

TOWN OF GHENT TOWN BOARD MEETING
December 16, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Town Board was held December 16, 2021 via the Zoom platform. Supervisor Benvenuto opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Present were: Michael Benvenuto Supervisor
Charles Wood Councilman
Koethi Zan Councilwoman
Patti Matheney Councilwoman
Mallory Mort Councilman
Ben Perry Highway Superintendent
Matthew Cabral Attorney for Town

MOTION #1 TO OPEN THE MEETING FOR PUBLIC COMMENT made by Councilwoman Matheney seconded by Councilwoman Zan and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Mort, Zan, Matheney

Nays: 0

Dave Berman- Thank you to all the board members for your service and wish you well in your next endeavors.

Gunner Worden- Wish you all luck in your next chapter, special thanks to Mal Mort who from day one has been there for the Town. Compassion for the Town and community whether with climate smart, or securing funding for the Town, he is a proven leader.

Sheldon Evans- Like to wish Mal the best of luck. Glad to have known him and know he will continue to do good things for the Town.

Carl Quinn- Mal, it was an honor and privilege to run the campaign with you. Few people in the town have your character and integrity. Wish you all the best. Climate smart and preserving the historical nature of the Town hall are legacies that will continue on.

Laurie Johnson- Thank you Mal, enjoyed running with you. Getting to know everyone and learning all the wonderful things you have all. It was really great to know that the people who are leading us are doing the right thing. Mike, I sent you an email a few weeks back and yet to hear back from you. What is the process and procedure for members of the sub boards in regards to speaking to the public and who holds them accountable that those statements are factual?

Supervisor Benvenuto- We do not have a system in where we muzzle any board members from commenting or speaking to the public generally speaking. If a complaint was made to the Board regarding specifics we would go from there.

Laurie Johnson- is this not a liability issue for the Town.

Attorney Cabral- The meetings of the Boards of the Town or public, recorded and have minutes. Things said on private social media and discussions held about the meetings that is not under the purview of the town.

Beth Lenahan- Thank you everyone, kudos' and thanks to Chuck and Mike. To Mal and Karen thank you for your leadership, Mal you have been a great public servant , set a standard and look forward to the Town Board in similar vain.

MOTION #2 TO CLOSE PUBLIC COMMENT AND OPEN THE MEETING made by Councilwoman Matheney
Seconded by Councilwoman Zan and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

MOTION # 3 TO ACCEPT THE PUBLIC HEARING ON NOVEMBER 9, 2021 AND TOWN BOARD MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 18, 2021 made by Councilwoman Matheney, seconded by Councilman Mort and approved.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Zan, Mort

Nays: 0

MOTION # 4 TO ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA made by Councilman Wood, seconded by Councilman Mort and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

Food Pantry numbers- Families 77, Children 88, Adults 109, Seniors 44, a food order of 5299 pounds.

Planning Zoning and Committees:

Climate Smart- Councilman Mort reported he met with Bob Dandrew, David Newman and Karen to get Bob up to speed on the Climate smart activities.

Broadband- Attorney Cabral – An MOU between Ghent, Canaan, Austerlitz and New Lebanon in connection with broadband expansion funds that have been awarded in the amount of \$329,524.00. This sets forth between parties that Ghent will be the primary applicant and will issue an RFP. The process will be the Towns will collaborate as they have now on a selection of a contractor and enter into a more formal agreement when things finalize. The board can approve the MOU and RFP and once all Towns do the same we can issue the RFP around December 30, 2021, with a response due by March 1, 2022.

MOTION # 5 TO APPROVE THE MOU AND GIVE PERMISSION FOR THE SUPERVISOR TO SIGN ON THE TOWN'S BEHALF made by Councilman Mort, seconded by Councilwoman Zan and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

MOTION # 6 TO APPROVE THE ISSUANCE OF THE RFP ONCE ITS HAS BEEN APPROVED IN FORM AND CONTENT BY THE OTHER TOWNS made by Councilwoman Zan, seconded by Councilwoman Matheney and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

Senior Report- Laurie Johnson reports of a new pilot program called NewEver Home Columbia, they are looking for 400 participants at no cost to them to help the stay home with the use of technology and case management. This information has been added to the Town's website.

HIGHWAY:

Earlier this month we finished setting up our snow fence around town. We have had a little inclement weather we had to deal with scraping and treating roads along with some down trees due to high winds. Since we have had no frost in the ground we went ahead and changed 3 cross pipes out for anticipation for next year paving process. We have fully completed our rebuild of our 1998 International Plow truck which I am very happy with the way the unit came out it is back in service as of this morning 100%. We are doing tree work on roads for the upcoming paving season. We will be swapping mowers and will be getting out with the boom mower to cut back over grown foliage and give some more attention to sight visibility issues around town. The State DOT has sent us a letter regarding Winter Hill and Ostrander. They have determined that these roads do not meet the conditions that would consider a lower speed reduction. I attend last month Traffic Safety Board Meeting in which we were notified that the State DOT has denied over 12 speed reductions out of 22 requests. We set our new speed sign out and where able to sit down with the company who walked us through all of the programs in which we can choose multiple ways to set up documenting and receiving info in which we are trying to obtain for whatever the interests may be. I would like to take a minute to thank Chuck, Mal, and Michael for the hand and hand working relationship in making my job as Highway Superintendent go as smoothly as it has for the past 8 years. Each one of you have played an important role in helping me in many ways from understanding what I needed to run the Highway Department to just lending a ear when needing a sounding board to bounce questions off of. I would just like to thank each of you personally for your assistance throughout the years in helping me make the town of Ghent Highway Department what it is today and I will truly miss each of you.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

MOTION # 7 TO APPROVE THE CHATHAM RESCUE CONTRACT FOR 2022 made by Councilman Mort, seconded by Councilwoman Matheney and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION # 8 TO APPROVE THE FIRE CONTRACTS FOR 2022 FOR GHENT, CHATHAM AND WEST GHENT made by Councilwoman Matheney, seconded by Councilman Wood and approved.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Zan, Mort

Nays: 0

Ghent Chatham Senior Contract- a brief discussion was had between board members with regards to the group their ideas on events, budget for the year, and calendar of events, liability insurance and moving forward to keep the town informed of upcoming trips and income and expenses in a quarterly fashion.

MOTION # 9 TO APPROVE AN AMENDED CONTRACT FOR THE GHENT CHATHAM SENIORS FOR SIX MONTHS WITH THE AMOUNTY OF \$1250.00 made by Councilwoman Zan, seconded by Councilman Mort and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

MOTION # 10 TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT FOR 2022 WITH THE MORRIS MEMORIAL made by Councilman Mort, seconded by Councilwoman Zan and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

MOTION #11 ACCEPT THE HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT PREVIOUSLY GIVEN made by Councilman Mort, seconded by Councilwoman Matheney and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

PAYMENT OF AUDITED BILLS AND ACCEPTANCE OF MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT: AUDITED BILLS:

General A \$73885.00

S.L. \$1148.96

General B \$15324.23

Highway DB \$20152.07

TOTAL: \$110,480.26

MOTION #12 TO PAY ALL AUDITED BILLS AND ACCEPT THE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT made by Councilman Mort, seconded by Councilman Wood and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Zan, Matheney, Mort

Nays: 0

MOTION # 14 TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 8 PM made by Councilwoman Wood, seconded by Councilwoman Matheney and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Benvenuto, Wood, Matheney, Mort, Zan

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Radley Town Clerk