

**MINUTES OF SELECTMAN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2017 6:00 PM
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

Gorham Selectman present: Terry Oliver, Pat Lefebvre, and Mike Waddell

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Denise Vallee; Shannon Buteau; Clint Emmett; Claire Fox; Gail Wigler; Pauline Tibbetts; Edith Tucker, Berlin Daily Sun; Diane Bouthot; Mary White; Adam White; Judy Leblanc; Tom Maniscalco; Elaine Bernier; Arthur Perry; Robert Demers; Sue Demers

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Oliver at 6:00 pm.

2. Appointments:

a) Library Budget Review - Shannon Buteau advised that they have kept their budget flat for 2018. The insurance cost increased for a family plan, but they have cut other areas of the budget, mainly office operations and collections, in order to keep it the same. Selectman Lefebvre asked if the library generates any revenue and Clint Emmett advised other than copy charges, they do not. Selectman Lefebvre mentioned the AT hikers that go to use the internet and asked if they were charged for the use and Emmett advised they were not. Gail Wigler mentioned that we are an AT Community and part of that application did mention that these services were provided free of charge. Selectman Waddell asked if they applied for any grants this year and Buteau advised they were awarded a grant of \$1500 from the Tillotson Fund to cover supplies for children's programs. Waddell asked if there were any Capital Improvements planned this year and Emmett advised that they are asking for \$10,000 for the CRF to begin saving for future projects, as the fund currently has a zero balance. Waddell asked what remains in the Murphy Fund and Denise Vallee advised there is \$110,475.18. Vallee also advised that between the Library, the Medallion Opera House, and the Senior Program, they were able to offer nine programs through the NH Humanities Council.

b) Pauline Tibbetts – AV Home Health Care – Tibbetts advised that it is Home Care Month and wanted to thank the town for their support of Home Health Care. Tibbetts stated that the town has been generous in helping to provide home care service for residents in Gorham. Tibbetts was asked how many clients they currently serve in town and Tibbetts advised that she would get the number to Denise Vallee. Edith Tucker asked how much the town pays for services and how it is billed. Tibbetts advised that they are allocated \$17,500, and bill monthly for services provided. Some years they use all of it and some years they may not. Sue Demers praised the organization and stated that they provide a way for the elderly to stay at home without having to go to a nursing home.

c) Chris Fournier, HEB – Spring Road Bridge Project and Storm Damage – Fournier advised that a preliminary design was submitted to NHDOT for the Spring Road Bridge on November 16. Selectman Waddell asked if contact has been made with the abutters and Fournier advised they have. An alternative detour was suggested, however they have researched that and don't think it is a viable option. Fournier advised that they included a conservative estimate for the temporary bridge, but if the contractor has one, it may not be as high as they have planned for. Fournier advised that they need to resolve some issues with the right of way, as they do not have copies of the signed easements and they need to be recorded. They will also need construction easements and will need to apply for the Wetland Permit. Fournier advised they will need the assistance of the Conservation Commission on the Wetland Permit. Waddell asked when they plan to break ground and Fournier advised next fall.

Fournier advised that they will need a signed contract before July 1, as that is when the state fiscal year begins. TM Frost advised they would like to go out to bid as soon as they can.

Fournier advised that the October 30 storm has not yet been declared a disaster, but this is likely to happen in December, as the state threshold has been met.

Fournier advised that they received the survey information from York Land Services for Stony Brook and are reviewing it. Fournier also advised the Board that NHDES is still issuing Emergency Authorizations if they are interested in doing work at Libby Field immediately. Waddell advised it is hard to make a decision without having information on cost.

Fournier stated that minor repairs are needed on the berm at the end of White Birch Lane. They have looked at the damage on site and reviewed the video of the water. The berm did protect the road infrastructure as it was supposed to do and some minor repairs will need to be done. Elaine Bernier shared concerns about the end that allowed the water to come through. Fournier stated that the problem with FEMA funding is that it only protects public infrastructure, not private land. Waddell stated that if it comes through Bernier's property it will affect infrastructure. Edith Tucker asked which homes on the street were affected and Bernier advised it is numbers 14-26 on White Birch Lane.

Fournier advised that they have asked for an extension on the road study so that they can include damage from the October storm. They plan to submit this on December 15th.

3. New Business:

a) Pole License – TM Frost presented a Pole License Petition from Fairpoint and Eversource to erect a pole at the corner of Androscoggin Street and McFarland Street.

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Chairman Oliver, the board voted unanimously to approve the pole license at the corner of Androscoggin and McFarland Street.

b) Service Contracts with Other Municipalities – TM Frost advised there has been talk about the contracts with other municipalities, especially dispatch, and wanted to know if the Board would like her to look into other ways of calculating the cost of service. Frost advised that the 2018 contracts for EMS would total \$63,907.85 between Randolph, Shelburne, and the county. Frost advised the dispatch contracts have not been figured yet. Selectman Waddell mentioned that the low amounts on the contracts were always buffered by the revenue, but now that the revenues are low, if that was removed from the calculation, they would have a significant increase. TM Frost advised that the call volume is also down. Waddell requested that the Chief just calculate the figures based on the 2017 numbers instead of the three-year average. TM Frost advised she would have the figures for dispatch at the next meeting.

c) Police/Dispatch Contract Proposal – Chairman Oliver stated that they have heard from enough people over the last few weeks that the Board should be able to make a decision on the proposed contract. Selectman Lefebvre argued that although the warrant does not say that they have to bring it to town meeting, they had clearly stated they would. Waddell stated that in the course of doing this, we have discovered some weak spots in our police service. Waddell stated that he would like to continue to talk with Berlin, as there are a lot of issues to still be addressed, and the other Selectmen agreed. Waddell also mentioned that most of the people he spoke with were not interested in contracting with Berlin at this time. Waddell suggested that the Board make a decision that they are not going to put an article on the warrant this year to contract with Berlin. Oliver stated that residents feel the taxes are

too high and we cannot afford to run two separate communities. Lefebvre stated that the study was a catastrophic failure and should be done differently. Waddell stated that the study was not without benefits and that this is the third time we have studied the possibility of contracting dispatch services, and the third time we have realized there is no real savings. Waddell agreed that the Board does owe the taxpayers a report of the findings at the town meeting. Waddell stated that he would still be in favor of pursuing it, and having a third party look at the retention issue. Lefebvre stated that if they do it should be done professionally and he would be in favor of using MRI.

