

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, June 18, 2012, 6:30 pm
GORHAM FIRE STATION

Selectmen present: Chairman David Graham, Paul Robitaille, Bill Jackson.

Also present: Robin L Frost, Town Manager, Grace Lapierre, Town Clerk and Tax Collector, Chief PJ Cyr

Denise Vallee, Michelle Lutz, Jeff Stewart, Chief Rick Eichler, Gail Scott, *Berlin Daily Sun*. Jeff Schall, Bob Demers, John Lapierre, Glen Eastman, and others.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by Chairman Graham.

2. Appointments:

a) Chief PJ Cyr – Department Update: Chief Cyr thanked the Board for their time. He announced the graduation of Eric Benjamin from the NH Police Academy and introduced Officer Benjamin to the Board. He also announced the promotion of Officer Mark Santos to the rank of Corporal. Corporal Santos has assumed some supervisory duties with the changes in personnel and is taking on other added responsibilities. Corporal Santos and Officer Benjamin were congratulated by the Board members and TM Frost.

b) Grace Lapierre – Town Clerk & Tax Collector: Ms. Lapierre read a letter announcing her retirement as of June 30, 2012. Chairman Graham stated that this is a sad and happy day for all of us. Selectman Robitaille echoed Chairman Graham's comments. He felt that it is the end of an era and she will be missed. Selectman Jackson stated, "First the Old Man of the Mountains and now Grace." He echoed the other Selectmen's comments and added that her dedication to the townspeople goes way beyond. Her love for Gorham and the job was very apparent. She collected taxes and actually made people feel good about paying them! It will be hard to fill her shoes. He hopes Grace and her husband enjoy their time together. Further discussion will take place later in the meeting.

c) Jeff Stewart – Recreation Department: Mr. Stewart asked if the Board was agreeable to replace the small concert sign on the common with the sign he proposed at the last Selectmen's meeting. **On a motion by Selectman Robitaille, seconded by Selectman Jackson, the Board agreed that he should move forward with the installation of the new sign.** Mr. Stewart then asked the Board to consider dugouts for the ballfield on the common. He is proposing structures similar to those at Promenade Field. They would be built with a storage room as well. The Board members will review what is at Promenade Field before making a determination on this proposal.

3. New Business:

a) July 4th Celebration: TM Frost spoke about the decorating contest, which is judged by the Board. They decided to judge this on June 28th at 4 pm. The Board will also discuss Town Hall staffing at that time. With regard to the parade on July 4th, Chairman Graham will be out of Town and Selectman Jackson will not be participating in the parade. Since Selectman Robitaille will be walking and taking

pictures and Chairman Graham will be out of town, he doesn't feel it would be appropriate for him to be in a Selectmen's car alone. TM Frost will walk in the parade with Selectman Robitaille.

4. Old Business:

a) Assessing Update: TM Frost reported that the project is on track with data entry being done remotely from around noon through 10 pm. She and Michelle Lutz have completed several cold calls to homeowners to see how the actual field work has been going. TM Frost explained that she called approximately 25 homeowners and about a third of them had an assessor enter their home, a third were not home at the time, but received a letter to call KRT Appraisals to make an appointment for entry and a third said that they were home, and spoke with someone, but they did not come into their home. Ms. Lutz reported that she also made several calls and all of the people she called were very satisfied with the way the visits were handled. All of the people she spoke with had an assessor enter their home to view the inside of the property. TM Frost assured the Board that she and Ms. Lutz will stay on top of the project.

b) 2011 Abatements/Exemptions – Review and Determination: The Board received a list of the abatements that have been reviewed by Assessor George Sansoucy so far. After review, **Selectman Jackson made a motion to accept the recommendations of George Sansoucy on the first 16 abatement applications on the list, seconded by Selectman Robitaille. So voted unanimously.** There are 37 more applications on which Mr. Sansoucy will review and make recommendations.

5. Public Comment: Glen Eastman reported that there is an outdoor recreation policy that should be reviewed before placing anything on the common. There was a grant received from the National Park Service which provisions should be reviewed.

