

THE GORHAM TOWN BOARD
2024 BUDGET WORKSHOP MINUTES
September 20, 2023 7:00pm

The Gorham Town Board held a Budget Workshop Meeting on Wednesday September 20, 2023 at 7:00pm at the Town Hall.

Present were Supervisor Fred Lightfoote, Councilmembers, Brian S. Case, Jake Chard and Phil Curtis. Town Clerk Darby Perrotte. Conservation Board Councilmember Ben Smith, Tax Collector Adrienne Smith and Deputy Town Clerk Sheril Cota.

Councilmember Brian Lazarus joined via Zoom.

Guests/residents in person and via Zoom.

1. Call to Order/Pledge to the Flag
2. Privilege of the Floor –

Lynn Klotz, Lake Drive resident, read a letter she sent to the Town Board earlier in the day. It is attached at the end of the minutes.

Supervisor Lightfoote gave authorization for Gabrielle Harris, a local landscape architect, to give her professional feedback on the Easton Park parcel.

The Board held discussion on potential future plans for Easton Park such as a dog park, playing fields, playground equipment, walking trails, etc.

3. Business – 2024 Budget

The Board discussed the proposed addition to the Library Building. The Board agreed to obtain a revised estimate for the addition.

Supervisor Lightfoote said the new bookkeeper is coming along well being trained in municipal bookkeeping. There is much more involved than in the past. Supervisor Lightfoote would like to contract EFPR for certain tasks for the year such as putting together the Annual Financial Document, helping to close the books for the year and helping to finish out the budget. That is something he would like the Board to consider.

The Board discussed hiring a Deputy Assessor to replace the Assessor's Clerk that is retiring in December. The Deputy would be in a part-time position to fill the current Clerk's position. Supervisor Lightfoote would like to find a candidate to fulfill the need for an in-house IT Tech person, covering the Zoning Office duties and the Assessor's duties. This would be a full-time position.

Supervisor Lightfoote said the Town hired new employees for the Water & Wastewater. To attract them the Town raised the base pay to \$31.00/hour for that department.

Looking at the Highway MEO employees, in 2019 they were one of the highest paid in the County, now they are the lowest at base pay of \$27.64/hour rate. Supervisor Lightfoote would like to raise those rates as well. The Board held discussion. It was expressed that the two

positions are completely different. It is recommended to gather data from other surrounding townships for a minimum and compare them.

The license requirements for water and wastewater employees raises their base by \$2.00 per license. The Board discussed pay rates, benefits and longevity.

The Board discussed cost of living increases being separated into different increments for elected officials.

Supervisor Lightfoote said any employee that has seen a substantial increase in pay will not get the cost-of-living increase at the beginning of the year.

The Board discussed options for the Transfer Station. Employees, policies for collecting money for truckloads, security cameras, closing the gates, increasing truckload debris prices, the brush pile, commercial contractor dumping, using a punch card system, etc.

The Board will consider all of this when determining Permit pricing for 2024.

The Board discussed water rate increases.

Jones Road Retaining Wall –

Supervisor Lightfoote stated the Town obtained a quote of approximately \$70,000.00 for a soil nailing system for stabilizing the retaining wall on Jones Road. The Board held discussion.

On the motion by Councilmember Curtis, seconded by Councilmember Chard, approval to proceed with the Jones Road project. Motion carried unanimously. 5-0

Ayes – 5 Lightfoote, Case, Chard, Curtis, Lazarus

087-2023

Barb Frank, Goose Street resident, stated she has been attending meetings trying to gain understanding of how decisions are made or what the reasoning for them is. She said so much of the information and the decisions that are made lack context. Some examples she gave are the rationale was this can be done because “The State says it’s in the best interest of the town”, referencing drainage work in the hamlet. Ms. Frank stated for people to be able to support the governance there needs to be more than the “best interest of the town” for a reason. There is no ability to identify problems or celebrate a success. What are the priorities for the Transfer Station. The number of recyclables and truckloads have no meaning without comparison from other years.

Ms. Frank stated her request is to consider some metrics for departmental reports so decisions can be supported and respected.

4. Set the Next Meeting Date –

The next meeting will be held on October 11, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

5. Adjournment –

On the motion by Councilmember Case, seconded by Councilmember Curtis, the meeting was adjourned at 9:01 pm. Motion carried unanimously. 5-0

Ayes – 5 Lightfoote, Case, Chard, Curtis, Lazarus

088-2023

Respectfully Submitted,

Darby L. Perrotte
Town Clerk

Correspondence from Lynn Klotz.

I haven't heard about the direction the TB wants to go regarding Easton Park's stormwater management plan, grading, and park design since my email 1 week ago.

Ms Harris is a professional landscape architect and is willing to offer her services to produce a parcel drawing and include a short list of pertinent factors to consider before any more heavy equipment runs over tree roots and disturbs native habitat. It is not reasonable to ask her to perform this task however, if it won't be used.

- I was surprised to see that the gutters are installed already - how are they pitched, to empty where?
- Has other groundwork been contracted for already? By someone with a proven record in other environmental conservation projects?
- Is there a plan for installing the rain garden? And creating berms to slow water from the top of parcel to SR 364?
- What work is the EP Committee tasked with completing (or researching)? We have already met a few times and have discussed multiple facets for completion?

Easton Park provides perhaps the best public view in the town and with a little care and planning, can be a shining example of "things well done." It would be wonderful for the Town to be seen as setting an example for other businesses and residents to follow similarly by being consistent with the recently approved Comp Plan & town codes, creating healthy habitat for native plants and animals to flourish, all while being mindful of protecting our drinking water and the primary economic driver in the community.