

**MINUTES OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
TOWN OF GORHAM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2015 6:00 PM**

Gorham Selectmen present: Jeff Schall, Grace LaPierre, Terry Oliver
Also present: Robin Frost, Town Manager; Kirstan Lukasak, Berlin Daily Sun; Denise Vallee, Finance Director

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

2. Appointments:

3. New Business

a) 2015 Encumbrances: Chairman Schall reviewed the 2015 Encumbrances and noted that the bulk of the \$143,501.45 as being the Tinker Brook Project. **Selectman Oliver made a motion to accept the 2015 Encumbrance list in the amount of \$143,501.45 as presented, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, voted unanimously.**

b) Great Lakes Hydro Settlement Document: TM Frost presented the Board with the Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release for Great Lakes Hydro America, LLC. She stated that the Board has already spoken about the settlement agreement, noting that nothing has changed it is just the agreement for signature. The Agreement has been prepared for TM Frost to sign on behalf of the Board and Town. **Chairman Schall made a motion to accept the Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release as presented, and to authorize TM Frost to sign the Agreement on behalf of the Board, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, voted unanimously.**

4. Old Business

a) 2016 Warrant Article Review: The Board began review of the draft copy of the Warrant Articles.

ARTICLE 1: To elect one Selectman for a term of three (3) years, one Water & Sewer Commissioner for a term of three (3) years, one (1) Library Trustee for a term of three (3) years, one (1) Trustee of Trust Funds for a term of three (3) years, two (2) Planning Board Members for a term of three (3) years, one (1) Planning Board Member for a term of one (1) year, four (4) Budget Committee Members for a term of three (3) years, one (1) Supervisor of the Checklist for a term of six (6) years. (To be voted on by written ballot while the polls are open for receipt of same.) TM Frost and Selectman LaPierre noted that there were corrections from the original article presented. The Board voted unanimously that the article was fine as is.

ARTICLES 2-5: These are slated for the Planning Board and did not contain any information. The Board skipped over these articles.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee's recommended amount of **\$3,850,699.00** for the general municipal operations. This article does not include special or individual articles addressed. (Majority vote required)

	Budget Committee	Tax Rate Impact
General Government	\$1,302,265.00	\$ 4.73/ \$1,000
Public Safety	1,295,599.00	4.71
Highways, Streets, Bridges	748,719.00	2.72
Municipal Solid Waste/Recycling	310,099.00	1.13

Health Purposes	1,700.00	< .01
Welfare	30,000.00	.11
Recreation, Parks	145,755.00	.53
Patriotic Purposes	4,825.00	.02
Information Booth	9,237.00	.03
Conservation Commission	500.00	< .01
Debt Service	<u>2,000.00</u>	< .01

Total: \$3,850,699.00

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 6 as presented.

ARTICLE 7: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$____.00 for the operation of the Sewer Department. (This amount will be offset by user fees and Sewer funds. It will not affect general taxation.)

ARTICLE 8: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$____.00 for the operation of the Water Department. (This amount will be offset by user fees and Water funds. It will not affect general taxation.)

The Board passed over Articles 7 & 8 as they were incomplete.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$159,962.00** for the operation of the Gorham Public Library. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.58

The Board discussed this line. Chairman Schall expressed concern regarding the budget request. He wondered why the part time position did not get cut back a few hours so the employee would not need insurance. The Board also did not agree with the 3% wage increase that the Library is proposing. **The Board voted this Article as follows: Schall – Nay; Oliver – Nay; LaPierre – Nay.**

ARTICLE 10: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of **\$80,000.00** for the purpose of highway and sidewalk asphalt repaving and curbing projects. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.29

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 10 as presented.

ARTICLE 11: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$110,000.00** as a Special Article for the Tinker Brook Project to replace the existing culvert with a bridge. \$110,000 to come from fund balance as of December 31, 2015. \$0.00 to come from taxation.

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 11 as presented.

ARTICLE 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$17,500.00** for the purpose of funding Androscoggin Valley Home Care Services. (By petition Richard Tanguay and others). Tax Rate Impact: \$0.06

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 12 as presented.

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,000.00** for the purpose of funding the D.A.R.E. Program. Tax Rate Impact: <\$0.01 (Recommended by the Board of Selectmen.) (Recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of ____.)

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 13 as presented.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000.00** for the support of the 4th of July Committee, to include fireworks and police coverage, for the annual 4th of July Celebration. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.04

Chairman Schall stated that he felt that "to include fireworks and police coverage" did not need to be in the language and requested that it be removed from the article. The article will now read "To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 for the support of the 4th of July Committee for the annual 4th of July Celebration. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.04

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 14 as corrected.

