

GOFFSTOWN SELECT BOARD
MINUTES TO MEETING OF JANUARY 22, 2024

In attendance were Chairwoman Kelly Boyer, Vice Chairman Peter Georgantas, Selectman Collis Adams, Selectman Jim Craig, Selectman Mark Lemay, and Town Administrator Derek Horne. Also in attendance was Gail Labrecque—Recording Secretary.

6:00 PM CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairwoman Boyer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She led the Board and the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACCEPTANCE/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Selectman Lemay made a motion to accept the public and non-public minutes to the Select Board meeting of January 8, 2024. Selectman Craig seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notice to Voter - NH Presidential Primaries

Chairwoman Boyer said the NH Presidential Primaries will be held Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at Goffstown High School, 27 Wallace Road for residents in Ward 1, and at Bartlett Elementary School, 689 Mast Road for residents in Ward 5. The polls will be open between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. for the nomination of Candidates. The Democratic Sample Ballot and Republican Sample Ballot are both available by clicking the “Elections Info” button on the Town Website, www.GoffstownNH.gov. Sample ballots are also posted at Town Hall.

Candidacy Filing Period for Town Elections and School Elections

Chairwoman Boyer said this is a reminder to residents interested in running to serve as an elected Town or School District official. Candidacy filing opens Wednesday, January 24th. Please Note - the Town Clerk's Office will have a delayed opening at 10:00 a.m. due to late night duties required by the January 23rd, NH Presidential Primary. Candidacy filings received at the Town Clerk's Office during regular Town Hall business hours (Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) will be marked as of the date received. All candidacy filings delivered after regular business hours electronically, by mail/courier, or drop box will be receipt dated as of the next regular business day when physically received by the Town Clerk's Office. Candidates filing on the last day, Friday February 2, 2024, must appear in person, per RSA 669:13. The Town Clerk's Office will remain open from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., only on the last filing day, to accept Declarations of Candidacy Forms.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Consent Agenda

Town Administrator Horne said for Employee Status Reports they have a Police Officer retirement, a Police Officer new hire, a FFI/EMT part-time resignation, and an EMT per diem new hire. For rights-to-inter, they have Westlawn Cemetery, Section 1911, Lot 36. They have a proclamation for an Eagle Scout award that needs the signature of the Board. And they have a 2024 MS-DTB (Default Budget) that needs the signature of the Board.

Selectman Lemay made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Vice Chairman Georgantas seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

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Assessors Recommendations

Town Administrator Horne said for Assessor's recommendations they have the following:
A Blind Exemption application for Map 9, Lot 58-19, with approval recommended. They have solar exemptions with approvals recommended for Map 30, Lot 47, Map 17, Lot 27, Map 16, Lot 2, Map 11, Lot 18, Map 8, Lot 62-8, Map 3, Lot 37B-5-8, and Map 2, Lot 56-8.

They have Veteran's Tax Credit and Tax Credit for Service-connected Total Disability, with approval recommended for Map 1, Lot 57-7, Map 5, Lot 60-9-A, Map 6, Lot 67-8 and Map 24, Lot 53. They have Veteran's Tax Credit approvals recommended for Map 3, Lot 59-15, Map 5, Lot 60-2B, Map 5, Lot 95-11, Map 6, Lot 17B-77, Map 6, Lot 22-59, Map 6, Lot 22-146, Map 7, Lot 11A-2-4, Map 9, Lot 4-38-2, Map 17, Lot 140, Map 24, Lot 15A-1, Map 33, Lot 24-1 and Map 34, Lot 54. For All Veteran's Tax Credit approval is recommended for Map 3, Lot 33-C2-104, Map 7, Lot 35-3, and Map 43, Lot 3.

