**A Special Meeting and workshop of the Mendon Town Board was held at 6:00 PM, Monday, July 27, 2026, at the Mendon Town Hall, 16 West Main Street, Honeoye Falls, NY.**

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| **PRESENT:** | Joseph Alati, *Supervisor* | |
| | Tanner Cheek | |
| | Rebecca Kreuzer | *Town Board* |
| | Kimberly Roberts | *Members* |
| | Thomas Voorhees | |

**TOWN CLERK:** Michelle Booth

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Moe Bickweat and Danny Bassette

The Supervisor called the meeting to order at and recited the Pledge of Allegiance 6:00 PM. He confirmed that the sound system was working and the recording was active.

NOTE: The Special Meeting, regarding the proposed Urgent Care, was cancelled. This meeting was only a workshop on policies and procedures.

**AGENDA**
***(Resolution 26-211)***
A motion was made by Mr. Alati, seconded by Mr. Cheek, to adopt the agenda as presented.

Adopted: Mr. Cheek, Aye; Ms. Roberts, Aye; Mr. Voorhees, Aye; Ms. Kruezer, Aye; and Mr. Alati, Aye.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments.

**MUNICIPAL HEALTH INSURANCE CONSORTIUM - MEMBERSHIP APPROVAL**
***(Resolution 26-212)***
A motion was made by Mr. Alati, seconded by Mr. Cheek, to adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Town of Mendon is performed due diligence for the responsibility it accepts with membership in the Consortium,now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Board hereby directs its officers and appointees to take the following Consortium membership application steps:

1. Submit as soon as practicable, but no later than August 1st, a board resolution authorizing application for membership along with the Consortium’s "New Group Member Application" completed which states the Consortium Health Benefit Insurance Plan or Plans the Municipal Corporation's employees and retirees will be participating in upon the effective date of participation in the Consortium.

2. As soon as practicable, but no later than August 1st, submit the Municipal Corporations' two most recent years of State Comptroller AUD reports.

3. As soon as practicable, but no later than August 1st, submit the Municipal Corporation's most recent monthly premium billing statements from all health insurance carriers providing benefits to all active employees and retirees. Further RESOLVED, if the Consortium Board accepts this application, the will comply with the following action steps:

4. By October 1st, notify the Consortium of the name and contact information for the person within your organization for benefit administration; and who will attend a new member orientation.

5. Sign the Municipal Cooperative Agreement (MCA) of the Consortium upon notification that the Consortium’s Board of Directors has approved the Municipal Corporation's application to become a Participant in the Consortium by November 15th.

6. Confirm by November 15th the names of all employees, retirees, and dependents to be covered in which Consortium's Health Insurance Plans WHEREAS, the Town of Mendon desires to provide quality, cost-effective health insurance coverage for its eligible officers and employees; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium enables participating municipalities of less than 100 employees to cooperatively pool health insurance risks and expenses;

WHEREAS, annual rates of MHIC are considerably lower for the same quality of health care insurance,

WHEREAS, there is no cost to the Town of Mendon to join,

WHEREAS, this resolution allows the Town to not be excluded from eligibility to join given a July 31st deadline for consideration by MHIC at their September 24th meeting, WHEREAS The Town of Mendon can request that MHIT stop our application process anytime before the MHIC vote at the September 24, 2026 meeting,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board of the Town of Mendon hereby approves entering into the Greater Tompkins County Municipal Health Insurance Consortium; subject to town attorney review and approval, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Supervisor is hereby authorized and directed to execute all contracts, agreements, and related documents necessary to complete the membership application for participation in the Consortium.

Adopted: Mr. Cheek, Aye; Ms. Roberts, Aye; Mr. Voorhees, Aye; Ms. Kruezer, Aye; and Mr. Alati, Aye.

**EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK - DISCUSSION**

The Board conducted a working review of the draft Employee Handbook, proceeding page by page through approximately the first thirteen pages. This discussion was understood to be the first of several sessions, with no vote taken on the handbook at this meeting.

