

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2016 6:00 PM
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

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

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; PJ Cyr, Police Chief; Chad Miller, EMS Director; Adam White, Dana Horne, Mike Waddell, Kirsten Knowlton, Nick Santy, Cagney Hatch, Henry Sanschagrin, Michelle Lutz, Jeff Schall, Stephanie Kennedy, Wanda Tanguay, Jess Lozeau, Rich McClure, Mike Pelchat, Diane Holmes

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

BOARD REORGANIZATION: On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, Selectman LaPierre was elected Chairman of the Board.

On a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, Selectman Oliver was elected Vice-Chairman of the Board.

On a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the representatives to the Board of the Androscoggin Valley Regional Refuse Disposal District will remain Yes Zornio as primary and Paul Robitaille as Alternate.

Selectman Lefebvre agreed to sit as the Town's representative to the North Country Council Transportation Advisory Committee with Selectman Oliver as the alternate.

Selectman Lefebvre agreed to be the Selectman's Representative to the Planning Board

Selectman Oliver will continue to serve on the Budget Committee as the Selectmen's Representative.

Chairman LaPierre will continue to serve on the Medallion Opera House Committee.

Denise Vallee swore in new selectman Patrick Lefebvre.

2. Appointments:

a) Keith Roberge – OHRV Use – Keith Roberge spoke to the Board about the rail bed from Jimtown to the parking lot. Mr. Roberge would like to see us writing weekly letters to the Commissioner and Bureau Chief to see where this issue stands. His business is suffering because he does not have access to the trail from his house, where his business is located. Mr. Roberge does think that the people on Route 2 who are complaining don't have any basis since the ATV's travel past their homes already. He asked Diane Holmes, who was in the audience, what her thoughts were on opening trails in Moose Brook State Park. She stated that she thinks it is a bad idea. Those trails are being used by hikers and bicyclists and OHRV's would be disruptive. Mr. Roberge agrees and therefore feels that the only option is to open that portion of the rail bed. If the State says no, he will pursue further.

Rich McClure stated that something needs to be done about the difference in hours of operation between Berlin and Gorham. It is also difficult for people to go out to eat at a restaurant and get back to their hotel before sunset.

Michelle Lutz disagrees with opening up the roads past sunset. Her concern is that not all OHRV's have lights. Mr. McClure stated that they can't ride after sunset without lights and that would be reason enough to stop and cite them. Chief Cyr disagrees with Ms. Lutz. He thinks there should be uniform hours of operation. He will be meeting with Berlin, NH Fish & Game and others to prepare a letter to the Trails Bureau about syncing the times and perhaps other matters as well.

Mr. McClure thinks there are enforcement agencies and other State personnel who are giving out conflicting information to riders. That just creates a mess.

On a motion by Selectman Lefebvre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board voted unanimously to direct TM Frost to send a letter on behalf of the Board to Commissioner Rose of NH Department of Resources and Economic Development to support opening the aforementioned portion of the rail bed.

Mr. Roberge and Mr. Sanschagrín asked to be copied on the letter.

Henry Sanschagrín stated that the club will not support asking for Route 2 access again, as it is too dangerous. He also mentioned the petition with over 100 signatures which was previously submitted to support access for Jimtown Road residents.

It was noted that speed patrols need to be done, if this opening is accomplished.

3. New Business

a) Hazard Mitigation Plan Update: TM Frost reported that the entire plan is in the mail envelope. If the Board could please review it before the next meeting, they can adopt the plan on April 4th. Selectman Lefebvre took the report with him to review.

4. Old Business

a) Public Safety Organizational Review Committee – Budgets and Job Description: Chief Cyr gave an update of the committee's last meeting. There was no change to the recommendation, but the committee did finalize the job description and the budget comparisons. There were no immediate questions from the Board. Chief Cyr mentioned that the committee revisited the residency requirement. They still agreed that residency should not be required, but changed the mile radius from 35 to 25. The discussion was that it opens up the area from which qualified applicants could apply.

Chief Cyr went on to say that he was fortunate enough to see the fire department and the community get together to honor and remember retired Firefighter Robert P. "Chuckie" Cote. He thought the departments worked together well. He thinks it is important to weigh the positive changes of a merger against the sense of community he witnessed. He does not change his vote for the merger, but the community piece needs to be taken into account.

Selectman Lefebvre would like to see some changes to the job description. TM Frost asked that he make the changes to his electronic copy and send them to her. The Board was not in favor of the recommendation of 25 miles for the response requirement. They believe it should be more like 10 miles.

Regarding the budget report, Asst Chief Horne stated that he thought some of the committee members were confused. He didn't understand why we were giving the Board budgets for several options. He thinks that two of the options, specifically hiring a part time chief and a merged department with four full time employees, are not viable options.

Chairman LaPierre asked if the Board was ready to vote as she thinks this has gone on long enough. Selectman Lefebvre agreed, however, no one made a motion. Diane Holmes, a long time member of the EMS Department, asked to give comment and explained that she did not speak to her peers at the public hearing, but she is in favor of merging the departments. She has given this issue a lot of thought. 2 ½ years ago when first asked, she wanted more information, but she was in favor then, too. She feels there is already a sense of community with the two departments and they work well together. The community of today, as seen during the funeral of longtime firefighter Robert "Chuckie" Cote, will always be in place. The concern is moving forward and flourishing and meeting the needs of the future. Training is more and more important and everyone is committed to that. Ms. Holmes stated that she is not saying there will be no bumps, but the territory issue will be worked out. She feels everyone needs to get over who is going to rule the roost. This merger will bring clarity of the chain of command.

