

**2014 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2014  
WATER & SEWER and CONTINUATION  
OF FIRE DEPARTMENT AND TOWN CLERK**

**Members Present:** Mike Waddell, William Jackson, Terry Oliver, Glen Eastman, Reuben Rajala, Dan Mccrum, Robert Demers

**Absent:** Terry Rhoderick

The Budget Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm. by the Chair.

Members of the Water and Sewer Department were on hand. The 2014 Water and Sewer budget review was presented by Lee Carroll and Dave Patry. No major changes in the 2014 budget, the bottom line is good. Nothing new to report regarding the 10 Year Plan. No future major plans yet, but they would like to do some much needed repair work in the Church Street/Railroad Street areas. Nothing has been finalized thus far. The Chair asked Mr. Patry if he had spoken with Public Works Director, Austin Holmes regarding such repairs/improvements. He stated not at this time, but was planning on meeting with him to discuss the improvements further. Mr. Patry asked that his department be considered if the town employees are given an increase. He stated there is approximately \$232,000 in the capital reserve fund for the sewer department and approximately \$274,000 for the water department. There were no further questions from the Budget Committee. The Water & Sewer Department was dismissed.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** Continuation of the Fire Department budget review. Chief Eichler wanted to update the Budget Committee on some new information he obtained. He stated he had contacted a few other towns regarding their policies on responding to accidents and compensation. The Budget Committee members were satisfied with his research and answers. Chief Eichler stated he had contacted mill representative Mike Cummings regarding the Cascade Fire Station. He stated Mr. Cummings was in favor of keeping the Cascade Fire Station open, but either way it would not affect the mill's current insurance policy. Regarding assistance with manpower from Berlin Fire Department, Chief Eichler stated Berlin fire fighters do charge if they come to assist Gorham. The last time the Town of Gorham required assistance from Berlin was in 2013 and he believes the Town was charged approximately \$400.00. Chief Eichler stated that the town of Gorham does have mutual aid agreements with 17 other towns. Questions were then asked regarding the Fire Department's request for a new fire engine. The Chair wanted it clarified if a new truck would still be needed if the Cascade Fire Station were to be closed? Chief Eichler stated yes. They still need to update/upgrade the outdated fire engine they currently have due to safety issues. A lengthy discussion was had amongst the Budget Committee members and Chief Eichler regarding the necessity of the Cascade Fire Station and costs associated with doing so. The Chair feels very strongly about looking into having the land and building associated with the Cascade Fire Station deeded to the Town of Gorham.

**TAX COLLECTOR:** Town Tax Collector, Carol Porter presented before the Budget Committee with information they requested at the prior meeting regarding unpaid taxes for 2013. The information she presented includes current taxes owed by the Mill in the amount of \$402,193.00. She stated Munces has paid the taxes on the three parcels that were recently sold and the remaining two parcels 7,8 will be liened in May 2014. There was a lengthy review between the Budget Committee members and the Tax Collector regarding outstanding back taxes in the community. The Chair pointed out that there is approximately \$1.6 million, roughly, in outstanding back taxes owed to the Town of Gorham at this time. Something should be done quickly. The Tax Collector noted that the outstanding taxes owed includes commercial and residential properties. She stated at this time the town is liening properties from 2010 forward. The Chair stated that he believes the liened properties are worth more than \$3.00 on the tax rate. The Tax Collector will present the Budget Committee with an updated spreadsheet for liened and unliened properties, taxes, interests and

penalties shown. The Town Manager distributed a document she prepared regarding the Lien Process taken from RSA 80:58-80:90. The Chair encouraged the Tax Collector to engage council in the lien process.

**EMS:** The EMS Director answered additional questions regarding his budget. He began by advising the Budget Committee he had received an email from Reuben Rajala regarding flood control and he was willing to answer his questions. There was a discussion amongst the Budget Committee members and the EMS Director regarding flood control matters. The EMS Director is also the Emergency Management Director for the Town of Gorham and is responsible for working with DES and FEMA on flood issues.

The EMS Director then handed out an EMS Rate Sheet for the Budget Committee's information. He explained in full detail the charges and gave a break-down of expenses and how individuals are billed. There was a lengthy discussion regarding costs for transfers and charges to neighboring towns for assistance. The Chair asked the EMS Director if he could return for one more meeting as they had run out of time again. The EMS Director will return on January 28<sup>th</sup> to complete his budget review.

A Motion to Adjourn was made by Bill Jackson with a second from Terry Oliver. All were in favor. The Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

APPROVED AS NOTED ON 3/24/14