

**MINUTES OF SELECTMAN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2017 6:00 PM
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

Gorham Selectman present: Grace LaPierre, Terry Oliver, Patrick Lefebvre

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Chief PJ Cyr; Michael Waddell; Richard McClure; Robert Demers, Gary Belanger, Glen Eastman, Yves Zornio, Christina Zornio, Adam White, Arthur Perry, Todd Lamarque, Reuben Rajala, Diane Bouthot, Judy LeBlanc, and others.

1. Call to Order

2. Appointments:

a) Josh McAllister, HEB Engineers – Spring Road Culvert Project: Josh explained that he was here to let the Selectmen know of some recommended changes to the Spring Road Culvert Upgrade Project. He displayed a plan that shows a bridge and a culvert instead of just one culvert. After doing their work on survey, hydraulics and hydrology, they have determined that the best course of action is placing these two structures in the correct stream beds in order to avoid flooding and erosion problems in the future. Currently the brook is required to make a sharp left when it meets the bank of the road and then a sharp right into the culvert. In times of high water, it tends to erode the road bed as well as around the culvert. Though changing the plan to include the two structures will increase costs, there are possible funding sources for most of the increased cost. Mr. McAllister went on to explain that he had spoken to Heather Dunkerley who coordinates the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grants for the State of NH. Heather indicated that there is a sum of money left over from the grant awards that might be available for this project. We need to apply for those funds. Mr. McAllister then explained that the State Bridge Aid Program may have some money that could be used for this project. He turned the floor over to his colleague, Chris Fournier, the lead structural engineer for HEB. Mr. Fournier has spoken with Nancy Mayville, who leads the State Bridge Aid Program, and she seemed very willing to partner with us to get this project completed. They typically have some funding that is available from the awarding of projects. Again the Town would have to apply for the funds and the form was signed by the Board of Selectmen right away. Further, the Town would have to follow the Bridge Aid guidelines for qualifications based selection of an engineering firm. There was considerable discussion from interested members of the public about whether the new plan was advisable. It was agreed the HEB would meet with the abutter to the project and discuss further.

b) Jay Guilmette, Doug Lavigne – Tax Exemption for Commercial Construction: Jay Guilmette cancelled his appointment earlier in the afternoon.

3. New Business:

a) Munce Properties – TM Frost reported that the deeds had been recorded and the Town now

owns the remaining Munce properties for which taxes have not been paid. The calculations of a repurchase agreement are being done and will be sent out to the previous owner this week.

b) Exchange Street Sign – TM Frost met with Mike Chabot regarding the kiosk sign on his property at the corner of Exchange Street and Main Street. He isn't quite sure what he will be doing with his property in the future, but he would like the Town's sign to be moved to Town property. TM Frost said that Mr. Chabot is well aware that this couldn't be done until spring at the earliest. PWD Holmes will be consulted on a suitable new location for the sign.

c) Recreation Department Truck – Recreation Director Jeff Stewart came in with more quotes for a truck for the Recreation Department as requested by the Selectmen. He received two quotes for a 4WD plow truck for \$37,776 and \$37,777; then two quotes for a 2WD full size truck at \$22,801 and \$22,577. He also received two quotes for a smaller 2WD truck at \$21,927 and \$24,376. RD Stewart explained that when he first approached the Board for a truck, he was only looking for a small used truck and asked for about \$10,000 to use towards it. When he had difficulty finding anything decent in that price range, he was encouraged to look for something newer and more reliable that would last a while.

Glen Eastman asked if the Town was in the Federal surplus program. Historically, he and Roger Guilmette would go and look at equipment in Concord and would get some really good deals. He feels the Town is spending unnecessarily. He encouraged the use of Federal and State surplus sites. Adam White stated that the State is holding onto their equipment longer than they used to and when it is ready to be replaced, it is basically worthless. Chairman LaPierre suggested that Jeff get together with Buddy and go look at any surplus trucks that might be available. Reuben Rajala stated that he didn't think there was a need for the Recreation Department to get a truck at all. There are plenty of trucks at the DPW and he is sure arrangements can be made. Others in the audience agreed. Selectman Oliver asked that the discussion be tabled until Mr. Stewart has a chance to look further.

d) Recreation Revolving Fund – Regarding this fund, the Budget Committee is in favor of eliminating the fund or at least restructuring it so that only certain revenues are deposited and only certain expenditures can be made. Mike Waddell asked the Board of Selectmen to consider putting an article on the warrant to achieve this result. Glen Eastman said he didn't think it was right that the Board of Selectmen can purchase items using the revolving fund with no oversight. Judy LeBlanc said she agrees with Mr. Eastman. Mr. Waddell stated that he would much rather have the Board of Selectmen agree to draw up the warrant article. He said the accounting for the revolving fund is "murky." TM Frost assured everyone that the books are clean and audited every year. It is not that difficult to understand the process as the reports give the whole story. Judy LeBlanc stated that there are no program revenues in the revolving fund. RD Stewart corrected her by listing all of the amounts of the different revenue accounts within the fund. Chairman LaPierre asked the other Board members what they wanted to do with regard to the revolving fund. Both Selectman Oliver and Selectman Lefebvre said they were in favor of leaving the revolving fund just as it is.

e) Recreation Department Focus Group – Mr. Stewart reported that there were seven people at the first focus group meeting on the new building. The suggestions were great and ran the whole

spectrum of a full teen center and having other groups use the space. There is another meeting on February 2nd and he is hoping for even more participation.

