

**TOWN OF GIBRALTAR
ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 16, 2024
OLD GIBRALTAR TOWN HALL
4176 MAPLE STREET FISH CREEK WI 54212**

Approved:

Call to Order: Chairman Steve Sohns called the annual town meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Steve Sohns welcomed the audience to the annual meeting and introduced the Town Board and Town Staff. He asked that electors identify themselves for the record when speaking. Only qualified electors are able to vote, anyone can speak. Electors are asked to sign in.

Board members present: Steve Sohns, Tom Birmingham, Vinni Chomeau, Jayson Merkel, and John Selenica.
Board members absent: None

Approval of the Minutes: *Motion: (Holly Sommerhalder, Judith Kalb) to approve the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting held on April 18, 2023, as presented. Carried. Motion: (Jayson Merkel, Patricia Podgers) to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the electors of July 26, 2023, as presented. Carried. Motion: (Greg Cote, Bill Wolff) to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the electors of November 20, 2023 as presented. Carried. Motion: (Greg Cote, Judith Kalb) to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of the electors of December 11, 2023 as presented. Carried.*

Chair Comments: The town is running very smoothly with a great staff and committee and commissions. Our clerk had to resign last month and working on finding a replacement clerk. Travis, Theresa, and Colleen have stepped up to keep the town running. Thank you to the Fire Chief, Department, First Responders, and Police Chief. Thank you to our Maintenance Dept for making everything look good, especially after the storm. Thank the board for continued work and making hard decisions. The town is about \$250k away from securing funds for the Redmann Property funds, hopefully we can secure the property this summer.

Annual Report: Theresa Cain-Bieri gave a summary of the 2023 Audit Financial Report. The full report will be posted on the town website.

Wayne Kudick asked that the Sanitary District provide a financial report at the Annual Meeting.

Standing Reports:

- ✚ Copies of the full reports as well as the Annual Financial Report are posted on the town website and can be obtained at the Town Office.

Building Committee: Karl Stubenvoll, chairman, stated the committee annually reviews town properties for any needs. 2023 projects included painting the Old Town Hall, renovating the restrooms, and placing a new stove in the kitchen. Gutters were replaced at the Chambers Island lighthouse, the hatch door was rebuilt and sealed, and a new cistern liner was ordered. A furnace was replaced at the Kinsey house, new carpet tiles were installed at the Fire Station, the Noble House Annex will replace with carpet tiles in 2024, and major cleanup of old dock parts and obsolete materials was disposed of at the Old Town Shop. Stubenvoll thanked Maintenance and Travis for getting projects done.

Wayne Kudick asked future needs for the Kinsey Property and whether we are keeping up with maintenance?

Gibraltar Fire and Rescue: Fire Chief Andy Bertges stated an increase in call volume in 2023, 291 calls compared to the previous year of 280. Team training continues to be a high priority. The Incident Support Team added nine members to the Red Cross. Member, Bob Simandl, helped organize and train a K-9 search team. He is currently training six dogs and handlers, this team will help find missing and endangered individuals. Another drone operator was added to aid the Police Department. Adrian Murre completed Marine Fire fighter training. One of the most significant fires of the year was at the Settlement Inn, where nearly 4 acres of brush burned in July. Our self-contained breathing air compressor arrived was installed by year end, 95% was paid through grants. Our 501c3

continued its endeavor to provide top-notch equipment for our team. The new rescue boat was received, it replaced our flat bottom boat. Funding was also started to combine our rope rescue equipment and ATVs into one unit so it can be easily deployed. Engine 8 was sold for twice what we thought we could get, around \$70k. The 501c3 also replaced Engine 9 with a more useful truck. Our brand-new engine will arrive before year end. One of the 2024 goals is to increase membership and incorporate a separate kid's program. We also want to add a community support program for those at risk.

Wayne Kudick asked if we are staffed to capacity or need?

Tom Michalsen said there was a bad event near Hidden Blossom and it could have been worse. It is very dry this year and construction, is there more communication that could come from the department to be better prepared?

Greg Cote said there is still a lot of brush in the Redmann area, is there anything can be done?

Judith Kalb would like the town to have a community brush pile again, so there are fewer brush piles on properties. Other communities have figured out how to do it.

Wayne Kudick said we thought we learned two things from the Settlement Fire, insufficient exit/entrances and we learned that the septic system will be closed, but the tanks can be used for a source of water.

