

REPORT OF THE
GORHAM TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
Burleigh Loveitt Council Chambers
May 2, 2023

Chairman Pratt opened the meeting. There were 14 members of the public in attendance.

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

Moved by Councilor Lavoie, seconded by Councilor Shepard and VOTED to accept the Minutes of the April 4, 2023 Regular Town Council Meeting and the April 25, 2023 Special Town Council Meeting. **7 yeas**

Open Public Communications

Charlie Pierson, Mighty Street voiced his concerns about the Town not having an in-house Assessor and urged the Council to bring one back to the Town. He also commented on his own homes assessment and disagreed with the final outcome of his appeal.

Priscilla Wheatley, Fort Hill Road touched upon the Mosher Corner zoning change, School Budget request and the increasing taxes in Gorham.

Linda Pierson, Mighty Street expressed her concern over the procedure of the assessment appeal for her residence. She also agreed that the Town should have an in-house Assessor.

Jim Means, Beatrice Drive informed the seniors of Gorham that there is a bill currently in the Legislature to repeal the LD-290 Senior Property Tax Stabilization Program. He also voiced his concern on the School Budget and how if passed, it would raise taxes substantially.

Mark Jutkiewicz, Hidden Pines Drive expressed his support for the Gorham School system.

Councilor Communications

Councilor Gagnon reported that the Robie Park Steering Committee will meet on May 8th. He also noted that since it is mud season, please be mindful of our fields and trails and stay off them if the conditions are too bad.

Councilor Phillips reminded residents that the Gorham Farmers Market will be returning on Saturday May 6th. The Market at Cherry Hill will also be returning on Wednesday, May 10th from 2pm-6pm. This year there will be food trucks as well as many vendors. She also announced that the School and Town annual budget meeting will be held this year on Tuesday, May 16th at 6:30 instead of in June. Councilor Phillips revealed that the Gorham Historical Society will be holding an open house at their new Cherry Hill Farm location at the end of May. More information is to come.

Councilor Wilder Cross attended the monthly GPCOG Metro Region meeting which featured a roundtable discussion with asylum community leaders. The panel was made up of a group of people who have been granted asylum and they spoke of their own challenges and experiences working through the asylum process. These people now hold leadership positions with organizations that provide support to asylum seekers. They also discussed updates on Legislative matters as well as heard an update on Portland's shelters for unhoused persons. Councilor Wilder Cross reported that the Ordinance Committee met on April 18th and discussed the ongoing long term plan for pedestrian improvements as well as curb cuts on arterials and designated collectors both to be consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The Committee hopes to have something more to report about these two matters at the next Council meeting. Councilor Wilder Cross noted that the Board of Health met on May 1st to continue discussing the concerning dangers to the health of our children that are using smokeless tobacco. She also reported that the New Year Gorham Committee met to discuss this year's event, with most of the time spent discussing how to include new performances with the hope to attract more participation of the middle school and high school aged children.

Councilor Siegel disclosed that he will be at Gorham High School on May 11th from 10:45-12:45 as well as Baxter Memorial Library on May 17th from 5:30-7:00 and will be available for questions and concerns from residents. Councilor Siegel reminded residents that Gorham Pride will be held on June 24th by the Gazebo and hoped all will come out to celebrate.

Chairman Pratt revealed that Public Works is out street sweeping and thanked them for all of their hard work. He also encouraged all to donate blood if possible.

Recreation Director Cindy Hazelton gave a visual presentation of the many services and programs that the Gorham Rec Department offers.

Town Manager Report

Town Manager Paraschak announced that the annual School and Municipal Budget meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 16th at 6:30. There will be two brush drop offs at Public Works this spring. One on May 6th and one on May 20th from 8am-noon. He reminded residents that work will begin soon on State Street and Main Street to help improve pedestrian safety. He also announced that the Memorial Day parade will be on Monday, May 29th and more information can be found on our website.

School Committee Report

School Committee Chairman Wright reported the following:

We are moving ahead with the final phase of modular expansion at Narragansett Elementary School. We have recently awarded the lease bid to Municipal Leasing Consultants out of Vermont with an interest rate of 4.55%. As a reminder, we utilize the lease purchase option so that we can avail ourselves of the \$8.00 per square foot reimbursement that the MDOE offers for 5 years. We have also recently awarded the modular bid to Schiavi to construct the modular buildings and the modular site work bid to Great Falls Construction to do the site work and connector work required. We will be doing site work this summer, hopefully having modularity placed and closed in by Winter and then focusing on inside work during the 2023-24 School year with the goal of opening for use for the fall of 2024.

NWEA testing will begin this week across grades at all schools. The Testing window will be for the next three weeks. The spring assessment serves 2 purposes, first, our spring benchmarking for local assessment data, and second, our State required achievement testing. We encourage families to do their best to make sure students are in school regularly for the next three weeks as we work to ensure testing is completed as required by the State and Federal government. This data is also very important and is used each year in our annual "State of the Schools" report to determine areas of focus for our schools in the coming year/years.

May is mental health awareness month and has been observed in the U.S. since 1949. Every year during the month of May, the National Association for Mental Illness in Maine (NAMI) joins the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. This organization works to fight stigma, provide support, educate the public and advocate for policies that support the millions of people in the U.S. affected by mental illness. Go to namimaine.org to learn more about how you can get involved.

This week our JMG students at GHS are hosting their second annual career fair. So far, they have over 30 local businesses involved in the career fair. This event is completely run by our students. Check out the impressive list of partners they have engaged attached at the end of this report!

