

**MINUTES OF SELECTMAN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 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; Austin Holmes; Jeff Stewart; Edith Tucker, Berlin Daily Sun; Diane Bouthot; Mary White; Adam White; Judy Leblanc; Jessica McCreedy

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chairman Oliver at 6:05 pm.

PUBLIC HEARING: Land Purchase from Eversource Adjacent to Public Works

TM Frost advised that the town is hoping to purchase 6.41 acres west of the current public works property. Frost advised that the property follows the FERC boundary. The land will be used for snow storage and the compost and debris piles. The price for the land is \$17,500. The second public hearing will be held on November 20 and the Board will vote on November 27.

The map of the land was shared with the public.

Jessica McCreedy asked if the trail that is on that land will still be accessible and was advised it would be.

The public hearing was adjourned at 6:11 pm.

2. Appointments:

a) Public Works Budget Review – Public Works Director Austin Holmes -

Holmes reviewed the cemetery budget first, pointing out the increases, which include a pay raise for the part-time cemetery employee who was a very hard worker. Holmes advised that the gas has been budgeted at \$2.75, but can be adjusted based on the current price. Selectman Waddell asked about the full-time position and why the amount is less for 2018 than it was in 2017. Denise Vallee stated that the numbers came from the new software program and she will double check them. Holmes advised that the full-time cemetery position is split 50/50 with the Highway Department and the part-time position is 24 hours per week, three 8-hour days.

In reviewing the Highway Department budget, Holmes advised that heating oil is down a little, but water rates are up. Most items were about the same, however salt was down significantly, in the amount of \$13,000. Holmes advised they were over budget for contract services in 2017, so he will be increasing that line item for 2018. Contract services are for the dump trucks hired to help remove snow.

Holmes stated that the only real change in the Sanitation budget was that diesel was up \$825. TM Frost advised that workers comp rates went down. Chairman Oliver asked about the monitoring costs that are budgeted for the East Milan Road and Cates Hill landfills. Vallee advised that there is no bill received yet, but the agreement was that they would be budgeted for. Selectman Waddell asked about the cost for AVRRDD and Vallee advised figures for their budget will not be available until December. The Board discussed the possibility of charging a fee for permits to AVRRDD and issuing permits for the town garage. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Waddell asked if plans for the land being purchased from Eversource was part of the budget and Frost advised that they are waiting on the study from CMA.

In reviewing the streetlight budget, the cost is about \$3000 less and is based on the average use over the last couple of years.

Holmes advised that he will again be asking for \$80,000 for paving under Land and Improvements. Holmes will also be requesting a new loader for Capital Improvements this year. The loader they have is 17 years old and although the engine is good, the cab is rotten. They are hoping for a lease-purchase agreement. Holmes has received 4 proposals. It would be about \$30,733 per year for five years. Buying instead of leasing would be about \$144,000 with the trade-in. Frost will get copies of the proposals to the Board.

b) Recreation Department Budget Review – Recreation Director Jeff Stewart –

Stewart advised that in the Recreation budget, telephone and electricity are both down, but heat and water are up. Utilities were a guess with the new building, but now they have a better idea of the cost. Stewart also advised that the building is being used more at night, which increases the heat and electricity. Stewart stated that travel is down \$600, and awards are down \$100, for a total overall reduction of about \$1000. Stewart was asked if there was any increased cost with the after school program using the building, and he advised only for lights and heat. Stewart stated that the program has doubled since they started using the building, and could probably have more if they were not limited to 15 since there is only one bathroom.

In the Parks budget, water was up \$50 and supplies up \$1000. Park Maintenance is currently at \$3000, but Stewart advised he would like to increase this by \$2000 to cover half of the new mower deck for the sidewalk tractor. Equipment and Machinery is down \$738 and Selectman Lefebvre asked if the mower should be here. Lefebvre also asked about the Fourth of July Common Maintenance, which he was advised is for overtime during the holiday for work at the common, emptying garbage, etc. Lefebvre mentioned that he would like the Board to discuss the Fourth of July and requested it be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Stewart reviewed the Revolving Fund next, stating that the telephone cost for the Information Booth has increased due to internet being installed there. Lefebvre pointed out that the Moose Tour revenue seems to be consistent and Stewart advised that they now have only one tour per night and cut the nights of the ATV Festivals. Stewart stated that the success rate for the tours this year was 99%, with only one night that they did not see anything. Waddell asked about the bus replacement schedule and Stewart advised that the oldest is a 2011 with about 59,000 miles, and the other is a 2015 with about 17,000 miles. Since there are less Moose Tours, it has helped with the maintenance costs. Both buses should last a while longer, since they have low mileage and are well maintained. Stewart advised the Recreation Access Fee is what the towns pay toward maintaining the fields. Money spent from the fund this year included the truck, which was just under \$10,000, electrical work at Libby's, adding names to the Veteran's Monument, work on the tennis courts, and the playground. Stewart advised that the Cascade playground equipment is scheduled to be installed tomorrow. Stewart was asked about the ballfield at the common and he stated that they just need to add some sand. Waddell asked for a breakdown of the Program Revenue and Fundraiser lines. Lefebvre asked about the negative balances for Beautification, the Information Booth, and Building Maintenance. Stewart advised that these have no revenue coming in. The balance in the fund will be about \$100,000 at the end of the year. Lefebvre stated that the mower deck may be able to come out of the Revolving Fund, from the Recreation Access Fee, since it is for maintaining the fields and the Board agreed. Waddell asked about revenues, stating that it was about 89,000 in 2016 and is currently at about 74,000. Stewart advised that 74,000 will be it for this year. Frost advised that the Medallion Opera House money in the revolving fund is used for help

with maintenance and also helped to pay for the carpet on the stairs. The amount raised last year was higher due to the fundraiser that was held for the new sign. Waddell asked Stewart if there were any Capital equipment requests and Stewart advised that the only thing needed was the mower deck.

Setting of Tax Rate

TM Frost advised that the estimated tax rate was received from DRA. The town is at \$13.86, the county at \$4.37, the school at \$13.50, and the state school tax at \$2.22 for a total of \$33.95. This amount is \$2.10 higher than last years rate and includes \$75,000 in overlay. Frost advised that the current unrestricted fund balance is \$304,000. If the Board were to use \$50,000 of this to reduce the tax rate, it would go down by 19 cents, \$75,000 would be 28 cents, and \$100,000 would be 37 cents. Selectman Lefebvre asked what the lowest fund balance has been in the past and TM Frost advised it was at \$198,000 in 2013. Selectman Waddell asked what happened with the auditor taking \$450,000 and TM Frost advised that he wrote off what was tax dedeed, which were the Munce properties.

On a motion by Selectman Waddell, seconded by Chairman Oliver, the board voted unanimously to not use the fund balance and set the tax rate at \$33.95.

Selectman Waddell asked why the difference between what they had anticipated at \$1.67 and the actual increase of \$2.10. Denise Vallee advised that revenues were down by \$39,000, as the Federal Forest money dropped \$13,000, and the rooms and meals tax, highway block grant, and railroad tax were also less than anticipated. Waddell asked about speaking with the auditor and Frost advised he was scheduled to attend the meeting next week.

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

On a motion by Selectman Lefebvre, seconded by Selectman Waddell, the Board unanimously voted by roll call to move to non-public session to discuss a personnel issue at 7:31 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 10:00 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 10:00 pm.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Terry Oliver

Patrick Lefebvre

Michael Waddell