



Budget Committee Meeting  
Town of Gorham  
Gorham Town Hall  
Public Meeting Room

Minutes of January 30, 2018

Members Present: Diane Bouthot, Chairman; Doug Gralenski, Vice-Chairman, Robert Demers; Lee Carroll; Dan McCrum; Abby Evankow; Judy LeBlanc; Todd Lamarque; Terry Oliver, Selectmen's Representative

Absent:

Town Staff Present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Denise Vallee, Finance Director

Others present:

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

AGENDA ITEMS & DISCUSSION

1. Call to order: 6:00 PM
2. Approve Minutes 1/25/2017: **Motion to approve from Lee Carroll with a second from Judy Leblanc to approve with amendment of the time left on the dispatch radio equipment from one year to two. Voted in the affirmative. Todd Lamarque abstained.**
3. Update on Prior Requests
4. **Work Session**

Abby Evankow asked what the vote of the Board of Selectman was on the budget and was advised it was 2-1. The committee was advised they will not vote on the budget until after the public hearing, they will just vote to recommend the budget for the public hearing. Bob Demers asked if the agency requests were up and was advised that Tri-County Cap is up \$200 and North Country Home and Hospice is up \$2,000. Demers pointed out that the requests total \$70,000, or about 25 cents on the tax rate. Diane Bouthot asked about the additional money for roads and if that was in the budget, she was advised that it is Article 10 in the Warrant. Dan McCrum asked about the total budget, which Denise Vallee advised is \$4,853,478, a \$66,336 increase from last year. TM Frost advised there will be a petitioned warrant article added for the fireworks in the amount of \$10,000. Lee Carroll asked about revenues and was advised it is a couple thousand higher than last year. TM Frost advised the budget includes the contract but does not include the loader or the money needed for the new property at the town garage. These will be separate warrant articles added by the Selectmen. The quote for the work on the land was \$61,000. Judy Leblanc asked about the collective bargaining agreement and pointed out that the cost appeared steep. Dan McCrum mentioned that the 3 year cost for 5 officers and 4 dispatchers is almost \$50,000. TM Frost advised that some of this cost is one-time payments will don't affect salary. McCrum asked what would happen if we don't agree and was advised it would be an impasse and could be passed over at the meeting. Doug Gralenski asked if they have Evergreen as part of their contract which would continue it as it is, but was advised they do not. The committee asked about the \$10,000 for the Library CRF and if it was supposed to be in the budget and were advised that Selectman Lefebvre had suggested it be removed but it was not voted on. The library had listed the repairs that the money would cover at the budget meeting there, including saving for a new

roof. Leblanc asked how much was left in the Highway and Sidewalk Asphalt Paving and Curbing CRF and was advised there is \$1027. Article 10, which is the additional \$272,000 for the roads will be an additional \$1 on the tax rate. It is a non-lapsing article and will be voted on every year. If not spent by 2023, it will go back to the general fund. Todd Lamarque asked what the difference was between this article and the Road Resurfacing CRF and he was advised they will both be used for the same purpose. The Road Resurfacing CRF has a balance of \$257,083.49. Article 11 is for Town Building Repairs and will be used for the clock tower repair, sealing the bricks on the town hall, and the new drains in the floor at the fire station. Article 15 was reduced by \$20,000. Article 17 will cover equipment needed at the highway department per their 10-year plan. The loader will be a separate article. Leblanc asked about the Emergency Disaster CRF and was advised it is used for matching funds for FEMA projects. McCrum asked how much money the town will get from FEMA for the October storm and TM Frost advised there are no estimates yet. The committee asked about North Country Home Health and Hospice and why they needed extra money. Gralenski mentioned that the agencies should be at the hearing and can be asked then. This agency and Androscoggin Valley Home Care provide similar services. NC Home Health projects that they will have 111 clients this year, while AV Home Care is anticipating 39. AV Home Care bills each month based on the services they have provided. This money covers expenses that are not covered by insurance and help the elderly to stay at home. AV Home Care asked for \$17,500 last year and used just over \$10,000. Leblanc asked if there were still Meals on Wheels available and was advised it is part of Tri-County CAP. Bob Demers asked about the Family Resource Center and what services they provide. Diane Bouthot pointed out that they served 391 people this year and believe that number will be 400 next year. The programs they provide are visiting home nurses, financial planning, and the after school program, among others. Denise Vallee advised the FRC has an annual budget of \$1.3 million. The FRC also requests money from other towns based on population.

Gralenski mentioned that there is not a lot of fat in the budget, but suggested that since motor vehicle registrations have been up substantially that they increase the revenue line for this by \$20,000. TM Frost advised that the DRA recommends that to increase fund balance, they either under expend or underestimate revenues. Terry Oliver cautioned the committee about increasing the estimated revenues, as when this was done with the ambulance, the revenues did not come in as expected. Bouthot asked about the money charged at registration for roads and was advised there is a surcharge for recycling, which covers tires, and there is an additional \$5.00 for road improvements.

**On a motion by Doug Gralenski, seconded by Judy Leblanc, the committee voted unanimously to add \$20,000 to the motor vehicle registration revenue line, changing it from \$480,000 to \$500,000.**

Evankow asked if the point of the gap was to increase fund balance and was advised it was, and that changing the amount will reduce taxes now rather than later. Denise Vallee reminded the committee that changing the revenue line does not change the expenditures, which are still up about \$66,000. McCrum advised he would like to see a net of zero for changes in the budget from last year to this year and mentioned that cutting the \$80,000 for the roads in half, or altering the additional \$272,000 could do that. Evankow mentioned that the goal is to get ahead in road repairs, as cutting now will lead to future detriment. TM Frost encouraged the committee to look at the Road Improvement Plan, which is available on the website. Frost advised that the Board was looking at Scenario 3, on page 11 of the plan. Frost advised that even with the \$272,000 per year, there will still be an unfunded backlog of about \$10 million in 2023. Demers mentioned the condition of the sidewalks and asked about using money towards repairing them. TM Frost advised they are looking at a Northern Borders grant for the sidewalks. Lee Carroll suggested that if they are repaired, snow machines should no longer be allowed on them as they tear them up. Demers suggested allowing them on one side of the road and have no parking there during the winter. TM Frost advised that the snow road for the Easter Seals ride in will only go to the common this year. The state helps to clean up the snow after the event. The town also provides a driver and bus to go to the casino for the ride-in.

Abby Evankow asked about the request for the Chamber of Commerce and if this was something that could be cut since the budget is tight. TM Frost advised that the committee can choose to not recommend it, but that since it is a petitioned warrant article, it must be voted on at the town meeting.

**On a motion by Lee Carroll, seconded by Terry Oliver, the committee voted unanimously to present the budget to the public at the hearing.**

5. New Business

6. Date of Next Meeting: The public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13 at 6:30 pm at the Medallion Opera House.

7. **Doug Gralenski made a motion to adjourn at 7:23 PM, seconded by Terry Oliver. Voted in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted  
Shelli Fortin

Approved 02-13-20