

GARDINER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, April 12, 2017
Gardiner City Hall

Mayor Thomas Harnett called the regular Council Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Roll Call:

Mayor Thomas Harnett; Councilors Terry Berry, Timothy Cusick, Shawn Dolley, Phil Hart, Maryann White, Jon Ault & Patricia Hart. Also present were Interim City Manager Anne Davis and City Clerk Lisa Gilliam.

PETITIONS, PUBLIC HEARINGS (Public comment for anything not on agenda):

Mayor Harnett opened the meeting up to public comment:

- Mike Cloutier from Spectrum Generations was present and spoke about their need for funding. Mr. Cloutier briefed the Council on the services they provide and stated they would be requesting a donation of \$1,000 from the City of Gardiner. Mayor Harnett informed Mr. Cloutier that they would be reviewing social services over the next few weeks and thanked him for speaking.
- Scott Westerlund, who represents the Mount Hope Cemetery in South Gardiner, was the next speaker. He said they are requesting a \$5,000 donation from the City. Mr. Westerlund spoke briefly on the expenses their association faces each year. Councilor Phil Hart thanked Mr. Westerlund and the grounds crew for the wonderful job they do maintaining the cemetery.

Council Discussion with Representative Gay Grant:

Mayor Harnett introduced State Representative Gay Grant & State Senator Shenna Bellows, who were present to give the Council a briefing on the legislation that has an impact on Gardiner. Representative Grant said that regionalization of community services would be an upcoming discussion for the legislature. Senator Bellows spoke about her hopes to increase municipal revenue sharing; she also spoke about minimum wage, CDBG funding and broadband coverage. There was also discussion of bills that involve excise tax and the impact it would have on communities if those funds were decreased. Members of Upstream were also present and their efforts were also discussed. The upcoming State Budget was talked about, along with the impact it will have on communities statewide. Education funding and the upcoming referendum were discussed. Senator Bellows & Representative Grant both ended their discussion by thanking the City for making them proud to represent the Gardiner community; they both noted the recent tax break programs for seniors and for the way Gardiner has been able to recruit new businesses to the area. The Mayor and the City Councilors thanked Senator Bellows & Representative Grant for their presentation.

FERC Dam relicensing of the American Tissue Dam:

Interim City Manager Anne Davis spoke briefly about this item. The City Council has agreed to be an intervener in the relicensing of this dam and that letter needs to be submitted by 4/17/17. Motion by Councilor Patricia Hart to approve the draft letter as City Council's response to the relicensing by FERC of the American Tissue Dam; motion seconded by Councilor Ault. A brief discussion followed. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Consideration of Transferring Administration of a Portion of the Cobbossee Trail Project to Maine DOT:

Patrick Wright from Gardiner Main Street was present to discuss the opportunity to transfer administrative responsibility for a portion of the Cobbossee Trail Project away from Local Administration. This is being proposed by DOT because of the importance of coordinating the timing of design of the bridge projects and the trail project, and the ways these projects will affect each other. DOT has proposed to take over administration of the portion of the trail just east of Dennis' Pizza to the entrance of the Kennebec River Rail Trail.

Because of the changes to the trail route to avoid impacts to neighboring properties, the City needs to create an addendum to the Preliminary Design, which has delayed the opportunity to move to final design for the trail to move quickly enough to match timing of the Main Avenue Bridge, which is slated for 2018. The city will still move forward with getting to final design and construction of the balance of the trail, but this portion will still be locally administered.

The shift of administration responsibility still requires the 20% local match, for which council has already approved funding. The City would still own the facility after completion. Maine DOT would still seek input from the City on the final design.

The Cobbossee Trail Steering Committee voted to recommend council to take this action with the assurance that funding would still be available to construct the balance of the trail.

Motion by Councilor Berry to approve the transfer of administrative responsibility of a portion of the Cobbossee Trail project to Maine DOT; motion seconded Councilor Cusick. Discussion followed. Wayne Frankhouser from Maine DOT spoke briefly about the project and the timeline they hope to keep as the project moves forward. Councilor Patricia Hart asked to insert language into the motion that would include that public opinion and discussion be allowed to take place during this process; Council agreed to the addendum to the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote 8-0.