Nancy Sargent said she got caught unable to get out during the Settlement Fire, it is very prominent in her mind that if there is another fire I'm not going to be able to get out. We need a second exit to get out with more people and more traffic.

Harbor Commission: Chairperson, Dave Harris said the dock will open for the 2024 season on Wednesday, May 15th, we look forward to welcoming back Dock Master Chase Austin and his wife Lindsey. This year is the earliest ice out to memory. The east ramp is available now and the west ramp will be in the end of April. The dock is a full-service marina offering seasonal and transient docking, two boat launches, mid-grade, non-ethanol gasoline, diesel fuel, pump-outs, ice, and our popular dock apparel. Dock hours and rates are posted on the website, fishcreektowndock.com. The Harbor Commission, along with the Town Board, Parks and Lands Committee, and Plan Commission are all working on our waterfront master plan improvements. The commission is also working with engineer, AMI to ensure the stability of the dock. Dave thanked Town Staff for their work. 2 slips turned over this year. The gravel retreat lot is split again 50/50 public and dock.

Wayne Kudick asked about the summer plan for the parking? Wayne complimented the Harbor operations and the collaboration with the Town Board, Plan Commission and Parks and Lands for future land development.

Law Enforcement: Chief Ryan Roesch reported that there were 931 calls in 2023, not including parking violations. The Department completed a state audit along with all other agencies in Door County. Lightning struck the outside communication antenna located on the east side of the Town Center building, causing significant damage to electronics inside the building. An insurance claim was filed, and the radio communication system and base computer were replaced. The Department drone was used on several incidents over the year, including searches for missing and wanted persons. The drone also provided valuable information to the Gibraltar Fire Department when an explosive storage site started on fire. The drone was used in 2024 for the search of missing, Elijah Vue in Two Rivers. We are now a member of the Mid-States Organized Crim Information Center, this allows for additional equipment and investigative resources. The Department is active in the Door County Missing Endangered Response Team (MERT) and the Door County Drug Task Force. The Department has discussions with Gibraltar School for critical incidents and took part in active shooter training. The Speed board was displayed in problem areas in the town. Anyone with concerns about speeding can contact the Police Department. Parking enforcement citations that are issued and not paid get reported to the State and vehicle registrations are suspended by the State. Looking forward to Serving in 2024.

Bill Wolff thanked law enforcement, there has been more police presence on Maple Grove East and F and that has helped a bit with speed. The stop sign at Maple Grove East, Maple Grove, and F is often blown through. The truck braking is an issue, there are signs in some places and there are a lot of trucks and truck noise on the detour routes. Is there a way to evaluate how the truck traffic effects the road? Asked if there is an ordinance about a gravel truck having a cover over their gravel load?

Wayne Kudick recalled a meeting where there was concern on F and A and suggestions about reducing speed before that intersection.

Fred Perryman said speed is a big issue on Maple Grove especially with the curve to Sugarbush, crisis in the making for pedestrian or bike-vehicle accident.

Patricia Podgers said Maple Grove and Gibraltar is very dangerous, no one stopped. Understands the problem of having to be in the squad to site. The speed on Maple Grove is a big concern.

Wayne Kudick said the speed trailer helps.

Parks & Lands: Laurie Buske gave a summary of the submitted report. The committee was happy to receive two grants from Destination Door County in 2023, providing additional funding to parks. Look for two additional panels on the small beach playground, a bike rack and picnic table, and a drinking fountain in Clark Park. The second grant from DDC funded the rubberized surface under the beach playground, making it safer, more sanitary, and accessibility compliant. The committee also works to create a sustainable tree policy, we seek arborist advice on sick or failing trees and treat or remove them. In 2023, the group planted oak trees along the creek, with Gibraltar Area Schools and the Watershed committee. The committee continues to work to eradicate invasive weeds from our parks. The invasive team pulled at least 75% of the Dames Rocket at Fish Creek Park. We are deeply grateful for the donations to add trees and benches at the cemetery, and four benches are coming soon to Noble Square. We thank the Zellners for their ongoing efforts as the Lighthouse keeps on Chambers Island. We look forward to another great season of beautiful gardens, healthy lawns, and well-cared-for parks. Buske said she deeply appreciates the input from the members and the community. The committee is currently developing the goals of each park and how it meets the needs of the community. The Lighthouse keepers, Leon and Sharon Zellner, are so dedicated and we appreciate their work. Donations from the community help replace trees as needed. Always looking for volunteers for weed warriors. The holiday lighting committee and stringing the lights are done by volunteers. April 26th there will be an Arbor Day event at Noble Square to pick up sticks.

