

TOWN OF GHENT TOWN BOARD MEETING  
November 16, 2023

The Regular Meeting of the Town Board was held November 16, 2023 at the Ghent Town Hall, 2306 State Route 66, Ghent NY 12075. Supervisor Simmons opened the meeting at 7:00 pm with the pledge to the flag.

Present were:	Craig Simmons	Supervisor
	Wally Engel	Councilman
	Scott Myers	Councilman
	Dan Barufaldi	Councilman
	Lynda Nielsen	Councilwoman
	Ben Perry	Highway Superintendent
	Matt Cabral	Attorney for the Town

3 Audience member  
No Public Comment

**MOTION # 1 TO OPEN THE MEETING** made by Supervisor Simmons, seconded by Councilman Engel, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen  
Nays: 0

**MOTION # 2 TO ACCEPT MINUTES FROM OCTOBER 19, 2023** made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilman Myers, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen  
Nays: 0

**MOTION #3 TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA** made by Councilwoman Nielsen, seconded by Councilman Engel, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen  
Nays: 0

Food Pantry- 80 Children, 78 Adults, 44 Seniors, 72 Households.

Town Historian had a nice speech on Ghent's history as a fundraiser for the Ghent Playhouse. Dog Control- need to revamp some policies, more to come next month.

**PLANNING, ZONING AND COMMITTEES:**

Planning Board- Councilman Engel- All members were present as well as 3 members of the public  
Special use permit continued from the previous meeting for Taconic Place for a fence. No public comment/approved. Further discussion regarding the rail trail on his property. He stated HVRT has not contacted him. \*7:17A&B /TNT property enterprises: Special use permit on Falls Rd for outside storage/ non-permanent storage for contracting business. Public hearing was set for 12/6 \*7:40 4 C's self storage special use permit for expansion of more buildings. After discussing lighting options a public hearing was set for 12/6 \*8:03 Members discussed the planning board involvement in future rail trail discussions and plans \*8:14 Approved the previous minutes and accepted a motion to adjourn at 8:15.

Zoning Board- Councilman Myers- Zoning meeting was the subject of chickens and a rooster at a residence on George St in Ghent this will continue as the property owner will come back in December to show a land exchange that was done few years back to possibly make it ok for the chickens to stay in that zone area , but a variance would be needed to relocate the coop. all board members were present except for Lyle.

Climate Smart- Councilwoman Nielsen: Good meeting, looking into funding to create a pollinator garden. The BYO campaign has been posted on the website. The movie Common Ground will be playing at the Crandell on Sunday at 1pm.

#### RESOLUTION # 27 OF 2023

WHEREAS, THE TOWN OF GHENT CLIMATE SMART COMMUNITIES TASK FORCE (“TASK FORCE”) REQUESTS TOWN BOARD AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN FOR A BUILDING DECARBONIZATION GRANT AVAILABLE THROUGH PARTNERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION; AND WHEREAS, THE TOWN OF GHENT ADOPTED A MUNICIPAL GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INVENTORY IN DECEMBER OF 2022, WHICH DETERMINED SOURCE ONE EMISSIONS (I.E., DIRECT FOSSIL FUEL COMBUSTION) TO BE THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF EMISSIONS FROM TOWN-OWNED FACILITIES; AND WHEREAS, THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS CUTTING SOURCE ONE EMISSIONS FROM FACILITIES AS A FIRST STEP IN REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN THE TOWN; AND WHEREAS, THE TASK FORCE FURTHER RECOMMENDS PRIORITIZING FACILITY UPGRADES AT THE WEST GHENT COMMUNITY CENTER DUE TO THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS AND BECAUSE THE PUBLIC-FACING NATURE OF THE FACILITY WILL ALLOW THE PUBLIC TO OBSERVE AND APPRECIATE THE BENEFITS OF CLEAN HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS FOR MUNICIPAL FACILITIES; AND WHEREAS, THE GHENT TOWN BOARD PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED THE TASK FORCE TO SOLICIT ESTIMATES FOR NECESSARY WORK AND TO WRITE A BUILDING DECARBONIZATION GRANT FROM PARTNERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION TO SUPPORT AN ALTERNATIVE HVAC SYSTEM FOR WEST GHENT COMMUNITY CENTER; AND WHEREAS, AN ESTIMATE WAS OBTAINED WITH A PROJECTED COST OF \$25,368.80 FOR PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF FOUR AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS; AND WHEREAS, THE COOLING FUNCTIONALITY OF SUCH HEAT PUMPS COULD ENABLE THE WEST GHENT COMMUNITY CENTER TO BE UTILIZED DURING SUMMER MONTHS AND IS A STEP TOWARDS DESIGNATING THE FACILITY AS A COOLING CENTER IN CASE OF A HEAT EMERGENCY; AND WHEREAS, A SOLAR ARRAY WITH AMPLE BATTERY BACKUP STORAGE COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR FUTURE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES TO BOTH OFFSET THE ADDITIONAL ELECTRICITY DEMAND FROM HEAT PUMPS AND ENABLE THE FACILITY TO SERVE AS A FUNCTIONAL COOLING CENTER IN A POWER OUTAGE. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF GHENT, THAT THE TOWN BOARD AUTHORIZES SUBMISSION AND SUPPORTS TASK FORCE’S DECARBONIZATION GRANT APPLICATION TO PARTNERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION SEEKING A MINIMUM OF \$25,368.80 FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF HEAT PUMPS AT THE WEST GHENT COMMUNITY CENTER.

