

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2014, 6:00 PM
GORHAM TOWN HALL**

Gorham Selectmen present: Jeff Schall, Bill Jackson, Grace LaPierre
Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk; Rachael Brown, Berlin Daily Sun; PJ Cyr, Chief of Police; Jay Holmes

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

2. Appointments:

a) Rep. William Hatch – Legislative Update: Mr. Hatch did not attend meeting.

3. New Business

Prior to moving forward, Chairman Jackson reviewed the following items. Chairman Jackson asked Grace LaPierre how she would like to be addressed, i.e. selectperson, etc. She stated that she was okay with being referred to as a selectman. Chairman Jackson also mentioned a conference on May 1st being held by Local Government Center that Selectman LaPierre may want to attend. She stated that she had already signed up for it and would pass along the \$20.00 fee to the Town.

Chairman Jackson passed out a packet of information to update the Board's binders. He said that it included an article from the Union Leader for Portland Pipeline, and noted that oral arguments for this legal matter will take place on April 16, 2014. He also put in an article for the ambulance section that relates to the Colebrook and Stewartstown issue on Police coverage. For the tax section, he included a copy of the 2013 tax rates for cities/towns in New Hampshire. Lastly, he included information from the NH Public Policy Website with regard to NH Senior Data as it relates to elderly exemptions.

Chairman Jackson mentioned the letter received from Ron Donato regarding the situation in January in which Mr. Donato asked for the original letter of January to be expunged. TM Frost stated that after the meeting that Mr. Donato attended, she spoke with Lisa White again to confirm Lisa's original feelings. TM Frost stated that Ms. White did in fact feel extremely uncomfortable and intimidated with Mr. Donato's actions. She also said that to date, Mr. Donato has not arranged to speak with Ms. White. Further discussion took place regarding the matter, and it was decided to take no further action in this matter.

Chairman Jackson also stated that he had made copies of the Official NH Assessment Manual, which was updated in 2014; along with the NH Equalization Manual, both manuals will be left in the Selectmen's office for review and reference.

a) List of 2013 Abatement Applications: Chairman Jackson opened by stating the list is short but voluminous and that anyone can request an abatement as it is their legal right. Chairman Jackson highlighted Walmart, Portland Pipeline, Great Lakes Hydro and Gorham Paper because these properties stand for large reduction amounts. The list of current request for abatements totals a reduction in the property assessment value for \$31,928,425.

Jay Holmes asked the Board if the Town lost that amount of assessment value in property, what kind of an effect it would be on the tax rate. TM Frost stated that it would be about \$9.00.

It was noted that again that there would be 15-minute oral arguments on the Portland Pipeline abatement case on April 16 at the NH Supreme Court. Chairman Jackson stated that he felt that this information needed to be aired publicly.

Jay Holmes noted the 15-minute opportunity to state our case, and asked the Board if that was sufficient and if the Town is happy so far with the outcome of the case. The Board stated that so far neither the Town nor Portland Pipeline has won anything, but felt that it was positive that the Court would listen to the BTLA matter. Further discussion took place regarding the methodology used by DRA, the Town and Portland Pipeline in establishing assessment values.

The Board asked TM Frost to set up a meeting with Attorney Rob Upton and Assessor Skip Sansoucy so that they can provide the Board with an update of the matter. It was also suggested that the City of Berlin and their attorney be present for this meeting.

Chairman Jackson asked TM Frost and Assessing Clerk Lutz if Skip Sansoucy had given the necessary back up for Walmart's assessment, they stated that they have asked for this information several times and to date, Mr. Sansoucy has not forwarded it. Chairman Jackson stated that he would speak directly with Mr. Sansoucy to get this information.

Further discussion took place regarding the 2013 Abatement requests.

b) Appalachian Trail Community Update: TM Frost stated that she has been trying to pull a committee together and that she had spoken with Rueben Rajala. He said that he would help, but did not want to be on the committee as a full-time member. Selectman Schall told TM Frost that he would help in pulling together the committee. Further discussion took place with regarding to the committee and who should be recruited for it.

c) Street Lights Survey: Chairman Jackson asked if the Town had the authority to shut off streetlights on Routes 2 and 16. TM Frost stated that the Town does have the authority and thought that PWD Holmes would be okay with going out with someone prior to sunrise to look at which lights may be shut off. Further discussion took place regarding this matter.

d) Kiosk Use Report: Chairman Jackson asked TM Frost if the Chamber monitors how much internet usage is being used at the kiosk. TM Frost said that the Chamber does not monitor the internet usage at this time.

Selectman Schall brought up whether or not the Chamber may be able to take over the Information Booth as has been discussed at previous meetings. Further discussion took place and the Board asked TM Frost to contact the Chamber to see how they would feel about it, and see if the Town could get on one of their meeting agendas.

Jay Holmes asked about how the Town might be able to further help promote local businesses. He said that it would be nice to be able to use the slogan Upper Mount Washington Valley to signify our area. Berlin and points north are classified as Great North Woods, and he thought that identifying

the Town, as an extension to the Mount Washington Valley would have value to the local businesses.

e) Boston Post Cane Report: Chairman Jackson passed out information on the Boston Cane that explained its history. He went on to say that the Town has kept the original cane in the meeting room on the first floor and that the last cane that was given out was a replica. Further discussion took place regarding the process of reestablishing this tradition. It was suggested that something be put on the Town's website so the oldest resident might be established.