ARTICLE 15: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,000.00** for the purpose of purchasing and installing new playground equipment in Cascade Flats. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.05

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 15 as presented.

ARTICLE 16: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Selectmen to enter into a five (5) year lease/purchase agreement for \$61,000.00 for the purpose of leasing a 2015 Caterpillar 415F2 Wheel Loader Backhoe for the Highway Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$12,812.00** for the first year's payment for that purpose. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.05 (Majority vote required.)

The Board asked FD Vallee how future payments will be handled. She said that the balance of the payments will be moved to long-term debt. **The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 16 as presented.**

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$44,000.00** to be added to the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__.* Tax Rate Impact: \$0.16

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 17 as presented.

ARTICLE 18: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$85,000.00** to be added to the Town Building Purchase & Repairs Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__.* Tax Rate Impact: \$0.31

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 18 as presented.

ARTICLE 19: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$100,000.00** to be added to the Ambulance Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__.* Tax Rate Impact: \$0.36

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 19 as presented.

ARTICLE 20: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$80,000.00** to be added to the Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__.* Tax Rate Impact: \$0.29

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 20 as presented.

ARTICLE 21: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$55,000.00** to be added to the Sanitation/Recycling Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.20*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 21 as presented.

ARTICLE 22: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$24,000.00** to be added to the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.09*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 22 as presented.

ARTICLE 23: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000.00** to be added to the Emergency Disaster Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.04*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 23 as presented.

ARTICLE 24: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,195.00** to be added to the Medallion Opera House Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. This sum to come from December 31, 2015 fund balance available for transfer on December 1, 2016. No amount to be raised from taxation. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__.*

FD Vallee explained to the Board that these monies are raised from shows/performances throughout the year. The money is placed in the CRF and is used for MOH expenses. This year the windows were renovated with some of the money. **The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 24 as presented.**

ARTICLE 25: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$10,000.00** to be added to the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.04*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 25 as presented.

ARTICLE 26: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$45,000.00** to be added to the Assessment Capital Reserve Fund. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.16*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 26 as presented.

ARTICLE 27: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$5,000.00** to be added to the Police Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.02*

 **The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 27 as presented.**

ARTICLE 28: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,000.00** to be added to the Ambulance Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__.*
Tax Rate Impact: \$0.05

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 28 as presented.

ARTICLE 29: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,000.00** to be added to the Dispatch Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.05*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 29 as presented.

ARTICLE 30: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$65,000.00** to be added to the Information Technology Capital Reserve Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.24*

TM Frost informed the Board that this article is the first year of the new software. The Board asked how this will be handled at Town Meeting. TM Frost stated that while legally it does not need to be discussed, but noted that ethically it should be brought up and discussed at Town Meeting. She also stated that when she prepares this year's letter for the Town Report that she will likely include it. **The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 30 as presented.**

 ARTICLE 31: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$5,000.00** to be added to the River Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate impact: \$0.02*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 31 as presented.

ARTICLE 32: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$3,000.00** to be added to the Longevity/Severance Trust Fund as previously established. *Balance as of December 31, 2015: \$__. Tax Rate Impact: \$0.01*

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 32 as presented.

ARTICLE 33: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,895.00** for the purpose of supporting outpatient mental health services to under-insured and uninsured individuals provided by Northern Human Services - The Mental Health Center. (By Petition ____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.01

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 33 as presented.

ARTICLE 34: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,848.00** for the support of the Child Advocacy Center of Coos County. (By Petition ____ and others) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.01

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 34 as presented.

ARTICLE 35: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$9,700.00** for the purpose of supporting the Tri-County Community Action Program, Inc. This request will support North Country Transit/Senior Wheels \$4,000.00; North Country Senior Meals \$2,700.00; and the Community Contact Office \$3,000.00 - all sponsored by TCCAP. (By Petition _____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.04

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 35 as presented.

ARTICLE 36: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$4,000.00** for the support of the Gorham Community Learning Center. (By Petition _____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.02

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 36 as presented.

ARTICLE 37: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$4,000.00** for the purpose of supporting the Gorham Historical Society's museum and the organization's public service efforts to preserve and display the Town's history. (By petition _____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.02

FD Vallee stated that this warrant article is based on a petition received last year as well as previous years. To date, she has not received the application for this year. The Board asked TM Frost if she had heard anything back from Mr. Rajala. She stated that she had not, but that Tim Sappington had been in touch with FD Vallee regarding a generalized plaque that would include others. The Board expressed concern regarding approving this article, stating that they would like more information as to what the monies are used for. The Board asked TM Frost to invite the Historical Society to come in to justify their request and present a current financial statement. **The Board conditionally voted unanimously to not accept Article 37.**

ARTICLE 38: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,000.00** for the purpose of supporting the Family Resource Center at Gorham. (By petition _____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.05

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 38 as presented.