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, the Board voted unanimously that they would not put the proposal to contract police or dispatch services with Berlin Police Department on the Warrant this year.

4. Old Business/Updates:

a) Fire Ponds in Stony Brook - TM Frost advised there is nothing new on this as it is too late in the year to do the work.

b) Complete Road Improvement Plan - Has been extended to December 15.

c) Spring Road Culvert – Was discussed with HEB earlier in meeting.

d) Eversource Property Purchase – Selectman Lefebvre asked if the CMA study was done and TM Frost advised it was not.

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Chairman Oliver, the Board voted unanimously to purchase the land adjacent to the town garage from Eversource for the price of \$17,500.

e) Alternate OHRV Trailhead –TM Frost advised there is nothing new.

f) Storm Damage/FEMA Declaration – Was discussed with HEB earlier in meeting.

g) Changes to Police Budget – Selectman Lefebvre asked if Chief Cyr had made the changes requested in the budget and TM Frost advised they would have a new sheet with the changes. Lefebvre asked about the \$5600 purchase that was listed in the Police Equipment CRF and Frost advised that it was a purchase requisition form that was used to update the fund, but the purchase was not made. Lefebvre also asked if Cyr was still going to use the 5-year average on which to base his budget and Frost advised he was. Lefebvre also asked to see the proposed police schedule with the reduction of part-time hours.

5. Public Comment:

Judy Leblanc stated that she felt that Berlin PD was not given adequate time to address the questions that the residents of Gorham had about the proposal. Leblanc mentioned that the cost of the contract with Berlin will give us anticipated costs for the next several years, however we do not have that same benefit with our own department. She also expressed her concern that retention was always going to be an issue and stated that there was more value for the dollar with Berlin as they offer more services.

Sue Demers spoke about the contract cost with other Municipalities and that they should pay their portion based on population, not on number of calls. Demers also stated that we are providing fire coverage through mutual aid to these other towns as well, but Selectman Lefebvre stated this was not true, as the other communities have even better equipment in some cases than Gorham has. Bob Demers stated that dispatch and ambulance coverage are like an insurance policy that you pay for even

if you do not use the service. Lefebvre stated that the other towns pay per call, but the ambulance also bills the patient's insurance. Leblanc stated that if the insurance does not pay, the call is actually costing us money. Waddell stated that without the revenue from the other towns, taxes would go up.

Sue Demers also stated that the Board never asked the public what they wanted for police coverage. The Board reminded Demers that they held several public hearings.

Tom Maniscalco stated that Chief Cyr's report did not take into consideration the amount of money Gorham has spent training officers for Berlin and that Berlin does not reimburse us for that. Maniscalco stated that the Gorham Fire Department will need to cover the new hotel at the Auto Road once that is built and was advised that we already do cover that area for the county. Maniscalco also spoke about police coverage in town, the Bearcat in Berlin, and the National Guard Armory, and that there may be something going on that we are not privy to. He also spoke about Stony Brook and the cost for the culvert, and the cost for Spring Road.

Diane Bouthot asked about Chief Cyr offering extra to the officer that decided to stay in Gorham instead of going to Berlin and how this will be handled in the budget. The Board advised that the Budget Committee would need to ask this at their meetings, as they are not sure what the plan is.

Adam White spoke about the contract for the Town Manager and that if the Board renews the contract before the town meeting, they will be setting the town up for a payout. The Board advised this is a personnel matter. Selectman Lefebvre advised that changing the position to a Town Administrator would not save the town money, as the wages would be about the same.

Bob Demers asked about the \$2.10 increase in the tax rate and why this happened. TM Frost advised that it is mainly a lack of revenues, mostly a lack of transfer revenues, and also from not having a fund balance to use to reduce taxes.

Bob Demers asked that the hours for the Assessing Office be posted on the door and TM Frost advised they would be.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update – TM Frost advised she did not have anything.

b) Selectmen's Updates –

Selectman Waddell asked about the Lead Mtn LLC abatement request and if Sansoucy had been contacted for a second opinion. Frost advised that she did not have that yet.

c) Approval of Minutes (November 14, 2017 public and October 2, 13, 16, 20, November 6, 13 non-public)

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, the Board voted unanimously to accept the public minutes of November 14, 2017 and the non-public minutes of October 2, 13, 16, 20, November 6 and 13, 2017 as presented.

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

There were no abatements or exemptions.

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

On a motion by Selectman Lefebvre, seconded by Chairman Oliver, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to move to non-public session to discuss union negotiations and personnel at 7:37 pm. Oliver – Aye, Waddell – Aye, Lefebvre - 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 9:05 pm. Oliver – Aye, Waddell – Aye, Lefebvre - Aye.

Minutes of non-public session are available separately.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Terry Oliver

Patrick Lefebvre

Michael Waddell