Mr. Eastman, speaking as a former selectman and individual, will miss Grace Lapierre. He feels the Town is taking a hit with her resignation and he hopes the Board and TM will take whatever steps necessary to make this a smooth transition. He is also very concerned about the assessor activities and not getting into homes.

John Lapierre stated that all the years he has known Grace, she has assisted all the residents of Gorham. She knows the laws better than anyone.

Bob Demers was home when the assessor came to his house and he felt they performed a run-through rather than a walk-through. He also stated that he was told that the assessor had been doing this less than one year. Selectman Jackson stated that these are well-trained professionals. The assessor who came to his house was not there long but he was amazed at how much information he took away from his visit when discussing the home with him outside after his walk-through. Michelle Lutz stated that all of the assessors working for this company have been in the business for much longer than one year, though they may have only been with this company for a year. She also stated that the comparisons on workmanship are throughout Town and more signify how your kitchen, for example, compares with other kitchens throughout town.

Glen Eastman asked how the 2011 abatements will affect the overlay this year. TM Frost stated it is hard to tell, but there are some that could potentially affect overlay dramatically, however that is not expected to be the case.

Jeff Schall asked how the paving on White Birch Lane and at Libby's were paid for. TM Frost stated that it is all part of the FEMA project from TS Irene.

6. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost reported that the backup system is now in place and she is confident that the servers are now being backed up daily. Selectman Jackson asked about the backup system which was in place before. There were three removable drives. We know where two of them are, but not necessarily the other one.

Trimming on the riverbank along Main Street has been completed. This was done by NH DOT.

TM Frost reported that she is still working on compiling building permit fees from other towns.

John Scarinza is working on getting John Losier to move his dump truck off of Town property near his house.

The Post Office is working on getting the potholes at the entrance to their property fixed.

b) Selectmen's Reports: Selectman Robitaille reported that he will be walking in the July 4th parade and then speaking on the common after the parade.

Selectman Jackson asked about the engine brake sign at the top of Gorham hill. This is on DPW Director Holmes' list of things to do. He also asked about a coat of polyurethane on the front door of the Town Hall. Denise Vallee replied that it had been done. Regarding the sand bags and cones on Blunden Street, he wondered when they would be removed. TM Frost will speak with Mr. Holmes about this.

Chairman Graham asked about the letter received from NH DOT regarding the traffic lights at the vacant Shaw's store. It seems DOT is reviewed whether to keep those lights there or remove them. The Board would like to send a strong message to DOT as well as Councilor Burton expressing their opposition to the removal of those lights. It is hoped that a company will soon occupy that property and it would be more appealing to them to have the lights already in place. Additionally, those lights, which are now blinking, serve as a reminder to people to slow down on the Berlin-Gorham Road.

A discussion ensued regarding how to proceed with staffing the Town Clerk and Tax Collector office after June 30th. **Selectman Jackson made a motion to appoint Carol Turcotte Porter as Gorham's Interim Town Clerk effective July 1, 2012. This interim term to expire at the 2013 Gorham Town Meeting. This motion was seconded by Selectman Robitaille and voted unanimously in the affirmative.**

Selectman Jackson moved to appoint Carol Turcotte Porter as Gorham's Tax Collector effective July 1, 2012, seconded by Selectmen Robitaille. The Board voted unanimously in the affirmative.

As far as the deputy positions, it would be up to Ms. Porter to appoint, with the approval of the Board. It is assumed (and hoped) that Grace Lapierre will be appointed as deputy for a bit since she has agreed to assist with the transition on a part time basis. The Board further directed TM Frost to work with all involved towards a suitable arrangement moving forward.

c) Approval of Minutes (June 4, 2012): On a motion by Selectman Robitaille, seconded by Chairman Graham, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

On a motion by Selectman Jackson, seconded by Selectman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously to approve the non-public minutes of June 4, 2012 as prepared and seal them.

c) Sign Manifest: The Board signed the manifest as prepared.

d) Sign Abatements (if necessary): Abatements were reviewed earlier in the meeting.

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

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

David Graham

Paul Robitaille

William H. Jackson