with that, but Waddell reminded the Board that they need to look out for the interest of the taxpayers. If you split a part of the lot off, it lowers the value of the property. Sue Demers stated that she may be able to purchase the whole lot that the car wash is on cheaper than what a boundary line adjustment would cost, but then she would probably have to incur the cost of tearing down the car wash. Lefebvre shared a concern about the driveway on that property and how the state would handle that. Adam White advised they are only concerned with new driveways, not in getting rid of old ones. Waddell also mentioned that if you subdivide the lot, you cannot change a nonconforming lot to a more nonconforming one.

Selectman Waddell made a motion to take sealed bids for the Munce Properties, any or all, no minimum, with the right to accept or reject all bids. The motion was seconded by Selectman Lefebvre. All voted in favor.

b) Fairpoint Poles in Cascade – TM Frost advised there is no update.

c) Eversource Dam/Dike Update – TM Frost advised there is nothing new to report. Frost sent the information to them about possibly selling the property to the town, and they are contemplating it.

d) Trails Committee – Selectman Lefebvre advised that they had a meeting last Monday, and spun their wheels, as not much was accomplished. They plan to do the same agenda next time concerning noise, education and enforcement, and have law enforcement present for that meeting. TM Frost advised that there is a trail plan that NC Council is working on with DRED and USDA, and they are looking for someone to be appointed to represent the town at those meetings. The first meeting is April 27 from 11a-1pm, at the town hall to discuss ATV's on the roads. Frost advised it does not have to be a member of the Board. Chairman Oliver volunteered to go. The Selectmen mentioned that either Preston Baillargeon, Ray Bergeron, or Brian Ruel would be good candidates to consider if they appoint someone to go for the town. TM Frost will contact them to see if they would be interested, and if they are not, Oliver will attend.

e) Stony Brook Roads Project – TM Frost advised that CMA is at a crossroads as to where the town wants them to go from here, whether to focus on a specific section, or all of it. They are wondering if we are looking to do some of the work this year, as there are sections that would be able to be done with the money in the road construction budget. TM Frost advised that the enhanced reclamation would not be cost effective if doing it in small sections, so that should be done at one time. There is a section that needs to be rebuilt at the entrance to Stony Brook that would cost \$160,000. Selectman Waddell stated that he does not feel that portion of the road is a priority. Waddell suggested that the town needs to come up with a plan that they can fund to do a serious improvement up there. TM Frost advised the cost is about \$1.6 million and there is about \$283,000 available. Frost advised that Phil Corbett from CMA is willing to come up to talk to the Board about the project, and the Board agreed this would be a good idea. Frost will schedule this.

f) Spring Road Project Update – TM Frost advised that we are waiting on DOT. Selectman Lefebvre asked if there was a timeframe, and Frost advised about a month.

5. Public Comment:

Sue Demers asked how much the Shelburne EMS contract was for and TM Frost advised it was \$22,130. Frost advised Randolph was about \$13,000-\$14,000 and the County was about \$24,000. Selectman Waddell asked if he could get a breakdown the 911 and transfer revenues for the ambulance department and TM Frost advised that Jay Watkins is working on it.

Sue Demers asked if the Munce Properties were clear of any soil contamination and TM Frost advised there were no open reports on any of the properties.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update – TM Frost advised that the Water and Sewer Department will be moving the gate at the airport further down the road to keep traffic further away.

TM Frost had the Selectman sign the appointments for Steve Roy to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for three years and for Clare Fox as an alternate Library Trustee for 1 year.

TM Frost had the Selectman re-sign the contract with Skip Sansoucy, as the DRA requested a change in the wording.

TM Frost also advised the Board that Elizabeth Thompson is retiring from the Library as of Friday. Chairman Oliver asked who would hire a new librarian and TM Frost advised it is the Library Trustees.

b) Selectmen's Updates –

Selectman Waddell asked to see the history month by month for the last two years of the ambulance revenue. He is interested in the 911 income, the emergency response income, and the transfer income. Waddell also requested the quarterly expense and revenue report for the next meeting, electronically if possible.

Waddell also mentioned that he would like to see a projected tax rate for next year. He mentioned that last year there was \$200,000 unexpended from the budget and an additional \$75,000 in revenue and he is wondering if that will happen again. He stated that the budget this year included a projected revenue over what was taken in last year. This is why he would like to see the ambulance figures, as all of the other departments seem to be about the same.

Waddell asked is the issue of fire safety at Stony Brook had been taken care of yet and TM Frost advised it has not been. TM Frost advised they would look into it. Waddell stated that one of the dry hydrants has a broken pipe and there is also an access issue to the cistern by Marion's Way. The pond has been dredged. Waddell suggested getting something in writing from Libby Land Company about the ownership, as they may have an obligation for maintenance. TM Frost advised if there are notes on the original plan it will just need to be enforced.

Selectman Lefebvre asked that when Jay Watkins puts together the ambulance figures, if he could also list it by town.

Lefebvre mentioned the North Country Transportation Advisory Board and that someone should be attending the meetings, which are on Thursdays. He suggested appointing someone who would be able to go, as there is a lot happening at those meetings and we should be there. He also mentioned again

that the Board needs to look at what committees they need to be on, and what they can appoint someone else to attend.

Lefebvre stated that when he gets back from vacation, they will be going to look at the slab by the library for the Bikes not Bombs shelter and options for moving it.

Lefebvre again mentioned that committees need to be doing things properly and discussing topics in the proper setting, which is why he requested the NHMA come to speak to them. TM Frost advised this will be on May 24 at 6pm. Anyone serving on a Board or Committee is encouraged to attend.

Lefebvre asked again about the lease for the mill property and TM Frost advised there is no news.

c) Approval of Minutes (April 3, 2017) -

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, the Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes from April 3, with the amendments of changing the wording of number 10 to using land that someone else has easements for and adding Waddell's note of #1 on the map stating the purpose of the Eversource plan.

Approval of Non-public Minutes (March 20, 2017 and April 3, 2017) - On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Chairman Oliver, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the non-public session on March 20, 2017 and April 3, 2017, as presented.

d) Sign Manifest; Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary) –

There were no abatements.

7. Non-public Session: RSA 91-A:3, IIe

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Chairman Oliver, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to move to non-public session at 9:28 pm to discuss the Eversource divestiture. Lefebvre – Aye, Oliver - Aye, Waddell – Aye.

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Chairman Oliver, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to come out of non-public session at 8:46 pm. Lefebvre – Aye, Oliver – Aye, Waddell - Aye.

8. Adjournment: On a motion by Chairman Oliver, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 pm.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Terry Oliver

Patrick Lefebvre

Michael Waddell