

REPORT OF THE
GORHAM TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
Burleigh Loveitt Council Chambers
February 7, 2023

Vice Chairman Shepard opened the meeting. There were 12 members of the public in attendance.

Roll Call: Vice Chairman Shepard, Councilors Wilder Cross, Phillips, Lavoie, Gagnon, Siegel. Also in attendance were Town Manager Ephrem Paraschak and Town Clerk Laurie Nordfors.

Moved by Councilor Wilder Cross, seconded by Councilor Phillips and VOTED to accept the Minutes of the January 3, 2023 Regular Town Council Meeting and the January 24, 2023 Special Town Council Meeting. **6 yeas**

Councilor Communications

Councilor Gagnon attended the inaugural meeting of the Robie Park Steering Committee on January 30th where they discussed many possibilities that could be done with the park and what they would like to see. The next meeting will be held on February 27th and Councilor Gagnon noted that all are welcome to attend.

Councilor Lavoie acknowledged that he attended and completed the Newly Elected Officials Training. He also reported that the next Finance Committee meeting will be held on February 17th.

Councilor Phillips attended the Capital Improvements/Economic Development Committee meeting on January 26th where they discussed the capital expenditures to date and projects that have been worked on. The next meeting will be held on February 16th. She also pointed out that the USM-Gorham night which was canceled last month due to a snow storm will be rescheduled in the spring.

Councilor Wilder Cross attended the GHS Musical Mary Poppins and remarked that the musical was amazing. She commended all of the performers and everyone involved for a job well done. She also attended the Elementary School concert and thinks that this program is an excellent way to prepare kids for performing at a higher level in middle school and high school. Councilor Wilder Cross attended the monthly meeting of the Gorham Village Alliance and thanked them for the dedication that they have to the Town to make our Village a better place. She also attended the GPCOG meeting where they heard about the Maine Municipal Associations Legislative platform for this Legislative session. She pointed out that there are many issues that could affect the municipal budget. Another workshop that Councilor Wilder Cross attended last month was the MMA Legislative Process A-Z where she learned the process for moving bills from committees to the State Legislature and then to be approved or not approved. Councilor Wilder Cross reported that the Ordinance Committee met where there was discussion regarding sidewalks, curb cuts and vernal pools and the next meeting will be held February 21st. She also reported that New Year Gorham has already met and noted that anyone interested in being on the committee is welcomed. Also, the Board of Health will meet on February 15th via Zoom and the agenda will be posted on the Town website soon. And to close, Councilor Wilder Cross reported that she attended a well put together social environmental and justice meeting sponsored by 1st Parish Church where Carol Eyeran outlined the many ways that our Comprehensive Plan addresses conservation and environment.

Councilor Siegel attended the Bring your Legislator to School Day at GMS and remarked that the teachers and students did a remarkable job sharing what a typical day at GMS looks like. Councilor Siegel was super impressed and commended everyone that made the day incredible. Councilor Siegel also reported that he has received numerous emails from citizens and expressed thanks for reaching out.

Councilor Shepard also attended the Robie Park Steering Committee meeting last month and was amazed at the over 158 suggestions from citizens on uses for the park. He noted that there was a lot of thoughtful discussion and that they are headed in the right direction.

Town Manager Report

Town Manager Paraschak reminded citizens of the winter parking ban still in effect and the availability of sand at Public Works. He also thanked Public Works for all of their efforts in the back to back storms last month. Town Manager Paraschak reported that Cumberland County ARPA funding is available for heating assistance for those citizens that do not qualify for State heating assistance programs and need a little extra help with heat. Please contact the Town for more information or go to the Cumberland County website for more information.

School Committee Report

School Committee Chairman Darryl Wright reported the following:

We are moving ahead with plans for the opening of our two pre K classrooms in the fall of 2023. We will be hosting a "Listen and Learn" on Monday, Feb. 13 at 6:00 p.m. for those who are interested in learning more about the program, especially those families who have children that will be four years old by Oct. 15, 2023. The meeting will be held via zoom so hopefully we can better work around people's busy schedules. The zoom link can be found on our district website calendar. Please feel free to share!

