

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2013, 6:00 PM
GORHAM TOWN HALL**

Gorham Selectmen present: Jeff Schall, Paul Robitaille, Bill Jackson Excused Absence
Also present: Robin L. Frost, Town Manager; Deb Thornblad, Berlin Daily Sun; Ron Donato, Jay Holmes, Steve Gauthier, Bob Balon, Don Provencher, Jeff Stewart, Rec Director

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

2. Appointments:

a) Jeff Stewart – Skating Rink Update: RD Stewart informed the Board and TM Frost that the sideboards for the rink are very close to being completed. Chairman Robitaille asked if he planned to paint the boards. RD Stewart said that he wanted to paint the outside of the boards' forest green and the inside white. RD Stewart went on to tell the Board that it was his intention to try to sell advertising space in order to help with maintenance costs. He also told the Board that to date Mr. Pizza had donated \$1,000, Portland Natural Gas Transmission System had donated \$3,000 and Coleman Concrete had donated cement to build the rink. RD Stewart also noted that in kind donations had been kept track of as well. Further discussion took place regarding a schedule for use. RD Stewart also informed the Board that he will be looking to light the rink, stating that the intention was to install two poles on the north side of the rink so the lights will be facing away from the adjacent property owners. He has been in contact with PSNH regarding the lighting as well as timers for the lights. Further discussion took place regarding the rink and it was agreed that the Board is fine with having RD Stewart move forward with the lighting.

RD Stewart also presented the Board with a rough draft of a Community Donation Packet that he has been working on, noting that it was for informational purposes. It is RD Stewart's intention to ask some of the local businesses for donations for particular events and in return use their business name when sponsoring an event. RD Stewart said that he has received a \$200 donation from Genesis for local 5k race, and he has received a \$3,000 donation from Bank of NH for an Open Air Cinema.

3. New Business:

a) Obsolete Fire Radios: TM Frost told the Board that the Fire Department has a number of obsolete radios at the station that would be cost prohibitive to the Town to update. Chief Echler has requested that they be donated to Wildcat Ski Patrol. Further discussion took place, and it was recommended that if they are to be donated, they should go to a not for profit business, such as the Androscoggin Search and Rescue team.

b) Brookfield Dam Update: TM Frost informed the Board that Brookfield Power did everything that should be done regarding the incident that took place last week, noting that the Town's Emergency Management Team also responded appropriately. She went on to say that while everything turned out okay, it was a good exercise for the Town's Emergency Management

Team. Further discussion took place regarding the Town and Brookfield's actions regarding this potential dam break.

4. Old Business:

a) Solid Waste Study: TM Frost informed the Board that Regan Pride was out of state and that he would not be attending this meeting. She went on to tell the Board that while she was promised the report, she still had not received it. TM Frost went on to express her frustration about the delay in receiving the study. Further discussion took place regarding the fact that the study had not been received.

b) Abatement Mediations: TM Frost informed the Board that the Town has been instructed to by BTLA to mediate all cases before the BTLA schedules them. She went on to say that some are residential and some are bigger. TM Frost told the Board that the residential cases could be dealt with by the Town's Assessors. Further discussion took place, and it was agreed by the Board to have TM Frost get started with the Assessors to take care of the residential properties. Selectman Schall asked TM Frost to provide a list of properties involved with this process.

5. Public Comment:

Don Provencher wanted to publicly announce that the Gorham Economic Development Committee was having a meeting at the Gorham Library on Wednesday, October 23 at 6:00 pm. Mr. Provencher said that to date David Graham had led the Committee forward as acting Chairman and Mr. Provencher hoped to keep be able to keep the Committee alive and moving forward. Mr. Provencher also informed the Board and TM Frost that there was going to be a meeting on November 13 at noon for the Passenger Rail Movement. Mr. Provencher said that he is hoping to have the support of the Town and indicated that the new General Manager of the St. Lawrence Railroad will be attending as well as Senator Woodburn and, hopefully, Governor Hassan. Chairman Robitaille thanked Mr. Provencher for his efforts on this project and informed him that TM Frost will attend the meeting as well. Selectman Schall thanked Mr. Provencher as well.