Wayne Kudick asked what the committee roll is with the Kinsey property?

Nancy Sargent commended the parks and lands committee for continuity of the benches in the town.

Plan Commission: Linda Merline, reported that the Town Board adopted by ordinance the Town of Gibraltar's 20 year Comprehensive Plan (2023-2043) on July 5, 2023. The plan represents the Town's commitment to the long-term planning needs of the community by providing the Town with a framework for preserving its character and national resources and guiding its growth and change. Please look at the goals and actions in the plan. Each member of the commission has one of the goals and is working to bring it into action this year. Merline highlighted 2023 Public Information hearings that were brought to the commission including a rezone and variance request. Also worked with Vinni Chomeau to do a Gibraltar 5th grade field trip at Fish Creek Park to identify the health of the creek by looking at what's living in it. The Green Tier Committee is going to be restructured so it can be more successful than in the past.

Wayne Kudick said one of the goals is for there to be a meeting each year to discuss and report the actions from the Comprehensive Plan.

Judith Kalb believes that the dark sky is part of the comprehensive plan, and it is a valuable asset, and we are losing it. Once you lose it, it is harder to regain it. Encourage movement forward on the dark sky initiative.

Dave Harris said people leave their lights on 24-7 and they are not even here, it is so important to do something.

Patricia Podgers asked if there is anything we do to reduce the outdoor lights on at homes and encourage the rental companies to ask renters to turn down lights.

Bill Wolff would like to think heavily about dark sky and quiet with the rental units and the outdoor campfires.

Watershed: Linda Merline reported that the 20 Year Comprehensive Plan also highlighted Watershed and Environmental Goals and call to actions. The group monitors two sites in Fish Creek, one in Fish Creek Park and one near the Redmann property. The creek was dry much of the year. There was water on the Redmann property all year. It is a worry to have the creek going dry for so many months. A big concern is the loss of the ash trees as it shades the water and affects the habitats. The Fish Creek Watershed Study was designed to establish physical, chemical, and biological baseline data. Monthly field testing occurs from May to October. The data can be used to improve the quality of the groundwater in the watershed, the surface waters of Fish Creek, and the Harbor. Big

thank you to the 2023 Fish Creek Watershed Volunteers, Judith Kalb, Dave Lea, Bob Merline, and Patty Dixon. The group also participates in the Shed Aquarium Sucker Monitoring, in fact today they were up here tagging suckers so they can see where they travel and how many return year after year. The new fish ladder works as well!

Andrea Kinsey-Jaquet asked if there is any way we could suggest to businesses with parking lots to lower the lamps etc.

Ephraim-Gibraltar Airport Commission: Jeff Drasek submitted a report. The Ephraim-Gibraltar Airport continues to operate in an efficient and productive manner and is a desired destination by pilots and their passengers as confirmed by having over 1000 arrivals in both 2023 and 2022 and even more expected in 2024. The Airport has had an ongoing waiting list for those interested in purchasing or building a hangar for years, the property adjacent to the existing hangars was acquired last June, providing space for five additional hangars. The management and operations for the Airport are conducted by the Airport Commission, with three representatives from Gibraltar and three from Ephraim. A significant amount of time, equipment and resources are also donated by members of the Friends of the Ephraim-Gibraltar Airport Group. The group is responsible for the bathroom now being available year-round, and the Friends maintain the mowing of the grass runway and between taxiways, as well as brushing the entrance. These volunteers significantly reduce maintenance costs. The efforts of the Airport commission and volunteers have resulted in 3D2 being one of a few Wisconsin airports that continue to be profitable and self-sustaining. The primary sources of revenue are hangar leases and fuel sales. The Friends group in planning another EAA-sponsored young Eagles even on June 1, 2024.

Wayne Kudick said the landing slip was talked about last year and if there was any progress on the runway improvements.

Myrv Somerhalder said the paved runway will be redone every 10 years, it has been more than that and it still hasn't been done because the base is on rock, and it has held up well. The commission requested that it be done in about 2 more years and the process is being worked on with the state and that takes time. Our airport is not meant for large planes and large companies to use, it is a certain level.

