

MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, September 12, 2011, 6:30 pm
TOWN HALL CONFERENCE ROOM

Selectmen present: Terry Oliver, Chairman; David Graham; Paul Robitaille.

Also present: Robin L. Frost, Town Manager

Don Provencher, Sue Enman, Dennis Arguin, Gail Wigler, Elizabeth Thompson, Aaron Gorban, Wayne Miccuci, Ben Murphy, Dan and Denise Gordon

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:35 by Chairman Oliver.

2. Appointments:

a) **Aaron Gorban – Candidate for Library Trustee Alternate** – Mr. Gorban was introduced to the Board by TM Frost. Also present in support of the appointment were Library Trustee Chair, Gail Wigler and Library Director Elizabeth Thompson. Mr. Gorban stated that he has resided in Gorham since 2004. He and his family have a great interest in the Library and are avid users. He was interested in getting more involved in Town and decided that this would be a good fit for him. He believes that the library is a good resource for the Town and it is important to support it. He went on to state that in tough economic times, people turn in greater numbers to libraries as a resource for many purposes. The Board welcomed Mr. Gorban and expressed their appreciation for his willingness to serve the Town. TM Frost stated that an appointment form will be prepared for the Board members to sign and once complete, Mr. Gorban will be asked to see the Town Clerk to be sworn in.

b) **Dennis Arguin – Broadway Street** – Mr. Arguin was present to discuss a problem with the Moose River as it runs through his neighborhood. Tropical Storm Irene turned the Moose River into a raging river. There is a dike along the edge of the river which he believes was not properly constructed. The natural flow of the river is impeded by a property owner who has built up a channel that the river normally would flow into under these conditions. Water was literally surrounding Mr. Arguin's house. He had to evacuate his family.

His neighbor, Wayne Miccuci, was also present to reiterate what Mr. Arguin was saying. They both said they needed sandbags, but there were none available. Chairman Oliver stated that the Town is looking into the problems, but government in general runs very slow. Mr. Arguin remembers that after the 1996 storm, the river was dredged, but only up to a certain place. They did not finish the job. Ben Murphy, who is also a resident in that area, stated that there is a 20 foot section of the berm that needs to be built up. They were hoping to be able to do that with sandbags.

Dan and Diane Gordon also stated that there was flooding behind Vashaw's, to the right of the property.

TM Frost told the group that the Town was working on this problem as well as others along the Moose and Peabody Rivers. NHDES is aware of the issue and have that area on their list of places to inspect. As time goes on, the Town will be working with NHDES and FEMA to mitigate some of the issues that have arisen from this recent event. Mr. Arguin and the rest of the group thanked the Board for listening.

c) **Chief PJ Cyr – Department Update** - Chief Cyr had another commitment and was excused from the meeting by TM Frost.

3. New Business:

a) **Charitable Organizations** – Selectman Graham suggested that since it is more than halfway through the year, we should ask all of the charitable organizations to come in to update the Board on their activities so far. Chairman Oliver thought it was a good idea. Selectman Robitaille stated that he doesn't have a problem with inviting them to come in, though he did want to mention that these monies appropriated for the organizations end up saving the Town money in the long run.

b) **Delinquent Taxes** – TM Frost, responding to an inquiry by Selectman Graham, presented information on delinquent taxes. There are two taxpayers who owe over \$200,000 in delinquent taxes plus interest. The Board will discuss further at a later date.

c) **Wal-Mart Settlement** – TM Frost reported that the Town had reached settlement with Wal-Mart on all previous years, plus 2011. This settlement is that the assessment will be at \$15M which will result in a lower tax bill by \$138,000.

4. Old Business:

a) **Economic Development** – The Board has asked TM Frost to have Max Makaitis join them at the next meeting to give an update on his activities for the benefit of Gorham's business community.

5. Public Comment: Don Provencher asked about the Lieutenant position in the Police Department. TM Frost reported that the position was filled by Sergeant Lemoine. With regard to his other question about the open patrolman position, TM Frost said that a conditional offer had been given to a candidate. On the subject of delinquent taxes, Mr. Provencher was under the impression that some of the empty storefronts were not paying their taxes. This was not mentioned to TM Frost by the Tax Collector. There is an informational parking sign still on the side of the road across from Welch's. He suggests that it be picked up since it looks unsightly. Mr. Provencher also asked what the annual dues are for North Country Council and whether the Town gets its money's worth from the organization. TM Frost reported that though she was only speaking for this year, NCC has agreed to rewrite the zoning ordinance, site plan and subdivision regulations at no additional cost. She believes that is a very good "bang for our buck." Finally, Mr. Provencher reported that he and Selectman Graham would be attending the Rail Rally on September 14th.

6. Other Business:

a) **Town Manager's Update:** TM Frost referenced a memo which she included in the Board's meeting packet. It explains the lack of performance evaluations for employees and the need for some way to give feedback to the employees and vice versa. Also included in the packet was the sample form which TM Frost is proposing to use. The Board had no significant concerns with the proposal, though Selectman Robitaille wanted to make sure that the employees were well informed of the purpose for this tool. TM Frost stated that she would make sure that happens and also would provide training for department heads in how to evaluate their employees.

TM Frost reported that Diane Labbe, Assessing Director, will be working Monday through Friday each week beginning the week of October 10th. This is intended to be a permanent change.

Pursuant to an inquiry from Chairman Oliver, most, if not all, of the engine brake complaints come from the northern junction of Routes 16 & 2.

TM Frost reported that the cost estimate for asbestos abatement and disposal at the Fur, Feather & Fin building came in at \$4975. This is only for the asbestos, not the entire building. Once the asbestos is taken care of, the building could then be razed.

The Board signed the MS5, which is the financial report for the Town. This form gets sent to the Department of Revenue Administration.

The Board received a letter from the Gorham Community Learning Center. They are asking for the Town to apply for a planning grant through the CDBG program on their behalf. The Board expressed their desire to assist the GCLC in this endeavor and TM Frost will call Ms. Cloutier to see what the best course of action would be.

There were two meetings over the past two weeks which TM Frost attended. Rep. Charlie Bass and Councilor Ray Burton came to the Town Hall for a meeting with Town officials to see if there were any pressing concerns with which they might help. The discussion centered on storm damage, but we also made sure that Rep. Bass knew we were hoping the Federal prison would be funded in this session. The other meeting was specifically about the storm damage and was set up by Commission George Bald of the Department of Resources and Economic Development. All the State and Federal representatives were on hand to provide their contact information and how to go about receiving necessary assistance.

b) Approval of Minutes (August 29, 2011): On a motion by Selectman Robitaille, seconded by Selectman Graham, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting of August 29, 2011 as prepared.

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

d) Sign Abatements (if necessary): The Board signed one abatement form for a property whose value was arbitrarily changed in error by the software program.

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3, II (a): On a motion by Selectman Robitaille, seconded by Selectman Graham, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into Non-Public Session at 7:45 pm. Robitaille –aye, Graham – aye, Oliver – aye.

On a motion by Selectmen Graham, seconded by Selectman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to return to public session at 8:17 pm. Robitaille –aye, Graham – aye, Oliver – aye.

On a motion by Selectman Graham, seconded by Selectman Robitaille, the Board unanimously voted to approve changing the position currently held by Sue Enman from Deputy Town Clerk to Assistant Town Clerk.

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

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Terry Oliver, Chairman

Paul Robitaille

David Graham