



**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**GARDINER CITY COUNCIL**  
**WEDNESDAY, May 12, 2021**  
**6:00 PM**

Mayor Hart called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**1. ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

City Council Present: Mayor Hart, Councilor Cusick, Councilor White, Councilor Berry, Councilor Rees and Councilor Frey.

City Council Absent: Councilor Rines and Councilor Sergeant.

Also present: Acting City Manager Anne Davis, City Clerk Alisha Ballard, Tax Collector Kathleen Cutler, Finance Director Denise Brown, Police Chief James Toman, Fire Chief Rick Sieberg,

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**3. PETITIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**a.) Backyard Dogs and Catering renewal for Roving/On Wheels/Lunch Wagon (Annual)**

**Action:** Councilor Cusick motioned to renew the Backyard Dogs and Catering application for Roving/On Wheels/ Lunch Wagon (Wagon).

Councilor White seconded

Mayor Hart asked for any discussion. None. All those in favor. Unanimous.

**b.) Consideration of a One Year Extension of PlanME, LLC Contract**

**Action:** Councilor Cusick motioned to instruct the Acting City Manager to accept the extension of a one-year contract with PlanME, LLC.

Councilor Frey seconded.

Mayor Hart asked for any discussion. None. All those in favor. Unanimous.

**c.) Consideration of the March Department Head Reports**

**Action:** Councilor Rees moved to accept the March Department Head reports.

Councilor White seconded.

Mayor Hart asked for any discussion. None. All those in favor. Unanimous.

**d.) Council discussion of Occupied Tax Acquired Property**

Tax Collector Kathleen Cutler spoke briefly.

Mayor Hart asked Tax Collector Cutler if she has seen more Tax Acquired Properties.

Tax Collector Cutler stated she does not think the pandemic has effected the TAPs, a lot of these are recurring.

Mayor Hart asked if we could see these in the future.

Tax Collector Cutler stated she is not seeing many new names.

Councilor White thanked Tax Collector Cutler for attending the meeting. Councilor White asked if the City had reached the point in the past to involve the Sheriff.

Tax Collector Cutler stated yes.

Councilor White asked for more clarification on the process.

Tax Collector Cutler explained.

Councilor Berry thanked Tax Collector Cutler for the update. Councilor Berry stated this is one of the harder conversations we have as a Council. Each property had unique circumstances and we have seen one property come before us three times, we were told all those times what they were going to do and three times they did nothing. Councilor Berry proposed to Council to take a harder stance and that we put some of the properties out to bid as is occupied properties and see what we get for bids.

Mayor Hart asked Councilor Berry what his thoughts were on the Mt Vernon property.

Councilor Berry stated he is not opposed to having it put on the list.

Tax Collector Cutler stated she would encourage him to include 25 Mt Vernon, this is one of the properties she has brought before council three times. She further stated to keep things consistent she would suggest to put all four out to bid.

Acting City Manager Davis stated she did reach out to legal to receive some guidance.

Tax Collector Cutler stated going this route would not affect the current process she is on. Tax Collector Cutler stated she would suggest that the City put in the bid document that there might be occupants.

Councilor White asked Tax Collector Cutler if she has been through this process before.

Tax Collector Cutler stated she has not.

Councilor White asked if there are successful bids and we accept. What happens to the occupants?

Tax Collector Cutler stated it becomes the buyer's problem.

Councilor Berry stated this becomes a civil matter and it goes to the courts.

Tax Collector Cutler clarified that she did not mean the Gardiner Police would get involved she meant they would get calls for the matter.

Mayor Hart asked for Police Chief James Toman input on this matter.

Chief Toman explained the process and how the Gardiner Police would handle such matters.

Councilor Berry motioned to instruct city staff to put out to bid as soon as possible, 25 Mt Vernon Ave, 36 Oak St, 47 Canard St and 596 Water St with the notification there might be a possibility may be occupied.

Councilor Cusick seconded.

Mayor Hart asked for any discussion.

Acting City Manager recommended we wait for the dead line of May 21, 2021.

Councilor Berry stated that is what he meant with his motion.

All those in favor. Unanimous.

#### **e.) FY22 Budget workshop**

Fire Chief Rick Sieberg gave an overview on the Fire Budget FY22.



Mayor Hart asked Chief Sieberg about the third offsite ambulance; “This year we pay 100% and then it will be divided across the communities in the future budgets?”

Chief Sieberg stated, “Correct.”

Mayor Hart asked if there is any funding we could apply for that would help cover this cost.

Chief Sieberg stated he was not sure, before the American Rescue Plan ambulance funding and staffing were difficult. He state he will look further into funding.

Councilor Berry stated we are going to be creating this budget and if we find we can use some of the money in the future to offset the budget, ultimately how is that going to affect the tax rate?

Finance Director Denise Brown stated we need to move forward with the budget and any funding City would get will go to Fund Balance at the end of FY22, that could help with future budgets.

Councilor Berry stated we have a very healthy Fund Balance. Councilor Berry asked Finance Director Brown, could we use more money out of the Fund balance and replace it when we receive more money in the future.

