



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
GARDINER CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, January 18, 2023
6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Hart at 6:00 .m.

1) ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

City Council Present: Councilor Berry, Councilor Brown, Councilor Cusick, Councilor Frey, Councilor Greenleaf, and Councilor West

City Council Present Remotely: Councilor Rines

Also present: Andy Carlton, City Manager; Michelle Snowden, Deputy City Clerk; Angelia Christopher, Administrative Assistant; Denise Brown, Finance Manager; John Cameron Sr., Public Works Deputy Director; Doug Clark, Wastewater Superintendent; Jim Toman, Police Chief; Jackie Toman; Michaela Toman; Aaron Toman; Robert Abbey; Joyce McCauslin; Colleen Pilsbury; Paige Thibeault; Nick Sebastine, Ransom Consulting; Jessica Lowell, Kennebec Journal

2) PUBLIC COMMENT

None present. City Manager Carlton did receive an email from Mr. Michael Hawkins on Central Street regarding speeding. He will reach out to him to discuss.

Mayor Hart asked City Council to take the Oath of Municipal Officers and Mayoral Proclamation out of order. All those in favor.

4) NEW BUSINESS

Deputy Clerk Michelle Snowden issued the Oath of Municipal Officers to Councilor Brown.

a) Mayoral Proclamation for Police Chief James Toman

Action: Councilor Greenleaf moved to approve the mayoral proclamation for Police Chief James Toman; Councilor Brown seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes, Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0.

3) PETITIONS/PUBLIC HEARINGS/PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

a) Public Hearing regarding an application for a liquor license renewal for Gerards Pizza.

Mayor Hart opened the public meeting at 6:10 p.m., there being no public comment, closed the public hearing at 6:10 p.m.

- b) Public Hearing regarding an application for a liquor license renewal for 3 Bridges LLC – A1 Diner.

Mayor Hart opened the public meeting at 6:10 p.m., there being no public comment, closed the public hearing at 6:10 p.m.

4) NEW BUSINESS

- b) Approval of a Liquor License Renewal for Gerards Pizza

Action: Councilor Cusick moved to approve the liquor license for Gerards Pizza, seconded by Councilor Frey. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor Brown – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor West – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0.

- c) Approval of a Liquor License Renewal of 3 Bridges LLC-A1 Diner

Action: Councilor West moved to approve the liquor license renewal for 3 Bridges, LLC – A1 Diner. Councilor Cusick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor Brown – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor West – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0.

- d) Approval of a Major Event – Winter Street Baptist Church Easter Egg Hunt

Action: Councilor Brown moved to approve the Winter Street Baptist Church Easter Egg Hunt, waiving any associated fees. Councilor Cusick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0.

- e) Palmer Fountain Committee Update from Robert Abbey

Mr. Abbey provided some historical background on the Palmer Fountain, also known as “Lady & the birds”, located in the Gardiner Common (which is on the historic register). No major maintenance has ever occurred on the fountain. Efforts to raise funds for restoration of the fountain (pedestal and surround will remain untouched) have been ongoing for three years thanks to the Fountain Committee. The Gardiner Rotary Club has also been a crucial part of the fundraising effort. The Committee has exceeded their beginning goal to which they are very grateful. The 200th anniversary of the Common is in 2024, so it is the goal that it will be completed this year with a dedication sometime this fall.

There was also discussion about a curriculum unit regarding Dr. Palmer, fountain namesake, at the middle school level.

Mayor Hart and Council thanked Mr. Abbey and the Fountain Committee for their work on this project. This would not be happening at all for not for Mr. Robert Abbey’s tireless dedication to the “Lady and the birds”.

Mayor Hart asked City Council to take the two appointments out of order. All those in favor.