Background Check Policy. A Board member raised the fact that the Background Check Policy had been removed from the Zywave template. The Board agreed this policy should be restored, given that the Town employee staff at the Mendon Youth Center legally require it. Discussion clarified the distinction between background checks (criminal history and sex offender registry checks, including fingerprinting) and drug and alcohol testing. It was noted that anyone working with youth is subject to background check requirements, and that the court clerks are handled through the State. The Supervisor agreed to review the existing policy language and coordinate with the HR liaison. The cost of a comprehensive background check was noted to be approximately $104 per person, to be paid by the Town.

At-Will Employment Policy (Page 6). The Board agreed on the straightforward correction of replacing the title "President" with "Town Supervisor" throughout the document.

Employee Handbook Acknowledgment (Page 7). A Board member noted that the signed acknowledgment of receipt should be routed to the employee's supervisor rather than directly to the Town Board, with the supervisor then forwarding it to the HR liaison for filing in the personnel record.

Code of Ethics (Page 8). A substantive discussion arose regarding the Code of Ethics section. It was noted that the Town already has a separate Code of Ethics established in the Town Code. Mr. Bickweat clarified that the Town Code provision can only be amended by local law following a public hearing, not by resolution alone, and that the current Town Code focuses primarily on fiscal responsibility rather than behavioral expectations. The Board agreed that the Employee Handbook's Code of Ethics section provides value by setting behavioral expectations that employees acknowledge upon signing. It was agreed that the Town's existing Code of Ethics should be referenced within the handbook, and that a future public hearing should be scheduled, tentatively in September, to consider amending the Town Code to expand and update its Code of Ethics provisions. The Board also discussed whether the existing Ethics Board composition of three members should be increased to five, to ensure quorum in the event of absences or recusals.

Mission Statement (Page 9). The Board agreed that the placeholder mission statement in the draft was insufficient and should be replaced with the Town's existing mission statement, which is contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

HR Liaison / Outside HR Resource. Discussion returned to the question of HR support, particularly for situations where employees at the Highway Department or elsewhere might be uncomfortable bringing issues to the Town's HR liaison, given existing personal relationships. The Board discussed the prior engagement of Karen Marchese, an HR professional and attorney from Monroe County, who had been retained on a per-diem basis to provide independent HR support. It was agreed that the Supervisor would follow up to determine whether Ms. Marchese remains available and, if so, re-engage her to provide employees with an accessible, independent HR contact.

Recruitment and Hiring (Page 11–13). The Board discussed updating language throughout these sections to reflect correct titles (e.g., Town Supervisor, Highway Superintendent, department heads) in place of generic references to "Town Board." A Board member raised the need to clarify and add language regarding pre-employment drug and alcohol testing, particularly for CDL holders, and potentially for all employees who may operate Town vehicles. The Board agreed that this language should be added where applicable. It was also noted that a civil service review would be needed before changing the HR liaison's official job title, and that the Town Supervisor would consult with the civil service office on this matter.

Vacation Carryover. Highway Superintendent Alati raised the issue of allowing employees to carry over unused vacation time, noting that the current policy is use-it-or-lose-it, which creates scheduling difficulties in December. The Board discussed allowing a maximum carryover of one week (40 hours) per year, with an absolute accumulation cap. Board members were generally supportive of the concept. It was noted that this would create a modest, manageable financial liability for the Town. The Supervisor agreed to research how neighboring towns handle vacation carryover and to bring comparable policy language back for further discussion.

The Board agreed to resume the Employee Handbook review beginning at page 14 at a future workshop session.

**SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY - DISCUSSION**

The Board reviewed the draft Social Media Policy. The Town Supervisor reported that the New York State Association of Towns had recommended that municipal social media accounts not permit public commenting, in order to avoid legal complications related to free speech, content moderation, and records retention. The Board agreed with this recommendation, concluding that Section 7 of the policy should be simplified to state that comments are turned off on all Town accounts.

A Board member raised the legal risks of blocking users from Town social media accounts, noting that multiple lawsuits have been filed across the country against government entities that blocked users from accessing public information. The Board agreed that a no-blocking policy should be articulated.