Yesterday was National Principal Appreciation Day and this week we are celebrating National Teacher Appreciation Week! Please take a moment and help us celebrate our incredible Principals and Teachers this week!

GHS prom is coming up on May 6 with the theme of "The Great Gatsby". This is always such an incredible evening for our students and our families. We encourage all our students to enjoy prom responsibly and don't hesitate to request a ride if they or their friends are unable to drive safely. We are asking all community members to help spread this important message about safety to our teens this weekend! We want EVERYONE to have a great - SAFE time!

GHS graduation will be June 11 on the GHS football field again this year. Stay tuned for details!

Last student and staff day will be June 16. It will be a half day for students with a District wide celebration and closing in the afternoon for staff. We will be meeting with District wide leaders for our data retreat on June 21 and closing with our final District Leadership Team meeting of the 2022-23 School Year on June 22.

The next School Committee regular meeting will be held Wednesday, May 10th, 2023, in the Burleigh Loveitt Council Chambers at 7pm.

Public hearing #1
On Item #2023-5-1

Public hearing to hear comment on a proposal to issue a renewal Liquor License to Azul Tequila, LLC, 29 School Street. (Admin. Spon.)

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

Proposed
Order #23-69

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and Ordered, that the Town Council issue a renewal Liquor License to Azul Tequila, LLC, 29 School Street.

Order #23-69 was VOTED 7 yeas

Item #2023-5-2

Action regarding the June 13, 2023 School Budget Validation Election. (Admin. Spon.)

Proposed
Order #23-70

Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered, that the Town Council authorize the Town Clerk to issue the warrant for the June 13, 2023 School Budget Validation Election; and

Be It Further Ordered, that the polls be open from 7:00am until 8:00pm; and

Be It Further Ordered, that the Town Council appoints the following persons for the designated voting districts and if any of the following should fail to serve, the Town Council hereby authorizes the Town Clerk to appoint substitutes:

District 1-1 – Susan Emerson, Warden and Laurel Smith, Ward Clerk

District 1-2 – Katherine Corbett, Warden and Marie Plummer, Ward Clerk

District 2 – Martha Towle, Warden and Nancy Kenty & Heidi Pratt, Ward Clerk

Central – Kim Getchell, Warden and Paula Nystrom, Ward Clerk

Be It Further Ordered, that the Registrar of Voters be in session during the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm on Tuesday, June 6th and Wednesday, June 7th; between the hours of 8:00am and 6:30pm on Thursday June 8th between the hours of 8:00am and 1:00pm on Friday June 9th and between the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm on Monday June 12th, 2023, and

Be it Further Ordered, that the Town Clerk be authorized to process absentee ballots on Monday, June 12th at 10:00 am and 2:00pm; and Tuesday June 13th at 10:00am, 2:00pm and 8:00pm.

Order #23-70 was VOTED 7 yeas

Item # 2023-5-3 Action to consider a Town Council rule change. (Councilor Lavoie Spon.)

Proposed

Order #23-71 Moved by Councilor Lavoie, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and Ordered, that the Town Council amends the Town Council rules as follows:

2.6 Every ordinance, order or resolve shall have a full reading unless the reading is dispensed with by the ~~unanimous~~ majority vote of those present, in which case reading shall be by title only.

Order #23-71 was VOTED 6 yeas, 1 nay (Gagnon)

Item # 2023-5-4 Action to consider adopting the 2023 Little Falls / South Windham Village Master Plan. (Admin. Spon.)

Proposed

Order # 23-72 Moved by Councilor Phillips, seconded by Councilor Shepard and Ordered, that the Town Council formally approve the 2023 Little Falls /South Windham Village Master Plan.

Order #23-72 was VOTED 7 yeas

Item # 2023-5-5 Action to consider entering into a Community Resilience Partnership with the State of Maine. (Councilor Pratt Spon.)

Proposed

Order # 23-73 Moved by Councilor Gagnon, seconded by Councilor Lavoie and Ordered, that the Town of Gorham enters into a Community Resilience Partnership with the Maine Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future (GOPIF) to benefit climate resilience in the Town of Gorham.

Order #23-73 was VOTED 7 yeas

Item # 2023-5-6

Action to consider instructing the Ordinance Committee to review and provide recommendations on amending the Town's Stormwater Ordinance. (Councilor Pratt Spon.)

Proposed

Order # 23-74

Moved by Councilor Shepard, seconded by Councilor Phillips and Ordered, that the Town Council forward to the Ordinance Committee, for review and recommendation, amendments to the Stormwater Ordinance as outlined in memos from staff, to bring the Town into better compliance with the Clean Water Act and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit.

Order #23-74 was VOTED 7 yeas

Item # 2023-5-7

Action to enter into executive session for personnel matters and to discuss confidential economic development matters. (Councilor Pratt Spon.)

Proposed

Order # 23-75

Moved by Councilor Shepard, seconded by Councilor Wilder Cross and Ordered, that the Town Council enter into executive session pursuant to 1 MRSA § 405(6) (A) Personnel Matters and 1 MRSA § 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 #23-75 was VOTED 7 yeas

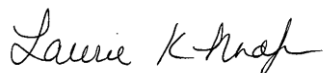
Councilor Gagnon left the meeting and did not enter into Executive Session

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

Moved by Councilor Siegel, seconded by Councilor Shepard and VOTED to adjourn. 6 yeas

Time of adjournment: 8:15 pm

A True Record of Meeting
05-02-2023



ATTEST

Laurie Nordfors, Town Clerk
05-03-2023