Prior to moving, on to new business Selectman Schall wanted to let the Board and TM Frost know that North Country Council was giving out free admission tickets to a Broadband Conference on May 1st in Concord. While he felt that this conference would give good information, he cannot attend, but thought it might be something that could be attended by someone from the Town. He also mentioned that Thursday night is United Way's Annual Dinner at White Mountain Chalet, and he plans on attending.

4. Old Business

a) Report of 1st Meeting of Public Safety Development Committee: Chairman Jackson wanted to make sure that it is clear that the Committee understands its direction and purpose. He went on to say that, the Committee should be developing a basis for contracts for the surrounding communities and the county and that they will be brought to the Board for discussion and approval.

TM Frost stated that the Committee has a clear understanding of what and how the contracts need to be completed. She went on to say that, the committee met on March 28 and had a general discussion on services. Mike Waddell suggested that an asset inventory be completed with depreciated values. The Committee also spoke about public services. TM Frost stated that the Committee would be meeting with Shelburne, Randolph and Coos County representatives to find out what they want for services from the Town. TM Frost also stated that the Committee wants to see if the County wanted more areas covered as had been discussed previously. To date, she has spoken with Paul Grenier, Jo Carpenter, Ted Wier and is waiting to hear back from them with regard to a convenient time to meet. She had spoken with Jerry Marcou, representative for Coos County, and had an appointment scheduled, but the meeting has been cancelled and will be rescheduled.

Selectman Schall stated that the purpose of meeting with Shelburne, Randolph and Coos County is to look at what is wanted for services only, the Committee does not intend to discuss costs. Chairman Jackson stated that with regard to costs the cards will fall where they fall, noting that the costs needed to be realistic. He went on to say that, the Town needs to be able to clearly show details on its costs.

b) Update on BTLA Hearing for Great Lakes Hydro Appeal: While this subject had previously been discussed in this meeting, TM Frost reiterated that the matter is continued until June and that so far the matter has gone as well as possible.

c) Attorney Boutin Response to RSA 126-X: TM Frost informed the Board that she has asked Town's Attorney Ed Boutin if we needed to change the Personnel Policy, and he feels that we covered well enough at this time. He did suggest, however, that at some point in time we review the entire policy.

d) Security at Library and Public Works: TM Frost presented the Board with proposals from Pope Security Systems, Inc., one for the Highway Department Office and the other for the Library. The Board thanked TM Frost for the information. Further discussion took place regarding the need for security and keeping the Town's employees safe. Information for the Library will be passed along to the Library's Board of Trustees for them to make a decision for the Library staff. Further discussion took place and it was suggested that TM Frost get quotes for the Fire/Ambulance Department building.

e) Current List of Potential Property to be Deeded: TM Frost presented the Board with an updated list of properties that are to be deeded. Chairman Jackson asked what the amount of the mechanic's lien was that the Town placed on the Chaudhry property. TM Frost stated that she would look into that for the Board. Further discussion took place regarding the list.

5. Public Comment

PJ Cyr of the Zoning Board informed the Board that Pat Murphy told him that he was going to be gone for most of the year, and because of this would be stepping down as a full time member of the Zoning Board. He also stated that Sue Whitehouse's term was up in March. He will ask her to get a letter of interest to TM Frost so she can be considered for reappointment. Further discussion took place with regard the vacancies on this board.

PJ Cyr as Chief of Police stated that Phil Pelletier is graduating from the Police Academy on Friday. Officer Pelletier will complete two weeks of training then will be on his own.

AC Michelle Lutz stated that Rich Dorsett of KRT Appraisals would be meeting with Denis Fournier on Friday to review his assessment value of a parcel of land; this meeting is part of the BTLA requirements.

6. Other Business

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost stated that May 1st at 10:00 am there is a Union arbitration meeting scheduled. TM Frost will keep the Board posted on this matter.

TM Frost stated that she had received an email from Attorney Sabeau with regard to the Verizon Lease. Attorney Sabeau has a couple of things that she would like to change. TM Frost stated that she would bring the correctioned/updated Lease to the next meeting.

TM Frost stated that the Water and Sewer Department noticed that Christmas falls on a Thursday this year and wondered if the Town will be off/closed on Friday December 26. Chairman Jackson stated that he felt it would be nice to be able to give the employees that day because of where the Christmas holiday falls. Selectman Schall felt that we should look at look at the holiday policy and possibly make another holiday floating so that day could be used instead of giving an additional holiday to the employees. He said that the Town's holiday policy is generous as it is. Further discussion took place regarding this matter.

TM Frost informed the Board that Architect Tim Sappington has reviewed the buildings front doors. Mr. Sappington stated that at this time, the Town is ADA compliant. TM Frost also stated that the

window company had looked at the windows so they can be fixed and made airtight. As soon as a proposal is received, she will bring it in for the Boards review.

Last Thursday TM Frost met with a contingent from Russia with regard to National Parks. They wanted to know how the National Forest effects the Town and how the Town works with the National Parks. Further discussion took place regarding the visit.

TM Frost presented the Board with Certificates of Appointments for Carol T. Porter as Tax Collector for three years; Elaine Riendeau as Deputy Town Clerk/Tax Collector for three years and David Graham as Alternate Library Trustee for one year, for their signatures. All Certificates were executed.

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

c) Approval of Minutes (March 24, 2014): Selectman Schall made a motion to approve the Minutes of March 24, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, voted unanimously.

d) Sign Manifest: All manifests were signed.

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

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II a-e: There was no need for a non-public session.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

William H. Jackson

Jeff Schall

Grace LaPierre