

**MINUTES OF SELECTMAN'S WORK SESSION  
TOWN OF GORHAM  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2017 6:00 PM  
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

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

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; PJ Cyr, Chief of Police; Judy LeBlanc; Diane Bouthot; Doug Gralenski; Jeff Lemoine; Adam White; Mary White; Arthur Perry; Richard McClure

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Oliver at 6:00 pm. Chairman Oliver advised those present that this was an organizational meeting to discuss the study of moving police and/or dispatch to Berlin, and that public comment was not allowed.

Chairman Oliver started the discussion by asking the other Board members if they had any comments about the number of people that will be on the committee or if they have anybody in mind.

Selectman Waddell stated that a committee of 3 members would be an ideal size. Waddell believes that Chief Cyr should be used in the role as a resource for the committee. Waddell suggested that the committee would go to Berlin to meet with them and explore options and focus their attention on the two best regional solutions. He suggested that in looking at the plan and a possible reduction in services, that the committee decide what we would be willing to live without under regionalization, and then apply that to what we would be willing to live without under the existing services. Waddell stated that there seems to be two things under the regionalization that would benefit the town, one being cost savings, and the other being the benefit of increased services. Waddell hopes the committee will be able to present options to the Board to consider, and one of the options will be chosen to present to the public at the town meeting in 2018. Waddell stated that there is a wealth of time to thoroughly research what is chosen. Waddell suggested several people for the committee, including John Scarinza, Gerald Marcou, Doug Gralenski, Tim Hayes, and Jennifer Lemoine. Waddell stated his top choice would be John Scarinza, since he started his career in law enforcement in Gorham and was the acting police chief here for almost a year. Waddell stated that an independent committee would make presenting the options to the public easier, as nobody on the committee would stand to benefit from the outcome, and the Board of Selectmen would be able to give them guidelines and ask questions before any decisions were made.

Chairman Oliver asked Selectman Waddell if the police chief would be involved as a committee member and Waddell stated he should be involved, but not as a member.

Selectman Lefebvre stated that he felt the committee should be made up of the Town Manager, one or two members from the Board of Selectman, maybe one person that both sides agreed on from the list Waddell provided, and with the Chief as a resource. Lefebvre stated that we need to figure out the scope of what we want for services, 24-hour coverage, or not 24-hour coverage. Just police or dispatch, or both. Is the one committee going to research both dispatch and police, and should there be someone from dispatch from either Berlin or Gorham. Waddell stated that the same committee should study both dispatch and police and present options. Waddell stated that it needs to be thoroughly researched so that the Board of Selectman can stand up at the podium at town meeting and be comfortable with the plan that is chosen. Waddell stated that a public meeting would need to be held for input, and that after taking those suggestions into account, a warrant would be drawn up for town meeting.

Chairman Oliver suggested that Chief Cyr be a liaison between Gorham and Berlin police departments with any questions that may come up. Selectman Waddell suggested that this be handled by the committee with Berlin directly.

Selectman Lefebvre again asked why a representative from the town should not be included on the committee. Waddell responded by saying that it creates an independent body. They will bring ideas to the Board and the Board will make the decision. Chairman Oliver stated that he would like to see someone from the town on the committee. TM Frost stated that she would prefer to be on the committee.

Selectman Lefebvre stated that he had heard from several taxpayers that the committee should be made up of residents of Gorham.

Chief Cyr advised that he spoke with Chief Morency from Berlin this morning and that he would like the town to define the level of service they are looking for Berlin to provide and then submit a request for proposal. Cyr advised that Berlin is not opposed to speaking with the Board or the committee directly as to how this will proceed. Cyr stated that a request was submitted to Berlin for dispatch services back in 2012 and the timing was not right. Cyr reiterated that what Berlin is looking for right now is a defined expectation of service and a request for proposal and they will take the ball and roll with it. Selectman Lefebvre stated that we are not at that point yet. TM Frost suggested that we need input before the scope of service is defined. Waddell suggested that we simply tell them to give us what we have got.