Vice Chairman Georgantas asked the total amount of the total tax credits. Town Administrator Horne said it's on the MS-1 form and he'll look it up. The Board does have the two warrant articles for the Veteran's Tax Credit and the All-Veteran's Tax Credit. The Elderly Tax Exemption was changed at Town Meeting last year. The Board doesn't have it annually for a change. The Assessor recommended it for an increase in value as well as an increase in the assets. It would be in the same tax year as the valuation update. That took effect last year. The Board may start seeing new applications that may not have qualified in the past.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to approve the Assessor's recommendations as presented. Selectman Craig seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

SELECT BOARD DISCUSSION

New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

Action Matrix

Chairwoman Boyer said they are reviewing the matter regarding the Police Station later this evening. The next meeting of the Village Pedestrian Bridge Ad Hoc Committee is on March 4th. She asked about the CDFR Community Center Investment Program Grant. Town Administrator Horne said they've not received notice of that yet. He will reach out before the next meeting to see where they are in the next review process.

He didn't hear from Fire Chief Sullivan or DPW Director Jacobs about any vehicles being out of service. They have already designated who's going where for coverage for the elections. He said they are normally there by 6:00 a.m. Selectman Lemay said they were asked to be there 15 minutes early because of the new standard with the people outside. It needs to be set up early.

Old Business

Town Administrator Horne said he has the information regarding the Veteran's credits. There was a memo from the Assessor to the Board in December in which he recommends a 20% increase. On the 2023 MS-1, the total tax credits were \$445,000. If you had no new credits or change in the number, that 20% increase would become \$534,000.

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6:10 PM PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

6:15 PM PUBLIC HEARING (RSA 32:5-c) - Adoption of Local Tax Cap

Chairwoman Boyer said that pursuant to RSA 32:5-c, the Goffstown Select Board will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, January, 22, 2024 at 6:15 p.m. at Goffstown Town Hall, 16 Main Street, Goffstown NH to receive public input on a citizen petitioned Warrant Article to adopt and implement a local tax cap.

The petitioned article states: “Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year’s actual amount of local taxes raised, by no more than 2.5% where 3/5 of a majority vote is required. The tax cap is calculated on the amount of local taxes raised for the prior year, adjusted to add back in any fund balance used at tax rate setting (RSA 32:5-b, I-a).”

The Budget Committee recommended a 2024 operating budget and warrant articles with an estimated amount of taxes to be raised totaling \$18,709,355. To achieve an estimated amount of taxes to be raised with only a 2.5% increase, the Budget Committee would have needed to reduce their recommended budget by \$681,236. She said when they open the public hearing, those wishing to speak need to state their name and address, and there is a 3-minute time limit.

Chairwoman Boyer opened the public hearing at 6:15 p.m.

Henry Gaiason III, 20A Amoskeag Drive, said he wants to speak in favor of this article. The metric used to determine this was the CPI of 2.5%. Inflation has risen 3% - 7% but wages have not. The taxpayers have to do more with less, and they are asking the Town to do the same—to do a little more with less. The Town budget is just under \$30 million and allows for an increase of just over \$500,000 per year, before it goes to the taxpayer. The School Budget is just over \$55 million, and it allows for more than a \$1 million per year increase. This allows them to meet the collective bargaining agreements and existing bonds, etc.

Before more increases come before the taxpayer, they are asking for more diligence in trying to see where they can get that money without taking it off the backs of the taxpayers. This is a way to put the taxpayers back into the conversation about how the tax dollars are proposed. New warrants can still be proposed separately. There have been a lot of complaints about tax in town. Our tax rate is \$26.31. We are less than \$15 above the state property tax. We don’t want to be in competition with the community with the highest tax rate in the state.

Mary Jenkins, 245 Wallace Road, said the tax burden is a legitimate concern for taxpayers but this isn’t the right mechanism to address it. It should be addressed and advocated for at the State level around taxation issues that suppress towns’ access to funding resources, and to address laws that promote exemptions and tax benefits for the very wealthy, and to the detriment of the rest of us. Her concern about the tax cap proposal is that it could bind the Town and School Board to a particular level of funding when a more fiscally constrained approach is possible. It can be costly in the long run to execute programs of maintenance for systems, equipment, and facilities if they

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take short term restrictions and are unable to take advantage of good approaches to addressing larger expenses in the short term. It can also potentially harm the bond rating, and hamstrings elected and town officials from addressing priorities for the town.

