

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2011, 5:30 PM
GORHAM TOWN HALL**

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

Also Present: Janet Corrigan, Wally Corrigan, Ron Donato, Norm Provencher, Jay Holmes, Don Provencher, two representatives from AV Home Health Services, Town Manager Robin Frost (arrived late due to negotiating session with Portland Pipeline)

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chairman Oliver.

2. Appointments:

a. AV Home Health Services, RE: General Report to the Board:

Representatives from AV Home Health Services addressed the Board regarding their activities during the year. They thanked the Board and the Town of Gorham for the financial support the organization received in the amount of \$ 17,500 at last year's Town Meeting. AV Home Health Services continues to serve the Gorham community along with other areas. Selectman Robitaille commended the organization for its fine work. It is anticipated that they will be submitting a request for assistance once again. The economic situation was briefly discussed and it was indicated that the Town is faced with a number of serious financial issues and that petitioners need to keep this in mind during the process. The Board thanked them for their report and for their continuing work in the community.

b. Janet Corrigan, RE: Gateway Trailer Park Concerns:

Mrs. Corrigan requested to speak with the Board about her family's concerns regarding an abandoned trailer on their property. The owner left owing approximately \$ 1,200 in unpaid taxes to the Town. The trailer is sitting there vacant and deteriorating at present. Mrs. Corrigan mentioned that in the past the Town has assisted with restoring such properties to tax status. It is their hope to remove the trailer and they are asking the Town to help with this by considering a waiver or reduction in taxes owed. The person responsible is no longer living there and it was stated that he has not responded to requests and that collection of anything will be difficult. Selectman Robitaille made a Motion to begin proceeding as requested, by referring this to the Town Manager for her review and action. The Motion was seconded by Selectman Graham and passed. (Town Manager Frost was not present during this discussion as her arrival had been delayed as she was involved all day in negotiations with Portland Pipeline.)

3. New Business:

This involved FEMA Project Bid Awarding. Town Manager Frost has compiled the bids for presentation to the Board. Since she had been delayed, Chairman Oliver suggested that the Board defer discussion under this until the Town manager arrived. All agreed and the meeting continued with the next item on the agenda.

4. Public Comment:

Jay Holmes mentioned that he had a number of items to address. Mr. Holmes stated that he felt WalMart was in violation of the Town's sign regulations. He mentioned that WalMart has placed a number of signs

at all carriage recovery locations in their parking lot. He stated that these were large and visible signs clearly advertising the WalMart brand, and he asked that this matter be addressed by the Town's code enforcement officer. Mr. Holmes also stated that high taxes are discouraging growth. He mentioned that the Planning board should be pro growth. He feels there is an anti growth mentality that is hurting the town. He feels we should encourage new development and condominiums like the North Conway area does. He also feels the recreation department's budget is excessive and that the Town cannot afford this.

Don Provencher stated that he too is troubled by rising taxes and something needs to be done to cut spending. He feels that greater efforts need to be made to collect delinquent taxes. He also feels the lack of lighting and decorations on the Town Common is unsightly and makes the Town look bad.

Ron Donato stated that he is very concerned. Gorham needs a path forward for the future. Homeowners cannot continue to absorb tax increases and things are out of control. He feels we should take a lesson from Berlin as they seem to be doing a good job holding down taxes and costs for the homeowners.

Norm Provencher asked about the results of the energy audit that was done awhile back. He recalled being at a meeting when this was discussed. He feels the recreation department trailer should be closed as soon as possible since it is costing the town money to keep it open. He also questioned the need for three men on the garbage trucks.

Since Town Manager Robin Frost was now present after completing a negotiating session with Portland Pipeline, Chairman Oliver proceeded to the next item on the agenda which had been deferred:

5. New Business:

a. FEMA Project bid Awarding: We received seven proposals and of those seven, there were a few that bid on all three projects. The proposals ranged from approximately \$449K to \$1M. The lowest proposal was from The Nelson Companies at \$448, 340. This company has been vetted by HEB Engineers and they are ready to start as soon as the bid is awarded. **On a motion by Selectman Graham, seconded by Selectman Robitaille, the Board voted unanimously to award the bid for all three projects (WBL North, WBL South, Libby's field) to The Nelson Companies.**

6. Old Business:

a) Delinquent Taxes – the bulk of the delinquent taxes are due to two taxpayers: Currier and Munce. Munce is in bankruptcy and therefore the town must wait before doing anything with the properties. If the properties are sold through the bankruptcy, the taxes must be paid in full. Doug Currier has been promising to pay on his taxes and has prospects for selling other properties which would free up some money for him to pay his taxes in Gorham. The Board would like to keep a close eye on how these issues progress. They are not in favor of putting off the payment of the Currier taxes for much longer.

7. Other Business:

a) Town Manager's Update - Nothing at this time.

b) Selectmen's Reports – Selectman Graham stated that he had some concerns about the Flea market and Gun Shop. He believes that these concerns have been alleviated for now. He has nothing further.

Selectman Robitaille responded to earlier comments about the budget. He thinks it is clear that others want more cuts on the budget. He feels that the budget is tight as it is and more cuts would result in services being cut. He also wanted to report that the Planning Board is working on zoning amendments with the planner from North Country Council. This is made possible through a grant the North Country Council received.

There was a short discussion about the tipping fees to Mt. Carberry which are paid by the Town.

c) Approval of Minutes – On a motion by Selectman Robitaille, seconded by Selectman Graham, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of November 7, 2011.

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

e) Sign Abatements (if necessary): There were no abatements at this time.

8. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3, II (a & c):

The Board remained in regular session as there were no issues for discussion in non-public session at this time.

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

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Terry Oliver, Chairman

David Graham

Paul Robitaille