



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

Minutes of June 20, 2017

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

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

Others present:

Minutes Taker: Shelli Fortin

AGENDA ITEMS & DISCUSSION

1. Call to order: 6:00 PM

2. Approve Minutes 2/13/2017: **Motion to approve from Doug Gralenski with a second from Dan McCrum. Voted in the affirmative.**

3. Board Vacancies – Appointments:

**On a motion from Dan McCrum, seconded by Robert Demers, the Committee voted unanimously to appoint Diane Bouthot as Chairman.**

**Selectman Oliver made a motion to appoint Lee Carroll as Vice-Chairman, the motion was not seconded.**

**On a motion by Robert Demers, seconded by Dan McCrum, the Committee voted unanimously to appoint Doug Gralenski as Vice-Chairman.** Lee Carroll mentioned that if Doug was unable to serve due to work commitments, he would be willing to step-up and fill that position.

Chairman Bouthot read a letter of interest received from Judy Leblanc to fill the vacancy on the Committee.

**On a motion by Doug Gralenski, seconded by Lee Carroll, the Committee voted unanimously to appoint Judy LeBlanc to fill the vacancy.**

Robert Demers asked if there were any other vacancies, and was advised the Committee was now full. LeBlanc was advised to see the Town Clerk, Carol Porter, to be sworn in. This will need to be done before she can vote on the Committee.

4. Review Revenue and Expenses for Town Budgets to Date

Denise Vallee advised the budget figures are for the ending date of May 31, 2017. Vallee advised that the collective percentage should be 57.89%.

Vallee pointed out some of the percentages that were off from last year. Interest and Costs is down from last year, as the tax deed notices were just sent out last week. Dan McCrum asked about the Payment in Lieu of Taxes line and Vallee advised NCEF pays most of this, and their bill for the first half was just sent out. Judy LeBlanc asked what the Tax Allowance Recovery Line was for and Vallee advised it is for tax abatements. Abbie Evankow asked about the PCT column on the worksheet and Vallee advised this was the percentage remaining in the budget.

Vallee advised the Motor Vehicle Registration line has increased, partly due to more people leasing vehicles, which since they are new, are more expensive to register. The town is also doing boat registrations, which brings in extra revenue.

Vallee advised that \$10,871 has been billed for Commercial Duty, although it does not show in the line yet since payments have not been received. This is money earned by the police department doing traffic details for companies, such as Spectrum. Vallee also advised that the bills have been sent out for mutual aid public safety contracts.

Vallee advised that Ambulance Revenues are down from last year, however the ACH payments received so far this year will all be processed in June, as they have hired a new billing person. Dan McCrum stated that this seems to be a continuing trend. Vallee advised that the call volume is down from previous years, and TM Frost advised it is also an issue with the availability of personnel. McCrum suggested that they may have to consider some changes, and may not be able to keep the extra full-time position. TM Frost advised that even if the call volume is down, they still need coverage for shifts. Frost advised that they currently have one less full-time position, as Jay Watkins covers both the Fire Chief and Ambulance Director positions. However, he does mostly administrative work, and does not cover shifts unless needed. Judy LeBlanc asked if there was a plan for moving forward and adjusting personnel and equipment needs. Frost advised they have not started those discussions yet, and this will start at the end of August, or beginning of September. Dan McCrum asked about the ambulance contracts with the other towns and the county and Vallee advised these have been billed out. McCrum asked about the contract money received last year, 31,300, which seems to be about 20,000 less than budgeted. Vallee will check on this number.

Robert Demers suggested that the town find a different way for billing the dispatch and ambulance contracts for the surrounding communities. Demers stated that it should be based on population, not the number of calls. Demers stated that Randolph may be watching their pennies, but we should be watching our dollars, and we need to take care of the Gorham taxpayers. TM Frost advised that this idea was presented several years ago and there was an outcry about the cost, so it was kept as it is. Frost advised that the contracts were just signed are due again on April 1, 2018. Diane Bouthot asked for a copy of the contracts and TM Frost will email them. Selectman Oliver stated that revenue lost from contracts would not be the only money lost if we did not renew them, as we would also lose revenue from billing for ambulance transports. Dan McCrum suggested that infrastructure costs should be included in what they are billed, and if they don't renew, we should be willing to cut back. McCrum stated that it should be our goal to break even for the ambulance service. Selectman Oliver asked that the contracts be included on the agenda for the next Selectman's Meeting.

Denise Vallee advised that the amount in the revenues for Private Haulers is for 4 months of billing. Vallee advised that the money in the capital reserve funds are for transfers to pay for planned purchases, such as Tasers for the Police Department.

In the Expenditure Report, Vallee advised that the line for Video is up due to the new service to record the meetings. Vallee advised that the Unemployment and Workers Compensation lines have been paid for the year. Vallee advised that the Fa Accounting line for Postage and Copy Charges will be adjusted after charges are separated out, for example, the postage for tax bills will be moved to the Tax Collector line.

Vallee advised that the Town Hall Heat and Oil line is a bit low, and we are hoping for a mild end of the year so that it does not go over. Vallee advised that the contract is already in place for this year, and has gone up, but is still a good price. Last year the contract was for \$1.52, and this year it is about \$1.72. Vallee advised that the line for Insurance are paid in two halves.