Peter Grigorakakis, 112 Gorham Pond Road, said he is against a tax cap. We are an SB 2 Town. There is only one other town that has a tax cap, and that's Litchfield, and they are having problems. Each and every year the voters decide whether or not, they approve a budget. And there is a Default Budget.

Shawn Santino, Pattee Hill Road, said he's opposed to the tax cap and it's a short-sighted plan. It looks in the immediate and does not look in the long term at where this town has to go, or how we're going to get there. He understands the tax burden. When we look at the overall ability of a Town to be able to manage and run what we need to do to sustain daily life. We need to not be hamstrung by an arbitrary 2.5% tax cap that they set. We could go back to the Default Budget. The citizens decide what will and what won't work for them. He feels it's a state issue that increases the liability of the residents to have to pay the school expenses.

The Chair closed the public hearing at 6:24 p.m.

State Educational Tax Effort

Town Administrator Horne said this is from the 2023 tax rate breakdown which is available on the website, under the Tax Collector's page. This gets done in the fall. From 2023 the Town collected \$17,588,409, for a tax rate of \$6.50 per thousand. The County portion was \$2,390,86 for a tax rate of \$.88 per thousand. Local education was \$27,520,664, for a tax rate of \$10.17 per thousand. The State education was \$3,394,811, for a tax rate of \$1.31. The total tax rate for 2023 was \$18.86.

Chairwoman Boyer asked about the municipal amount of \$17,588,409 for 2023 and the current proposed from the Budget Committee. Town Administrator Horne said they had proposed an operating budget and recommended warrant articles because the way the tax cap is written, it is what is on the budget form from the Budget Committee that goes to the voters. They have a total of \$18,709,355. That is the operating budget, minus revenues, plus the warrant articles that the Budget Committee recommended.

Selectman Craig asked if they have information about whether or not a tax cap affects a bond rating. Town Administrator Horne said they don't have that information. He'd have to reach out to other municipal managers. They don't typically do their own bond rating because they typically go through the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank, whereas some of the larger communities actually do their own bond rating and go out themselves to get bonds.

Selectman Adams said he heard Litchfield is the only other SB2 town in the state with a cap. Town Administrator Horne said there's no database right now. The DRA is reviewing about 210 towns and are reviewing all their warrant article language and their budget. They did submit a request to find out if they had a list of who does, but they didn't get an answer back. They hope to have that by the Deliberative Session. Selectman Adams said Litchfield has been having problems and he wonders what kind of problems they were seeing, and what they are faced with.

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TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT (continued)
Recommendations for 2024 Annual Warrant Articles

Article 12—Operating Budget

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to recommend Article 12, the Operating Budget. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 13—Appropriation from the EMS Special Revenue Fund

Town Administrator said this article offsets the costs of the ambulance service. If it doesn't pass, the ambulance service becomes funded through property taxes.

Selectman Adams made a motion to recommend Article 13. Vice Chairman Georgantas seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 14—DPW Teamsters Collective Bargaining Agreement

Town Administrator Horne said this is the CBA between the Town and the Teamsters at DPW. It's a 2-year agreement that represents 24 full-time positions at DPW. The estimated increase in 2024 is \$151,752, and in 2025 the estimated increase would be \$177,829.

Selectman Adams made a motion to recommend Article 14. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 15 – Police Patrol Officer Collective Bargaining Agreement

Town Administrator Horne said this is for 22 full-time sworn patrol officers. This is a 3-year tentative agreement. In 2024 the estimated increase is \$96,059. In 2025, the estimated increase is \$132,441. In 2026, the estimated increase is \$128,105. All CBAs were recommended by the Budget Committee.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to recommend Article 15. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 16 – Dispatchers and Clerks Collective Bargaining Agreement

Town Administrator Horne said this is for the CBA for the Goffstown Dispatchers and Clerks, and it covers 13 positions. In 2024 the estimated increase is \$46,454. In 2025, the estimated increase is \$72,270, and in 2026 it is \$49,385. The Budget Committee unanimously recommended it.