Our Aspire Gorham Program continues to grow! In 2019 we had just 610 students participating in field experiences as 2400 students in in school experiences related to Aspire. In 2021-2022 those numbers have increased with a total of 1400 students participating in field experiences related to our Aspire Gorham Program and another 3918 participated in school experiences related to Aspire. So far this year we are on track to beat our year totals from last year! This is all due to the hard work of our Aspire Team coordinators, Eliza Kenigsberg and Jen Belanger. For more information on this program and see the great things our students are doing, please go to our website and under About Us you can click on the Aspire Gorham link.

If you didn't get a chance to get out and enjoy the GHS Musical Mary Poppins this weekend, it is scheduled to show again next weekend Feb. 10 and 11:00 at 7:00 p.m. and Feb. 12 at 2:00 p.m. \$14.00 per adult ticket...it is a great show featuring some very talented GHS students!

Thank you to those Town Councilors who were able to participate in our "Invite your Legislator to School" day that was held on Jan. 18 at GMS. We had a great turn out with 2 of our 3 local legislators present as well as several Town Council and School Committee members and Commissioner Makin herself was also there. The students and staff did a wonderful job sharing what a typical day at GMS looks like and some great ideas on how to continue to support our schools. We have received great positive feedback from the staff.

The School Committee will receive the Supt's proposed budget on February 8th and will work on the budget from there and it will be delivered to the Town Council in April.

I wanted to finish my report by saying thank you to all of you for the Agenda item later tonight, considering changing the timeline for approving the proposed school budget. As you all know, in the past, after the meeting, the School Committee has had to make the adjustments in one evening due to the tight referendum timelines based on the current schedule. If passed, this will allow the School Committee, with input from the District Leadership Team to make better, more informed decisions regarding any adjustments the Town Council may make to the budget. We are very appreciative that you would consider this change to the process.

The next School Committee meeting will be held tomorrow, February 8th, 2023, in the Burleigh Loveitt Council Chambers at 7pm.

Public hearing #1

On Item #2023-2-1

Public hearing to hear comment on a proposal to issue a renewal Liquor License to Make Dough LLC, DBA Otto's Pizza. (Admin. Spon.)

Vice Chairman Shepard opened public hearing #1. There were no comments from the public and the Hearing was closed.

Proposed

Order #23-23

Moved by Councilor Gagnon, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered, that the Town Council issue a renewal Liquor License to Make Dough LLC, DBA Otto's Pizza, 109 Main Street, Unit C.

Order #23-23 was VOTED 6 yeas

Public hearing #2

On Item #2023-2-2

Public hearing to hear comment on a proposal to issue a renewal Liquor License to JBNI1 LLC, DBA Junction Bowl. (Admin. Spon.)

Vice Chairman Shepard opened public hearing #2. There were no comments from the public and the Hearing was closed.

Proposed

Order # 23-24

Moved by Councilor Gagnon, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and Ordered, that the Town Council issue a renewal Liquor License to JBNI1 LLC, DBA Junction Bowl, 7 Railroad Avenue.

Order #23-24 was VOTED 6 yeas

Public hearing #3
On Item #2023-2-3

Public hearing to hear comment on a proposal to issue a renewal Special Amusement License to JBNI1 LLC, DBA Junction Bowl. (Admin. Spon.)

Vice Chairman Shepard opened public hearing #3. There were no comments from the public and the Hearing was closed.

Proposed
Order #23-25

Moved by Councilor Gagnon, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and Ordered, that the Town Council issue a renewal Special Amusement License to JBNI1 LLC, DBA Junction Bowl, 7 Railroad Avenue.

Order #23-25 was VOTED 6 yeas

Public hearing #4
On Item #2023-2-4

Public hearing to hear comment on a proposal to issue a renewal Adult Use Marijuana License to Harrison Otterbein, Warren West Group LLC, 289 New Portland Road. Property owned by 789 Development LLC. (Admin. Spon.)

Vice Chairman Shepard opened public hearing #4. There were no comments from the public and the Hearing was closed.

Proposed
Order #23-26

Moved by Councilor Siegel, seconded by Councilor Phillips and Ordered, that the Town Council issue a renewal Adult Use Marijuana License to Harrison Otterbein, Warren West Group LLC, 289 New Portland Road. Property owned by 789 Development LLC.