ARTICLE 39: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,000.00** for the purpose of supporting the Androscoggin River Athletes, a local arm of NH Special Olympics. (By petition _____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: <\$0.01

The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 39 as presented.

ARTICLE 40: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$2,000.00** for the purpose of supporting the Androscoggin Valley Chamber of Commerce. (By petition _____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.01

It was stated that the Route 2 information booth in Shelburne that is owned by the State will likely not be reopened. The Board wondered if the State would consider assisting with the expenses of the Town's information booth. Chairman Schall stated that he felt that the booth is there to primarily serve the local businesses and feels that they should be assisting with support of the information booth. The Board also asked TM Frost to get in touch with the local Chamber of Commerce to see if they would be interested in taking it over. **The Board voted unanimously to accept Article 40 as presented.**

ARTICLE 41: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$15,000.00** for the purpose of funding Northwoods Home Health & Hospice. (By petition _____ and others.) Tax Rate Impact: \$0.05

The Board asked if this was the same people as in Article 12. FD Vallee stated that this is a different organization and that this was their first year requesting money from the Town. The Board asked to have Northwoods Home Health & Hospice invited to the next Board's meeting so they may introduce themselves. The Board would also like to find out how they will handle their billing. **The Board voted unanimously to pass over Article 41.**

The Board asked what the tax impact is if all articles are voted in. FD Vallee stated without the \$110,000 for Tinker Brook added in, it will be a \$0.33. However, that number does not include the revenue end. TM Frost stated that the budget increase is just shy of two percent.

FD Vallee stated that when the Library was in to review their budget, they discussed starting a CRF and wanted to include \$10,000 in this year's Warrant. To date FD Vallee has not received anything in writing from the Library regarding this matter and asked the Board how they would like her to proceed. The Board stated that the Library would need to get that request on the Warrant via petition.

TM Frost stated the other item that has not been included was the engineering costs for the street/road repairs. She said that she will not be getting that information until next week. FD Vallee stated that when she places that article on the warrant that she will put it in as number 12 and move the Androscoggin Home Care Services article toward the end of the warrant.

b) Road Study Update: TM Frost stated that she had no other update, other than expecting the engineering costs by the end of next week.

5. Public Comment:

Kirstan Lukasak asked for clarification on the \$10,000 Warrant Article for the Library. The Board stated that, if the Library wanted this money on the warrant, the Library would need to have it completed by petition. It will not be added without the petition.

6. Other Business

a) Town Manager's Update: TM Frost presented the Board with an extension for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, which includes Gorham. While our Plan is already at FEMA, June Garneau of MAPS, wanted to be protected for all Plans. The Board signed the Extension request.

b) Selectmen's Update: Selectman LaPierre asked TM Frost if Chris Gamache of the NH Trails Bureau has gotten back to you. TM Frost stated that she has not heard back from him as of yet. TM Frost also stated that the Public Safety Committee was meeting tomorrow and had some changes to the documents, noting that is why she did not have anything for this meeting. Selectman LaPierre asked whose responsibility it is for the entrance into the old Rite Aid building owned by Arthur Couture. She stated that there is a very large hole at the entrance and was concerned about smaller cars being damaged. TM Frost stated that other business entrances in Town had been like that, and that it was the responsibility of the business that the entrance services. She will call Claude Pigeon of Couture Construction and ask him where they stand with it. Chairman Schall stated that he wanted to get acquainted with the Gorham Community Learning Center Building. TM Frost stated that there are a couple of boxes in her office containing information on the project/building, and he expressed concern regarding the Town's liability for this property. Further discussion took place regarding the ownership of the building, and the Board asked TM Frost to speak with Patty Stolte regarding the Town shifting ownership of their portion of the building to GCLC.

c) **Approval of Minutes (December 14, 2015 and December 16, 2015):** Selectman LaPierre made a motion to approve the Minutes of the December 14 and December 16, 2015, meetings as presented, seconded by Selectman Oliver, voted unanimously.

d) **Sign Manifest:** All manifests were signed.

e) **Sign Abatements and Exemptions (if necessary):** TM Frost presented the Board with several BTLA Settlement Recommendations from KRT Appraisal.

Arthur Couture, gravel pit land only: 30 Heath Road, Map R6, Lot 6; Arthur Couture, 37 Jimtown Road, Map R6, Lot 10.