Selectman Lemay made a motion to recommend Article 16. Vice Chairman Georgantas seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor.

Article 17 – Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund

Town Administrator Horne said this is the annual deposit of \$250,000 for a deposit into the Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund. This would be from a new tax collection. It was not proposed to come from fund balance. It was recommended by the Budget Committee with a vote of 11-2-0.

Selectman Lemay made a motion to recommend Article 17. Selectman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 18 – Public Library Capital Reserve Fund

Town Administrator Horne said this article is to establish a Goffstown Public Library Capital Reserve Funds for building projects and matching grant funds, and to deposit \$200,000 into the

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fund, with the Board of Trustees and the Select Board as agents. The Budget Committee recommended this by a vote of 8-4-1.

Selectman Adams made a motion to recommend Article 18. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 19 – Engineering Design – Replacement for Barnard Park Pool and Bathhouse

Town Administrator Horne said this article is to raise and appropriate \$340,000 for the purpose of funding an engineering design for the replacement of the pool and bathhouse at Barnard Park. It was explained that, if this article were to pass, the Town would come forward, at a future town meeting to seek funds for the actual construction.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to recommend Article 19. Selectman Craig seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 20 – Crispin’s House

Town Administrator Horne said this \$20,000 is to support a petitioned article request for Crispin’s House. This was recommended by the Budget Committee with a vote of 8-3-2.

Selectman Adams made a motion to recommend Article 20. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 21 – Goffstown Main Street Program

Town Administrator Horne said this article seeks to raise \$4,000 for Goffstown Main Street Program. This was recommended by the Budget Committee by a vote of 11-0-1.

Selectman Craig made a motion to recommend Article 21. Vice Chairman Georgantas seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 22 – Dispatch Center Revolving Fund

Town Administrator Horne said this article seeks to establish a Revolving Fund for the maintenance and replacement of the Town’s Dispatch Center hardware and software related to first responder dispatch services and for maintenance and replacement of the first responder radio infrastructure. All revenue from dispatching services, beginning January 1, 2024, would go into this fund.

Selectman Lemay made a motion to recommend Article 22. Vice Chairman Georgantas seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 23 – EMS Revolving Fund

Town Administrator Horne said this article is to establish a revolving fund for the purpose of funding operations for EMS. They’ve had a special revenue fund since 2001, but in 2017, DRA began requiring them to appropriate from that fund as a separate article every year. If that warrant article were to fail, they’d have to collect the taxes. This is a revolving fund where the ambulance fees would go into that fund and the Select Board and Treasurer would have access to those to operate. This is to establish that revolving fund. The next article is where they would actually discontinue the special revenue fund and deposit everything into the revolving. It is really just changing the form of a special revenue fund to a revolving fund. This is not at the request of the DRA. It is a recommendation from himself and Danielle Basora. There’s always that danger that if the revenue fund appropriation article fails, then it actually goes back to taxes, and they have to

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fund the ambulances by taxes. All the revenue continues to go into the special revenue fund but to actually fund it, you would have to collect additional taxes.

Selectman Lemay made a motion to recommend Article 23. Vice Chairman Georgantas seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 24 – Transfer of Funds from Special Revenue Fund into Revolving Fund

Town Administrator Horne said this article is contingent upon the passage of Article 23. All the funds would be transferred from the Special Revenue Fund into the Revolving Fund.

Selectman Lemay made a motion to recommend Article 24. Selectman Craig seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 25 – Modification of GTV Revolving Fund

Town Administrator Horne said this article seeks to modify the existing cable access revolving fund established in 2013. At that time, the cable franchise (GTV Revolving Fund) receives 40% of the franchise fee from Comcast. Because cost has increased on equipment and everything related to cable access, he and the Finance Director came to the Select Board in December and proposed an increase to the share, shifting it from the General Fund over to the Cable Access Revolving Fund.

