

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2016 6:00 PM**

Gorham Selectmen present: Jeff Schall, Grace LaPierre, Terry Oliver

Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Denise Vallee; Naomi Levesque; Tim Sappington; David Graham, Gail Wigler, Clint Emmet, Aaron Gorban, Library Trustees; Elizabeth Thompson, Library Director; Connie Landry, Asst Library Director; Chad Miller, EMS Director; Rick Eichler, Fire Chief; Dana Horne, Asst Fire Chief

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Schall.

2. Appointments:

a) Gorham Public Library Trustees – 2016 Budget – David Graham was present, but stated that others would be right along. Chairman Schall moved to the next appointment to allow time for the others to arrive.

b) Denise Vallee – Medallion Opera House Marquee Sign – Ms. Vallee stated that after the last presentation, she took the comments from the Board back to the designer of the sign and hopes that the new rendering will be more satisfactory. She noted that research was done to find the cost of an electronic sign and it would cost an additional \$25,000. The Board agreed that the sign looks much better centered on the door and the window. Ms. Vallee stated that the sign exceeds the allowed square footage in the sign ordinance, so if approved by the Board, the next step would be to apply for a sign permit and then proceed to the ZBA for a variance. **On a motion by Selectman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board unanimously approved this new sign rendering.**

Gorham Public Library Trustees – The Board welcomed the Library Trustees. Chairman Schall explained the Board's action at the last meeting and reasons therefore. It was discovered that the members of the Board of Selectmen never received the email with the letter from the Trustees and while copies were being made for them, LT Graham started to explain what was in the letter. The Board took a minute or two to read through the letter and then asked the Trustees to continue with their presentation. Aaron Gorban, Chairman of the Library Trustees, stated that they looked at salaries of the other town employees and quickly saw that the rates for library employees are much lower than the rest of the Town employees. They made the decision to give them 3% instead of the 2% proposed for all of the other Town employees to try and bring them closer to those rates. The Board asked FD Vallee what the starting rate for a clerical position is and she stated around \$13 per hour. The Library employees are under \$9. The second issue was the offering of health insurance to the part time Assistant Library Director, who works 32 hours per week. According to the Affordable Care Act, if an employee works that many hours per week, they must be offered health insurance. The Library Trustees could have decided to lower the hours per week worked by the Asst Director, but they did not want to do that explaining that this position is a very important one to keep at that level. As Library Director Thompson put it: The Library has evolved over the past 10 years and most people are very happy with the changes. The success of the Library is based on the efforts put into programming and consistently seeing that person at the circulation desk. This position allows

the Director to accomplish her work, including writing grants and other important duties. Chairman Schall stated that the inclusion of health insurance effectively gives that position a raise of 33%. He is not in favor of this because it would be better to reduce the hours to 29 per week and have the other part time employees pick up those hours. Selectmen LaPierre stated that she was in favor of recommending both of these budget items. After some deliberation, Selectman Oliver decided that he, too, was in favor of both items. The Board will take a formal vote at a later date when they vote on recommendations for all the warrant articles.

With regard to the warrant article to place \$10,000 into the previously established Capital Reserve Fund, once the Board understood that the fund was established some time ago and the library just had not been placing any funds in it for a few years, they agreed to place this article on the warrant without the need for a petition.

3. New Business

a) Public Safety Organizational Review Committee (PSORC) Final Report: TM Frost stated that the Board received this report in their packets and gave an overview of the findings. She stated that there were three other members of the committee present, besides her, at this meeting and the others were either working, on vacation or will be coming to the next meeting where the topic will be discussed in more depth. This meeting is really to introduce the report and then allow the Board members to review it before the next meeting on January 25th. In short, the committee recommends (7-1) to move forward with combining the Fire and EMS departments and also recommends that the Board hold a public hearing prior to making their final decision. Asst Fire Chief Dana Horne stated that he hoped the Board would really take their time to read the report and think hard before making a decision. He was the dissenting vote and feels that this would mean the end of the Fire Department as we know it. He thinks there are some problems with the department that need to be fixed, but this can be accomplished without merging the two departments. Chairman Schall asked him to elaborate and AFC Horne stated that he believes things are running well enough right now and sees no benefit to merging. Selectman LaPierre wondered if everyone would have to be cross-trained and TM Frost told her that was not going to be a requirement for the call members, only for the full time employees. The Board will revisit this on January 25th at their regularly scheduled meeting and decide on a public hearing date at that time.

