

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015 6:00 PM**

Gorham Selectmen present: Jeff Schall, Grace LaPierre, Terry Oliver

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Denise Vallee, Finance Director; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk; PJ Cyr, Police Chief; Chad Miller, EMS Director; Austin Holmes, PWD; Rick Eichler, Fire Chief; Mike Waddell, Jeff Stewart, Rec Director

Prior to the meeting, the Board was in conference with counsel.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:17 pm by Chairman Schall.

2. Budget Work session: Chairman Schall stated that the Board will review the Budget by department and start at the top.

Executive Office – There is no change to the presented budget.

Election & Registration – TCTC Porter stated that she needed to increase the equipment maintenance line by \$25.00 because of an increase from LHS Associates. The Board spoke about the proposed wage increases in this line and decided that all requested wage increases over the standard 2% will be moved to the “merit increases” line under Financial Administration in a lump sum. There are no other changes from the last meeting’s discussed changes.

The Board reiterated that all salaries will be maintained at the 2% increase all other increased will be denied and money will be placed in the merit increases line. The Board stated that they would also like to see the benefits included in the amount that will be allotted in that line.

Financial Administration – TM Frost stated that she would like to see \$10,000 to \$12,000 placed in the line for merit increases. TM Frost will perform reviews and give out increases as merited. FD Vallee stated that the audit services line needs to increase \$500 for additional work for a pension report, which is federally mandated.

Tax Collector – There are no changes with the exception of request for raises over and above the 2%.

Assessing/Revaluation – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Legal Expenses – The Board stated that in light of their conference call with legal counsel prior to the meeting that they feel that instead of increasing the legal line from \$60,000 to \$70,000; that it should be decreased from \$60,000 to \$50,000.

Personnel Benefits – The Board asked FD Vallee to update this line item to reflect the changes in the requested wage increases. The Board also stated that they would like the merit line money to include benefits related to the merit increases.

Planning and Zoning – As in previous budgets the request for a wage increase will be moved to merit increase line. AC Lutz and Mike Waddell stated that the planning board is looking at updating the master plan this year. Jim Garneau and Tara Bamford have been contacted for estimates in the cost of completing the plan. Both numbers that were received were close. It equates to roughly \$7,500. The Planning Board is meeting tomorrow

night and will decide at that time if they would like to move forward with the plan. There is currently \$4,000 in the Develop Code Update line and Mr. Waddell is asking the Board to add an additional \$3,500 to that line. If the Planning Board decides not to move forward, it can be removed at the Budget Committee level. The Board agreed to the increase.

General Government Building– There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Cemetery – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Insurance – While FD Vallee had not yet updated the budget worksheets, TM Frost noted that there was a change that she had written down on her copy. She is showing the total \$49,834 instead of the \$47,374. FD Vallee stated that line 480 should be \$17,901, line 590 should be \$7,282, line 521 should be \$17,199, line 520 should be \$7,219 and 4-521 should be \$234. The Board accepted the changes noting that it is what it is.

Advertising & Regional Association - There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Police Department – Chairman Schall asked the Board if the request for the additional officer was acceptable to them. The Board unanimously that they approved an additional officer. Chief Cyr stated that as previously stated at the last meeting, the holiday line can be reduced to \$20,000, which is a \$4,597 savings. The Board approved the PD budget as presented with the corrected holiday line.

Ambulance Department – TM Frost stated that \$15,000 of FC Eichler’s salary is included in the permanent position line of the ambulance department because he covers so often. EMD Miller stated that this money is obviously in the budget and has been used to compute the EMS contracts for Shelburne, Randolph and Coos County. TM Frost stated, however, that it is also included in the Fire Department budget. The Board agreed to leave the salary number in the Ambulance budget and remove it from the Fire Department budget. The Board agreed to the budget as presented.

Fire Department – As noted above, the salary line along with associated benefit costs will be reduced to reflect the change noted above in the Ambulance Budget. There were no other changes to the budget.

Building Inspection – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Emergency Management – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Dispatch Service – The Board asked if the numbers would change if the Town could use Berlin to dispatch during late night hours. Chief Cyr stated that he was not sure. He has tried to get information and pricing from Berlin in the past with no luck. At this time, he feels that Berlin is simply not interested. The Board accepted the budget as presented.

Highway Administration – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Street Lighting – Selectman LaPierre asked if this budget included the exchange program for the street lights. TM Frost stated that it does not. When preparing the budget, FD Vallee did not have numbers from Eversource. The program is not scheduled to begin until after the first of the year. There will be upfront costs associated with the exchange and FD Vallee will see if those numbers are available yet. The budget will stay as is, but as soon as the numbers are available they will be brought before the Budget Committee.

Other Gas - There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Sanitation – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Health and Welfare – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Recreation Department - The wage increase request of \$10,000 will be removed and FD Vallee will add the 2% increase and will make the necessary changes in the benefits line to reflect the change. All other aspects of the budget will remain as is.

Parks Maintenance – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Library – There will be warrant articles put together for Town Meeting.

Patriot Purposes – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Information Booth – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

Conservation Commission – There is no change and was accepted as presented.

TAN – FD Vallee stated that unless money is received from the Mill, she would like to see the monies remain as is. The Board agreed to leave this line item as is.

