

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, July 1, 2013
GORHAM TOWN HALL

Selectmen present: Paul R. Robitaille, Chairman; William H. Jackson; Jeffrey Schall

Also present: Robin L. Frost, Town Manager, Police Chief PJ Cyr, Michelle Lutz, Assessing Clerk

Stephan Hamilton, Josephine Belville, Henry Sanschagrín, Dennis Arguin, Don Provencher, Jay Holmes, Bob Langlands, Beth Host, Mike Waddell, Gail Scott, *Berlin Daily Sun*.

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

2. Appointments:

a) **Stephan Hamilton, Director, DRA Property Appraisal Division:** Mr. Hamilton explained that he understood the Board had a presentation from Sansoucy regarding tax rate setting, etc. He read about it in a newspaper article and the meeting minutes. It was his intent tonight to explain the tax rate setting especially the county portion. DRA uses their utility values in the calculation of the towns' apportionment of the county taxes. The values derived by Gorham's contract utility assessor are used in calculating the local tax rates. In 2011, the Town of Gorham was responsible for 8.6876% of the county taxes. In 2012, the Town of Gorham was responsible for 8.9072% of the county taxes. The changes in the percentages are based on a few different factors, one of which is the utility assessments. The DRA provides the utility values based on RSA 83-F Utility Property Tax. Selectmen Schall stated that there is quite a disparity between DRA values and Sansoucy values. The utilities are using the DRA values in their cases against the Town. Mr. Hamilton agreed that there is certainly more risk when the Town's values are higher. Mr. Schall said that he understands that the DRA values utilities based on cost with no appreciation of the business or property taken into consideration. Mr. Hamilton stated that DRA uses standard utility property techniques, not necessarily the cost basis. Selectman Jackson stated that he had gotten the DRA utility values off the DRA website. There is a great disparity. Why is that and can they show the Town how they arrived at those values? Mr. Hamilton said that the information used to develop those values is confidential, citing RSA 21-J:14. This did not satisfy Selectman Jackson. Mr. Hamilton said that, for instance, they value the pipeline as a whole and then apportion value to the Towns through which the utility goes. They use varied methods of assessing in this process, including cost and sales. Selectman Robitaille stated that he feels we are going to the BTLA with one hand tied behind our backs. He is very concerned about this. He imagines that with regard to the disparity of values, the truth lies somewhere in between. He thinks our values are in line. Mr. Hamilton agrees that there is a discrepancy, but stated that doesn't necessarily mean one is right and one is wrong. Selectman Jackson turned to the recent revaluation and spoke of the StonyBrook subdivision. All of the values in this area were predicated on one sale. Is that appropriate and how should the Board move forward? Mr. Hamilton stated that the assessors look at the overall market. Often in unique areas there are not a sufficient number of sales. Is there evidence of new sales that show the values are incorrect or too high? That would be something to watch out for. Selectman Jackson asked if it was prudent to run without a contract and how often should building permits and new subdivisions be assessed. Mr. Hamilton said that the Town should have a contract and the building permits and subdivisions should be reviewed every year. Josephine Belville, the DRA monitor for Gorham, monitored the revaluation and has reviewed the sales

used as well. She pointed to the USPAP manual that shows how the reval was done and how the values were developed. Selectman Jackson stated that he had not seen the manual. Selectman Robitaille had reviewed the manual, but Selectman Schall was not on the Board when the manual was received. There were no further questions or comments and Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Belville left the meeting.

