

**Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes of
January 22, 2013**

Members Present: Jeff Schall, Glen Eastman, David Graham, Lisa Kardell, Robert Demers, Terry Oliver and Mike Waddell

Excused: Reuben Rajala

Other: Robin Frost, Denise Vallee

It was noted that Debra Ackerman was not present to take minutes.

Call to order by Jeff Schall at 6:32 pm

Approve Minutes The minutes of the January 15th meeting were reviewed. David Graham made a motion to accept the minutes as written, Glen seconded it and all were in favor, Mike Waddell abstained. The minutes of the January 17th meeting were reviewed and it was noted that Robert Demers and Lisa Kardell were not at the meeting, but were excused and that Mike Waddell called the meeting to order as the Vice-chair. A motion was made by Terry Oliver and seconded by Mike Waddell to accept the minutes with the revisions noted above. Robert Demers, Glen Eastman and Lisa Kardell abstained. All were in favor.

General Review of Budget: Jeff Schall informed the committee that there would be an overall discussion of the budget. He asked if anyone had any comments, recommendations and wondered if they had heard back from any department heads.

David Graham said he still had a concern about the Public Works Department budget and the request for an additional part-time cemetery worker. The Board of Selectmen had approved it in their budget, but at a subsequent meeting, he thought it had been deleted? The other two selectmen did not want to remove it and, in fact, wanted to raise it. Mike Waddell commented that it was not the best use of manpower to have a full-time employee pushing a lawn mower instead of running a machine. He sees the part-time position as a smart move.

Jeff Schall asked whether we could cut back and mow less? Mike Waddell responded that they cut back, cut water off and put back cut hours, but then had to cut twice as much grass and it looked bad. They had also tried blowing snow on people's lawns instead of hauling it and the residents were unhappy even though the Town saved on contract labor. Robin Frost commented that cemeteries are a hot button item.

Robert Demers commented that he does not want to cut anyone off the work force-he is all about benefits. Reciprocal billing needs to be done: school to Gorham, Gorham to school. The Board of Selectmen needs to take control.

Jeff Schall agreed that Gorham is a donor town and that he knows that the board, Robin and Denise are working on revising existing contracts.

A general discussion then took place regarding the school's tax rate for Gorham, Randolph & Shelburne and that the average daily membership is used when allocating funds, the merge possibilities and fairness.

David Graham then commented that a lot had come out of the suggestions made by the budget committee, including the Police Contract with Shelburne and that \$14,000 was not enough revenue for the service they were receiving. A new figure was arrived at for 2013 which better reflected the cost and needs and the Police Chief decided that is was not going to happen, which resulted in better service to Gorham residents. Building permit fees were also compared and rate fees will be adjusted up. The street lights were reviewed and 44 lights were put on a Midnight Savings Plan to reduce the cost.

Lisa Kardell then commented that the Police Chief would cover Shelburne on moral grounds and that you can't make business plans on moral ground. Robert Demers said that if he responds, he should charge a rate. Robin Frost responded that there is a rate, but without an agreement.

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Lisa Kardell then commented that Randolph and Shelburne should be paying higher fees for recreation than Gorham residents pay.

Mike Waddell asked if an offer was made to Shelburne and who walked away.

Robin Frost responded that Gorham walked away and that the proposed contract figure was \$65,000 to \$70,000.

Glen Eastman asked about the loader maintenance and repairs and wondered if we had looked into a lease vs. outright purchase.

A discussion then took place about the need for the Town to work on roads. Lisa Kardell commented that there is a safety issue. Robin responded that the Town needs to do a Road Infrastructure bond. Jeff Schall said that we should wait until the Town Hall bond is done and that there are two sections that are really bad.

Engineering wise, we should look at the two worst pieces.

Robin Frost stated that she has an estimate which is broken out into sections and that we would start from the top and work our way back. We need a road that will stand the test of time.

Lisa Kardell commented that there are people in those homes that need EMS services and they are difficult to get to. They are not actually getting the services.

Mike Waddell suggested we grind it up and make gravel. Robert Demers stated that it was poor fill, poor drainage and lots of clay.

Jeff Schall commented that the budget is what it is – the department heads know what it costs to provide the services. He also suggested that the Sanitation and Recycling program be compared to Shelburne and Lancaster. Maybe we should have a different type of service.

Lisa Kardell said that some folks put their trash out and it is strewn all over.

Jeff Schall said that he had spoken with Regan Pride of North Country Council who assists towns with projecting costs and upfront costs for transfer stations. The Lancaster Budget is comparable to ours for MSW & Recycling.

Robert Demers said he would be curious to see the study results and that he would like to see health insurance coverage for the employee only. We need to reverse what is happening, cut back and lower the rate.

Jeff Schall said the MSW-Recycling study would cost the Town \$3,520 and that NCC would match that amount with a grant. Jeff will prepare a Petitioned Warrant Article for the Town Warrant.

Jeff Schall will also prepare a budget summary Power Point and present it at the Public Budget Hearing. The Department heads will be prepared to answer any questions.

Denise Vallee will post the notice for the Public Budget Hearing in the newspaper and in three public places.

Jeff Schall suggested splitting up the operating budget warrant article into multiple articles.

Mike Waddell said that the warrant is prepared by the Board of Selectmen.

Jeff Schall then made a motion to vote to recommend that the Board of Selectmen break up the operating budget warrant article into separate warrant articles and Robert Demers seconded it. 5 were in favor, Glen Eastman and Mike Waddell voted against.

Next meeting: February 12, 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Medallion Opera House, Town Hall for the Public Budget Hearing.

Adjournment: Terry Oliver made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Robert Demers. All were in favor and Jeff Schall adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Vallee