

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014, 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; Brian Ruel

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

2. Appointments:

3. New Business

a) Losier Abatement Application: TM Frost presented the Board with a memo from AC Lutz that explained a situation with regard to property owned by John and Paulette Losier. In January 2014, the Losiers submitted an application to place their gravel pit into current use with their other property. Mary Pinkham Langer inspected the site and found that the site was in fact reclaimed and was eligible to be placed in current use. At that time, the Losiers had also asked for an abatement, which was in the form of a letter request. The Planning Board had the final decision with regard to the current use application, and in the meantime, the abatement request had been put aside until such approval. The Town's Assessor, based on Ms. Pinkham Langer's review, recommended reducing the property assessment value from \$79,700 to \$27,700. TM Frost stated that AC Lutz is asking the Board if they wish to grant the 2013 abatement. **Selectman LaPierre made a motion to accept the abatement as recommended by KRT Appraisal, the Town's Assessor, seconded by Selectman Oliver, voted unanimously.**

b) Tax Rate Setting Preparation: Chairman Schall thanked TM Frost for the tax scenario sheet that she prepared and asked what the State recommends for a fund balance. TM Frost stated that it is recommended to keep \$700,000 to \$800,000 on the low side with the high side being \$1,200,000. She reminded the Board that these figures are just estimates as of yet, but if they decided to use \$200,000 of the fund balance, the land/building auctions can be put back toward the fund balance. After further discussion of the options, the Board and TM Frost agreed to use \$200,000 of the fund balance to assist with setting the tax rate.

c) Great Lakes Hydro BTLA Decision: TM Frost stated that the BTLA had a split decision on the Great Lakes Hydro abatement that the Town and City of Berlin were working on together. While the City of Berlin did not win their portion, the Town did win. She said that GLH could go further with the matter as far as the appeal process for the Town, but it was a good decision for the Town. GLH has 30 days to appeal the decision.

d) Town Banking RFP: TM Frost stated that she had asked FD Vallee to prepare a Request for Proposal for the Town's banking. The RFP includes lockbox services so tax payments can be received and deposited into the Town's account quicker. If the Town elected to use this service, it would consider doing it a few months a year during the primary tax bill receipt time. The RFPs are due November 7, 2014. TM Frost also stated that she may look at doing the same for auditing. Paul Mercier has been doing this service for several years and has done a great job for the Town, but a fresh set of eyes may not be a bad idea.

4. Old Business

a) OHRV Extended Hours for RiverFire: TM Frost stated that the State did in fact allow extended hours for ATVs for the RiverFire event. Permission was given for this event only. It is her intention to start meeting with Chris Gamache, NH Bureau of Trails, in December to see about keeping our trail system open later in general so the Town's hours of operation will be the same as the City of Berlin as well as alleviate the need for special requests.

b) Public Works Roof Update: TM Frost stated that six companies attended the second walk-through. The bids have gone out and are due on October 23, 2014. David Laurin will review the bids with the Town when they are received.

c) Public Safety Contract Development Committee: Chairman Schall stated that at the last meeting of the Committee they had pulled a plan together and needed to work on compiling the data. The Committee will have the information together for the Board's next meeting.

d) Public Auction Open House Report: TM Frost stated that she attended the open house inspections last Tuesday, for the properties. She said that there were two parties that got information on the Currier property and about five interested parties for 15 Main Street. She told the Board that she feels the Town is in good shape to move forward with the auctions. The Board and TM Frost also discussed how the Highway Department did a great job cleaning up the Currier property and getting it ready for the auction.

e) Town Hall Windows: TM Frost stated FD Vallee spoke with the owner of the company and should have the requested information within the next couple of days.

5. Public Comment:

Brian Ruel asked the Board about the Fire Department and the old truck and if the department is planning on or has already purchased a new truck. TM Frost stated that Chief Eichler came in to see the Board for information purposes at this time. The department will need to do something, but capital reserve money will be used when it is time to purchase anything.

Brian Ruel, as a member of the Presidential Range Riders. Mr. Ruel stated that he had recently been informed that Dennis Tupick, owner of the Gorham Industrial Building, has closed the portion of the snowmobile trail that crosses his property. This trail allows access to the lower Main Street area businesses. Mr. Ruel asked the Board if the Town would consider assisting the club with creating another access so snowmobilers could access those businesses. The Board, TM Frost and Mr. Ruel discussed other potential trail access. It was suggested that Mr. Ruel speak to the Railroad to see if traffic/trail could run parallel to the tracks/Railroad Street. Mr. Ruel also informed the Board that the Langlands are posting their property in Shelburne that allows snowmobile access from NH to Maine. He said that the Langlands were doing this because ATVs cannot access Gorham from their campground. The property that is in question for ATV access is approximately 80 feet of National Forest Land. The Board said that they would write a letter stating that the Town supported doing a land swap for a right of way for ATV access to Gorham. TM Frost stated that she would be seeing Tom Wagner at a meeting Wednesday night and would check to see if there is a way to work this kind of a deal.

Dennis Arguin asked TM Frost and the Board where things stood with regard to the Moose River. TM Frost stated that the letters were ready to go out to the abutting landowners. If the Town receives favorable responses, it will proceed. TM Frost stated that the sand bags had been replaced and put down where they need to be instead of on a pallet.

6. Other Business

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost stated that Mike Guay had responded to the bedbug ordinance and that she had received the language for the ordinance. Mr. Guay will be on the next agenda.

TM Frost stated that a letter was received from the State stating that Byrne Auto was applying for a tobacco license. Chairman Schall asked if that was an issue being so close to the school and TM Frost stated that she did not believe so.

TM Frost said that in an effort to clean up current use property files, one property was found to not have a signed application on file. The Board signed the application for the file.

TM Frost stated that Linda from North Country Council had sent out an email that noted the reception starts at 4:45 pm and the business meeting will start at 5:45 pm for Tuesday's annual meeting.

b) Selectmen's Update: Selectman LaPierre asked whether or not there were any plans in the works to repair Cascade Flats, stating that the south end of the road is in real bad shape. Selectman Oliver said that the worse is from the bridge up to the main road. TM Frost stated the issue is with the Tinker Brook culvert. Selectman LaPierre stated that maybe the road could be closed.

Selectman LaPierre asked about the street light status. TM Frost said that they are working on it and that she had spoken with Nancy Riendeau.

Selectman Oliver asked if a date has been set yet to meet with Chris Gamache to talk about any complaints and hours of operation. TM Frost stated that there was not anything scheduled as of yet. The Board and TM Frost discussed that when meeting with Mr. Gamache some of the items that should be included in the discussion is hours of operation, trail access for the Jimtown Road area and Cascade Flats as well as access to the car wash.

Chairman Schall asked to get the Application Trail Community back on the agenda, noting that if the Town followed through being part of it, the Town would be highlighted on the map as well as the website.

c) Approval of Minutes (September 8, 2014 & September 22, 2014): Selectman LaPierre noted that Selectman Oliver was not included in the September 22nd minutes, and wording needs to be corrected in the October 13, 2014 minutes. **Selectman LaPierre made a motion to approve the minutes from September 8, September 22 and October 13, 2014, with the discussed corrections, 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 e: On a motion by Chairman Schall, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into non-public session at 7:33 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 7:45 pm. Schall – Aye, LaPierre – Aye, Oliver – Aye.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Jeff Schall

Grace LaPierre

Terry Oliver