Finance Director Brown stated we could if we are to receive the money. She explains that this is very unclear how much the general funds we will receive.

Councilor Cusick asked Chief Sieberg if he was going to be applying for a grant to offset the cost of a new engine.

Chief Sieberg stated we could try for the AFG grant again.

Acting City Manager Davis discussed the short staff within Building & Grounds.

Councilor Berry asked how does this compare to add a new person year round.

Finance Director Brown stated an average added Building and Grounds position with benefits and minus the part time employees would cost the City \$30,000 or .10 on the mil.

Mayor Hart thanked Gardiner Rotary for the cleanup over the weekend.

Public Works Director Jerry Douglass gave an overview on the Public Works / Building & Grounds FY22 Budget.

Councilor Cusick asked Public Works Director Douglass if he has looked into contracting some of the mowing out to try and take the load off the workers.

Public Works Director stated he has not looked into it and mentioned the City would need to fund this. Libby Hill Business Park takes a lot of time to mow and could be an area to hire out.

Councilor Rees asked Public Works Director why repairs and maintenance had dropped in percentage not increased.

Finance Director Brown stated over the last couple of years the City has done some roof repairs and repairing the building. We wanted to be able to store one of the ambulances there.

Public Works Director Douglass continued his overview on the Public Works / Building & Grounds FY22 Budget.

Councilor White asked about the cost of rug cleaning over the last couple of years.

Finance Director Brown explained the rug cleaning expenses.

Councilor Berry asked if the numbers are an estimate for the light repairs.

Public Works Director Douglass stated these numbers are an estimate and the reason why this is needed.

Acting City Manager Davis stated the number shown in the budget is a placeholder for the work to be done. The City changed over from CMP owning the lights to a new company, Infinity. Infinity is almost done with installing the lights.

Councilor Berry stated that he was questioning the options.

Acting City Manager Davis stated they will put together a bid process in place so the City gets the best price.

Public Works Director Douglass continued his overview on the Public Works / Building & Grounds FY22 Budget.

Mayor Hart asked how many years would the flail mower be good for?

Public Works Director Douglass stated if it maintained you could have it running for 7-10 years.

Councilor Rees asked since the mower would be used at Libby Hill business park could part of the cost be paid for out of TIF fund.

Finance Director Denise Brown stated she spoke with Public Works Director Douglass and the majority would be road side and could be used at Libby Hill, it could be a possibility that some of the funds come from the TIF fund.

Public Works Director Douglass stated at Libby Hill the hard place to mow would be around the retention ponds, with the flair mower they could get closer and clean up a better job and take less time.

Acting City Manager Davis spoke briefly about paving.

Public Works Director Douglass continued his overview on the Public Works / Building & Grounds FY22 Budget.

Councilor Berry asked if using more salt than sand increases the liability of salt damage to wells or environment.

Public Works Director Douglass stated that they would not be using any extra salt; they would just be removing the sand.

Councilor Berry stated we are not buying more product; salt is just a more expensive product?

Public Works Director Douglass stated not in the long run, when you use sand they fill up the ditches and catch basins. In the spring you end up doing more sweeping than you need to do. In previous years the crew would spend the month of May to clean up the roads but this year using less sand, we used half the crew and took a couple weeks. In the end you are saving money using more salt than sand. Public Works Director Douglass continued his overview on the Public Works / Building & Grounds FY22 Budget.

Mayor Hart stated the column change was the Manager's request; this is showing there is no change from last year?

Public Work Director Douglass stated that was correct. Public Works Director Douglass continued his overview on the Public Works / Building & Grounds FY22 Budget.

Mayor Hart stated the whole increase for the budgets would be 2.17.

Acting City Manager Davis asked Finance Director Brown to speak in regards to page 21 in Public Works.

Finance Director Brown reviewed page 21 in Public Works.

Public Works Director Douglass continued his overview on the Public Works / Building & Grounds FY22 Budget.



Finance Director Brown reviewed the communication upgrade in the Public Works/Building & Grounds GY22 Budget.

Councilor Berry stated he did not see any discussion on the sidewalks. We bonded for paving, Finance Director Brown do you know how much we bonded and for how long?

Finance Director Brown stated the roads were \$1.3 million and the sidewalks were \$600,000, approximately. We needed \$2 million dollar bonds; she thinks the paving bond was for 8 years.

Councilor Berry stated he is thinking if we change the model and we can store the funds instead of bonding to get out of this cycle. Are we stating we are not going to be doing any paving for a period of time into the future?

Finance Director Brown states the request is for \$300,000 dollars a year, you would need to pick and choose what they are able to do each year.

Public Works Director states that paving is expensive.

Councilor Rees stated she agrees with Finance Director Brown in regards to borrowing money to pave the roads.

Acting City Manager Davis stated this is a critical piece of the budget. She mentioned this would be a tough transition.

Councilor Berry stated this is a tough decision asked Finance Director Brown; over the 8 years \$1.352 million dollars, that we bonded, what was the interest charge?