b) Chief PJ Cyr – ATV Use on Local Roads: Chief Cyr was charged, at the Public Hearing, with developing a plan for residents on the local roads to access Main Street by OHRV. The Selectmen were provided a draft ordinance that addresses this issue. Chief Cyr selected a common point of connection to Main Street for neighborhoods with multiple accesses to Main Street. He had a visit from a business owner, who wished to remain unnamed, who suggested that the Town issue a “Public Access Decal” at a minimal cost to those wishing to use local roads. This fee could then be used to offset repairs to these roads and signage. Selectman Jackson worried that it might be discriminatory. Chief Cyr stated that he did not think that would be the case and continued his presentation. He pointed out on a map where the access points would actually be. These are also identified in the draft ordinance. He noted that the Town parking lot at the corner of Church and Railroad Streets could be used for trucks and trailers; adding that parking would still be designated for the use of the Family Resource Center. There was discussion about rules of the road, enforcement and a possible curfew on local roads. There was also a suggestion that the penalty for violating the Town ordinance be reduced from \$1000, although it was noted that this was a “not to exceed” amount. Selectman Schall wondered if the Board should change the motion voted at the Public Hearing that opens all local roads during the weekend of the ATV Festival, since the State may not give their approval for Main Street by that time. Henry Sanschagrín stated that it has been a long process to get this far. He was interrupted by Selectman Jackson who wanted to make sure everyone understood that it wasn’t the Town that was holding things up. Mr. Sanschagrín continued that once the roads are opened up, the riders would have to follow the same laws as conventional motor vehicles. He also said that Clinton Savage from the Bureau of Trails told him that DOT and Mr. Savage drove several roads in other Towns that were under review and they were approved on the spot. Main Street in Gorham was not ready to be reviewed at that time, but he doesn’t know why they couldn’t do that now. Selectman Schall asked if the roads were opened, could we begin using the radar trailer to monitor speeding through Town? Chief Cyr stated that he would look at the equipment to see if it would even work appropriately. The equipment is old and may not function correctly any more. On a side note, Chief Cyr stated that Lt. Lemoine plans on writing a grant for 50% of the cost of a new radar trailer next year. Selectman Robitaille opened the floor to the public at this time. Bob Langlands of White Birch Campground stated that he likes the decal idea, but would suggest a very modest fee. He also wanted to make it clear that once the roads are opened, the State and the Presidential OHRV Club will be providing the signage. Frankie Edmondson stated that he believes 8pm is too early to cut off riding and Beth Host agreed with that. Michelle Lutz stated that OHRV’s are not subject to all of the motor vehicle laws as stated by Mr. Sanschagrín, or we wouldn’t have 14 year old riders on the road. She continued that she agrees that the parking lot on the corner of Church and Railroad Streets is a good idea and the fees for the decals would limit riders on the local roads. She wondered why an OHRV without lights would be able to drive on a road at all. Don Provencher wondered if the railroad had been contacted about crossing the tracks. It was pointed out that the only crossings we were discussing would be on the State roads. Rene Boutin stated that he felt the decal would stop speeding on local roads since the riders would actually have permission and not have to ride quickly on the roads so as not to be caught. There was a short discussion about how the decals would work and it was agreed that it needed to be discussed further. Chief Cyr was thanked for his well organized presentation.

3. New Business:

a) Acceptance of Donation to Parks and Recreation: There is a family who will be donating to the Parks and Rec Department for the parks program, but the donation hasn't happened as yet. Therefore, the Board will accept at the next meeting.

4. Old Business:

On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Selectman Schall, the board unanimously reversed the decision of June 17th denying the abatement request of Twin Lights Properties and approved the abatement of Twin Lights Properties based on the recommendation of KRT Appraisal, the Town's contract assessor.

Selectman Jackson asked if any date had been set for KRT to come and inspect the remaining two properties. Michelle Lutz stated that KRT will be in the area from July 15 through July 19 and will address those properties during that time.

On a motion by Selectman Schall, seconded by Selectman Jackson, the Board voted unanimously to clarify the motion made at the public hearing regarding opening the local roads to OHRV's by adding "upon State approval for Main Street."

5. Public Comments: Jay Holmes stated that he wants the Board of Selectmen to review the theme for the 4th of July parade and okay it from now on. He is disappointed in this year's Christmas theme.

Don Provencher echoes the comments of Mr. Holmes and feels it is an embarrassment. He also thanked Selectman Schall for mentioning the radar trailer.

Dennis Arguin was present to see if there had been any word from DES regarding the properties they looked at on the Moose and Androscoggin. TM Frost stated that there was no word as yet, but she would email DES tomorrow.

Mike Waddell said the meeting was interesting.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost was approached by Bob Hickey from Shelburne who asked if he could put a business card display case in the Town Hall. He makes the display cases and then charges businesses to put their business cards in it. He would keep it filled and neat. It was decided that it was not a good idea at this time. TM Frost will contact Mr. Hickey and let him know.

TM Frost reported that she applied for and received a full scholarship from the Municipal Managers' Association of NH to the International City Managers' Association Conference which is being held in Boston in September.

The Library submitted two requests for appointments to the Board of Trustees. Todd Lukazewski has resigned from the Board and the Trustees accepted his resignation with regret. They wish to appoint Aaron Gorban, their current alternate, as a full member and they also wish to appoint David Graham as an alternate member.

On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Selectman Schall, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Aaron Gorban as a full member of the Board of Library Trustees.

On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Selectman Schall the Board unanimously approved the appointment of David Graham as an alternate on the Board of Library Trustees.

Douglas Gralenski has also asked to be appointed to a vacant position on the Conservation Commission.

On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Selectman Schall, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Douglas Gralenski as a member of the Conservation Commission.

b) Selectmen's Updates: Selectman Schall asked if the public phone pedestals could be removed. Chairman Robitaille asked if we might be able to work with Fairpoint to get a public phone installed somewhere in Town. He doesn't believe there is one available anymore. Selectman Jackson stated that he believes the agreement was that if the phones came out, the pedestal also had to come out. This was originally agreed by Verizon, but would have transferred to Fairpoint. TM Frost will review the documents and see what the next step should be.

c) Approval of Minutes (June 24, 2013): On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Selectman Schall, the Board unanimously approved the minutes for the meeting of June 24, 2013.

d) Sign Manifest: There was no manifest to sign.

e) Sign Abatements (if necessary): There were no abatements to be signed.

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 7:45 pm.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Paul R. Robitaille, Chairman

William H. Jackson

Jeffrey Schall