Regular Town Board Meeting Town of Gnesen

March 27, 2023

The bi-monthly meeting of the Town of Gnesen was held on Monday, March 27, 2023. The following officers were present:

Jon Nelson Chair

Nancy Poppenberg Supervisor

Gary Juten Supervisor

Sarah Blix Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm by Chair Nelson. Chair Nelson stated that he would like to start the meeting by saying the Pledge of Allegiance in honor of John Werner, City of Rice Lake Mayor, who recently passed away. The Township employees and 10 members of the audience stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Nelson then welcomed Gnesen’s new Supervisor, Nancy Poppenberg, to the Board.

Motion to approve the agenda was moved by Chair Nelson, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All voted in favor.

Minutes of the March 13, 2023, Town Board Meeting were unanimously approved with a motion by Supervisor Juten, second by Chair Nelson. All vote in favor.

**DISCUSSION**:

**OLD BUSINESS**:

Linda Lenard – Linda was asking if she could get permission to get into the Old Town Hall prior to her lease start date which would give her time to clean the facility and set up her equipment. Linda said she was hoping for either March 30th or March 31st. Since nothing is scheduled for rentals, the supervisors agreed to let Linda have access to the building starting March 30th, so she has a few days to get settled before her lease starts which is April 1, 2023. Joe Lenard asked about the lease terms. He said he was not aware they would be responsible for 100% of the utilities. Joe questioned how much the utilities run. Sarah stated since everything is very minimal now because the building is hardly used, she looked into the costs of propane, electricity, and garbage for 2018 and 2019 and it cost between $3000 - $4000 a year. Joe asked if the township would be willing to cover any of the costs of utilities since they would have to pay even if the building was sitting vacant. Joe questioned even half of the utility costs. Supervisor Juten stated that he would not agree with half since the $400 monthly lease payment is already a very good deal. Supervisor Juten said he would agree to paying 1/3 of the utility costs and then the remaining 2/3 would be the responsibility of the Lenard’s, this would be for electricity and propane. Chair Nelson agreed with Supervisor Juten. The Lenard’s would be responsible for anytime the dumpster gets emptied. Sarah stated she just had the dumpster emptied on Friday so it will be empty at the start of their lease. Sarah will be invoicing the Lenard’s for all utilities and the monthly lease payment. Joe asked for clarification on section 2.2 – Real Estate Taxes. Carol said it is state law and a MN state statute that once a nonprofit building’s use gets changed into a for profit use then the County could charge property taxes. Chair Nelson said he thought if the use of the building could be tied to the Gnesen mission statement then they would not have to pay property taxes. Chair Nelson said he will bring this question up to the County at the Board of Appeals on April 18, 2023. Joe questioned snow plowing on the weekends and if the parking lot was not plowed would he have permission to plow it. Chair Nelson said yes they could. The Lenard’s questioned what damages consists of. Supervisor Juten said if damages occur that are due to the tenant’s business such as children busting a window, then that would be the responsibility of the tenant. If the damages are something like a broken furnace or refrigerator, then that would fall on the responsibility of Gnesen. Linda asked about signs and being able to advertise her business. Chair Nelson said they could use the bulletin board on the exterior of the building to advertise.

Township Job Openings – Supervisor Juten said he had contacted all three applicants for the grader operator job. Currently Gnesen has three employees; Jody Cooke, Darrin Franckowiak, and Beau Halverson who handle the road jobs. In June when Jody retires Darrin will take over the lead position and Beau will move into Darrin’s position as 2nd backup. Supervisor Juten said after talking to all three applicants the one with the most experience with equipment was Dennis Campbell. Gary made a motion to recommend hiring Dennis Campbell as the 3rd backup employee for grader, snowplowing, and mowing, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor. Sarah said she is waiting until the end of April to interview applicants for the janitor position, and she said she has heard nothing from Nathan about the Deputy Zoning officer position.

GCC security system – Sarah received a quote from ESC Systems for $3,965.00 for a new security system for the Community Center and $258.00 annually for monitoring. Per Mar’s bid was $2,403.08 for the security system and $804.48 annually for the monitoring. Chair Nelson made a motion to accept the bid from Per Mar, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor.

Nuisance Ordinance – Carol stated that the subcommittee has used feedback from the public hearing and town board and trimmed down the ordinance, especially Section 5 so that it mainly fits the problem areas Gnesen has. Carol stated that they were told to add definitions for “junk” and “blight” but wanted guidance as to whether they should be added just to the Nuisance Ordinance or also in Ordinance #10. Supervisor Juten stated he thought they should be added to both ordinances, with Supervisor Poppenberg agreeing. Chair Nelson commented that the sample definition for “junk” was lengthy, and he thought a lot of people could be considered in violation and it leads us back to the same issues that were mentioned in the first public hearing. Supervisor Juten asked Carol if she could send Chair Nelson and Supervisor Poppenberg the other sample definitions of “junk” that she received. Carol said Joe Ferguson, another member of the committee, thought the last sentence in Section 6 needed to be reviewed by an attorney. Chair Nelson mentioned that the entire ordinance will be reviewed by an attorney after the reconvened public hearing. There was discussion about the fine schedule, and it was mentioned that after the last fine of $200 there should be a line added to read, “and all additional occurrences.”

Ordinance Changes – Carol questioned any ordinance changes and whether the public hearing is held by the P&Z or the Town Board. Chair Nelson stated that all ordinance changes public hearings are held by the Town Board. Carol, who is on the ordinance changes subcommittee, said the ordinance needs consistency as to whether we are called Gnesen, Gnesen Township, or Town of Gnesen. Chair Nelson said he thought we should use Gnesen Township. Sherri stated that in the definition section a line could be added to read, “also known as,” this would help alleviate the need to change all the inconsistencies.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Resolution # 23-08 – Supervisor Juten made a motion to approve resolution #23-08 reappointing Joe Ferguson, Kathy Buran, and Dick DeLano to the Planning Commission, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

MAT Spring Short Courses

Township Officers List

AWAIR Training Packets

No further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm with a motion by Supervisor Juten, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. No objections, meeting adjourned. (This meeting is taped for transcribing purposes only.)

Visitors attending the meeting: Jay and Marcia Haller, Dennis Campbell, Linda and Joe Lenard, Matt Thibodeau, Carol Jacobson, Sherri Underthun, Kathy Buran, Annie Kuklock

Employees present: Jody Cooke Employees absent: Nathan Horyza

**Upcoming Meetings:**

Town Board Meeting – April 10, 2023 - 7:00pm

Board of Appeals – April 18, 2023 – 10:00am

P&Z Meeting – April 19, 2023 - 7:30pm

Town Board- Reconvened Public Hearing for Nuisance Ordinance – April 24, 2023 – 6:00pm

Town Board Meeting – April 24, 2023 - 7:00pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Sarah Blix, Clerk Jon Nelson, Chair

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_