**MOTION # 4 TO APPROVE RESOLUTION # 27 FOR THE YEAR 2023 AS AMENDED AND AMENDED GRANT APPLICATION** made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilwoman Nielsen, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen Nays 0

Broadband- Supervisor Simmons- moving forward with Mid Hudson, permits are coming, meeting next week.

County Report- Supervisor Simmons – budget time, all about finances, staying under the tax cap, labor negotiations ongoing.

Rail Trail- Councilman Myers- The consultants are working on the routing plan through the Village. We met with Mayor Howe and the DPW to make sure the trail construction does not interfere with the sewer project. We also met at Camphill Ghent to look at the potential route through the Camphill property. The engineering and environmental teams have been onsite checking the bridge structures and wetlands. The project is moving along and is little ahead of schedule. The HVRTA annual meeting was a great success with 120 people attending.

Communications Committee- Councilman Barufaldi- fair number of stories and events. Story on the food pantry, Halloween parade was great. Looking to start a Community Day committee of volunteers. The tree lighting is December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6pm. Menorah lighting December 7<sup>th</sup> at sundown.

Seniors- Councilman Engel- stated that the group has been active and doing well. Had a chicken BBQ at the boat club. Christmas party planned for 12/6 at Jackson's. Heading to see the Rockett's on 12/13. Senior luncheon to be held at the Chatham Middle School on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

Parks and Recreation- Supervisor Simmons- tennis courts have been winterized. Holiday banners have been installed. Received reimbursement from the County and State for camp costs and busing. Discussed signs for West Ghent regarding parking.

#### HIGHWAY:

We have been busy doing final end of the year final preparations for the upcoming winter season. We have 95% of the fleet swapped over winter season. We have been working on the new storage building all the upright post and the two cans I place. We will be working on the roof system next. We have been diligently working on the body swap. At a meeting yesterday I attended with Cornell Local Roads I was notified that the State has revised the green light law to allow municipalities to use the yellow/green combination lights on any of our municipal equipment. We have gotten around our entire road system tending to the fall leaves with 3 units Turbine blower, truck blower and leaf vac trail making sure our ditches and pipes are cleaned to the best of our ability which will reduce our plugged pipe issues throughout the winter season. Put the trailer and dump body on the auction site which ended yesterday day trailer bid is \$4,000 & dump body was \$5,100 along with the roller was \$3,850 that would put us at \$12,450 in sales of the equipment for the year on the \$100,000 we had set aside for equipment purchase price was \$111,265 total sale of equipment will cover this over cost as well hoped and will bank \$1,185. Flags have been taken down and holiday banners have been put up. Tennis nets will be coming down soon. Resolution #28 speed request reduction Harlemlville rd east of parkway.

**MOTION #5 TO ACCEPT THE HIGHWAY REPORT** made by Councilman Engel, seconded by Councilman Barufaldi, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen

Nays: 0

**MOTION # 6 TO ACCEPT THE BIDS RECEIVED TO SELL USED EQUIPMENT FOR HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilwoman Nielsen, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen

Nays: 0

**RESOLUTION # 28 FOR THE YEAR 2023-**

WHEREAS, RESIDENTS LIVING ALONG THAT PORTION OF HARLEMVILLE ROAD LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF GHENT THAT BEGINS AT THE TACONIC STATE PARKWAY AND EXTENDS EAST TO THE TOWN LINE HAVE SUBMITTED A PETITION REQUESTING A SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION FROM THE CURRENT MAXIMUM SPEED OF 45 MPH APPLICABLE TO THE SAID TOWN HIGHWAY (HEREINAFTER THE "SUBJECT HIGHWAY"); AND WHEREAS, THE RESIDENTS REPORT A HIGH VOLUME OF AUTO AND TRUCK TRAFFIC FREQUENTLY TRAVELING ON THE SUBJECT HIGHWAY AT SPEEDS IN EXCESS OF THE CURRENT MAXIMUM; AND WHEREAS, THE SUBJECT HIGHWAY SERVES MANY RESIDENCES AND PROVIDES ACCESS TO THE ART SCHOOL OF COLUMBIA COUNTY, THE HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARMSCAPE ECOLOGY PROGRAM, THE HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM AND STORE, AND THE HAWTHORNE VALLEY WALDORF SCHOOL; AND WHEREAS, THERE IS A CATTLE CROSSING ON SUBJECT HIGHWAY USED BY HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM TO MOVE ITS HERD FROM FARM TO PASTURE; AND WHEREAS, THE SUBJECT HIGHWAY ALSO HOSTS A HIGH-VOLUME PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRAFFIC; AND WHEREAS, PETITIONING RESIDENTS REPORT DANGEROUS CONDITIONS ON THE SUBJECT HIGHWAY DUE TO THE HIGH SPEED OF THE VEHICLE TRAFFIC; AND WHEREAS, THE GHENT TOWN BOARD HAS DETERMINED THAT A REDUCTION OF THE SPEED LIMIT WOULD IMPROVE SAFETY ON THE SUBJECT HIGHWAY; AND WHEREAS, THE GHENT TOWN BOARD HAS DETERMINED THAT UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES A SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION IS WARRANTED. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF GHENT THAT THE TOWN BOARD HEREBY REQUESTS A SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION FOR THAT PORTION OF HARLEMVILLE ROAD LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF GHENT THAT BEGINS AT THE TACONIC STATE PARKWAY AND EXTENDS EAST TO THE TOWN LINE; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT A COPY OF THIS RESOLUTION SHALL BE SENT TO THE COLUMBIA COUNTY DPW AND THE COLUMBIA COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD, WITH A REQUEST THAT THE COLUMBIA COUNTY DPW AND THE COLUMBIA COUNTY TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION IN CONNECTION WITH REVIEWING THIS MATTER, TOWARD THE GOAL THAT THE SPEED LIMIT BE REDUCED AS REQUESTED HEREIN.