Discussion on FY18 Public Works, Building & Grounds, Community & Social Services, and TIF Budgets:

Finance Director Denise Brown reviewed the FY18 Budgets for Public Works, Buildings & Grounds, Community & Social Services, and TIF Districts. Assisting with the presentation was Tony LaPlante who reviewed Public Works and Buildings & Grounds for the City Council. While reviewing those two budgets, Mr. LaPlante discussed items such as equipment, maintenance, supplies and training for his department. Finance Director Denise Brown continued the presentation with Community & Social Services, and TIF Districts. Discussion followed.

Mayor Harnett asked if any nonprofits would like to speak:

- Michael Michlon from Johnson Hall spoke briefly and presented a handout of their Annual Report for the Council. Mr. Michlon said this past year was very successful for Johnson Hall and he hopes for many more.
- Ingrid Stanchfield from the Boys & Girls Club spoke next. She read a letter from a youth who participates in the program and expressed all of the wonderful things the Boys & Girls Club had provided her and the other kids who are also members.
- Patrick Wright from Gardiner Main Street spoke next and gave a background on his organization and how they promote the City and encourage business growth. Councilor Phil Hart expressed his gratitude to Gardiner Main Street for all they do for the community. Councilor Cusick gave the same endorsement of Gardiner Main Street and what a wonderful job they do promoting the City.

There was no action taken by the Council following the public comment.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE:

- The purchase of the Libby Hill Tower is progressing and updates will be given to the Council as the status changes.
- The Kennebec River is at flood stage and the City will have updates about the water level and parking on the website.
- 2016 Annual Report is currently being worked on. New council photos will be taken for the 2016 and 2017 Reports. The Council will be notified of the date once it's scheduled.
- The cables that hold the banners over Water Street have snapped. The Interim Manager said they are working on a solution to resolve this matter.

- In the next few weeks, the Code Enforcement Officer will have an update on the dangerous building on Adams Street.
- There were 38 applications received for the City Manager position. Next week they Council will meet in executive session starting at 5pm to review them.
- Library was been named in a person's will and they received at \$25,000 bequest through their estate. In the will, the donor stated how much the Library meant to him.

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE:

- Councilor Berry – Thanks the department heads for their presentation, along with the volunteers and special organizations who were also present tonight.
- Councilor Cusick – Thanked staff for the budget presentation.
- Councilor Phil Hart – Thanked staff for putting the flood information out to the public. Congratulated Anne for the \$25,000 donation and the great service provided by the Library. Reminded those present of the senior tax breaks and to encourage the elderly residents to take advantage of it.
- Councilor White – Thanks to those who participated in the budget presentation this evening. She also noted that her son was a member of the Boys & Girls Club and thanked them for all the services they provide.
- Councilor Ault – Said that he had attended the School Board Finance Committee Meeting along with Councilor Phil Hart and Tax Collector Kathy Cutler. Councilor Ault said he was impressed with the budget they have put together. Over 400 people attended the high school concert that was held this evening, which is a wonderful turnout for those students. Councilor Ault attended the MSAD 11 Food for Thought Backpack Program, which funds 120 students to have access to food. He said this is a nonprofit and volunteer driven program for a very worthy cause.
- Mayor Harnett spoke about the passing of Jeff McCormick, who owns Gerard's Pizza and asked for everyone to keep Jeff and his family in your thoughts. Saturday is the Easter egg hunt on Water Street. The Cinderella Project will be this weekend as well. Thanks to the department heads and Anne for all of their work. Mayor Harnett also recognized Rick Sieberg from the Ambulance Department, who showed up on his day off to help review the tower information; and said what a great and knowledgeable employee he is.

ADJOURN:

Motion by Councilor Berry to adjourn; seconded by councilor Dolley. Motion carried 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Lisa Gilliam, City Clerk