f) Gorham/Berlin Police/Dispatch Consolidation – Chairman LaPierre said that she told everyone at the Budget Committee meeting that she would put this on the Selectmen's agenda. Chief Cyr was on hand to discuss the possibility of combining both Dispatch and the Police Department with the City of Berlin. Selectman Oliver asked if the communications would work with a tower on Pine Mountain and one on Cates Hill. Chief Cyr did not have enough information to give an answer, but he would look into that question. Discussion turned to all that the dispatch in Gorham does, including Fire and EMS dispatch, which is not done regularly by Berlin Dispatch. Glen Eastman felt that the cost to combine would be more than it is to run our own departments. The Board asked Chief Cyr to begin exploring this possibility.

g) Housing Standards – TM Frost supplied the Board with a copy of RSA 48-A Housing Standards, which will allow the Town to adopt an ordinance regarding unhealthy, hazardous or dilapidated dwellings. This would have to be voted on at Town Meeting and the Board approved placing an article on the warrant to see if the voters want to adopt.

h) HB 324 – Valuation of Utility Property – TM Frost also supplied the Board with the text of HB 324 which, if passed, would require municipalities to use the DRA utility values. The Town of Gorham would lose over \$35M in valuation if this legislation passes. TM Frost is going to Concord on Wednesday to testify before the committee on this bill.

i) Recording Capability in Public Meeting Room – Selectman Lefebvre stated that he would like the meetings recorded and available for anyone to listen to. TM Frost said she would look into what is needed to get that going. The room is wired for a video feed to the dispatch center. TM Frost also stated that there are many towns that video all their meetings and make them available to watch on their website, with a few towns also live streaming their meetings. It would be good to see what our options are.

4. Old Business/Updates:

a) Fairpoint Poles in Cascade – Selectman Lefebvre reported that Eversource was in Cascade today moving their lines from the old poles to the new. This is at least some movement on this issue.

b) Public Works Building – TM reported that both Buddy and Lisa are in the new office, but there is still a problem with the new heating system. There is a part on order and will be installed as soon as received. This should fix the problem.

c) Eversource Dam/Dike Update – There was nothing new on this item.

d) School Budget Hearing – This hearing is this Wednesday evening at 7 pm at the school.

f) Trails Committee – TM Frost reported that there was a meeting this afternoon of the Trails Committee. There were many Gorham business owners present to express their concern that the

Town would shut down the roads. They were assured that this was not the case and no decisions had been made. There were several people who volunteered for the committee. There will be another meeting soon.

g) North Country Council – Transportation Advisory Committee – Chairman LaPierre stated that no one was able to go to the TAC meeting where projects were discussed for the State 10 Year Transportation Plan. The Town of Gorham is interested in getting the corner by Libby's Pool in the plan. The bank on the inside of the road is crumbling.

h) UNH Cooperative Extension – First Impressions Program – TM Frost stated that she had made contact with Geoff Sewake of the UNH Cooperative Extension and he is willing to discuss this program and see if it would be beneficial for the Town of Gorham.

i) Stony Brook Roads Project – CMA Engineers are still working on the design engineering for this project. They contracted with York Land Services to do the surveying for them.

5. Public Comment There was no further public comment at this time.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update – TM Frost asked the Board to sign the contracts with KRT for the cyclical measuring and listing and the one day per month that an assessor is here. These contracts have to be sent to DRA for review.

b) Selectmen's Updates - Selectman Lefebvre stated that he would like to see some money in the budget for a person to focus on economic development. He also stated that he was surprised that no one on the Budget Committee asked about a savings in the budget from one department head over both Fire and EMS. Budget Committee Chairman Mike Waddell stated that if Selectman Lefebvre had something to share with the committee, he should have said so. Selectman Lefebvre stated that he was just concerned that the Budget Committee was so focused on the residency requirement in the Fire Department that they lost sight of the budget.

Selectman Lefebvre asked what would happen if the petitioned article to rescind the Town Manager form of government passes. Chairman LaPierre stated that the Selectmen could hire Municipal Resources, Inc. to work in the town. She turned to TM Frost for confirmation. TM Frost said that would certainly be an option, but reminded the Board that a vote to discontinue the Town Manager form of government was not a requirement to fire the person in that position. It could mean that the Board changes the job title of that person and they would become a Town Administrator with duties and authority prescribed by the Board of Selectmen. All of this will be the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen after Town Meeting. Selectman Lefebvre wondered whether there needed to be an increase in the budget to absorb whatever action the Board would take after Town Meeting. TM Frost didn't think it was necessary.

c) Approval of Minutes (January 9, 2017) – **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Chairman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of January 9, 2017 as prepared.**

d) Sign Manifest; Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary) – The Board signed two small abatements granted as a result of data inaccuracies.

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II a-e, if necessary – **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, the Board voted by roll call to move into non-public session at 8:40 pm under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3,II-e. Lefebvre – Aye, Oliver – Aye, LaPierre – Aye.**

On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, the Board voted by roll call to move out of non-public session at 9:04 pm. Lefebvre – Aye, Oliver – Aye, LaPierre – Aye.

No decisions made as a result of the non-public session.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Reviewed and Approved:

Grace E, LaPierre, Chairman

Terry Oliver

Patrick Lefebvre