b) 2016 Utility Assessing Contract – George E. Sansoucy, PE, LLC: TM Frost presented the Board with the 2016 contract for utility assessing as prepared by Skip Sansoucy. This contract is less than previous years due to the settlement of a couple of major utility assessment challenges. The total recommended amount for budget purposes is \$40,000. Chairman Schall asked if there was any way to get other proposals for this work. He thinks the money spent on the challenges to the assessments are high. TM Frost reminded him that we are heading in the right direction with these issues, having been able to achieve fair settlements for future years on several major challenges. The Board signed the contract.

c) 2015 Equalization Ratio: TM Frost referred to the document in the Board packets that outlines the equalization ration for 2015. While this is not official, there is no reason to think it will change. According to this report, the ratio for 2015 is 110.8%.

4. Old Business

a) Easter Seal Ride-In Tentative Schedule: TM Frost included this schedule in the Board packets. Grace and Chad will judge the parade again (hats and all!).

b) Road Study Update: TM Frost stated that the report came in late this afternoon and she had only a chance to pull out and total the total reconstruction costs and the engineering costs. She asked that the Board review the rest of the report and discuss in greater detail at another meeting. The engineering cost for the nine roads is \$215,000 and the total cost, which includes the engineering, is \$2,824,000. The Board agreed to put the engineering in a warrant article for discussion purposes.

5. Public Comment:

There was no public comment at this time.

6. Other Business

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost presented the Board with a resolution for participation in HealthTrust, which provides our health insurance. **On a motion by Selectman LaPierre, seconded by Selectman Oliver, the Board unanimously voted the following:**

Resolved: That Town of Gorham shall participate as a Member in the HealthTrust pooled risk management program for the provision of group medical and/or other benefit plans in accordance with the "application and membership Agreement" and NH RSA 5-B

Resolved: That Robin L. Frost, Town Manager is hereby authorized and directed to execute and deliver to HealthTrust, on behalf of Town of Gorham, the "Application and Membership Agreement" in substantially the form presented to this meeting.

TM Frost said that Recreation Director Jeff Stewart has been looking for used pickup trucks for \$10,000 and under. He is having no luck. At the Budget Committee meeting on Thursday evening, members told him he probably would not find anything for less than \$20-25K. RD Stewart is looking for authorization to look in that price range and bring options to the Board for review. The Board agreed that he will have better success in this range. They also suggested that he look into the same deal that the school got a few years ago with their pickup truck from Berlin City.

TM Frost bought forward the GIS and Internet Maintenance Contract from CAI for the assessing department. This contract is currently \$1800. The Board signed the contract for 2016.

b) Selectmen's Update: There were no selectmen's updates at this time.

c) Approval of Minutes (December 28, 2015: There were just a couple of amendments presented by Selectman LaPierre. **Selectman LaPierre made a motion to approve the Minutes of the December 28, 2015 meeting as amended, seconded by Selectman Oliver, voted unanimously.** These minutes will be amended and placed in the selectmen's mail envelope for signature.

d) Sign Manifest: All manifests were signed.

e) Sign Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary): TM Frost presented the Board with the abatement forms from the approved recommendations of last meeting and told the Board that Richard Dorsett of KRT Appraisals will be at their meeting on January 25th to discuss the Couture commercial property recommendations.

7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II a-e: There was no need for a non-public session tonight.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Jeff Schall

Grace LaPierre

Terry Oliver