

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
TOWN OF GORHAM  
MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2016 6:00 PM  
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM**

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

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Chad Miller, EMS Director; Adam White, Dana Horne, Mike Waddell, Jeff Schall, Arthur Perry, Henry Sanschagrin.

**1. Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman LaPierre at 6:00 pm.

**2. Appointments:** There were no appointments scheduled.

**3. New Business:**

**a) Exploration of Contract for Fire Chief Services with Berlin** – TM Frost stated that she had approached the Board about the possibility of sharing Fire Chief services with the City of Berlin a couple of meetings ago. This came about after hearing the news that Belmont and Laconia had signed an agreement for the City of Laconia to provide Fire Chief services to the Town of Belmont. She explained that while the Town is searching for ways to save tax dollars and increase efficiency and Fire Chief Rick Eichler is retiring, this is an avenue that should be explored. The City of Berlin is willing to work with us to see if this is an option that would be beneficial for both communities. We are, however, simultaneously moving forward with the posting of the Fire Chief position.

Chairman LaPierre stated that she doesn't want to move forward with the Berlin option, however, Selectman Oliver said he wants to keep going. Selectman Lefebvre thinks that we are limiting our applicant pool because potential applicants see that there is a possibility that we may not hire a chief.

Selectmen Lefebvre suggested that we use Municipal Resources, Inc. to do the oral boards for the new fire chief. Chairman LaPierre stated that she agrees.

Chad Miller said that the Public Safety Organizational Review Committee worked very hard for several months and delivered a report with a recommendation and then, when asked, provided budgetary information. Even though there were no disputing facts regarding the budget savings or why a merger would not work, the Board decided to say no. Would they give more consideration to the results, if they choose to hire an outside service to give them a recommendation?

Selectman Oliver said that we are discussing whether to move forward with the Berlin exploration and the conversation should stay on that topic. The Board tabled the MRI discussion to later in the meeting.

Dana Horne stated that the fire department is hurting. They need time to heal.

TM Frost stated that this merger discussion did not have to play out the way it did. There is a lack of leadership within the officers of the fire department. They could have handled the situation much better and led their department through this. The two fire officers in attendance, Dana Horne and Arthur Perry, strongly disagreed with her comments, saying that TM Frost only felt that way because she “didn’t get her way.”

**Selectman Oliver made a motion to continue talks with Berlin. The motion was seconded by Chairman LaPierre.**

Adam White suggested that the Berlin option be considered only as a temporary measure. He would like the Town to hire a new fire chief for the Town of Gorham.

Chairman LaPierre agreed and TM Frost stated that if that was the Board’s direction, then they should make that a formal decision because that was not the original direction and, therefore, not the nature of the discussions with Berlin so far.

Henry Sanschagrin stated that he thinks it is time to stop considering new ideas for the Fire Department. It is time to hire a new fire chief.

Jeff Schall said that he thinks the Town has to look at any possible ideas in order to see if there can be a reduction in expenses.

Mike Waddell said he agrees that the Fire Department needs to heal. The merger discussion should be over and everyone needs to move on. He thinks that the idea of having MRI help in the hiring process is a good idea.

**Selectman Lefebvre stated that he would agree to continue talks with Berlin only if further meetings included just- the Town Manager, a member of the Select Board, the Berlin City Manager and someone from the City Council. Selectman Oliver and Chairman LaPierre agreed to the amendment. The amended motion carried unanimously.**

**b) Tax Anticipation Note Approval and Execution** – TM Frost explained that the tax anticipation note is through Northway Bank in the amount of \$300,000 at a rate of 1.25% and due October 31, 2016. **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectmen Lefebvre, the Board unanimously approved the tax anticipation note as presented.** The Board signed the required documents.

**c) Personnel Policy Amendments** – TM Frost explained the proposed changes to the Town’s Personnel Policy. Most of the changes were a result of requirements of the Affordable Care Act, but there are also a few other changes, such as allowing donations of sick time and the change to the maximum accrued vacation time from 5 weeks to 4 weeks for new hires. **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Chairman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously to approve and accept the proposed changes.** The amended policy will be distributed to all

employees.

**d) Connelly Deed** – This paperwork is for the tax-acquired mobile home that the Board previously voted to sell to Hurbert Connelly. The cost of \$500 and fees (legal, recording) of \$185.49 were paid by Mr. Connelly. Having already voted to sell this property to him, the Board executed all of the paperwork associated with this sale and we will now record the deed.

**e) EMS Agreement – Shelburne** – The Board signed the ambulance agreement with the Town of Shelburne.

**f) PA-28 Inventories of Taxable Property – Randolph** – The Town of Gorham has four separate properties in the Town of Randolph. Since the Town of Randolph still uses the PA-28 Inventory forms, the Board signed this paperwork and it will be sent to Randolph.

