

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2015, 6:00 PM
GORHAM TOWN HALL**

Gorham Selectmen present: Jeff Schall, Grace LaPierre, Terry Oliver
Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Kirstan Lukasak, Berlin Daily Sun, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Carol Porter

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

PUBLIC HEARING: USDA Rural Development Grant for Public Works Garage Roof

Chairman Schall opened the public hearing at 6:01 pm. He explained the reason for this second grant application was because the project scope changed and the cost increased after further consideration. USDA suggested applying for a supplemental grant. There was only the press in the audience and there were no questions.

Chairman Schall closed the public hearing at 6:05 pm.

2. Appointments: There were no scheduled appointments.

3. New Business

a) Abatement Recommendation – Map R4 Lot 4-B, 111 Glen Road: TM Frost presented the Board with the recommendation for settlement prepared by Richard Dorsett of KRT. The Board reviewed the narrative. **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously to approve the settlement.**

b) Health Insurance for New Hires: Selectman Oliver explained that a suggestion came from a discussion at the Budget Committee. In negotiating the new union contract at the school, it was agreed that any new hires beginning July 1, 2015 would pay 25% of the health insurance costs, with the coop paying 75%. The split is currently 20/80. Selectman Oliver asked the other Board members to consider doing the same in the Town personnel policy. It was agreed that this needed to be looked at in the Town's union contract. **On a motion by Selectman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board voted unanimously to change the Town's policy to a Town/Employee 75/25 split for any new hires beginning July 1, 2015. All current employees would stay at the 80/20 split.**

c) Cascade Playground: The Budget Committee has been talking about the Cascade Playground, which is situated on land owned by the Mill. Some residents in Cascade would like to see playground equipment reinstalled at that site. Assessing Clerk Lutz found the lease agreement between the Town and James River which was executed in 1981. Since that time, there have been multiples sales of the property so the lease is probably not valid at this time. TM Frost reported that

she has left a message for the Mill Manager, Dick Arnold, to see what his thoughts are on this. She will update the Board as she gets further information.

d) State Reimbursement for FEMA Projects: Senate Bill 409 was introduced and passed in the 2014 Legislative process. It was signed by the Governor and becomes effective July 1, 2015. This bill appropriated over \$4M for distribution to the Towns that were affected by declared disasters from 2010 through 2013. The amount is equal to a 12.5% matching grant for the Town's portion of the disaster recovery costs. This would mean around \$100k to the Town of Gorham for damages sustained in 2011 and 2012. When TM Frost called the State Office of Emergency Management to see when the Town could expect to receive these funds. The person at the Department of Emergency management told TM Frost that the legislation was not passed and she should call our representative or the Governor's Office for more information.

e) Personnel Policy Discussion – Vacation: Selectman Oliver brought up a concern that came from the Budget Committee that five weeks vacation is too much time off. He is suggesting that the Board amend the Personnel Policy to state that new hires would be capped at four weeks of vacation time after 10 years of service. There was a short discussion about part-time employees and how they accrue vacation time. **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously to cap vacation for any new hires at four weeks after ten years of service.** This is retroactive to January 1, 2015.

4. Old Business

a) North Country Council – Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): The Board needs to appoint a representative to the TAC at North Country Council. Selectman LaPierre was the alternate when Bill Jackson was the primary. When Mr. Jackson resigned, no one was appointed as primary. It was decided that Terry Oliver would become the representative to the TAC if he is re-elected. In the meantime, TM Frost would attend any meetings in order to bring information back to the Board. The other North Country Council item is the Town representative to the Council Chairman Schall is currently listed at the representative, with TM Frost serving on the Board of Directors. Typically, the member of the Board of Directors and the representative are one and the same. **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of TM Frost as the Town Representative to North Country Council.**

b) Budget Updates: There were two updates made to the budget since the Board sent it to the Budget committee. There is a need to increase the Town Clerk's marriage License line by \$1200 due to new year-to-date information. The Conservation Commission Chairman, Mike Waddell, has asked for \$500 to be placed on the Conservation Commission line, just in case. There was a very brief discussion. **On a motion by Selectman Oliver, Selectman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously to approve the changes.**

c) Project Proposal Moose Riverbank: The Board reviewed the project proposal received from Josh McAllister of HEB Engineers. It calls for a reconstruction and armoring of approximately 250 linear feet of the berm on the right bank of the Moose River. The cost for engineering the project would be \$28,000 and construction is estimated to be \$100,000. After the geomorphological assessment report was done, it was determined that any stabilization measures would not need to encompass the Town cemetery since the risk of damage in this area is low. Due to that fact, any work done to protect private property would carry with it a concern that others would also want work done on

their properties. We are aware of several areas that are in need of stabilization measures, including some referenced in the geomorphological assessment. We also have three property owners adjacent to the Peabody River who paid 25% of their project costs after Tropical Storm Irene. They would likely want to be reimbursed for their costs if the Town were willing to pay for this project. The Board was sympathetic to the concerns expressed at several meetings by property owner Dennis Arguin, but the protective measures would be for the private property of a few and not for protecting Town infrastructure. It was mentioned that when funding for Project Impact dried up, several people were left thinking that the projects could still be completed. This included at least one of the property owners adjacent to the Peabody River who ended up paying for 25% of his project costs. **On a motion by Chairman Schall, seconded by Selectman Oliver, it was unanimously voted to not place this project on the Town Warrant.** It was mentioned that Mr. Arguin could petition this as an article on the warrant if he could get 25 signatures by next Tuesday, February 3rd.

5. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

6. Other Business

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost stated that she received a phone call from Paul Ingersoll, who would like the Town to consider asking the State to designate the tracks crossing Route 16 near the Mill to be designated exempt. Since the rails were removed in Cascade Flats, there is no use for that crossing any longer. The Board asked TM Frost to pursue this matter with the appropriate State agency.

b) Selectmen's Update: There were no updates.

c) Approval of Minutes (January 12 2015): Selectman LaPierre made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 12, 2015 meeting as presented, seconded by Selectman Oliver, voted unanimously.

d) Sign Manifest: All manifests were signed.

e) Sign Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary): None were presented.

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II a, d, e: On a motion by Selectman Oliver, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into non-public session at 7:00 pm. Schall – Aye, LaPierre – Aye, Oliver - Aye.

On a motion by Chairman Schall, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board came out of non-public session by unanimous roll call vote at 9:40 pm. Schall – Aye, LaPierre – Aye, Oliver - Aye.

Decisions made as a result of Non- Public Session: There was a motion by Chairman Schall to leave \$7000 in the 2015 Operating Budget to be used for merit increases as TM Frost sees fit. This motion failed to receive a second. \$7000 will be removed from the 2015 Operating Budget.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:42 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Jeff Schall

Grace LaPierre

Terry Oliver