

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
THE GORHAM TOWN BOARD
January 17, 2024 7:00pm**

The Gorham Town Board held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday January 17, 2024 at 7:00pm at the Town Hall in Gorham, NY.

Present were, Supervisor Dale C. Stell.
Councilmembers, Jake Chard, Phil Curtis, Brian Lazarus and Chrissy Watkins.

Town Officials in attendance; Chief Operator Water & Wastewater Districts Greg Coston, Highway Superintendent Zach Eddinger, Code Enforcement Officer Jim Morse, Assessor Enza Mineo, Tax Collector Adrienne Smith and Town Clerk Darby Perrotte.

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

Amanda Gibeau, Director of Operations for Stanley/Hall/Gorham Ambulance, updated the Town Board on the happenings of the agency. The Ambulance has put a purchase offer on a piece of property to build a new base for the Ambulance. The property is located on Gorham Road in the Town of Seneca. An interesting note; some of the property's previous owners were founding members of the Ambulance.

Debbie North, County Road 18 resident, welcomed Supervisor Stell and Councilmember Watkins and thanked them for their service to the Town Board. She stated many residents are looking forward to increased transparency and fiscal responsibility within the Town.

Mrs. North stated Councilmember Lazarus called the Sheriff on her stating her emails were repetitive and he wished no further email contact. Mrs. North feels this has infringed on her right as a resident to communicate with elected officials. At this time she would like to ask Councilmember Lazarus to rescind the directive from the Sheriff's Department so that she may include the entire Town Board on any issues she wishes to email about.

Councilmember Lazarus said No.

Mrs. North then asked about a FOIL request she submitted to the Town on January 9, 2024 regarding FEMA paperwork being processed by Highway Superintendent Eddinger and Highway Clerk Jones.

Highway Superintendent Eddinger said, in an email, that he was asking the Town Attorney before fulfilling the request.

Mrs. North asked why the Town Attorney has to respond to a FEMA request when it is a government agency and it's a request she has made as a resident.

Highway Superintendent Eddinger said she will have her request when he is done with his follow ups.

Mrs. North asked if it would be fulfilled within the time period required by NY State.
Superintendent Eddinger said yes.

Mrs. North is looking for any kind of documentation of awards or grants given to the Town of Gorham, through FEMA, and the areas affected that would be receiving those grants or rewards.

Highway Superintendent Eddinger confirmed the Town has not been awarded anything.

Supervisor Stell said he is aware there have been no awards yet. He asked if that would satisfy her FOIL request.

Mrs. North said yes, it would be sufficient to receive a response stating as of January 17 there have been no awards granted to the Town of Gorham and she will follow up later in the year if needed.

- 3. Approval of Minutes – 12/13/2023 Regular Meeting
12/13/2023 Special Meeting

On the motion by Councilmember Watkins, seconded by Councilmember Chard, both the meeting minutes were approved as submitted. Motion carried unanimously. 5-0

5 Ayes – Stell, Chard, Curtis, Lazarus, Watkins

008-2024

4. Reports of Town Officials -

A. Chief Operator Water/Wastewater Plants – written report on file.

B. Highway Superintendent – written report on file.

C. Zoning/Building Officer – written report on file.

D. Assessor –written report on file. In addition to her report, Assessor Mineo stated the County has adopted some additional exemptions. She will keep the Board informed so that the Town can adopt the new exemptions when they are available. Sales continue to exceed assessed value.

E. Town Clerk – written report on file. Town Clerk Perrotte said she received notification from NY State Department of Transportation stating they will conduct a speed study on a portion of County Rd 11 in the Town. A number of residents signed a petition setting forth the request to the Town for a speed reduction because of safety concerns for pedestrians. The State will notify the Town of their findings when the study is completed.

F. Tax Collector- Collector Smith said collection is on par for January. She has collected approximately \$2 million of the \$6 million dollar plus warrant.

G. Town Supervisor – Supervisor Stell stated he appreciates the confidence the Town’s people have shown by electing him to the position.

He added “Somewhere along the way we lost the trust and confidence of our residents in our community. It is my goal to regain that trust and confidence. I hope to do that through transparency, honesty, integrity, smart decision making, respect of our community members and smart spending. That’s my goal, hopefully we can attain those goals.”

