

-Draft-

2015 Budget Committee Meeting

Thursday April 2, 2015

Quarterly Review

Members Present: Mike Waddell, Chairman, Glen Eastman, Reuben Rajala, Bob Demers, Diane Bouthot, Dan McCrum,

Others: Robin Frost, Denise Vallee

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6 PM.

The Chair asked the Secretary, Reuben Rajala to take the minutes as Lisa White was not present. He also suggested that the standard fee of \$75 for each meeting recorded. Town Manager Frost volunteered to take the minutes without fee anytime she was present and Lisa was not after this meeting.

Mike Waddell reported on a review of open positions on the Budget Committee, based on communications with the Secretary of State. For 2015 three slots are currently vacant. Possible candidates include Terry Rhoderick and Carol Fish. There were no objections. The consensus also was to spread the word about one position being left open, hoping that we may be able to fill it with someone stepping forward between now and the next meeting, which will probably be held the third week of July. Mike reminded everyone that the Committee will be reduced by one person for 2016, as per a warrant article passed in March.

Election of Officers:

Glen nominated Mike Waddell, Diane seconded. Unanimous vote. Bob nominated Diane as Vice Chair, seconded by Dan. Unanimous vote. Dan recommended Reuben for Secretary, Diane seconded. Unanimous vote.

Minutes:

Glen made a motion to accept, Dan seconded. After Reuben requested that the notes re Article 32 be amended to better reflect his earlier comments, a motion was made by Glen, seconded by Reuben to pass over the minutes. Reuben will get Mike the revised text for distribution to the Committee.

Quarterly Budget Review:

Denise began a review of the 2015 budget after the first quarter. Some minor corrections were first noted. Then on page 6, she noted that a recent timber harvest in the Town Forest generated significant net income, after roughly \$12,000 in expenses, leaving the balance in the Town Forest Fund at \$101,504. Mike noted that

taxes on the property, two dams, roads, pipeline and pumping station are roughly \$22,000/year. Efforts to negotiate with Randolph officials a reduced figure have not been successful.

On the expense side, Denise noted reductions in the cost of health insurance for Town employees below the 1.1% expected increase budgeted. It will be approximately .2% lower.

On page 4 Denise noted the long cold winter has taxed heating costs across the board. But the Town and School were able to negotiate a fixed rate for oil of \$2.27/gallon vs. the \$3 budgeted figure.

Within the Police budget Denise noted a higher than expected overtime expense, due to the Department being one officer short. While a new officer has been hired, he will need to spend time at the Police Academy thus some additional overtime will be expended.

The Highway budget saw higher than expected overtime, sand, salt and contract expenses. The heating oil budget will also be very tight.

On page 13 Denise reported that the final bond payment for the Town Hall Renovation project has been paid.

Page 15 had \$5000 taken out of the River Maintenance Trust Fund to pay for the partial study of problems on the lower Moose River.

Denise explained that 22 of 55 windows in the Town Hall have been repaired, as outlined on page 16.

Denise also reported that she included the Library budget printout, as was previously requested. She gave another handout updating the status of the Recreation Revolving Fund. The renovation of the Information Booth recently came in at \$13,000, below the original \$18,000 estimate. Once the Moose Tour bus is purchased, the Van Capital Reserve Fund will be phased out in 2015.

Bob brought up concerns about the rental of Recreation Department vehicles by other organizations and driven by drivers other than known, trained and skilled Town staff. Robin reported that the past practice of allowing other drivers has been stopped, in the aftermath of an accident on a recent trip, resulting in a very small amount of damage.

Some discussion was had about the status of the Town Garage roof project. Denise and Robin reported that a USDA rural grant was not funded. They are pursuing reapplying but have decided to forge ahead on the roof and insulation replacement. Thoughts of office work at the Town garage are currently on hold.

Denise reported that the Town should know whether or not a grant is approved for replacement of one of the fire trucks should be known.

Old Business:

Chairman Waddell asked about the status of ambulance and police contracts with Shelburne and ambulance contract with Randolph, in the aftermath of Town Meetings. A lengthy discussion ensued about the history of such contracts in both towns, costs, issues and concerns and several years of unapproved contracts. Estimates of lost revenue ranged from approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000. This includes contracts and lost revenues.

Bob Demers expressed concerns about contracts not being high enough, relative to overall costs of Gorham's police and ambulance budgets. The consensus seemed to be that negotiations for 2016 need to begin soon and that costs be more in line with previous years, especially given population differences, numbers of calls and two years of unsuccessful closure of contracts. Plus we need to cognizant of costs and services being offered by others, relative to our requests. Tension between the towns appears to be centered on the large jump in fees 2 years ago, totally \$52K, even if phased in over 4 years, timing and communication. Mike reported that it represented nearly a 400% increase.

Before a motion to adjourn at 7:45 PM, made by Bob and seconded by Glen, we talked about the next quarterly meeting likely being sometime during the third week in July.

Respectfully submitted by Reuben Rajala