

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2013, 6:00 PM
GORHAM TOWN HALL**

Gorham Selectmen present: Bill Jackson, Paul Robitaille, Jeff Schall

Also present: Robin L. Frost, Town Manager; Denise Vallee, Director of Finance; Carol Porter, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Dennis Arguin, Steve Gauthier, Paula Poirier, RJE Properties; Gail Scott, Berlin Daily Sun

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by Selectman Robitaille.

2. Appointments: There were no appointments.

3. New Business:

a) Fund Balance and Uncollected Taxes: TM Frost informed the Board that she did not have any specific person/taxpayers that she wanted to bring to their attention, but that she wanted to talk to them about the older outstanding taxes and the current years' outstanding balance. TM Frost informed the Board that she had been working with Denise Vallee, Director of Finance, with regard to moving a portion of the uncollected taxes into a "doubtful account". TM Frost went on to inform the Board that the Fund Balance was currently \$572,000; noting that they would like to move at least \$200,000 of the uncollected balance into the doubtful account. TM Frost went on to say that of the uncollected back taxes, Currier Sales & Service and Munces total \$330,000. TM Frost expressed her concern that even if some of the properties were taken, it was doubtful that the Town would be able to recoup the monies that are currently outstanding. At this time, TM Frost asked the Board for direction with regard to the uncollected taxes. Selectman Jackson asked what the current balance of outstanding taxes is for 2012. TCTC Porter informed the Board and Selectman Jackson that it was currently \$620,000. Selectman Jackson asked FD Vallee how much of the \$750,000 TAN had been used; FD Vallee stated that approximately \$100,000 had been used, noting that figure did not contain a school payment. Selectman Jackson went on to ask FD Vallee what she felt was the worst case (with the school payment), and FD Vallee indicated an amount of \$500,000. Selectman Jackson expressed further concern regarding how much was outstanding from the 2012 payments in December coupled with the time until the next bill is due in July and stated that he did not have a warm feeling concerning tax receipts in July. Further discussion took place regarding the current financial condition of the Town. After further discussion about the budget and direction the Town needs to take with regard to spending, Selectman Jackson said that the Board needed to have a serious discussion about the budget and spending, indicating that the Board needed some direction from the Town Manager and that the Board needs to decide what they would like to see and be sure that the brakes are put on. It was agreed that no unnecessary spending should be taking place. TM Frost informed the Board that she spoke with the Gorham Paper & Tissue and that the Mill indicated to her that payment would be made in the second quarter for their outstanding tax balance. Chairman Robitaille stated he felt that while we are willing to work with taxpayers, it was time for the Town to go after some of these properties that have been sitting on the books, especially Currier's. Selectman Schall and TCTC Porter also stated that they were concerned about those properties that have been on the list for a couple of years that need to be taken care of. After further discussion, it was agreed that the Town needed to move forward with the taking of property. TM Frost and the Board then discussed the list of requested abatements, noting that there was almost \$1,000,000 in requested abated values from 27 property owners.

b) Gorham Art Walk: Finance Director Vallee stated that both she and Rec Director Jeff Stewart had met with the Chamber of Commerce with regard to this summer's Art Walk on Exchange Street. FD Vallee informed the

Board that they would like to close Exchange Street for the Art Walk on either the second or the third Wednesday in July and August from the hours of 4:00 PM to 8:30 PM. FD Vallee stated that vendors would be situated along the street sides, noting that there is some interest in including a Farmers Market with the event. FD Vallee informed the Board that she has spoken with Chief Cyr with regard to closing Exchange Street and he noted that he was okay it. After further discussion, it was agreed to allow the closure of Exchange Street to allow for the Art Walk.

c) Losier Assessment Question: TM Frost informed the Board that John Losier posed questions regarding the assessed value of Joele Losier's property, as well as the assessment of the Losier Gravel Pit. TM Frost informed the Board that KRT will be taking a look at Joele's property/house and that Mary Pinkham-Langer will take a look at the gravel pit.

d) Town Manager Contract: TM Frost reminded the Board that her employment contract will be up for renewal soon and asked if that could be discussed. After further discussion, Selectman Jackson stated that he was not willing to talk about the contract this evening based on the Board's earlier discussion on the budget and the fact that the Selectman have not discussed it yet but would be willing to do so at a later date. Selectman Schall also stated that he was not prepared to handle the matter, while maybe not for the same reasons as Selectman Jackson; he stated that he wanted to be able to review the contract. It was agreed that the matter would be placed on the next agenda.

4. Old Business

a) Theater Heat: TM Frost informed the Board that Kevin Rines', K & R Heating, estimate came in at \$4,592 noting that the insurance company has reimbursed the Town \$3,592 (\$4,592 - \$1,000 deductible). TM Frost went on to say that, the insurance company is willing to keep the estimate open just in case this fix does not work. The insurance company would then be willing to cover the difference between what it costs and what we paid.

b) Arguin/Corrigan/Riverbank: Because Dennis Arguin was at the meeting, the Board and TM Frost wanted to present Mr. Arguin with an update. TM Frost informed Mr. Arguin that Jeff Blecharczyk, NHDES, is sending out a letter to set up an appointment to look at the area in question.

c) Building Permits and Fees: Selectman Jackson voiced his concern regarding the residents were paying for a simple building permit fee, as example to replace siding. Selectman Jackson had seen what a resident paid for a building permit and was taken back at the cost for the resident. Further discussion took place regarding the Building Permit Fee Schedule, and it was decided that it would be put back on the agenda so clarifications could be made.

5. Public Comment: There was none.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost informed the Board that Highway Director Holmes is looking to move the gate on Bellevue Place closer to town. After further discussion, it was agreed by the Board that it was ok to move the gate. TM Frost told the Board that she has met with Regan Pride and will be getting him further information. TM Frost informed the Board that the Fire Department training money comes out of the training budget.

b) Selectmen's Updates: Selectman Schall informed the Board and TM Frost that while he was nominated to represent the Town for North Country Council, he noted that NCC meets in the afternoon usually between 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm. Selectman Schall stated that he could not make those meeting times because of his work schedule. Selectman Jackson informed the Board that he would not be able to attend the next meeting, and that they will discuss it at the next Board meeting. The Board discussed the 4th of July parade and decided that they would not participate in the judging the home decorating contest this year. The Board also mentioned that the next meeting for AVRRD is to take place on May 1st at the Mahoosuc Inn.

c) Approval of Minutes (April 8, 2013): Selectman Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes for April 8 as presented, seconded by Selectman Schall, approved unanimously.

d) Sign Manifest: All manifests were signed.

e) Sign Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary): TM Frost presented the Board with an abatement for Kevin and Cindy Rines for their Spring Road property. TM Frosted noted that this abatement is pursuant to the settlement reached. **Selectmen Jackson made a motion to approve and sign the negotiated settlement of Kevin Rines' property in the Pellerin Development, seconded by Selectman Schall, voted unanimously.** TM Frost presented three letters to the Board that needed signatures regarding Veteran exemptions, the Board signed as necessary.

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II d: On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into Non-Public Session at 6:59 pm. Jackson –aye, Robitaille – aye, Schall - aye.

On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to return to Public Session at 7:28 pm. Jackson –aye, Robitaille – aye, Schall - aye.

There were no decisions made as a result of the non-public session.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Paul Robitaille

William H. Jackson

Jeff Schall