Bill Wolff said when you live under the flight pattern is like living near O'Hare. It was a nice small airport at one point, and it was said no new hangars, and now more hangars and more people. Noise pollution is a thing, what are we doing for the people that live here and pay taxes here.

Vinni Chomeau mentioned that a new master plan is being updated at the airport.

Door County Tourism Commission: Travis said the treasurer indicated that we had a surplus, partially because of the tax increase from 5.5% to 8%, while occupancy hasn't necessarily increased. They also provide room tax grants and we the town received two grants for the Redmann property and playground.

Judith Kalb said legislation dictates how tourism dollars are spent and encourage municipalities to go to the state to solve the problems that surges in tourism has created like housing, parking, and community life diminishing.

Wayne Kudick said these concerns would be good to raise during campaigns.

Visit Fish Creek: Sara Lancaster gave an overview of the mission and goals of the organization. She highlighted the Associations annual report. In 2023 the organization worked closer with the Town of Gibraltar to design and distribute member open flags to align with the town's future sign ordinance. They helped over 4,800 visitors since May 2023 at the Information Center, either in-person, via email, or over the phone with countless referrals made to member businesses. Invested in professional photography for continued expansion and enhancement of the marketing initiatives in 2024. Increased social media presence through paid advertising and promotion opportunities, both on association social medial channels and through DDC. Updated brochures using QR technology to help save on future printing and costs. Will continue to hose Fish Creek's signature events, Inside/Outside Days, Jack O'Lantern Days, and Winter Fest, with goals to expand certain events. Also brought VFC up to full staff by hiring Membership and Office Manager Sara Lancaster and Community and Events Coordinator Jessica Murphy. Exciting events for 2024 include Derby Day on May 4th and Fish Fri (family-friendly live music event at the town beach on the last Friday of the month May-September. An updated Inside/Outside Day event is also in the works.

Wayne Kudick said the DDC Stewardship Plan will be available April 24, 2024, from 9-11 AM at the Kress Center, and we can see the future outlook.

Judith Kalb asked if the information office could let visitors know when we are in a high fire danger.

Carol Vandewalle asked about controls on Airbnb like other communities are doing?

Wayne Kudick said there is a recent lawsuit by the real estate association that says managing companies can operate and manage a property remotely.

Thomas Michalson asked if Travis could talk about STR's at the Redmann property?

Gibraltar Historical Association: Laurie Buske thanked everyone in the community and board for their support and gave a short history lesson on the town. Gibraltar is the 2nd oldest tourist town in the state of Wisconsin. GHA is happy to report 2023 was a balanced year; continuing to balance costs with income. We continue to strive for an increased membership base and sponsorship to keep Walking Tours free and day tours economical. Fundraising is showing growth, Dues/Donations are up slightly. Day tours and night tours were steady. Expenses and payroll were constant. Goals for 2024 are focused on sustainable growth to secure our future and protect the artifacts and documents we have acquired in the past 34 years. Our efforts to maintain staff in a competitive market are our top priority. GHA is focused on repairing the three failing porches and restoring some of the cosmetic damage inside from the foundation repair and converting VHS tapes and videos to a user-friendly media.

Wayne Kudick said that the planning commission is working on setting architectural best practices and hopes this image will be in conjunction with GHA efforts.

Judith Kalb hopes Gibraltar Talks continue; they are wonderful.

Fish Creek Sanitary District #1: Report submitted by Dennis Steigenberger, Cedar Corporation. After many years of planning, Phase I of the Interceptor Sanitary Sewer Pipeline which will provide sanitary sewer service to the Upper Bluff area is nearing completion. The Upper Bluff Area includes the existing developments of Hidden Blossom, the Settlement Inn, the Settlement Shops, and new residential development under construction by the Redmann Family. The project included 7,000 feet of gravity sanitary sewer; 24 precast concrete manholes; over 22,000 cubic yards of rock removal along with 900 feet of rock grinding. The project was able to move forward, in part, with funding through the Town of Gibraltar Tax Incremental District #1 along with connection charges from the benefited users. The project, which began construction in January 2024, is expected to see all pipeline installation completed and be fully operational prior to the Memorial Day Weekend. Three private holding tanks will be eliminated with the project. Upon completion all generated wastewater from the Upper Bluff area will be treated at the wastewater treatment plant which operates under a Wisconsin DNR permit.