At that time Vice Chairman Georgantas asked if it could be staggered over a number of years. It can be staggered but can't be done in a warrant article. It would require multiple warrant articles. The share is currently 40% to the Cable Access Revolving Fund, and 60% goes to the General Fund. Staff recommends reducing the share of the General Fund from 60% to 30% and shifting that 30% to the Cable Access Revolving Fund. They are currently getting about \$80,000 per quarter, or about \$320,000. That's between \$90,000-\$100,000 they'd be moving from the General Fund.

You'd be reducing the revenue in the General Fund by \$90,000 and increasing the revenue of the revolving fund by \$90,000. When they developed the 2024 budget and presented it to the Select Board and to the Budget Committee, they had zeroed out cable revenue. This would be a slight increase from what was presented. The 30/70 split is a recommendation from staff. The Board can change it if they want to.

Vice Chairman Georgantas asked the dollar difference in what's going into the General Fund. Town Administrator Horne said in 2024 they've budgeted \$164,000 into the General Fund. But they didn't budget the revenues. If they move forward with both, they will decrease what's going into the General Fund by about \$250,000.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to recommend Article 25. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 26 – Increase in Veteran's Tax Credit and All-Veteran's Tax Credit

Town Administrator Horne said this was a recommendation from the Assessor that was brought to the Select Board in December. It is a 20% increase for both the Optional Veteran's Tax Credit and the All-Veteran's tax credit. It would increase its current tax credit of \$500 per year to \$600 per year. It would take effect for the 2024 property tax year.

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Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to recommend Article 26. Selectman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 3-0-2. Selectman Craig and Chairwoman Boyer abstained. Motion carries.

Article 27 – Increase in Service-connected Total Disability Tax Credit

Town Administrator Horne said this article is to increase the service-connected total disability tax credit from \$2,000 to \$2,400 per year, to take effect in the 2024 property tax year.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to recommend Article 27. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 28 – Tax Exemptions for new construction or Commercial or Industrial Use

Town Administrator Horne said the EDC recommended this article to give tax exemptions for new construction or commercial or industrial use. There would be a 50% exemption in year one, then reducing it, in 10% increments. They used the terms in the Zoning Ordinance for what Commercial and Industrial uses are. They put in a special provision that no multi-family or residential uses in mixed use would be eligible for that part of the exemption. This is a 5-year program, and if still available in 5 years, the Town will have to re-adopt it if they want to continue. It's for the increased amount of value due to the new construction.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to recommend Article 28. Selectman Craig seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Article 29 – Petition Warrant Article – 2.5% Tax Cap

Town Administrator Horne said this is a petition warrant article. When originally received, he took out the first paragraph. The attorney suggested that paragraph remain in the warrant. It could be amended at Town Meeting. The second paragraph is statutory language and is required by law.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to not recommend Article 29. Selectman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

6:48 p.m. Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to enter into non-public session in accordance with NH RSA 91-A:3, II, (c), adversely the reputation of any person. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Chairwoman Boyer-aye; Vice Chairman Georgantas-aye; Selectman Adams-aye; Selectman Craig-aye; Selectman Lemay-aye. All in favor. Motion carries.

At 7:31 p.m. Chairwoman Boyer recused herself from non-public session.

At 7:42 p.m. Chairwoman Boyer re-entered non-public session.

7:42 p.m. Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to exit non-public session. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

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Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion to seal the minutes of non-public session. Selectman Lemay seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Chairwoman Boyer-aye; Vice Chairman Georgantas-aye; Selectman Adams-aye; Selectman Craig-aye; Selectman Lemay-aye. All in favor. Motion carries.

At 7:43 p.m. Chairwoman Boyer recused herself from the meeting.

Vice Chairman Georgantas made a motion find that accepting all the allegations of fact as true, the Board does not find any violation of the code of conduct for the private speech that has taken place. Selectman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 4-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

At 7:43 p.m. Chairwoman Boyer returned to the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

7:44 p.m. Selectman Lemay made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Selectman Adams seconded the motion. VOTE: 5-0-0. All in favor. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted, Gail Labrecque
Recording Secretary

These minutes are subject to approval by the Select Board.