On the motion by Councilmember Watkins, seconded by Councilmember Curtis, the reports of Town Officials were approved as submitted. Motion carried unanimously. 5-0

5-Ayes Stell, Chard, Curtis, Lazarus, Watkins

009-2024

Sally Napolitano, Lake Drive Resident, asked Tax Collector Smith if the \$2 million collected is in an interest-bearing account until payable to the County.

Collector Smith said it is not. She turns part of the money over to the Town Supervisor and then makes payment to the County.

Discussion was held.

Supervisor Stell said he is speaking with the bank manager inquiring about a short-term money market account, he will have an answer by the end of the week.

5. Audit of Bills -

Abstract #1

Prepared by the Bookkeeper, Town Clerk and Highway Clerk
Approval of Vouchers

On the motion by Councilmember Chard, seconded by Councilmember Case, The abstract for December totaling \$263,941.74 was approved for payment. Motion carried unanimously. 5-0

5 – Ayes - Stell, Chard, Curtis, Lazarus, Watkins

010-2024

6. Business -

a. Adopt Resolution calling for a Public Hearing to approve Zoning Map Changes –

Councilmember Watkins offered the following resolution and called for adoption. Seconded by Councilmember Chard the resolution was adopted unanimously. 5-0

011-2024

**TOWN OF GORHAM
RESOLUTION #1-2024
RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING DATE TO ADOPT THE NEW ZONING
MAPS**

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Gorham has determined it necessary to update the Town of Gorham Zoning Maps;

WHEREAS, the Town of Gorham Comprehensive Plan Committee has made appropriate changes to said maps;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Town of Gorham Town Board wishes to have a Public Hearing on February 21st, 2024, to discuss all recommended changes by the Town of Gorham Comprehensive Plan Committee;

I, Darby L. Perrotte Town Clerk of the Town of Gorham, do hereby certify that the resolution was adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Gorham on January 17, 2024 by the following vote:

| | <u>Aye</u> | <u>Nay</u> |
|-----------------|------------|------------|
| Dale C. Stell | X_____ | _____ |
| Jake Chard | X_____ | _____ |
| Phil Curtis | X_____ | _____ |
| Brian Lazarus | X_____ | _____ |
| Chrissy Watkins | X_____ | _____ |

7. Set the Next Meeting Date – The next regular meeting and public hearing will be held on February 21, 2024 at 7:00pm, at the Gorham Town Hall.

8. Privilege of the Floor –

Debbie North asked about consideration of an official town email address for Councilmembers. She asks if that can be discussed with the Towns IT Agency in an effort to create more transparency and to protect Councilmember’s personal email accounts.

Supervisor Stell said they will consider the request.

Lynn Klotz, Lake Drive resident, stated she asked the Town Clerk earlier, in an email, if there is a copy of the approved 2024 Town Budget. She understands the Town Clerk can’t put on the website what she doesn’t have in hand but, it would be great if it could be put on the website.

9. Executive Session –

On the motion by Councilmember Watkins, seconded by Councilmember Chard, the Board entered into executive session at 7:50 pm to discuss pending litigation, Town of Gorham v Kerrick and to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation or relating to promotion demotion, discipline, appointment or removal.

On the motion by Councilmember Chard, seconded by Councilmember Curtis, the Board returned to regular session at 8:46 pm.

No action was taken in executive session.

10. Appoint New Highway and Transfer Station Employee

On the motion by Councilmember Watkins, seconded by Councilmember Chard, to appoint Michael Ayers as Transfer Station Attendant and Hunter Orbaker as Highway MEO. Both starting immediately and at 90% pay. Motion carried. 4-1

4 Ayes - Stell, Chard, Curtis, Watkins

1 Nay - Lazarus

012-2024

11. Adjournment – with no further business, on the motion by Councilmember Watkins, seconded by Councilmember Curtis, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm. The motion carried unanimously.

5 Ayes – Stell, Chard, Curtis, Lazarus, Watkins

013-2024

Respectfully Submitted,

Darby L. Perrotte
Town Clerk