Mr. Dorsett of KRT Appraisal stated that when he originally reviewed the request for 30 Heath Road, he felt that the information that was received was inadequate to determine or support their opinion of market value. He has since reviewed a BTLA case involving gravel pits, the valuations included the gravel and land, not just the land. The property owner has agreed to withdraw his appeal to the BTLA if the Board will assess the property at \$56,100 from \$132,700. This will result in abatements in the amount of \$2,350.09 for 2014 and \$2,255.17 for 2015. Mr. Couture's property at 37 Jimtown Road, fell under the same set of circumstances. The taxpayer has agreed to withdraw the BTLA appeal if the Board will assess the property at \$50,100 from \$386,200. This will result in abatements in the amount of \$10,311.55 for 2014 and \$9,908.23 for 2015. After further discussion of Mr. Dorsett's findings, **Chairman Schall made a motion to approve the abatements for Arthur Couture's property located at 30 Heath Road, Map R6, Lot 6 and 37 Jimtown Road, Map R6, Lot 10, as recommended by Rich Dorsett of KRT Appraisal, seconded by Selectman Oliver, voted unanimously.**

SDC Realty, LLC – 7, 9 & 15 Ray – Map U13, Lots 31, 32 & 36-A: This property is a commercial garage with two additional small lots. The Board had previously denied the abatement request based on KRT Appraisal's original recommendation. The taxpayer has since appealed to BTLA. Mr. Dorsett has reviewed the property again, and has suggested that based on the fact that the two small lots are not saleable, the assessment value be reduced from \$197,100 to \$125,000.

Arthur Couture – 230-2 Main Street – Map U6, Lot 37: This is a commercial office building on a 1.2 acre lot. The Board had previously denied the abatement request based on KRT Appraisal's original recommendation. The taxpayer has since appealed to BTLA. Mr. Dorsett has taken a second look at the property and noted major vacancy issues as well as functional issues. Therefore, Mr. Dorsett is recommending that the Board reduce the assessment value from \$313,800 to \$250,000.

Arthur Couture – 167 Main Street – Map U6, Lot 4: This property is a commercial retail store on a .89 acre lot. The Board had previously denied the abatement request based on KRT Appraisal's recommendation. The taxpayer has since appealed to BTLA. Mr. Dorsett has taken a second look at this property as well and has noted that the property has been vacant for several years. Based on the leasing issue as well as the building's current condition, Mr. Dorsett recommends that the Board reduces the assessment from \$556,200 to \$500,000.

The Board discussed these commercial properties and expressed concern over Mr. Dorsett's decision. They asked if Mr. Dorsett might be able to negotiate with the Mr. Couture. TM Frost stated that Mr. Dorsett has already completed this process. The Board express extreme concern with the Mr. Dorsett's decisions noting that they feel that he doesn't seem comfortable with being able to back his decisions on values. At this time, the Board agreed to not do anything with 7, 9 & 15 Ray Street, 230-2 Main Street and 167 Main Street

abatements and requested that TM Frost ask Mr. Dorsett to come before the Board to discuss his reasoning for changing his original recommendation.

Joele & John Losier – 5 Gorham Road, Map U26, Lot 11: The abatement request for this property is based on the property owner completing an appraisal of the property based on the agreement with the Town. This matter was scheduled for a hearing before the BTLA for October 7, 2015. Mr. Dorsett stated that the appraisal came in at \$209,000. As such, Mr. Dorsett recommends that the assessed value of the property to be set at \$209,000 from \$245,700. This will result in abatements in the amount of \$1,173.67 for 2013, \$1,125.96 for 2014 and \$1,081.92 for 2015. **Selectman Oliver made a motion to accept the recommendation of the assessed value of 5 Gorham Road, Map U26, Lot 11 be set at \$209,000 for 2013, 2014 and 2015 and to grant the abatements as noted, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, voted unanimously.**

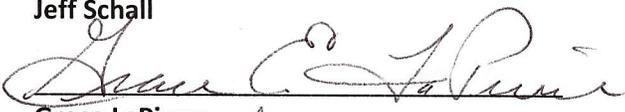
7. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-a:3, II e: On a motion by Chairman Schall, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board voted unanimously by roll call to move into non-public session at 7:20 pm. Schall – Aye, LaPierre – Aye, Oliver – Aye.

On a motion by Chairman Schall, seconded by Selectman LaPierre, the Board came out of non-public session by unanimous roll call vote at 7:45 pm. Schall – Aye, LaPierre – Aye, Oliver - Aye.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 PM.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED:

Jeff Schall



Grace LaPierre



Terry Oliver