Public Works Director Douglass stated that the bidding would start in March or April. That is when the paving company starts there plans. "Plan your work and work your plan."

Mayor Hart asked if the money is in the budget or are we authorizing something in the future?

Acting City Manager Davis stated that in the transition year if Public Works Director was to go to bid in March the work would be done in cross budgets.

Public Works Director Douglass stated the work would be depending on the fiscal year of the budget.

Mayor Hart asked Public Works Director Douglass what the amount he is asking for to do the paving.

Public Works Director Douglas stated \$350,000 if we could get it.

Mayor Hart stated, so you are looking for Libby Hill and the Arcade parking lot.

Public Works Director Douglass stated and the Mill and Fill.

Finance Director Brown stated the answer to Councilor Berry's question, \$151,000 dollars of interest and was a 9-year bond.

Public Works Director Douglass stated the interest cost could have paid Libby Hill.

Councilor Berry stated that is only \$16,000 a year.

Councilor Rees stated there are times that you need to borrow money but we do need to do paving every year and should budget for the known expenses and the special projects should be bonded.

Mayor Hart explained the back-story for the paving bonding.

Councilor Berry stated he would like see a plan to not stall on the sidewalks.

Mayor Hart asked if there is any sidewalk money left.

Public Works Director Douglass stated \$40,000 that is going to be used on Brunswick Ave.

**Mayor Hart called for a 5-minute break at 8:20 p.m.**

Library Director Anne Davis provided an overview of the FY22 Library Budget.

Mayor Hart asked clarifying questions for wages.

Finance Director Brown spoke further about the wages in FY22 Library Budget.

Economic Development Director Tracey Desjardins provided an overview of the FY22 Planning and Development and Economic Development Budget.

Finance Director Brown spoke briefly in regards to the Arcade Alley.

Councilor Berry asked about the GSI software upgrade, is this something the Assessor Curt Lebel uses?

Economic Development Director Desjardins stated she spoke with Assessor Lebel, this is a different software.



Councilor Berry asked if Assessor Lebel could use this.

Economic Development Director Desjardins stated he would have access to this program.

Economic Development Director Tracey Desjardins continued the overview of the FY22 Planning and Development and Economic Development Budget.

Councilor Berry asked if there has been assessment done for the pool vehicle, would it be cheaper to run a pool vehicle or pay the employee mile reimbursement.

Finance Director Brown stated is it a lot cheaper to have the pool car.

Acting City Manager Davis stated there has been concerns of liability when someone uses their own vehicle for City business.

Mayor Hart thanked all the presenters.

## **5. CITY MANAGER REPORT**

Acting City Manager Davis thanked the council for the thoughtful process for the budget process.

Acting City Manager Davis stated the City staff has been very busy and reminded everyone Covid is still high with people getting sick.

## **6. CITY COUNCIL REPORT**

Councilor Cusick thanked everyone presenting tonight. Thanked all city staff who are very dedicated to the City.

Mayor Hart 'Hear' 'Hear'

Councilor White thanked everyone for presenting. Councilor White wished all members of the police department a Happy National Police Week. Councilor White stated she is on the community outreach committee and working in conjunction with Chief Toman and Tara to have the "Good Day Gardiner" more known, she explained what Good Day Gardiner is.

Councilor Berry stated they had a KVCOG meeting yesterday, May 11, 2021. There are issues with the budget. Councilor Berry stated he heard they could be getting a \$28 million dollar fund from the federal government, the group was wondering what they can do with the funds. Councilor Berry asked what percentage of the city staff has been vaccinated.

Acting City Manager Davis stated the City is not mandating so they do have true data but she believes 70%. Acting City Manager Davis stated the whole library staff has been vaccinated.

Councilor Berry stated it is good to know and possibly the City can hold some incentives for people who ever to receive the vaccine.

Acting City Manager Davis stated the EOC is still meeting, they have moved their meeting to a monthly plan.

Councilor Rees stated the speed monitor sign on Brunswick Ave has stopped working. Councilor Rees thanked everyone who presented and the Councilors and Mayor who work all day and go through these meetings.

Mayor Hart stated "Right back at you." 'Hear' 'Hear'

Councilor Frey echoed the encouragement for people to get the vaccine. Councilor Frey thanked the city staff for the budget report.

Mayor Hart congratulate the Boys and Girls Club. Mayor Hart thanked Rotary Club, Interact Club, Buildings & Grounds and Gardiner's Gardeners for the cleanup at the waterfront. Mayor Hart stated they received three bids for the RFP and added a meeting on 5/26/2021. Mayor Hart thanked the department heads for presenting and putting this together. Mayor Hart thanked the police officers.

## **7. ADJOURN**

**Action:** Councilor Berry motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Councilor Cusick seconded.

Mayor Hart asked for any discussion. Seeing none, a roll call was conducted. Unanimous.

The City Council adjourned the meeting at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alisha Ballard". The script is cursive and fluid.

Alisha Ballard

City Clerk