

Minutes

8 West Main Street, Gowanda, NY 14070

October 14, 2021

Budget Workshop: 6:00pm

All stand for the Pledge of Allegiance

Happy Halloween!!

Roll Call:

Supervisor: John T. Walgus: present
Councilperson: Theresa A. Girome: present
Councilperson: Gloria J. Tomaszewski: absent
Councilperson: Robert O. Dingman: present
Councilperson: Seth H. Howard: present

Others present:

Highway Superintendent: Daniel H. Ackley
Town Clerk: Denise M. Trumpore
Jack Broyles

Supervisor John T. Walgus: * I have processed payroll and paid the prepays. * I ask for a resolution to affirm the letter that was sent to Gov. Hochul; this letter was signed by the Town Board and copied to Senator Borrello and Assemblyman Joseph Giglio. * We will need a resolution for two budget transfers; \$60.00 from A1990.4 – Contingent to A1410.4 – Town Clerk – Contractual & \$266.00 from A1990.4 – Contingent to A1410.11 – Town Clerk – Personal Services – Deputy. * Tonight, we will be setting the meeting for the tentative budget for October 21st at 7:00pm. Afterwards we will set the public hearing for adopting our budget for 2022 at our next meeting night of November 11th. Tomorrow, I will mail our tentative budget figures to our accounting team. * We will also need a resolution to hold a public hearing for proposed Local Law which would allow us to override the tax levy limit for the 2022 budget if need be. * As you know our Code Enforcement Officer, Mel Shaw has decided to retire after many years in this position. Mel has stated he will stay on until we bring the new CEO on board. * Today was the last day to apply for the CEO position. I will be asking the Planning/Zoning Board when they meet on November 15th to interview the candidates. I'm

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also asking the Planning/Zoning Board to formulate a flood ordinance as required by the Cattaraugus County Hazardous Mitigation Plan which we belong.

This is a plan that the Highway Superintendent and I have been working on for the past four years. It will allow us to access FEMA funds for the projects that we feel need mitigation. I have asked the Cattaraugus County DPW for help with this subject and they will be sending me information on how to accomplish this. * Our assessor has informed me that the assessing team will be here in the office every other Monday starting on the 18th from October to March to help property owners with any concerns they may have. * This month birthday greetings go out to former Supervisor Paula Schueler on the 15th, and I promise that I won't spill the beans under threat of retribution.

Highway Superintendent Daniel H. Ackley: * Read highway bills. * Forty Road starting at 10229 and ending at the state parking area will be a seasonal limited maintenance road starting on November 1st and ending April 1st. * I would like to go with the lowest bidder for the water well drilling which is Willey Well Drilling for \$17,620.00. the drilling is good for 300 feet, I would like to add an extra \$2,380 in case they need to drill deeper. * Did some research on purchasing a new truck, I would like to order a F-250 from Gowanda Ford. Gowanda Ford said we should get it by next June. * Burzak Electric is working on the electric at the highway barn. * Highway is getting ready for winter.

Councilperson Theresa A. Girome: * I attended the Village Board meeting and found out that the bridge will be repaired in the spring.

Councilperson Robert O. Dingman: * I have been working on the water/sewer contracts with the Village, I should have the results of the negotiations at the next board meeting.

Councilperson Seth H. Howard: *read general bills. * I attended a ambulance meeting via ZOOM on September 14th.

Councilperson Gloria J. Tomaszewski: * absent

Assessor Kate Harrington: (by email) * The STAR check delivery schedule is available online at <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/star-check-delivery-schedule.htm> * Corresponded with several property owners about their assessments, tax bills, and exemptions. * Added 13 property transfers for the month of August.

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Town Clerk Denise M. Trumpore: *

Total transactions for September - 109

Total Collected: \$ 4,824.00

Towns Portion: \$ **842.63**

*I ask for a resolution to accept the minutes from September 9th.

Public Participation

Jack Broyles: Stated he also went to the Village Board meeting and keeping a record of fire equipment was brought up along with the approval of the draft water/sewer contract.

RESOLUTION # 77 Audit of Claims

On a motion of Councilperson Howard

Seconded by Councilperson Dingman

The following was

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Howard, Dingman, Girome, Walgus

NAYS – 0

RESOLVED that the bills contained on Abstract #10 for General and Highway have been reviewed by the Town Board and are authorized for payment in the following amounts:

Abstract 10- General Vouchers # 140 to # 158 Total: \$ 3,057.60

Abstract 10- Highway Vouchers # 54 to # 63 Total: \$ 10,507.84

RESOLUTION #78 Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Councilperson Howard

Seconded by Councilperson Dingman

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Howard, Dingman, Girome, Walgus

NAYS - 0

RESOLVED to approve the minutes from September 9, 2021.

RESOLUTION # 79 Financial Report

On a motion of Councilperson Girome

Seconded by Councilperson Howard

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Girome, Howard, Dingman, Walgus

NAYS - 0

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RESOLVED to accept the financial report for September 2021.

RESOLUTION # 80 Letter to Governor Hochul

On a motion of Councilperson Howard

Seconded by Councilperson Dingman

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Howard, Dingman, Girome, Walgus

NAYS – 0

RESOLVED to send the following letter to Governor Hochul:

Dear Governor Hochul,

On behalf of the Persia Town Board, Congratulations on your ascension to the Governor of New York State! We appreciate your history of service to Western New York and its Future. We are particularly proud to now have a governor from Western New York!

