

**2014 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2014  
CONTINUATION OF BUDGET REVIEW**

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

The meeting began with the EMS Director returning to continue the review of his budget. He began with the EMS Rate Changes document that he handed out at the previous budget review meeting. He gave a very thorough presentation and answered several questions regarding EMS billing services and rates for services provided. There were various opinions and mixed reviews regarding charges and services. The Town Manager handed out a document for the Budget Committee to review regarding the "proposed" Ambulance Revolving Fund Warrant Article. A lengthy discussion was had regarding its budgetary impacts. The EMS Director went on to express how he feels a revolving fund would benefit the EMS Department. He stated the revolving fund would allow the department to earn more revenue without over expending its appropriation.

The Chair would rather raise and appropriate the money needed to cover all potential revenue in the EMS budget. A general discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of the existing budgeting methods versus the revolving fund method. A "straw poll" vote was then taken by the Chair to see who was in favor or not of the proposed revolving fund article. The Committee voted 6-1 against the revolving fund. Based on that vote the Chair requested the EMS Director to present to the board a revised budget based on the traditional municipal budget approach. He informed the Director that the Committee was well aware that this would require significant increases in expense and revenue lines.

The Finance Director was on hand to answer previous questions regarding wages and benefits for town employees. She provided documents for the Budget Committee members to review which included employee wages, school wages, operating budget comparisons, and HRA/FSA information. She reviewed in great detail the current health insurance policy that the Town of Gorham has and health insurance options for 2014. A very lengthy review was had regarding town employee wages and increases in comparison with the school. She wanted to be sure all Budget Committee members understood the wage comparisons and insurance information. Due to the lateness of the hour the Committee felt that the discussion on wages and benefits should be continued.

A Motion to Adjourn the Meeting was made by Bill Jackson with a 2<sup>nd</sup> from Terry Oliver. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

**\*\*\*\*\*ADDENDUM PREPARED BY REUBEN RAJALA REGARDING JANUARY 28, 2014 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING:**

As per our recent Budget Committee discussion, a number of amendments were to be attached to some of the multiple meeting minutes.

I have written up the amendment to the Jan. 28 meeting minutes, re the extended discussion that we had with Chad Miller.

Reuben

Chad started off the meeting saying that he wanted to respond to an email inquiry from Reuben Rajala re the town's recent flood emergencies. In his role as Emergency Management Director, he stated that there is no written flood prevention and management plan. He also said that he has no list of pending flood restoration projects (what might be called "third tier projects," behind the top priority town and state property projects and second priority private property stabilization work. He also reported that he is not actively pursuing any additional State or Federal funding for pending projects. He speculated that permission for any stream dredging or bank stabilization work would not be approved anyway. Finally, he said that he would recommend that the Town seek Federal funding to purchase any properties that have been damaged or are at risk of repeated flooding.

Reuben Rajala stated that he and others are well aware of other damaged and threatened properties on the three main rivers around Town. He also said that the State, when asked if they had any list of pending projects said that it's up to the Town to generate such a list. He also cited that the Town has undertaken such work multiple times over the decades, including the spending of funds and use of Town personnel and equipment. The Town has extensive berms/dikes protecting various neighborhoods, as do hundreds of communities around the US, and these are to be monitored and maintained. He expressed an opinion that we need to set aside far more money in the dredging/stream bank capital reserve, as has been done in the past so that we don't have to burden property owners with expensive matches or skip badly needed projects. The past two floods caused more than \$1 million dollars in damages and numerous properties are still at risk.

Chad said that he understood that the 20% match paid by a number of property owners along the Peabody was a requirement of the State and Federal agencies. Reuben challenged this, saying that is was a Town decision to not spend Town funds or use Town staff and equipment for the 20% match, not a requirement. Finally, Reuben said that if it's the Town's preference or policy to begin purchase of many properties that this needed to be fully aired and debated in Town. Mike Waddell echoed many of these concerns, especially the idea of buying properties, citing that there are some 120+ properties in the flood plain. Bill Jackson stated that he was concerned about the way flood restoration projects were done, with a focus on public property and only some private property projects while skipping other properties.

Respectfully submitted,

Reuben Rajala

APPROVED AS NOTED