Order #23-26 was VOTED 6 yeas

Public hearing #5
On item #2023-2-5

Public hearing to hear comment on a proposal to issue a renewal Medical Use Marijuana License to Gerard Tardiff, Callander Corp., 5 Little Wing Lane, Unit B. Property owned by Dave Cowen.

Vice Chairman Shepard opened public hearing #5. There were no comments from the public and the Hearing was closed.

**Proposed
Order #23-27**

Moved by Councilor Siegel, seconded by Councilor Phillips and Ordered that the Town Council issue a renewal Medical Use Marijuana Licenses to Gerard Tardiff, Callander Corp., 5 Little Wing Lane, Unit B. Property owned by Dave Cowen.

Order #23-27 was VOTED 6 yeas

Item #2023-2-6

Action to consider establishing a new date for the Town Council vote on the Gorham School Department and Municipal budgets.
(Councilor Shepard Spon.)

**Proposed
Order #23-28**

Moved by Councilor Wilder Cross, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered that the Town Council establishes May 16, 2023 as a special Town Council meeting in order to approve of both School Department and Municipal Budgets.

Order #23-28 was VOTED 5 yeas, 1 nay (Gagnon)

Item #2023-2-7

Action to consider reviewing zoning in the Gorham Village Districts to increase economic development. (Councilor Shepard Spon.)

**Proposed
Order #23-29**

Moved by Councilor Siegel, seconded by Councilor Phillips and Ordered that the Town Council forwards to the Ordinance Committee, for review and recommendation, amending the Land Use and Development Code's village zoning districts to increase economic development opportunities.

Order #23-29 was VOTED 6 yeas

Item #2023-2-8

Action to consider authorizing staff to begin a review of on street parking and lane layouts in the Gorham Village. (Councilor Shepard Spon.)

**Proposed
Order #23-30**

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered, that the Town Council authorizes staff to propose modifications to the parking and lane layouts within the Gorham Village to increase parking, walkability, bicycle flow while increasing the look and feel of a traditional village; and

Be It Further Ordered that staff will report back to the Town Council with their recommendations.

Order #23-30 was VOTED 6 yeas

Item #2023-2-9

Action to consider ordering the Town to explore current and future Economic Development programs with the Economic development Capital Improvement Committee. (Councilor Gagnon Spon.)

**Proposed
Order #23-31**

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and O Ordered, that the Town Council authorize the Town to explore Current and future Economic Development programs with the Economic Development/Capital Improvement Committee.

Where by the Economic Development/Capital Improvement Committee will be authorized to review current programs or initiatives that various Town Departments currently undertake;

Where by the various Town Departments will provide the materials necessary for review;

Where by the Economic Development/Capital Improvement Committee will consult with the Gorham Economic Development Corp, and any other community group or organization that will lead to further Economic Benefit;

Be it further ordered that the Economic Development/Capital Improvement Committee review existing programs and determine new programs, initiatives, or other economic development opportunities.

Order #23-31 was VOTED 5 yeas, 1 nay (Wilder Cross)

Item #2023-2-10

Action to consider ordering the Town to review the Little Falls Master Plan with the Capital Improvement/Economic Development Committee.

Proposed

Order #23-32

Moved by Councilor Gagnon, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered that the Town Council authorize the Town to explore current and future Capital Improvements for the Little Falls Recreation Area and Little Falls Community Center.

Where by the Capital Improvement/Economic Development Committee will be authorized to review current and future Capital Improvements for the Little Falls Recreation Area and Little Falls Community Center;

Where by the various Town Departments will provide the materials necessary for review;

Where by the Capital Improvement/Economic Development Committee will consult with community groups and stakeholders for input;

Where by the Capital Improvement/Economic Development Committee will take into account the proposed grant funding for parking area light improvements, and how best to incorporate them into the site;

Be it further ordered that the Capital Improvement/Economic Development Committee will make recommendations for changes to the Town council.

Order #23-32 was VOTED 5 yeas, 1 nay (Shepard)

Item #2023-2-11

Action to consider authorizing a pilot program for recycling food waste. (Councilor Siegel Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-33

Ordered, that the Town Council authorizes a staff to execute a pilot program for recycling food waste with a local vendor with a drop off location in the Gorham Village to cost no more than \$2,000 for the remainder of the fiscal year; and

Be It Further Ordered, that funding for the pilot program is authorized from the Town Council's contingency account.