Vinni Chomeau asked if part of the plan is to restore areas that were torn up from the pipe installed?

Wayne Kudick asked where we think we are with attainable housing for working people?

Nancy Sargent asked what they are going to do with the big mountains of soil and gravel on the Upper Bluff?

Broadband Report from Bertram: Submitted by Bertram Communications Read by Steve Sohns. We are currently finalizing the engineering drawings for the entire Town of Gibraltar. This will take several weeks. Once we get those drawings, we will present them to the town of Gibraltar, and they will approve. During this time, we want to start collecting signed Right of Entry Agreements (ROE's) from all residents. We will also get ROE's from private roads, HOAs, COAs, and MDUs. We will work with Gibraltar to hold public meetings to answer questions about installations and ROEs. We have set a drop dead date for signing ROEs on August 15, 2024. This way, we can go up one road and down the next. This is the way we do our timeline to hold. That means we can do it differently, but it adds 6 months to the project. We will need to schedule a start-up meeting with the Town of Gibraltar. This

meeting is a collaborative effort where we will sit down and discuss several things such as staging area, contact with contractor, monthly updates, reimbursements, etc. Your input is highly valued and integral to the success of this project. Hardcore construction will start in July or August.

Bill Wolff said he panicked today and heard Baileys Harbor needed people to commit by May 15th. If you Bertram and they will have their marketing person call you with a link for the form and you can sign up and fill out the ROE form.

John Young asked what the timeline is for broadband?

Wayne Kudick said we are holding off on grants and are grants still available? And asked about future hookup fees for future homes.

Sohns said if you are planning to build get your stuff in now.

Laurie Buske asked if we are going to get internet in the Old Town Hall?

Old Business: Steve Sohns opened the floor for old business.

Wayne Kudick asked about local zoning vs county zoning. Said the county is about 2 years behind on follow-up on violations.

Steve Sohns said he is on the WTA TAC committee and has been pushing for a bill for towns to breakaway from county zoning. This bill was passed, and the governor signed it last month and we now have the ability to exit county zoning and create their own zoning, the rule making is the process right now. Once the town puts their notice in, it is 5 years to leave and there are different monuments that you must make show your intent. Will probably work with other towns to talk about this. The town is looking into this and more discussion to come.

Tom Birmingham asked if a town board or any town board has approved an intent to remove from zoning? Steve said no, it has been several years since it was discussed. The administrator was directed when he was hired to pursue moving forward with removing the town from county zoning.

Vinni Chomeau wants clarification of direction from the board made several years ago, as it is a different board now and we should revisit it. We haven't seen any numbers for costs, etc. We don't have a lot of information right now before this can be decided. As a county board member, this is a large decision that we should take seriously. To jump to leaving county zoning is short sighted without looking into the costs and all the details.

Linda Merline said we joined zoning in the 1960s and we are living in a different world, it is time to restructure and there are things the county could still do for us and there are things we could do ourselves. A total restructuring of how we do things, needs to evolve, and turn into something better.

Wayne Kudick wants to know how to reserve Champagne Rock. Steve Sohns said Champagne Rock means a lot to some people, asked Mike Kabr to pull the rock out of the water and asked Parks and Lands if they wanted to see the rock back in original form. Received approval from parks and lands and town board and currently fundraising to put the rock back, it can be done for about \$10,000 if anyone wants to donate.

New Business: Steve Sohns opened the floor for new business.

Travis Thysen talked about the connectivity trail from Egg Harbor to Sister Bay. Communities are working to make this a reality. More information to come in the future.

Nancy Sargent would like the board to pursue a second entrance at Hidden Blossom and look at other roads that may need another access as well.

Jayson Merkel asked if we should ask the electors to remove the properties at Kinsey tonight. Treasurer Cain-Bieri said it is allowable at this meeting but the public wasn't made aware that this might be voted on and the board hasn't officially approved a plan either.

Motion: (Greg Cote, Sara Sobns) to set the next annual meeting date for Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Old Town Hall. Carried

Adjourn: *Motion: (Bill Wolff, Judith Kalb) to adjourn at 9:29 p.m. Carried*

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Cain-Bieri, Treasurer/Deputy clerk

Posted: April 18, 2024
Town of Gibraltar website
Fish Creek BP
Fish Creek Post Office
Gibraltar Town Center

Draft