Transfers - FD Vallee stated that the Library transfer is higher than originally anticipated.

TM Frost stated that in light of the probability of the Presidential Primary taking place on February 9th, the budget hearing scheduled for the 9th will need to be changed. She suggested February 4th rather February 10th with the 11th as the snow date noting that pushing it forward is cutting it close to the deadline for the hearing. Mike Waddell stated that he will talk to the Budget Committee regarding the dates and let the Board know.

Capital Reserve Funds

Town Blding Purchase/Repairs – This line will be increased from \$50,000 to \$85,000 so as to include the Fire Station alarm panel and Town Hall painting. Dep TC Riendeau reviewed the information that she received with the Board regarding the paint bids. After further discussion the Board agreed to go with the bid received from D & M Painting.

Assessing – Based on the Board’s telephone conference today with the Town’s counsel, the Board agreed to decrease the amount from \$60,000 to \$45,000.

Chairman Schall stated that this year’s CRF appropriations are \$100,000 more than last year and asked the Board how they wanted to move forward.

Highway Heavy Equipment – Chairman Schall asked PWD Holmes how many hours are on the backhoe. He stated that he wasn’t sure but that it was a lot. However, PWD Holmes reminded Chairman Schall that the backhoe is not included in the CRF account, it will be presented in a Warrant Article. Chairman Schall and PWD

Holmes discussed the need for the replacement of the Holder and Chevy Pickup. The Board accepted this line as is.

Ambulance – Chairman Schall asked EMD Miller if he was playing catch-up with the \$100,000 request. EMD Miller explained that he was not in a rush and could probably ask for less because of the third ambulance. However, the two current ambulances have issues. Most of the department revenues come from transfers and there needs to be at least two on the road at all times. He also noted that the new proposed EMS contracts include these monies. EMD Miller noted that while he is not in a super rush, he would like to replace the next ambulance in 2017. The last breakdown was during a patient transfer. They had to call Manchester's EMS team to finish the transfer. The ambulance was down for four days and in that time, the department missed about \$5,000 in revenue. PWD Holmes informed the Board that as being in charge of the maintenance on these vehicles, they will not make the 10 year plan. He urged the Board not to wait for the additional purchase. The Board left the line as is.

After the Board's review of the Capital Reserve Funds, they left all as is with the exception of Assessment and Town Building Purchase and Repairs lines.

TM Frost informed the Board that they still have to address Warrant Articles and hope to have the bulk of those prepared for their next meeting on December 28th. FD Vallee stated that they will have the encumbrances ready for the next meeting as well.

Software review – Chairman Schall stated that he specifically had questions as the software relates to Assessing portion. AC Lutz stated that she has spoken with several of the Towns who currently have the AssessPro program. She asked questions regarding hidden costs and was informed of possibilities but they were minimal. The only issue that AC Lutz thought might be an issue is the sketches. While the Towns the data, most software companies are proprietary with regard to letting them go. However, she said that the Lebanon said that Wayne Peters has been able to obtain data from Vision without cost previously. When the data is received Patriot will convert the code. AC Lutz stated that all Towns that currently have AssessPro are satisfied with the program and support. While Gorham will be the first Town for the motor vehicle software, they are not the first to use CollectPro. FD Vallee presented the Board with her top six reasons for at least changing the financial software.

Chairman Schall explained that he understood why the Town needed to get away from BMSI, but he is concerned that we are exchanging for the "Cadillac" version of software. He wondered if there was other software available and would produce the same results at a lessor cost to the Town. FD Vallee stated that AccuFund is within \$6,000 of the price of Tyler Technologies, and there were a lot of negative comments about MuniSmart and its support. FD Vallee and TM Frost reviewed the five year payment plan with the Board, noting that funding would be through Warrant Articles for the next five years. Chief Cyr stated that he looked forward to being able to access his department's budget numbers on his own. He also stated that this system looked like it would help revamp the current purchase order system. TM Frost stated that it would eliminate duplication of work and be more efficient. Department heads will have the opportunity to be more involved with tracking their expenditures. TM Frost stated that we would work as a team to help get everyone trained and acclimated with the software. She also noted that she would not be surprised if Blum Shapiro wouldn't take care of all training to start with. EMD Miller stated that he would like the idea that payroll can be tracked more thoroughly. He will be able to see the actual costs for transfers. Chairman Schall again stressed that he understands why the need to change, he just wants to make sure that all avenues have been explored, noting that Gorham is a small Town. AC Lutz stated that not all assessing departments that she spoke to were large. One of them being Brentwood. Mike Waddell asked how a 2/3 warrant article could be avoided and wondered whether it was legal to simply put it on an article and try to get a majority vote. Further discussion took place

with regard to funding through warrant articles and other means of funding and/or bonding. Chief Cyr asked if after this software is up and running whether or not any positions will be able to be eliminated. TM Frost stated that it would not happen right away, but maybe through attrition.

The Board asked TM Frost to look into all possible ways of funding the software. All Board members were in agreement with signing the contract with Patriot and to move forward with the software.

TM Frost asked the Board for a final number for the “merit” line. The Board agreed to \$12,000 with the understanding that it included raises as well as the taxes and other costs associated with the wage increases.

3. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Jeff Schall

Grace LaPierre

Terry Oliver