Rich McClure wondered about the hiring process. TM Frost explained that there would be a panel that would conduct oral boards and it would be comprised of a few members of the departments and Fire Chiefs from other communities and other appropriate participants.

Adam White feels that if the firefighters have to live in town, the Chief should also have to live in town. Jessica Lozeau, a member of the EMS Department, questioned why that was such an issue. There are people on the fire department who no longer live in town.

Asst Chief Horne stated that he was not in favor of the residency requirement for the Chief, though he thinks it may be a good idea.

Mike Waddell said that this is forcing the issue. He thinks that good things are happening. The merge document is a problem. Mr. Waddell stated that the Budget Committee approved the separate budgets for the Fire and EMS Departments and if the operations could be done with less, then he was snowed. Mr. Waddell likes the status quo and filling the chief position. He feels residency is not that black and white; not functionally necessary, but a very good idea.

Chad Miller, EMS Director, said that he listened to Mr. Waddell and wonders if not now, then when. When will be the right time to make this move, if it's not now with the Fire Chief retiring? The last 6 hires on the EMS Department have been cross-trained as firefighters. On any given day, we cross-train the staff and when the last EMT was hired, Chief Eichler asked if we could hire someone who was also a firefighter. The question is will the status quo still work with a new chief? EMSD Miller realizes that he may not be a department head when this is all said and done, but regardless of that, he is still in favor of the merge.

Dana Horne been here 35 years. Who's the boss is not a valid issue. He just doesn't see a need to change what is currently working.

TM Frost stated that one of the Town attorneys mentioned that if we weren't running the department under one fire chief as voted at the 1996 Town Meeting, we need to separate them at the next Town Meeting. The Board asked TM Frost to supply them with a copy of that opinion.

On a motion by Selectman Lefebvre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board voted unanimously to table discussion and a vote until the requested information is received.

b) Projects from Town Meeting:

TM Frost stated that some of the projects for which funding was approved at Town Meeting are moving forward. They are, in no particular order, Tinker Brook bridge installation, Spring Road culvert replacement, the fire alarm at the Fire Station, and the Public Works Office. TM Frost also asked the Board for their support in researching the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) option for disposal of household waste. The Board agreed that getting more information on this would be a good idea. In short, PAYT requires the residents to purchase special bags to use for disposal of their household waste. The intent is to increase recycling and cut down on the landfill use for disposal of solid waste. Mr. White suggested that if the Town moves in this direction, we should consider changing the hours of the Transfer Station to allow people who work during the week access to the transfer station on weekends.

5. Public Comment:

Henry Sanschagrin who lives on Crestwood Drive reported that he has big chunks of tar on his lawn. He would like the highway crew to come and remove it and see what might be needed to be repaired on the road.

Mike Waddell mentioned that he is moving forward with the application to designate Gorham as an Appalachian Trail Community (ATC). He has asked both TM Frost and Denise Vallee to assist.

Mr. Waddell also mentioned that the roads in town are a big problem. It was again discussed that there needs to be a Road Capital Improvement Plan in place in order to know how to proceed. The Town voted \$200,000 into the Road Resurfacing and Reconstruction CRF. TM Frost will attend the next Planning Board meeting to encourage the formation of a CIP Committee. The Planning Board does not have to do all the work, but the committee should originate with them.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost had nothing else for public session.

b) Selectmen's Update:

Selectmen Lefebvre asked if there was any movement on fixing the potholes in the entryway to the old Rite Aid building owned by Sonny Couture. TM Frost said that she had spoken with Claude Pigeon of Couture Construction and he said they would look at the issue.

Chairman LaPierre asked when we would be awarding the Boston Post Cane. TM Frost reported that the recipient was still in the hospital and it would probably be awarded once he returned home.

Selectman Oliver said that tractor-trailer units are traveling through Cascade Flats Road in order to get to the Mill. TM Frost asked Chief Cyr to provide patrol in that area to remind the truckers that they need to use the northern entrance of Cascade Flats Road to get to the Mill.

Chairman LaPierre said that the new issue of the NHMA magazine *Town and City* has a picture of the Gorham Town Hall on it as submitted by Denise Vallee.

Selectman Lefebvre asked if there were grants available for a School Resource Officer as there has been in the past. Chief Cyr said he would research and meet with school officials to see if that is something they would like to pursue.

c) **Approval of Minutes (March 7, 2016):** On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman Lefebvre, the minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2016 were approved as presented.

d) **Sign Manifest:** All manifests were signed.

e) **Sign Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary):** There were none.

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II d: On a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into non-public session at 8:05 pm. LaPierre – Aye, Oliver – Aye, Lefebvre – Aye..

On a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board came out of non-public session by unanimous roll call vote at 8:30 pm. LaPierre – Aye, Oliver – Aye, Lefebvre - Aye.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:31 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Grace LaPierre

Terry Oliver

Patrick Lefebvre