Discussion also addressed the practice of posting Town business from personal social media accounts. Board members acknowledged that this practice creates legal exposure, including the risk of FOIL requests being applied to personal accounts, and sends mixed messages to the public. The Board generally agreed that official Town communications should originate from the Town's official accounts and website, and then be cross-shared to other pages, rather than originating on personal accounts. It was also noted that elected officials retain their own independent speech rights and are not subject to the same restrictions as employees.

ADA and web content accessibility compliance was raised, noting that municipalities of Mendon's size will be required to comply with WCAG 2.1 AA standards by April 2028. The Board agreed to incorporate a reference to this compliance obligation into the policy.

**RECORDS PUBLICATION AND REDACTION POLICY - DISCUSSION**

The Board reviewed the draft Records Publication and Redaction Policy. It was suggested to change the language from "required redactions" to "information subject to redaction," to better reflect that not all personal information is always subject to redaction in every context, for example, property addresses in planning and zoning applications are necessarily part of the public record.

The Board discussed the need to add Social Security numbers and taxpayer identification numbers to the list of information subject to redaction. It was noted that the existing language, "unless disclosure is required by law", provides adequate flexibility to address situations where certain personal information must remain visible.

They reviewed the inclusion of a provision requiring the Town Clerk to maintain final authority over public posting standards, suggesting this could place the Clerk in an awkward position in disputes between elected officials. The Board agreed to remove or revise that language.

The Board confirmed that FOIL requests are fulfilled by the Town Clerk, who distributes them to relevant departments for response, and that FOIL appeals are handled by the Town's designated Records Management Committee. It was noted that the policy should include reference to items exempt from FOIL disclosure.

The Library Director noted that she would welcome clarity on whether FOIL requests pertaining to the library should be routed through the Town Clerk or handled by the library trustees, with the general consensus being that library-related FOIL requests are properly the responsibility of the trustees.

A Board member suggested adding a step in the policy requiring Town Attorney approval for any redactions not explicitly listed in the policy document.

**ETHICS BOARD - DISCUSSION**

**(Resolution 26-213)**

A motion was made by Mr. Cheek, seconded by Ms. Kreuzer, to add an Ethics Board discussion to the agenda.

Adopted: Mr. Cheek, Aye; Ms. Roberts, Aye; Mr. Voorhees, Aye; Ms. Kruezer, Aye; and Mr. Alati; Aye.

The Board discussed expanding the Ethics Board from three members to five. Under the current Town Code, membership is fixed at three, which means that any absence or recusal eliminates quorum and prevents the Board from conducting business. The Board agreed that increasing the membership to five would provide necessary flexibility. It was noted that this change would require a local law amendment, including a public hearing and submission to New York State, and could potentially be combined with a broader update to the Town's Code of Ethics. The Supervisor agreed to coordinate with the Town Attorney to prepare the necessary public hearing notice, with a target of September.

**DISCUSSIONS TABLED**

***(Resolution 26-214)***

A motion was made by Mr. Alati, seconded by Mr. Cheek, to table the following agenda items until a later date:

**BUILDING AND FACILITIES POLICY - DISCUSSION**

**SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT FORM - DISCUSSION**

**VIDEOCONFERENCING - DISCUSSION**

**POLICY VIOLATION PROCEDURE - DISCUSSION**

**EMPLOYEE WRITTEN WARNING FORM - DISCUSSION**

Adopted: Mr. Cheek, Aye; Ms. Roberts, Aye; Mr. Voorhees, Aye; Ms. Kruezer, Aye; and Mr. Alati; Aye.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Danny Bassette,** offered three comments: (1) cautioning the Board that some records are generally not on the FOIL exclusion list and that the Town should take care not to improperly restrict access to foilable records through its internal policy; (2) noting that Facebook is significantly restricted for users without accounts, which should be considered when evaluating it as a primary communication channel; and (3) confirming that a previously posted agenda had referenced urgent care matters, and that no such item came before the Board this evening.

**ADJOURNMENT**

***(Resolution 26-215)***
A motion was made by Mr. Alati, seconded by Mr. Voorhees, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 PM.

Adopted: Mr. Cheek, Aye; Ms. Roberts, Aye; Mr. Voorhees, Aye; Ms. Kruezer, Aye; and Mr. Alati; Aye