Selectman Waddell stated that there are several areas that need to be considered, such as if there will be a reduction in force here and who will be laid off or transferred, that the town hall will be an unoccupied building for 12 hours a day with no receptionist, and what does the current dispatch staff do that does not fall under ordinary dispatch work. Other things to consider are if the department down here would be used as a satellite station, how shifts would work, how outside dispatch contracts would be handled, along with public works, ambulance, and fire. Waddell stated that Morency has the preferable position of being able to add staff and gain revenue. The committee would most likely spend most of their time down here considering these issues. Waddell stated that there are benefits of being covered by Berlin PD, as they have a full-time prosecutor and detective division, but these things will not come without a price.

Chairman Oliver shared concerns about the town hall not being open 24 hours, and the security concerns that come with that. Money will need to be spent for a locking system to secure the building at night, and more cameras may be needed, and someone will need to be able to open and close the building for the groups that use it after hours. TM Frost advised that there are many towns where this already happens and we do not need to reinvent the wheel.

Selectman Lefebvre asked if Berlin dispatch would be able to provide the service we have now. Chief Cyr stated that a request for proposal was already done in 2012, and that it can be resubmitted to them to get a price. Cyr suggested the same be done for police coverage so that we have an idea what would be charged. If the cost is 600,000, it may not be worth pursuing, as it would not be enough of a savings, but if it was \$400,000 maybe it would be.

Selectman Waddell stated that from his understanding, this will not be a hybrid, but will be Berlin police providing a service down here. He stated that if they have four officers on, an additional Beat could be added to their existing ones, with Beat 3 being Gorham, and a lieutenant in charge. Waddell stated that if backup was needed in Gorham, there are already 3 additional personnel readily available to respond. Waddell stated that Cyr's staffing levels have been predicated on needing extra staff for busy times. Cyr

stated that the only way to save money is to reduce staff. Waddell asked if additional staff was needed during busy times, if additional officers would be called in and we would be billed. TM Frost stated that this will be figured out by Berlin PD as they will be handling the calls as one police department.

Waddell asked Chief Cyr if he was familiar with how the Milan contract works. Cyr stated that what is written is not what they are doing now. Waddell stated that it did not work the way everyone thought it would.

Selectman Lefebvre shared his concern that the initial up front cost may look great, but what if the cost rises significantly five years from now, we would not be able to go back.

Lefebvre stated that there are also additional things in town that require extra police coverage, such as the Fourth of July celebration and ATV's in the summer. He stated that the Chamber pays for additional police coverage for events they organize.

Waddell again suggested that considering these things is what the committee would do. Waddell stated that he has spoken with Doug Gralenski, Gerry Marcou, and John Scarinza and they have all agreed to serve if asked. Chief Cyr suggested having someone on the committee who is not law enforcement to give a different perspective. Lefebvre again suggested a member from the Board of Selectman and Waddell disagreed stating there is no need for a Selectman on the committee. Lefebvre stated that he just wants to be sure that the members of the committee are unbiased. Chief Cyr suggested that Alan Pike would be a good member as he was part of the public safety reorganization committee and had a lot of good ideas and did his homework. Oliver suggested that Pike be considered as the fourth member of the committee. TM Frost advised she would call the people mentioned to see if they would be interested in serving. Cyr stated that he believes only using Gorham taxpayers would be a mistake, as John Scarinza is a respected member of the community, knows the region, and it would be a mistake to not have him there. Cyr also suggested that there be more than 3 on the committee, as it is difficult to get a quorum for the meeting with so few. Lefebvre stated that he would not support Marcou, as he does not believe he would be fair. Waddell stated that at this point, it looks like the list would consist of John Scarinza, Doug Gralenski, Jen Lemoine, Alan Pike, and TM Frost. It was decided that a final decision about the members would be made at the regular session on Monday night. Waddell stated that after choosing the committee, a public hearing date should be set, and after the public hearing the committee could begin developing the scope of the service we expect. Chief Cyr suggested that Chief Morency also be asked to attend the meeting on Monday.

Doug Gralenski suggested to the Board that no matter who is selected for the committee, that they be given a set of directives from the Board as to what they want the committee to work on.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.

**REVIEWED AND APPROVED:**

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**Terry Oliver**

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**Patrick Lefebvre**

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**Michael Waddell**