Chip Kain, Meadowbrook Drive, Linda and Bruce Webb, Ridgfield Drive expressed their interest in the program and pointed out how it would help the Town to be a more sustainable community. They encouraged the Council to support the item.

Moved by Councilor Gagnon, seconded by Councilor Phillips and VOTED to table Order 23-33 until Staff reviews and investigates the program and brings their findings back to the Council. 3 yeas, 3 nays (Lavoie, Siegel, Wilder Cross) MOTION FAILS

Order #23-33 VOTED 4 yeas, 2 nays (Gagnon, Phillips)

Item #2023-2-12

Action to consider authorizing staff to release a request for proposals to transfer and refurbish town property located at 28 School Street. (Councilor Wilder Cross Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-34

Moved by Councilor Wilder Cross, seconded by Councilor Phillips and Ordered, that the Town Council authorizes staff to release a request for proposals to qualified contractors to develop, rehab and/or further utilize the town owned building and property at 28 School Street for mixed use, multi dwelling unit and/or commercial benefits; and

Be It Further Ordered, that staff will bring recommendations back to the Town Council on a final course of action for the property.

Moved by Councilor Siegel, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and VOTED to amend the order to read Be it further ordered, that Staff will bring recommendations back to the Town Council on a final course of action for the property or potential municipal uses including associated costs. 5 yeas 1 nay (Gagnon)

Order #23-34 VOTED AS AMENDED 6 yeas

Item #2023-2-13

Action to consider ordering the town to explore the cost of adding public charging to the Robie Gym location, with the cost to be included in the 2023/2024 budget, with the intention of installing up to a Level 3 charger. (Councilor Gagnon Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-35

Moved by Councilor Lavoie, seconded by Councilor Gagnon and Ordered, that the Town Council authorize the town to explore and implement a public charging station at the Robie Gym location, with the cost to be included in the 2023/2024 budget.

Be It Further Ordered that the Town look to install up to a Level 3 charger.

Order #23-35 VOTED 6 yeas

Item #2023-2-14 Action to consider adding certain agricultural uses into the Village Expansion Districts. (Councilor Phillips Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-36 Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Shepard and Ordered that the Town Council instructs the Ordinance Committee to review adding agricultural uses into the Village Expansion Districts and report back to the Town Council with a recommendation.

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and VOTED to amend the order to Read send to the Planning Board instead of the Ordinance Committee. 6 yeas

Order #23-36 VOTED AS AMENDED 6 yeas

Item #2023-2-15 Action to consider instructing the Ordinance Committee to review minimum square footage standards in the Fire Suppression Systems Ordinance. (Councilor Siegel Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-37 Moved by Councilor Siegel, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered, that the Town Council instructs the Ordinance Committee to review increasing the minimum square footage exemption for a fire suppression system from 400 square feet to 800 square feet and report back to the Town Council with a recommendation.

Order #23-37 VOTED 5 yeas, 1 nay (Gagnon)

Item #2023-2-16 Action to consider instructing staff to start the process for an open space plan. (Councilor Phillips Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-38 Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered, that the Town Council instructs staff to begin the process of conducting an open space plan and inventory for the Town of Gorham in the FY2024 fiscal year; and

Be It Further Ordered, that cost estimates for consultants and/or other services be included in the Town Manager's FY2024 budget for review.

Order #23-38 VOTED 6 yeas

Item #2023-2-17

Action to enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6) (C). (Councilor Shepard Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-39

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Siegel and Ordered, that the Town Council enters executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6) (C) for discussion or consideration of the condition, acquisition or the use of real or personal property permanently attached to real property or interests therein or disposition of publicly held property or economic development only if premature disclosures of the information would prejudice the competitive or bargaining position of the body or agency.

Order #23-39 VOTED 6 yeas

Moved by Councilor Wilder Cross, seconded by Councilor Phillips and VOTED to come out of Executive Session. 6 yeas

Moved by Councilor Wilder Cross, seconded by Councilor Phillips and VOTED to adjourn. 6 yeas

Time of adjournment: 9:20 pm

A True Record of Meeting
2-7-2023

ATTEST 

Laurie Nordfors, Town Clerk
2-8-2023