**MOTION # 7 TO APPROVE RESOLUTION # 28 FOR THE YEAR 2023** made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilwoman Nielsen, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen

Nays: 0

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

Comprehensive Plan Committee- Co -Chairs French and Streeter sent a letter to the Board requesting a letter of support for their participation in the Cornell Cooperative Extension program to assist communities engaged in Comprehensive Plan Review work. Introductory meeting early December planned.

**MOTION # 8 TO APPROVE SUPERVISOR SIMMONS TO SIGN A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE CPC** made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilman Engel and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen  
Nays: 0

Budget Adoption- Councilman Barufaldi thanked Supervisor Simmons for all his hard work on the budget

**MOTION # 9 TO ADOPT THE TOWN OF GHENT'S 2024 BUDGET** made by Councilman Myers, seconded by Councilwoman Nielsen, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen  
Nays: 0

NEW BUSINESS-

Public Hearings Fire Companies-

**MOTION # 10 TO SET PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR GHENT, CHAHTAM AND WEST GHENT FOR DECEMBER 21, 2023 AT 6:45pm, 6:50pm and 6:55 pm** made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilwoman Nielsen, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen  
Nays: 0

Tax Cap Resolution- RESOLUTION # 29 FOR THE YEAR 2023

WHEREAS, IN CONNECTION WITH ADOPTION OF THE 2024 TOWN OF GHENT BUDGET THE TOWN OF GHENT MUST SUBMIT TO THE OFFICE OF THE NEW YORK STATE COMPTROLLER DOCUMENTATION SHOWING THAT THE 2024 TOWN OF GHENT BUDGET DOES NOT EXCEED THE MAXIMUM TAX CAP INCREASE ALLOWANCE, INCLUDING THE INFORMATION NECESSARY FOR CALCULATING THE TAX LEVY LIMIT FOR THE COMING FISCAL YEAR; WHEREAS, THE TOWN SUPERVISOR HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO FACILITATE AND ENSURE THAT THIS FILING IS COMPLETED AS REQUIRED; AND WHEREAS, THE TOWN BOARD WISHES TO EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZE THE SUPERVISOR TO FILE THE REQUISITE INFORMATION WITH THE NEW YORK STATE COMPTROLLER ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF GHENT, THAT THE TOWN SUPERVISOR IS AUTHORIZED TO COMPLETE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS AND FILINGS TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW YORK STATE COMPTROLLER'S TAX CAP FILING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AS RELATED TO THE 2024 TOWN BUDGET AND ITS ADOPTION.

**MOTION # 11 TO APPROVE RESOLUTION # 29 FOR THE YEAR 2023** made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilman Myers, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen  
Nays: 0

Rescue Squad Contract- Discussion with Town Attorney regarding fee schedule in contracts and tabled approval till next amount to make sure figures are correct.

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

**AUDITED BILLS:**

General A \$ 33554.04  
S.L. \$ 662.35  
General B \$ 1416.93  
Highway \$ 50455.54  
Total \$ 86188.86

**MOTION # 12 TO PAY ALL AUDITED BILLS, ACCEPT THE MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT** made by Councilman Barufaldi, seconded by Councilman Engel, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen

Nays: 0

**Public Comment-**

Bob Dandrew- What is the time frame for Schnackenberg Road for internet? Supervisor Simmons stated they will know more next Tuesday.

Bootie Fenoff- Senior rep- Veterans food pantry is doing very well, overwhelmed with donations that they are sharing with other local pantries. Office of the Aging is ready to assist senior families in Ghent if needed. The employees of Ginsberg's donated 4 full turkey dinners to families in need. Meals on Wheels also cooked 40 frozen dinners to give out.

**MOTION # 13 TO ADJOURN MEETING AT 8:05 PM** made by Councilman Engel, seconded by Councilman Myers, and approved unanimously.

Ayes: 5 Simmons, Engel, Myers, Barufaldi, Nielsen

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michelle Radley, Town Clerk