**g) ZBA Appointment – Rick Eichler** - Rick Eichler has agreed to serve one more year on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. **On a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board approved the appointment of Rick Eichler to a one-year term on the Zoning Board of Adjustment.** The Board signed the appointment certificate.

**h) Bank of NH Settlement Agreement** – The Board approved the negotiated settlement of \$684,400 in assessed value, from an original assessment of \$834,400, on the Bank of NH property. This settlement does not include interest on the refund of taxes and is not due until July 1, 2016. **On a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board approved the Settlement Agreement with Bank of New Hampshire.** The Board signed the agreement.

#### **4. Old Business:**

**a) OHRV – Jimtown Road/Rail Trail – Letter from Commissioner Rose** – The Board received a letter from Commissioner Rose in response to their letter dated April 6<sup>th</sup>. Comm. Rose stated that he was not inclined at this time to open the portion of the rail trail referenced in the letter, but he is willing to come to Gorham to meet with the Selectmen as requested. He gave the Board two dates on which he was available; April 25<sup>th</sup> and May 16<sup>th</sup> and the Board chose April 25<sup>th</sup>. TM Frost stated that the Board would have a conference call with Town Counsel at 6 pm on the 25<sup>th</sup> and they set the meeting with the Commissioner for 7 pm.

**b) Fire Chief Posting** – TM Frost stated that the Fire Chief position has been posted in three newspapers and two list serves. Inquiries have been coming in and two applications have been received. The deadline for applications is at 5 pm on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The discussion turned to hiring MRI to help with the oral boards. TM Frost stated that Primex also provides these services. The Board asked TM Frost to see who can provide assistance with the oral board for the hiring process.

TM Frost also asked the Board to decide on a distance limitation for the Fire Chief for a response time to the Fire Station from their home. Selectman Lefebvre said that he would rather see a time limit and the Board decided on a 20 minute response time limit.

**c) Public Works Office Building Update** – We still cannot advertise this project for bids until the USDA has given us notice of whether or not the grant has been approved. Meanwhile, the plans have changed slightly, but not enough to affect the estimated cost. The Town has received a great price for an office trailer for the duration of the project. It will cost us \$220 per month. Bob Chapman assisted PWD Holmes with securing the trailer at that price.

TM Frost also told the Board that the Tinker Brook project will begin on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The date for substantial completion is August 13<sup>th</sup>. PWD Holmes is coordinating the project with the school since school buses are usually able to drive through Cascade Flats and the southern end of the road will be closed. Selectman Lefebvre asked if we could post a notice in the newspaper about the closing of that end of the road. This will be done the week before construction begins.

**d) Bathrooms at Libby Pool Update** – TM Frost stated that the bathroom project at Libby Pool will be changed slightly to be closer to where the actual sewer lines are. The bathrooms are still near the pavilion. There were two windows added to the plan, which increased the cost from \$15,968 to \$17,568, which is still considerably below the next bidder.

**e) Coos Cycling Club Request** – The Board reviewed the letter from the Water and Sewer Commissioners regarding the request for a short length of trail and a parking lot on Airport property, which is also a Town water source. The Commissioners approved the trail, contingent upon Selectmen approval, but declined to approve the parking lot. The Board concurred with the Commissioners' decision.

## **5. Public Comment**

Henry Sanschagrin stated that the article in the Berlin Daily Sun about the rail trail access misstated the name of the OHRV Club and also had erroneously reported that the club would erect a fence along that portion of the rail trail. He will contact the reporter to let her know.

Mike Waddell requested an electronic copy of the Public Works office building plans emailed to him.

## **6. Other Business:**

**a) Town Manager's Update** – Nothing further.

**b) Selectmen's Updates** – Selectman Lefebvre stated that, at the last meeting, the Board said that the new Fire Chief would be able to decide whether the Fire and EMS Departments should be merged. He believes that the Board did not intend to give up their authority over this decision. **On a motion by Selectman Lefebvre, seconded by Chairman LaPierre, the Board unanimously voted that they do not relinquish their power to the newly hired Fire Chief to reorganize the Fire and EMS departments.**

Selectman Oliver asked TM Frost if she was looking for someone to take minutes at these meetings. She stated that she had not yet had time to begin that search.

**c) Approval of Minutes (April 4, 2016) – On a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board approved the minutes of the meeting of April 4, 2016 as prepared.**

**d) Sign Manifest; Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary) – Nothing further**

**7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II c**

**At 8:40 pm, a motion was made by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver to go into Non-Public Session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3, IIc. Roll call vote: Lefebvre – Aye, Oliver – Aye, LaPierre – Aye**

**The Board came out of Non Public Session at 8:50 pm on a motion by Chairman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver. Roll call vote: Lefebvre – Aye, Oliver – Aye, LaPierre – Aye**

No decisions made in Non-Public Session.

**8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

**REVIEWED AND APPROVED:**

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**Grace LaPierre**

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**Terry Oliver**

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**Patrick Lefebvre**