We wrote to you today to bring to your attention grievous wrongs and harm done to Southern Erie County and Cattaraugus County by the Cuomo administration. Right before Christmas in 2020, Governor Cuomo announced the closing of the Gowanda Correctional Facility, located in the Town of Collins in Erie County. This action was a lawless, illegal, deleterious and disastrous decision for the economic vitality of Southern Erie County and Cattaraugus County, and for New York State operations.

This decision resulted in the loss of over \$54 million in payroll and additional state retirement and health benefits. The action circumvented the normal New York State facility closure process, which requires a two-year reuse study, public comment and local planning and coordination. None of these items occurred as the Governor used his power to declare a budget emergency in closing the facility.

According to the New York State statutes, a budget emergency must result in a deleterious financial condition and must provide transparency. Without transparency in government, there cannot be accountability. Former Governor Cuomo was required to provide transparency for the cost analysis in closing the Gowanda Correctional Facility and repeatedly to do so.

We ask you review FOIL request #202108250825082433645 which was sent through “Open FOIL NY” requesting information that was refused on many occasions from the Cuomo administration.

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A decision of this magnitude should have proper public disclosure to ensure the public that the actions being taken comply with the law and are in the best interests of, and will benefit the State of New York, and minimize the impacts on local communities. The closure of the remaining operations would decimate the local economy further and cause the withdrawal of tens of millions in additional payroll for Southern Erie County and Cattaraugus counties while shifting even more inmates to higher cost institutions.

The Gowanda Correctional Facility is adjacent to the Collins Correction Facility, which are both medium security prisons, located in the Town of Collins in the southern part of Erie County. The facilities share a common electric generation system, and common water system and a common sewer system which will increase the unit costs to the remaining correctional facilities and jeopardize their futures should further prison closures occur. We feel a failure to reverse the Gowanda Facility closing will lead to the future closing of the two remaining prisons.

We believe this action was a form of political retaliation. In short, millions of dollars of upgrades and improvements to Gowanda Correctional Facility were approved shortly before the announced closing. A new roof is being installed at the facility and cranes are visible lifting materials to the rooftop. Contracts for these capital improvements still must be honored. Contractors will be paid for work completed on an empty building. Surely, there must be more to this situation. No financial disclosure, no transparent cost analysis and no factual response to the FOIL request demonstrating compliance with the budgetary statues and tens of millions of dollars in capital improvements to a facility precipitously closing such as new windows being installed now. This action reeks of political manipulation and or retaliation.

You have stated that “Transparency will be the hallmark of my administration”, and as you embark on this journey, we ask that this decision to close the Gowanda Correctional Facility be reversed. This closure causes a true hardship in our region, in the NYS Prison System, and a long-lasting financial impact in your home area. Local prison jobs are important to the local economy, but also the low costs of delivering a service to the State of New York make this decision a win-win for Erie and Cattaraugus Counties. The decision to close Gowanda Correctional Facility was the worse decision New York State has made in a generation related to Southern Erie and Cattaraugus County and we implore Governor Hochul to correct this grievous injustice by re-opening Gowanda Correctional and providing funding for it in the 2022-2023 NYS budget.

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As long-standing community leaders, we ask for an open line of communication with your administration to provide any and all details required to correct this grievous injustice.

RESOLUTION # 81 Budget Transfers

On a motion of Councilperson Girome

Seconded by Councilperson Dingman

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Girome, Dingman, Howard, Walgus

NAYS – 0

RESOLVED to transfer \$60.00 from A1990.4 – Contingent to A1410.4 – Town Clerk – Contractual and to transfer \$266.00 from A1990.4 – Contingent to A1410.11 – Town Clerk – Personal Services – Deputy.

RESOLUTION # 82 Tentative Budget Meeting

On a motion of Councilperson Dingman

Seconded by Councilperson Howard

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Dingman, Howard, Girome, Walgus

NAYS – 0

RESOLVED to have a tentative budget meeting on October 21st at 7pm.

RESOLUTION # 83 Water Well drilling bid

On a motion of Councilperson Howard

Seconded by Councilperson Girome

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Howard, Girome, Dingman, Walgus

NAYS – 0

RESOLVED to accept the lowest water well drilling bid from Willey Well Drilling for \$17,620.00 using APRA funds with a contingent fund of \$2,380.00.

RESOLUTION # 84 Local Law 2021-3

On a motion of Councilperson Girome

Seconded by Councilperson Howard

ADOPTED AYES – 4 Girome, Howard, Dingman, Walgus

NAYS – 0

RESOLVED to hold a public hearing on October 21, 2021, at 7pm for comment on Local Law 2021-3 which is to adopt a budget in excess of the tax levy limit.

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RESOLUTION #85 2022 Ford F-250

On a motion of Councilperson Howard

Seconded by Councilperson Dingman

ADOPTED AYES –4 Howard, Dingman, Girome, Walgus

NAYS – 0

RESOLVED to have Highway Superintendent Ackley order a 2022 Ford F-250.

Hearing no objection, Supervisor Walgus closed the meeting in memory of town residents Douglas Wright, Dorothy Selan and Thomas Skowronski at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Denise M. Trumpore

Town Clerk