Vallee explained that the PD Overtime and Vacation OT lines are not correct at this point, as she will need info from Chief Cyr as to what overtime paid was to cover vacation time, as it has not been split out yet. Vallee also advised that even though the Uniform line is only at 19%, both new officers already have their uniforms and equipment.

Vallee advised that the Cleanup Costs in the Fire Department budget are due to a cancelled voucher, and she is waiting to hear back on that. Vallee also explained that the Heat and oil cost has not been adjusted for the Ambulance portion that will be applied later in the year.

Vallee pointed out that the Dispatch Part-Time Position budget is over due to a full-time employee that is out on extended medical leave, and there is a part-time employee currently covering that position.

The Highway Department budget for Overtime, Salt, Contract Services, and Vehicle Repairs was affected by the snowy weather last winter, and again they are hoping for a mild end of the year to stay within budget.

The Recreation Department budget is over for Heat, as the amount needed was underestimated. This will be reflected in the budget for next year, and Vallee advised the cost will probably double.

Vallee advised that the Engineering Costs in Land and Improvements will be covered by the Road Repair CRF.

## **5. New Business**

Doug Gralenski asked about the court ruling in favor of the towns for public utilities and if this would affect Gorham in any way. TM Frost advised that it just covers Eversource and will only be a small amount. Judy LeBlanc asked about the issue of storing snow and compost on Eversource property and if this has been resolved. TM Frost advised they are currently working on this and she does not expect it to be a problem.

Doug Gralenski asked about the budget process and timeline. TM Frost advised that budgets from the department heads should be ready by the end of August or first week of September. They are turned in to Denise Vallee and she will enter them. Next year they are hoping the department heads will be able to enter them directly into the system themselves. They will then meet with the Town Manger and she will submit her budget to the Selectmen. The Selectmen will then submit their budget to the Budget Committee. The committee asked if they could work on the budget simultaneously, and were advised that is not how it is traditionally done. TM Frost suggested that it would be possible to move their process along more quickly, which would allow the committee to start meeting in December, however the committee agreed that December was not a good month to have meetings. Selectman Oliver suggested that the committee members attend the Selectmen's meetings, as they can ask questions as members of the public.

Chairman Bouthot asked the committee if they would like to keep their meeting at 2 hours or less and the committee agreed they should. Bouthot also suggested that if for some reason a department head has been asked to a meeting and there is not enough time to speak with them, that they be first on the agenda for the following meeting. The committee agreed. Lee Carroll also mentioned that they cannot micromanage the departments.

Denise Vallee asked if she should prepare a proposed meeting schedule and Chairman Bouthot stated yes.

Chairman Bouthot asked if the new members could be added to the NHMA website so that they could access it. Bouthot also asked if any of the new members would be interested in the Budget workshop which is held the last week of September. Judy LeBlanc and Abbie Evankow both stated that they were interested in the workshop.

Doug Gralenski asked if there were any expenses coming up that the committee should prepare for and TM Frost advised that the Selectmen were looking at bond schedules for the road repairs that need to be done. Frost indicated that it may add a little over \$1 to the tax rate.

Chairman Bouthot asked if William Jackson had been paid for taking minutes last year and Denise Vallee stated that she believes he was, but she will double check.

Dan McCrum asked about the unrestricted fund balance and if that could be used to reduce taxes. TM Frost advised they will not have figures until fall, but there is not much in the fund.

Judy LeBlanc asked about the Munce properties and TM Frost advised they were hoping to get them sold and back on the tax rolls. Properties that still owed large amounts for taxes include the mill, the Munce properties, and the Gleason property. The committee asked if the mill was keeping up with their agreed upon payments and TM Frost advised they are, for the most part.

Robert Demers asked about the Spring Road project and TM Frost advised it is out now for an RFQ. Lee Carroll asked if it was a qualification based selection and TM Frost advised it was, as the project is receiving state aid. The Board will decide who is best qualified and request a formal proposal from them. TM Frost advised that construction is scheduled for 2018, and despite the increase in the total cost for the project, the town's portion only went from \$72,000 to \$82,000.

Chairman Bouthot asked about the Recreation Revolving Fund and if any committee members were interested in pursuing the warrant article to dissolve it. The committee agreed that they were fine with it set up the way it is now, since some changes were made during the last budget cycle. TM Frost advised that her concern would be the Medallion Opera House money if it was dissolved, as they would then have to set up a 501(C) as a nonprofit agency. Judy LeBlanc advised that she has received some positive comments about the Recreation Department since the public meeting, and that Jeff Stewart handed out certificates to the coaches to thank them for their time and has attended some of the games. Doug Gralenski asked if the Recreation Department had purchased a truck and was advised they did purchase a used one from the Water and Sewer Department.

Diane Bouthot asked if the committee members could receive an updated revenue and expense report emailed to them each month and Denise Vallee will do this.

Abbie Evankow asked about the Beautification Program and how they received revenues. Denise Vallee advised that some people make donations for planters in memory of a loved one and plaques are added with their name.

The committee asked if the Medallion Opera House makes a profit each year. Denise Vallee explained that money that the MOH makes from rentals and shows is placed into a Capital Reserve Fund for the Opera House each year by Warrant Article. This money is used to help with repairs, such as the windows and the rug on the stairway in the town hall.

**6. Date of Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 17 at 6:00 pm.

**8. Selectman Oliver made a motion to adjourn at 7:32 PM, seconded by Doug Gralenski. Voted in the affirmative.**

Respectfully Submitted  
Shelli Fortin