- g) Appointment of Detective Sargent Todd Pilsbury as Interim Chief of Police
Action: Councilor Cusick moved to appoint Detective Sargent Todd Pilsbury as Interim Chief of Police, Councilor Berry seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0.
- h) Appointment of Assistant Library Director Dawn Thistle as Interim Library Director
Action: Councilor Brown moved to approve Assistant Library Director Dawn Thistle as Interim Library Director, Councilor Greenleaf seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor Brown – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor West – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0.
- f) Presentation from Ransom regarding the EPA Brownfields Program
Nick from Ransom Consulting defined a Brownfield site – a property that could have an environmental stigma attached to it. The City was awarded \$500,000 to identify and work on a Brownfield site. Nick reported that the funds are in place and selection of a site may begin immediately. Ransom will work with City Manager Carlton and Council to identify a site.
- i) Dedication of the Annual Report
Manager Carlton reported that the City is obligated to write an annual report which includes the City's fiscal update for the previous year.
Action:
Councilor Greenleaf moved to dedicate the 2022 annual report to Jim Toman, Councilor Frey seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0.
- j) Department Head Reports
Manager Carlton thanked all department heads for reporting out. They all do a great job, and the reports provide fantastic information.

5) CITY MANAGER REPORT

- Manager Carlton thanked Chief Toman for his service. Non-essential City services will close at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 19 for a retirement party.
- Manager Carlton announced that two new police officers will be starting over the next month and the public works equipment operator position has been filled.

- Work on the 2024 budget has begun; he will bring it before Council at the first meeting in April.
- Manager Carton reported that he and John Cameron met with FEMA and MEMA today – Kennebec County and the State of Maine will be the threshold for a federal disaster from the December snowstorm. The City will be able to request reimbursement for associated costs (i.e. equipment costs, overtime).
- Manager Carlton will work with an outside firm to fill the police chief position. It will be a transparent process, and councilors will be invited to be on the search committee.
- A goal setting workshop for City Council will be held on Saturday, February 18 at City Hall.
- Lastly, Manager Carlton thanked Interim Chief Pilsbury and Interim Library Director Thistle for assuming the additional roles.
- Melissa Lindley, the new Economic Development / Public Information Officer, will begin on Monday, January 23.

6) CITY COUNCIL REPORT

- Councilor West reported that MSAD11 asked him to participate in a discussion based on the Education 750 model regarding Maine's future for education. The meetings are recorded and uploaded online.
- Mayor Hart expressed her congratulations to Jim Toman and thanked Dawn and Todd for their additional work. She also thanked City staff for a wonderful inauguration / recognition ceremony.
- Mayor also stated that Ingrid Stanchfield, Director of the Boys and Girls Club, has a generator on site that can handle the entire building. She would like to work with the City to become an emergency shelter for the community. Manager Carlton will work with Ingrid and the Chiefs to coordinate this.

7) EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) Councilor Berry moved to enter into executive session at 6:58 p.m. pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A. §841(2) Property Tax Abatement Request, Councilor Greenleaf seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0. The City Council moved into executive session at 6:58 p.m.

Councilor Greenleaf moved to exit executive session at 7:33 p.m. pursuant to 36 M.R.S.A. §841(2) Property Tax Abatement Request, Councilor Cusick seconded. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0. The City Council moved out of Executive Session at 7:33 p.m.

ACTION: Councilor Berry moved to deny the abatement request for case number 2023. Councilor Greenleaf seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted:

Councilor Brown – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor West – yes; Mayor Hart – yes.

The motion passed 8-0.

- b) Councilor West moved to enter into executive session at 7:39 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D) Labor Contract Negotiations, Councilor Cusick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0. The City Council moved into executive session at 7:37 p.m.

Councilor West moved to exit executive session at 7:57 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D) Labor Contract Negotiations, Councilor Cusick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0. The City Council exited executive session at 7:57 p.m.

- c) Councilor Berry moved to enter into executive session at 7:58 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A) Evaluation of the City Manager, Councilor Cusick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0. The City Council moved into executive session at 7:58 p.m.

Councilor Berry moved to exit executive session at 8:26 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A) Evaluation of City Manager, Councilor Cusick seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0. The City Council exited executive session at 8:26 p.m.

- 8) **ADJORN**
Councilor Frey moved to adjourn, Councilor Greenleaf seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted: Councilor West – yes; Councilor Cusick – yes; Councilor Berry – yes; Councilor Frey – yes; Councilor Rines – yes; Councilor Greenleaf – yes; Councilor Brown – yes; Mayor Hart – yes. The motion passed 8-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michelle Snowden, Deputy Clerk