Ron Donato asked the Board and TM Frost what they are doing to keep taxes down. He expressed concern regarding our tax rate because it is the second highest in the State. Mr. Donato also asked why the Library is open year round noting that the Town could save money if it was closed during the winter months. He said with the technology available today, he does not see the need to keep the Library open during the winter months; it may be one way to save money. Mr. Donato also asked why couldn't the Recreation Department move into the Town building. Noting that is another way the Town can save money.

Jay Holmes told the Board and TM Frost that last week's newspaper article was a nice article. Mr. Holmes asked when the Town decided to hire Mr. Sansoucy to assess Walmart. TM Frost and the Board told him that it was decided at a previous meeting to have Mr. Sansoucy look at the assessment because they felt it was too low. Mr. Holmes asked what happens when the Town sets the tax rate on inflated rates. TM Frost said that when the tax rate is set it is based on the current assessed value and that the Town also includes an overlay amount that is part of the tax rate. Mr. Holmes also asked asked about whether or not the Town would consider

including actual marked parking spaces along Main Street for the local businesses. Mr. Holmes was informed that the Town could look into the cost to do that.

Ron Donato asked about the status of the Jimtown Road repairs/maintenance. TM Frost told Mr. Donato that it is on the list of items that the Public Works Department needs to take care of. Mr. Donato asked Chairman Robitaille about a comment that was made by him during a private conversation. Chairman Robitaille reminded Mr. Donato that it was a private conversation and that the Selectmen handle themselves in a courteous, professional manner when in public.

Don Provencher questioned the Board and TM Frost as well as the public, about the number of problems the Town is currently experiencing. Mr. Provencher said that most of the residents in Town are having a hard time, and he feels that it would be in everyone's best interest if we all worked together.

Bob Balon asked what the balance of the overlay account is. TM Frost informed Mr. Balon that it is not an actual account but is part of the tax rate and that at that point in time; she was not sure what the exact figure is.

Jay Holmes stated that back some time Selectman Jackson asked that a questionnaire be sent out to the Town residents. To date, he has not seen it and was wondering if it was every going to be done. Mr. Holmes also asked why Selectman Jackson had not been present at the last few meetings and is concerned that having just a two person Board is really in the best interest of the Town. TM Frost informed Mr. Holmes that Selectman Jackson had an excused absence.

Chairman Robitaille went on to inform everyone that the Board is very aware of the economic decisions that need to be made.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost informed the Board that the information she needed to discuss was for non-public session.

b) Selectmen's Updates: Chairman Robitaille presented the Board and TM Frost with a Town Annual Report from 1938. Chairman Robitaille received an anonymous letter regarding property on Frasier Street that he passed along to TM Frost to handle in the best way possible.

TM Frost said that quite some time ago, the old Rec Department van and truck had gone out to bid, but the Town did not receive any offers. She informed the Board that RD Stewart had reached out to P & L Auto Parts. P & L has offered \$400 for one of the vehicles and \$600 for the other. Because there have been no other offers for the vehicles, TM Frost would like to allow P & L Auto to take the vehicles for the offers noted. Further discussion took place regarding the vehicles, it was agreed by the Board to allow P & L Auto take the vehicles.

c) Approval of Minutes (September 9, 2013): **Selectman Schall made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2013, meeting, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, approved unanimously.** The Minutes for October 7 had not been included in the Board's packets, therefore, it was agreed to review/approve them at the next meeting.

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 a: On a motion by Selectman Schall, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into Non-Public Session at 7:02 pm. Robitaille – aye, Schall - aye.

On a motion by Selectman Schall, seconded by Chairman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to return to Public Session at 7:45 pm. Robitaille – aye, Schall - aye.

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

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

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Paul Robitaille

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William H. Jackson

Jeff Schall